STILL RELEVANT TODAY

CHANGING THE WORLD

HARVEY DONG

PHOTO BY GILBERT HOM

Harvey Dong working on a graphic layout of Wei Min, Chinese Community News in 1971 at Asian Community Center.

ASIAN COMMUNITY CENTER ARCHIVES

SOLD OR EX

In 1967, I had been involved in the Stop the Draft Week (STDW) protests that took place in front of the Oakland Army Induction Center. In front of the Center, thousands of anti-war demonstrators gathered to stop the processing of army inductees. There were two groups who were protesting at this time. One was a sit-in led by singer Joan Baez, which was peacefully removed and arrested by police in front of the media. A second, and much larger group, was more determined to shut down the Center and did not comply with the authorities so quickly. These protesters were attacked by police who swung their batons from above the shoulders downward. I was pretty shocked to see police officers assaulting non-violent demonstrators using nightsticks and mace in the pitch dark. The following year, another STDW took place. Many, including myself, went to the army surplus store to purchase helmets to protect our skulls from injury. Young people were determined to end the killing in Vietnam and didn't want to be drafted to fight in an unjust war.

During this time, the anti-war movement was merging with the Black Power movement, represented by the Black Panther Party, which strongly opposed U.S. involvement in Vietnam. The Black Panthers spoke at rallies connecting oppression at home with imperialism overseas. Bay Area anti-war marches had dual goals: to end the war and to free jailed Black Panther Party leader Huey P. Newton. I attended a packed, full-house "Free Huey" rally at the Oakland Kaiser Auditorium (now Oakland Civic Auditorium) that featured national Black Power spokespersons including H. Rap Brown and James Foreman from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). There were very few Asian faces at the STDW planning meetings and Panther support rallies. At the STDW meetings, I remember two who were later active in the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) Strike at UC Berkeley (UCB). Later I met two more STDW Asians in the UCB TWLF Strike who were members of the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA).

My parents knew about my involvement in the anti-war movement and support for the Black Panthers. Whenever I returned home to Sacramento, I brought political literature, including Black Panther newspapers. They were a little alarmed and concerned about whether I would graduate. Sometimes there were reports of riots in Berkeley, and they wondered if I had gotten into trouble. At the same time, they knew they couldn't really do much about it because I had pretty much moved out of the house and was figuring out the world on my own. Before my mother passed away, I got to learn more about her life in China.

CHINA AND CHINATOWN

At age four, my mom was left behind in China by her parents because they prioritized boys coming over [to the U.S.] instead of girls. Her whole family was in the U.S. while she was left behind in the village in China in the care of her aunt. My mom's birth slot was given to a male cousin who entered the U.S. as a paper son. Because of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1883, using false immigration papers was one of the few immigration alternatives.

The Sino-Japanese War, which began in 1937, ended at the same time as the end of World War II in 1945. During this period in China, my mom's teacher recruited her to be an agitator, going from village to village giving speeches and calling on people not to give up the fight against Japan. She would be the one to fire up the crowd at the rallies—a little girl getting up on a chair, raising her fist, and giving a speech. She was very proud of what she did during the war. When she came to the U.S., my mother first worked in the canneries and then later learned enough English to get a clerical job. She was involved in the California State Employees Union and wasn't afraid to give speeches at rallies.

My dad was the opposite. More reserved. He grew up in Sacramento Chinatown during Chinese exclusion and was the eldest son raised by a single mom, my grandmother. My grandfather died when my dad was nine years old, so he had a heavy burden to carry. His proudest achievement was that he finished high school level Chinese school. He was able to read newspapers and Chinese classics, and wrote letters for my grandmother to family overseas. Every Chinese New Year, my grandmother would have him write and send a letter with $50 inside to his aunt in Malaysia, who was employed as a servant. I have the address memorized: 44 Madras Road, Penang.

