Asian American Studies: '84-'85
CENTER OVERVIEW

Back in 1969, amid anti-war demonstrations, civil rights struggles, and third-world student strikes, the Asian American Studies Center was born, alongside the Center for Afro-American Studies, the Chicano Studies Center and the Native American Cultural Center. In our excitement we were sure that no longer would students remain ignorant of the experience of Asians in America. No longer would Asian Americans look in vain for classes that address their academic needs. Now they could satisfy their thirst for knowledge about their ancestors who helped build this country. Research on the Asian American condition and experience now would be supported and the results would be incorporated in courses on American history, society, politics and literature. The new learning would be disseminated throughout society, and would transform both our individual lives and the life of our communities.

Now after fifteen years, while we truly can be proud of our collective achievement, we remain nevertheless far from our goals. Yes, there are now at UCLA a variety of undergraduate and graduate courses on the Asian American experience offered every quarter. This university is the only institution that offers a masters of arts degree in Asian American Studies. Eleven research projects simultaneously ongoing at the Center range from history to psychology, from Chinese to Pilipino, from internal dynamics of one Asian American group to intergroup relations. They employ both graduate and undergraduate students who work closely with established scholars in the field. The recent publication "Asian American Reader (1969)" is in its eleventh printing, and our semi-annual journal Amerasia recently was praised by noted reviewers as the number one journal in the field and a must for all libraries.

The Reading Room, located on the second floor of Campbell Hall, houses a collection of books and magazines on Asian Americans, as well as all the major newspapers published in our communities. This is the place you go to find out about your own history, the needs of your people, and the events that may effect you as an Asian American.
(Reading Room Round Up, page 18)

Warren and Jai, of Student/Community Projects Unit, together with their assistants Val and Joe are eager to help you adjust to life at the Big U, to make connections with organized student groups, and to find friends among 30,000 faces. They also will keep you informed regarding what is going on in and outside the university and help you bring your skills back to the community you came from. Every effort, however little, on your part counts in the total effort that all of us must contribute to make society fit the image of America as prosperous, democratic and just.

by Lucie Cheng
Director of the Asian American Studies Center and Professor of Sociology -
The UC Davis Asian American Studies Center (ASA) last month lost their suit for a temporary restraining order halting the removal by University officials of books and resources from their on campus office.

The decision cut the ASA's staff to half time, effectively eliminated its office space, and reduced its resource library to a single bookshelf, thus setting back efforts of a group organized to battle the seemingly-imminent elimination of the department.

Initial indications of the potential elimination occurred last February when Glenn Hawkes, chair of the Applied Behavioral Sciences department to which ASA belongs, ordered that the bulk of ASA resources library be removed to the main university library. Only a "minor exception," Hawkes asserted, of "very special materials" could be retained at the ASA library. Concerned students then formed the Coalition to Save Asian American Studies and, after negotiations proved fruitless, filed suit in Yolo County Superior Court requesting a temporary restraining order, which was denied. Students also checked out all of the ASA library's books to prevent their removal.

A preliminary injunction was subsequently denied, and Hawkes announced plans to move more non-ASA material into ASA resource library space, while insisting the room be made available for graduate study.

An ABS (Applied Behavioral Science) reorganization plan does not include the ASA and the ASA faculty has not been consulted on the future of their department.

The latest court defeat only serves to further erode the ASA, pointing to its gradual elimination, or move away from its community-based programs. The University of California at Davis would appreciate letters of concern supporting the department sent to the address below:

Chancellor James H. Meyers
University of California
Davis, Ca. 95616

Copies of the following will be appreciated:

Charles E. Hess, Dean
College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
University of California
Davis, Ca. 95616

Yori Wada, Chair
Board of Regents
University of California
2200 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, Ca. 94102
NEW FACES

NEW ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

As a scholar and teacher in East Asian religion and philosophy, Oaksook C. Kim brings her unique background to the Asian American Studies Center in her new position as Assistant Director of Asian American Studies.