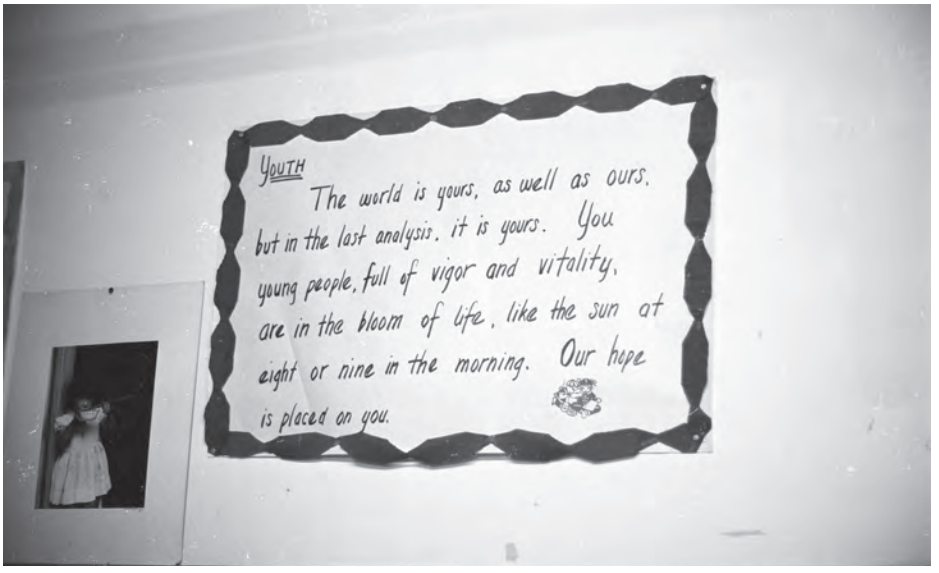
COURTESY OF HARVEY DONG

Harvey Dong and brother Al at home, Sacramento, CA.

My father went to City College in Sacramento and was drafted into the U.S. military to fight in the Philippines during World War II. The Allied Powers had consolidated victory in the Philippines and were preparing for a large-scale invasion of Japan when the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The atomic bombs cancelled the invasion that would have involved my father and uncle.

Through introductions, my father met my mother, and he was able to bring her over to the U.S. as a fiancée under the War Brides Act. After arriving, my mom had thirty days to decide whether or not to marry my dad, or return back to China. Coming over as a war bride enabled my mom to reunite with her parents, plus meet her five American-born siblings. They were all surprised that she was so outspoken, but in looking back at what she went through in China, it wasn't so surprising.

Our family first lived in downtown Sacramento, near Chinatown, and later, five miles away in South Sacramento. In downtown, my grandmother owned a three-unit building. She lived upstairs, we lived on the second floor, and my cousins lived downstairs. My grandmother purchased the property with savings from her cannery and fruit harvest jobs. Because of the Alien Land Laws, she could not buy the property in her own name and placed legal ownership under an American-born relative. We moved out to our own place, a newly-built home in South Sacramento. Using a GI housing loan, my father was able to skirt racial housing covenants by buying directly from a fellow veteran, a white man, who sold to Chinese.



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE LOUIE, WEI MIN SHE AND ASIAN COMMUNITY CENTER PHOTOGRAPHS, ETHNIC STUDIES LIBRARY, UC BERKELEY

Activities blackboard in the Asian Community Center with references to the April 22 Coalition Against the War and other tasks. Bottom: Quotation from Chairman Mao "On Youth" posted on ACC wall.

This was the 1950s, and though there was some integration, Asians were not fully accepted. Our family still participated in the traditional Chinese social organizations. We celebrated the Chinese holidays and we attended Chinese school. Every day, the school bus would pick me up in the late afternoon and meander throughout Sacramento to bring us to Chinese school.

Although we lived in an integrated community, I grew up not really feeling accepted by the whites. I got along with white kids who lived on my block, but if I walked through another neighborhood, I would get called "ching chong" and sometimes threatened. Their parents did not teach them any better, or perhaps the children parroted their parents' views. Many of the taunts were related to the past wars in Asia, which in their minds were still going on.

When I attended my first day of junior high school, a group of white kids yelled racial slurs at me regarding the building of the railroad. I had inadvertently sat at an empty lunch table later claimed by six racist white males. They made fun of me for being a coolie railroad worker, and about how I traveled from China to work on the railroad. Seated the entire time, I ate my lunch and humility.

The next day, I avoided the cafeteria and sat alone on the outer bleachers. Several of the kids from the same group spotted me and proceeded with more racial taunting but this time, I responded differently. One of them smashed my lunch. I remember jumping on top of the lunch smasher with my hands around his neck. He panicked, yelling for help. I wasn't bothered by that person again.

Most of my friends were Asian and we hung out together for friendship and survival. Sports, dances, parties. . .and later, learning kung fu. There were a few kung fu practitioners who taught ABC (American Born Chinese) kids. I remember two I took lessons from in Sacramento. Lucky Chan was a grocery worker who taught Choy Li Fut classes behind the Chinese school during the summer. Leo Fong, a Baptist preacher and professional softball player from Arkan-

sas, taught classes at the Firemen's Hall. My cousins organized a brick breaking club and to join, you had to break two bricks with your palm.

COLLEGE AND STUDY

I did okay in my college studies—not straight A's, but I was able to pass my classes. My parents were pretty happy that I had moved out of the house. When I was in high school, we had conflicts over how I spent my time. They would have specific ideas, and I wanted more freedom. When I got accepted to UCB, I didn't know exactly what I was getting into but welcomed the opportunity. I planned the move and packed all my stuff. I figured I'd better not bring too much just in case I flunked out and had to bring it all back. I just filled up a suitcase and moved into the dorm. I got to know people there. There were ROTC (Reserved Officers' Training Corps) army cadets on my floor. Following the example of an uncle, I joined the ROTC, where scholarships were granted to cadets to finish their upper division years.

That was my mindset in 1966. I grew up hearing stories from uncles and father about how the military got the Chinese community out of isolation. Education and housing were provided for returning GIs. The house I grew up in was through one of the GI housing loans. The realtor would not sell to us because we were Chinese, but the contractor did because he was a GI veteran like my father.

By 1967, I was opposed to the Vietnam War. I had done a lot of reading and study about why the U.S. should not have been involved in Vietnam. Cody's Books was near my dorm and I'd find books there. There were also lively discussions with fellow classmates over the war. In ROTC convocations, cadets were told by the military instructors, who were Korean War veterans, to not stop by the political literature tables on Sproul Plaza because the groups there were communists.

AAPA NEWS / ASIAN COMMUNITY CENTER ARCHIVES

SF State TWLF picket line in which AAPA Berkeley participated, 1969.

"If it walks like a duck, it's a duck," commented one instructor regarding the literature tables being a possible communist "front group."

"When Charlie comes at you, you have to be ready. We are here to get you ready," was another comment that stuck in my mind.

One time at rifle practice, a cadet hit the bullseye and stated with glee, "I just shot a Gook."

I dropped out of ROTC and attended Stop the Draft Week meetings in 1967. STDW later organized into small groups that met weekly to discuss politics. My ideas were shaped by this involvement. There was government repression after STDW and some of the leaders were being tried for conspiracy. The repression only served to bond those who participated.

When word got out that I was participating in anti-war activities, a few conservative Asian Americans in the dorms threatened me. Someone's cousin, who was in the Marines, threatened to come to campus to kick my ass. What the hell? People were dying in an unjust war and I was being threatened for opposing it? I was willing to talk to the "cousin" but the encounter never happened.

I also became concerned with issues affecting the Asian American community and began to investigate what could be done. The Black Panthers emphasized this idea of a "rainbow coalition" and the need for people of color to do work in their own communities. In fall 1968, I became active tutoring immigrant youth in San Francisco Chinatown. The project was organized by the UCB Chinese Students Club whose Social Action Committee posted notices about the project. My friend Steve Wong and I went to San Francisco Chinatown every Wednesday to tutor and hang out afterwards. We visited Leways on Jackson Street, a youth-based self-help enterprise involving a soda fountain and pool hall. Many Leways members would later radicalize to form the Red Guard Party. We also visited the ICSA (Intercollegiate Chinese for Social Action) headquarters on Clay Street to check out the youth programs that were organized by San Francisco State College (now San Francisco State University, or SF State) students.

Some of the young people we tutored were Steve's nieces. We also had relatives we bumped into who worked in the garment shops and tourist stores. This experience helped put together ideas about what later became steps towards linking Asian American studies to the community. Big changes were already taking place in the community. That same summer, a march against Chinatown poverty involved many community progressives, youth, and students. The march blasted the Chinese Six Companies (Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association) for promoting the myth that social problems didn't exist in Chinatown. This got all over the news.