"The Asian American community is starting to refer back to their Asian heritage," states Oaksook. "There is great enthusiasm among younger students who want to understand their continuity not only from 100 years in America didn't come from a vacuum, but from the longest, most important civilization in history."

Born in Korea, Oaksook came to the U.S. for her college studies in 1952 and chose to remain in the U.S. to continue her education. Since then she has received her Ph.D. in Chinese Philosophy and Religion and has an extensive background in education, research, and community work. In addition to her new position at AASC she is also a visiting assistant professor teaching a course in Korean Thought for UCLA's East Asian Languages and Cultures Department.

Although she is a newcomer to AASC Oaksook already has great admiration for the current AASC administration, faculty, and programs. "We have a unique Reading Room which has developed a comprehensive collection of research materials on Asian Pacific Americans. Our

BELLE LEGASPI DUFF

The Center welcomes Belle Legaspi Duff who is the new secretary in the main office.

Recent immigrant from the Philippines, arrived here in 1979 and has worked for PACE for the last five years, where she was executive secretary.

Born and raised in the Philippines, received a Bachelor in Business Administration from the Philippine Women's University. She is here with her family which includes her husband Bruce and Xyriz, a 9th grader at Belmont High School.

everywomen's shelter

In Asian cultures since the time of Confucianism, women have been regarded as subordinate to men, the servant of the household. This anachronistic, stereotypical view has kept Asian women from seeking outside assistance when domestic troubles threatened to overwhelm them. However, now Asian women are starting to free themselves from traditional restraints and are trying to change their situation for the better. One sure sign of this is Everywoman's Shelter, presently the only facility in the United States available to battered and abused Asian women seeking help.

In the Asian community two recurring circumstances lead to wife beating and child abuse; 1) Feelings of inadequacy. While the socioeconomic status of a recently immigrated man may decline due to unemployment or underemployment, his wife's status may rise due to her entering the work force. Therefore the husband feels his authority threatened. He may try to reestablish his superiority by using physical force on his wife or children. 2) Cultural differences. The newly immigrated man may believe that it is perfectly acceptable to beat his wife and children, as this was an accepted practice in his homeland. He might be ignorant of the physical and psychological damage to his wife and children. Everywoman's Shelter attempts to deal with domestic violence in the context of this situation.

At the shelter, women who have been abused by their husbands receive counseling, usually in their own language, and other aid in deciding their future. Although wife abuse is a major concern in the Asian community, particularly among recent Korean or Vietnamese immigrants, the shelter receives virtually no support from these communities, because of firm traditional beliefs held regarding the role of women. This pioneer program is vital to the Asian community, but it needs the support of the Asian community to survive.

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At the same time, the AC will strive to maintain broad programming to address not only the Asian/Pacific concerns, but those of the entire Third World community. Active participation and programming with the non-Asian minority students and the rest of the campus community will remain, as always, a high priority for the Asian Coalition.

An historical weakness of the Asian Coalition has been in leadership development. Too often leadership has graduated or moved on to other positions, leaving noone adequately prepared to keep the Asian Coalition moving forward. Consequently, new staff and leaders spend a lot of time relearning the ropes of coordinating a major campus organization. This year one of the on-going projects of the Asian Coalition staff will be a leadership training and developments, not only for the AC staff but all member groups as well. While a definite program has yet to be fully defined, leadership project will continually develop as the year progresses.

This year's Asian Coalition promises to be an educational, cultural, and social entity, acting in harmony with, not in competition against, its member groups, and other campus organizations. Stressing broad programming, the Asian Coalition will continue breaking down negative images from both external and internal sources. Serving their needs on campus and advocating their issues to the university and student government, the AC will act as a representative voice for A/P students. Building unity through diversity, the Asian Coalition looks toward the coming year in great anticipation of the rewards of progressive programming.

Different experiences in the continental U.S. and Hawaii are creatively explored by first and second generation Korean American poets, also in this issue. Saehang Lee, the recipient of the National Literature Award for Young Writers (Korea) in his poem "To the Stars," laments the Kwangjuo Incident from the viewpoint of a Korean immigrant in America, "From head to toe/Our bodies are a mass of guilt. /Rocks are the food we chew,/ A forest of thorns covers our sleep."

Born in Hawaii, Cathy Song, who received the prestigious 1982 Yale Series of Younger Poets Award, writes about an elderly Korean laborer recollecting his early life on the islands. Los Angeles poet Chumgi Kim, in "Brother," writes about the contemporary despair of a brother finding that "America is no paradise."

Other Korean American scholars including Professor Eun Sik Yang of Los Angeles review current books on Korean Americans. Photos of contemporary Korean American life and an extensive bibliography are round out the "Korean American Experience in the 80's" issue (10;2) available for $3.50 plus $1.00 handling from:
Asian American Studies Center Publications
3232 Campbell Hall, UCLA
Los Angeles, CA 90024

A one-year subscription to the Journal is $7.00 per year; $12.00 two-year for individuals.
Is feminism the agenda for women of color?

**This speech was delivered by Lucie Cheng (Director of Asian American Studies Center, UCLA) at the National Women's Studies Association Conference at Rutgers University, June 25, 1984.**

As members of a male-oriented and male-dominated society, the answer to the question for any women, white or colored, has to be a definite "yes." The struggle for gender equality is a common agenda. But it should not be the exclusive agenda, and for most Asian American women, it is not.

How do Asian American women activists relate to feminism and the organized women's movement? I quote from interviews gathered by Susie Ling for a master's thesis on the Asian American women's movement. To the question, "As an Asian American woman, do you consider yourself a feminist?" one woman answered:

"People call me a feminist. I'm not sure what they mean by that. I believe strongly in women's rights and equality for women, equal pay for equal work, and those kinds of things. But there are different types of feminism. There is feminism where all the problems in society are seen as caused by men. I don't believe that. I don't believe men are the creators of the problems in society. I probably never did believe in that. I do believe that men and women have to work together to solve the problems in society."

Another responded:

"No, because I understand "feminist" to mean something negative. I'm not really sure what it means but it has a connotation of being anti-men. I don't agree with that kind of viewpoint."

Yet another replied:

"Essentially, I think I'm more Asian American than feminist. I basically support women's rights but when it comes down to things, I find myself analyzing things more from the basis of race. The passion comes from my being Asian, rather than a woman's angle."

In discussing the gap between Asian and white women, one woman commented:

"You have to look at the white women's movement along with racism. I agree that white women are oppressed by this society. I understand how they have to fight for their rights. But they also belong to the group that oppresses minorities. That will always make a difference. I cannot unite, but in many ways, the white women's movement helps to move Asian women forward. Overall, it's a help. But one has to be careful because it can also serve to oppress."

I do not believe that we need to choose between racism and sexism as the target of our struggle because both are oppressive, and one is related to the other. It is important for white women to understand the profound impact of racism on the experience of women of color, and the depth of identification that we have with our people. For Asian American women, this identification goes beyond national boundaries. When atomic bombs were dropped by the U.S. over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, when the U.S. occupied the Philippines, when American troops went to Korea and Vietnam, and when the U.S. government boycotted the people's Republic of China, both men and women in these countries, our brothers and sisters across the Pacific suffered. When Japanese Americans were incarcerated in this country, no difference was made between men and women. My points are best conveyed by a poem may be outdated, the concepts are still very relevant today. For those of you who are familiar with it, I hope you'll agree with me that it is appropriate to read it here.

MS.

I got into a thing with someone
because I called her
Miss Ann/Kennedy/Rockefeller/Hughes
instead of ms.  (spelled capital M
small S period)

I said it was a waste of time
worrying about it.

her cool blue eyes
iced me—a victim of sexism.