FORMING AAPA

Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA) founder Yuji Ichioka and his wife Emma Gee were civil rights workers in the American South. They wanted to bring the political activism of the anti-Vietnam War movement and the Black Power movement to the Asian American community. The term "Asian American" that we all take for granted today was coined by Yuji at a founding AAPA meeting in his Berkeley apartment back in May 1968.

Joining AAPA was the first time I was working with politically active Asian Americans who wanted to radically change the world. Around October 1968, I attended an Asian Studies 100X information session. AAPA members were working with Professors Paul Takagi and Franz Schurmann to develop a new course on the "Asian Experience in America." Professors Takagi and Schurmann co-sponsored the class but it was actually taught by graduate students Bing Thom, Ling-chi Wang, Richard Aoki, and Wai-Kit Quan, all of whom were AAPA members.

A number of meetings took place to recruit interested students. At one gathering, individuals took turns introducing themselves and what their views were about the need for Asian American political involvement. Steve Wong and I attended one such meeting where the two of us may have been among the few "newbies" present. Eyes were on us. Steve mentioned something about how he was religious and believed in a single world religion. I don't remember what I said, but it was the first time I had heard Steve's thoughts on world religion.

AAPA was diverse, with members from San Francisco Chinatown, Sacramento, the Salinas Valley, and Los Angeles. There were mixed-race members. There were members from Hong Kong who held strong anti-colonial feelings. There was Richard Aoki, a founding member of the Black Panther Party. Everyone in AAPA was focused on the idea that we needed an Asian American studies that served student and community needs. AAPA was also one of the organizations involved in the Chinatown anti-poverty protests.

COURTESY OF ETHNIC STUDIES LIBRARY, UC BERKELEY

TWLF strike picket line on Sproul Steps, UC Berkeley; Harvey Dong in left panel (black jacket and black rimmed glasses)

PHOTO BY GILBERT HOM

Volunteering to build a youth center in LA Chinatown.

THE IDEA OF ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

I became committed to the idea of Asian American studies, or "Asian studies" as it was called then. Many old-timers, such as me, automatically refer to Asian American studies as "Asian studies." That's how one can tell what period they became involved. Now, the name has been changed to Asian American and Asian Diaspora Studies (AAADS) at UCB. The idea for calling the department Asian Studies was to take back the state department-focused "Asian Studies" term, and to bring anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, and anti-orientalist meanings to it.

The Yellow Symposium ("The Asian Experience in American/Yellow Identity") was held in the Pauley Ballroom at UCB on January 11, 1969. The symposium was sponsored by the Chinese Students Club, Nisei Students Club, AAPA, and others. Students and instructors visited from other campuses, with some as far away as Hawai'i and New York. By the time the conference was over, many campus organizations, such as Oriental Concern (Sansei Concern), had also changed their names to AAPA. George Woo and Laureen Chew from SF State called on symposium attendees to support the SF State TWLF Strike, and to bring the strike issues and demands back to their own locales and campuses. Many UCB AAPA members went over to support the TWLF Strike at SF State.

On January 22, 1969, the TWLF at UCB struck for a Third World College. On March 13, 1969, a strike moratorium was called to establish an interim Department of Ethnic Studies with programs in Asian Studies, African American Studies, Chicano Studies, and Native American Studies. Negotiations were to continue towards a Third World College but this became waylaid. In 1974, the African American Studies program left the Ethnic Studies Department to form their own in the College of Letters & Science. This was opposed by many

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE LOUIE, WEI MIN SHE AND ASIAN COMMUNITY CENTER PHOTOGRAPHS, ETHNIC STUDIES LIBRARY, UC BERKELEY

Community protest against Chinese Times news editorial that denounced the I-Hotel struggle. From left: William Fong, Olden Ng, Mr. Jeung, Mr. Lee, Harvey Dong.

African American students and instructors, but the chancellor was successful in pulling it off. By this time, the TWLF Strike momentum was gone and could no longer exert political pressure of any significance on the university administration.

With a small budget in the beginning, Asian Studies at UCB had to be creative. Those who were paid higher salaries put their monies into a pool so that more jobs could be created. Because students were involved in the struggle to establish Asian Studies, they were passionate about making sure that it would succeed. The program was not a top-down hierarchical program, but one based on a student-advisory council that worked in conjunction with the Asian Studies coordinator and staff.

THE ELDERLY AND ALLEYWAYS

Community work was always an important component of the Third World College idea. To me, it meant learning from the masses for the purpose of serving the people. We tried to do this in different ways, with varying degrees of success. After the TWLF Strike, I worked at Self-Help for the Elderly, located on Old Chinatown Lane in San Francisco. Three of us who were involved in the TWLF Strike were now working at Self-Help: me, Steven Wong, and Victor Wong.

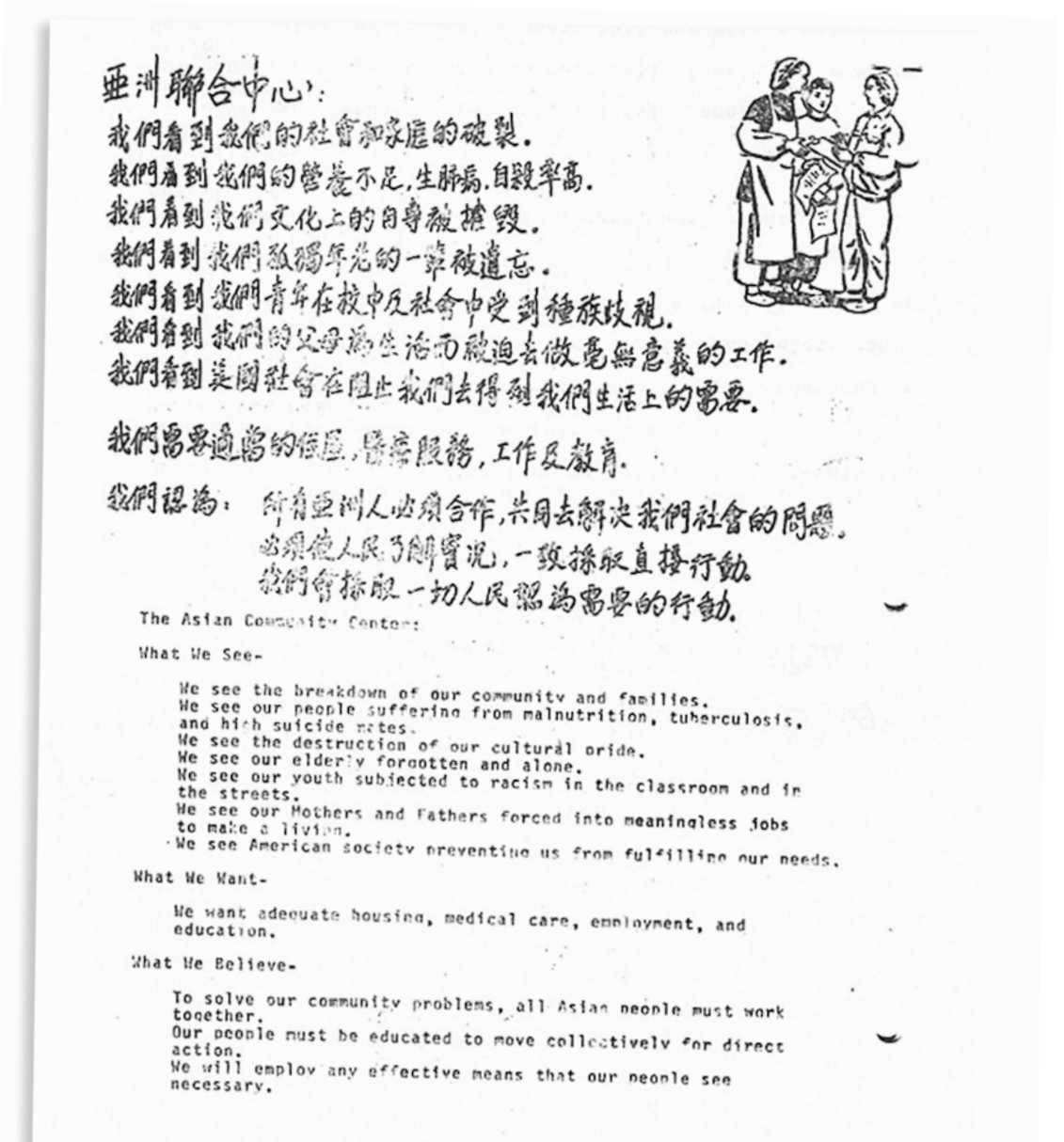
We did case work where we went into SRO (single room occupancy) homes to check up on elderly residents. I had the assignment of regularly checking up on an elderly Chinese man who suffered from dementia and had to remind him to take his medications. He would be yelling and cursing loudly in Portsmouth Square, and I would have to bring him back to his room to take his medication.