I wanted to accommodate her
and call her what she deserved,
but knowing that would please her
instead I said,

white lace & satin was never soiled
by sexism
sheltered as you are by mansions
built on Indian land
your diamonds shipped with
slaves from Africa
your underwear washed by
Chinese laundries
your house cleaned by my
grandmother

so do not push me any further.

and when you quit
killing us for democracy
and stop calling me gook

I will call you
whatever you like.

I believe Women's Studies has an

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obligation to teach the history of Asian American women within the context of international relations and the context of Asian American history.

I spent last night going over the program for this conference, and I was greatly impressed by the sessions put together by the WWSA Council and the Autonomous Institute. Many issues that I consider to be central to our joint struggle are being addressed by both white and minority women. And here, I include discussions on anti-semitism in our movement. I feel that what I've said so far may have been redundant. At the same time, I am struck by the absence of discussions on an issue of deep concern to me and to Asian American women and other women of color -- the issue of immigrant women. Since the passage of the 1965 immigration law and as a consequence of U.S. involvement in Asia, there has been a tremendous increase in Asian immigration. In the year the law passed, Asians comprised only 7% of all immigrants. By 1977, however, over two-fifths of new immigrants to this country came from Asia. The major countries of origin are: the Philippines, South Korea, China (Taiwan and Hong Kong), India and Vietnam. The character of the new Asian immigration is remarkably different from the old. Most significantly, the number of female immigrants exceeds the number of males. Who are these immigrant women? How do they fare in America? What is their impact on the country? Their impact on the labor market? How are their needs addressed? Is the women's movement cognizant of their concerns? A recent study shows that more Asian immigrant women than white women participate in the labor force, and a larger proportion of these women are employed full-time. Yet the annual earnings of full-time, year-round Asian immigrant women workers are significantly lower than their white counterpart. For those Asian women who had four or more years of college education, it is significantly more difficult for Asian women to convert their education into high occupational status. Those large numbers of immigrant women with only a grade school education are, on the other hand, trapped in ethnic ghettos and low income jobs.

We must ask, what is the goal of feminist struggle? Is it simply to achieve parity with men? If the Reagan Administration appoints an equal number of men and women to positions of power, do you think it would improve the lives of working class people or specifically, working class women? Is it our goal to gain an equal opportunity to participate in the oppression of a segment of our population? With each specific objective of the movement, we must ask who will be the beneficiaries and who will suffer as a consequence? When, as professional women we fight for equal employment, what should our position be on domestic work? Are we going to devote the same energies to fight for the industrialization of housework, the socialization of housework, and the redistribution of private wealth? Are we aware that we may be creating a new underclass occupied mainly by immigrant women of color and help to trap them permanently in that position? As long as the family is the basic unit of consumption and identification, how can we expect Chinese immigrant women living in San Francisco Chinatown, in substandard housing, with a median family income of $9,000 to identify with a women's movement that focuses on
 LINKING OUR LIVES

This new work presents for the first time a rich part of the fascinating community of the Southern California Chinese Americans. Women, though very few in the beginning, played an increasingly major role in creating a well-rounded social community, in developing identity, and providing a strong continuity for Chinatown. At the same time, these women were pioneers in defining social outreach and in exploring new ventures and professions. This beautifully designed paperback is founded on a collection of recent oral histories spanning the period 1980-1950. Period photographs from the collection are featured.

LINKING OUR LIVES: Is an inspiration. Essays created and written by eight women who feel spiritually linked to the Chinese women pioneers. Authors are associated with the Asian American Studies Center, ULCA.

LINKING OUR LIVES: Is a history, surveying the one hundred thirty years of Chinese American experience in Southern California.

LINKING OUR LIVES: Is for layman or scholar, anyone interested in women’s experiences, Chinese Americans, and Southern California life.


LINKING OUR LIVES: Chinese American Women of Southern California. 110 pages, 6”x9”, 12 period photos, 1 map, 1 glossary, paperback. Library of Congress catalog number 84-072431. Published by Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. Single copies $9.95 each. Pre-publication discounts: 20% to Chinese Historical Society of Southern California member; 10% to others until December 31, 1984.

Please send checks payable to: CHSSC, LINKING OUR LIVES 4205 South La Salle Avenue Los Angeles, Ca. 90062

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Resource Development and Publications unit publishes the Amerasia Journal, and has maintained its role as the leading publisher of scholarly research and work on Asian Americans. Student Community Projects is also outstanding in continuing the dialogue between academic research, scholars, students, and community.”

As Assistant Director, Oaksook’s duties include overseeing the Center’s units, assisting Director Lucie Cheng with Southeast Asians, Samoans, and other Pacific Islander groups in America.

With her knowledge and understanding of Asian thought, and her enthusiasm from her work, Oaksook will certainly add a new dimension to the Asian American Studies Center in her position here as Assistant Director of the Studies Center.

by Val Soe-

simpson/mazzoli

DOWN FOR THE COUNT

Minority communities can breathe a cautious sigh of relief at the failure of the Immigration Reform and Control Act to reach approval in this year’s Congress. This bill, known infamously as the Simpson-Mazzoli Bill, stands one last chance for approval in the “lame-duck” session following the November elections, but will more than likely die without further debate this year.

The bill reached its demise when a compromise could not be reached on the issue of amnesty for undocumented workers. Permanent resident status would have been given to undocumented workers who could prove they had entered the United States before January 1, 1977, and temporary residence to those arriving between 1977 and January 1, 1981. Though these dates represented a compromise between factions in the house and the senate, provisions regarding the implementation of the amnesty provision rose as a major controversy. Amendments proposed by Rep. Don Edwards (D-CA) and Rep. Barney Frank (D-CA) asked for $100% federal reimbursement to the state and local governments for the costs of public assistance given to newly legalized aliens. President Reagan claimed he would not sign the bill into law unless the Edward/Frank amendments were removed. The president favored the more stringent version of the bill presented by the Senate. In spite of last minute negotiations, the House-Senate conference could not reach a mutually satisfying compromise to send the bill to the White House.

Supporters of the bill saw a chance for success with a compromise offered by Rep. Charles Schumer (D-NY) regarding the anti-discrimination provision. Schumer’s proposal compromised Rep. Frank’s amendment to protect workers from discrimination on the basis of “alienage”, or refusing to hire workers simply because they are not citizens. The bill would have placed employer sanctions against those who knowingly hire undocumented workers. Fines up to $2,000.00 and prison terms would have been used to discourage the hiring of the undocumented. This, however, left the door wide open for employer discrimination against all workers who may look like they might be foreign, regardless of their citizenship or legal status. Frank’s amendment would have provided legal avenues for workers to file complaints against discrimination.

Though the Simpson-Mazzoli Bill is effectively dead for the time being, a revised immigration reform bill will likely appear before the congress when it reconvenes in 1985. What changes will be made are not as yet defined, but they will depend greatly on the outcome of the November elections and the new sociopolitical climate that will follow. Though the Simpson-Mazzoli bill may die, efforts at immigration reform will no doubt continue as the government strives to curb the growth of power and numbers among the minority communities.

by Joe Virata-
At the same time, the AC will strive to maintain broad programming to address not only the Asian/Pacific concerns, but those of the entire Third World community. Active participation and programming with the non-Asian minority students and the rest of the campus community will remain, as always, a high priority for the Asian Coalition.

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Getting women into corporate positions that will boost their family income well over $100,000? Whatever the agenda of feminism is, it cannot be and must not be the perpetuation of the status quo.

I believe there are common causes among us. I believe that a rainbow coalition can be built and must be built to transform our society, to free it from sexism, racism, anti-semitism and class exploitation.

2. Loo, Chalsa and Ong, Paul. "Slaying Demons with a Sewing Needle:
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Cont'd next issue