Conditions for seniors were bad. Kitchen facilities were limited. Dozens of tenants shared small kitchens and bathrooms. The cramped quarters led to friction. Many elderly we visited were sick and suffering in their own rooms. We were the only ones checking up on them. I remember one elderly lady in bed, crying and weeping, in need of care. Another elderly couple was more cheerful but suffered from mental issues, hoarding junk up to the ceiling.

Sam Yuen, Self-Help's director, was an affable man. He wore a vest and coat and would constantly flicker his eyes, which I think was a condition related to being overworked. To stay calm, he would fill tobacco into his pipe, light it up, and take puffs. He had to put out a lot of emergency fires related to the elderly crisis and was happy to have us former strikers as interns. We helped provide a little more reinforcement. Sam told me about how all this poverty couldn't be solved by his agency and that the problem was *systemic.* He told me that what we did during the strike, including the violence, was good. He cited Frederick Douglass: "If there is no struggle, there is no progress."

Eventually, Steven went on to teach the "Asian Communities" course in Asian Studies at UCB. Victor later contracted tuberculosis (TB) from the Self-Help job and had to quit. San Francisco Chinatown had one of the highest TB rates in the nation, as well as suicide. I stayed on at Self-Help to work on an alley renovation project with the Chinatown-North Beach Youth Council and Chinatown Neighborhood Design.

I became close with the "Team 40" youth group that was assigned the job of restoring the alleyway. The work entailed cleaning alleys, painting walls, building benches for seniors to sit on, and planting Chinese bamboo plants in large barrels. It was a challenge working with these youth. I'd organize them to paint the alley walls, only to turn around and find that I was the only one slinging the paint. After each day of work, we would hang out. Working at Self-Help allowed me to become acquainted with community youth and the elderly.



亞洲聯合中心：

我們看到我們的社會和家庭的破裂。
我們看到我們的營養不足，生肺病，自殺率高。
我們看到我們文化上的自尊被摧毀。
我們看到我們孤獨年老的一輩被遺忘。
我們看到我們青年在校中及社會中受到種族歧視。
我們看到我們的父母為生活而被迫去做毫無意義的工作。
我們看到美國社會在阻止我們去得到我們生活上的需要。

我們需要適當的住屋，醫療服務，工作及教育。

我們認為：所有亞洲人必須合作，共同去解決我們社會的問題。
必須使人民了解實況，一致採取直接行動。
我們會採取一切人民認為需要的行動。

The Asian Community Center:

What We See-

We see the breakdown of our community and families.
We see our people suffering from malnutrition, tuberculosis, and high suicide rates.
We see the destruction of our cultural pride.
We see our elderly forgotten and alone.
We see our youth subjected to racism in the classroom and in the streets.
We see our Mothers and Fathers forced into meaningless jobs to make a living.
We see American society preventing us from fulfilling our needs.

What We Want-

We want adequate housing, medical care, employment, and education.

What We Believe-

To solve our community problems, all Asian people must work together.
Our people must be educated to move collectively for direct action.
We will employ any effective means that our people see necessary.

ASIAN COMMUNITY CENTER ARCHIVES

A youth program, food program, and film series for elders were some of the many services provided by the Asian Community Center.

庆祝
CELEBRA

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE LOUIE, WEI MIN SHE AND ASIAN COMMUNITY CENTER PHOTOGRAPHS, ETHNIC STUDIES LIBRARY, UC BERKELEY

Harvey Dong raises his fist with Jung Sai Garment and Lee Mah Electronic workers celebrating International Women's Day in 1974 in SF Chinatown.

CHANGES ON KEARNY STREET

The UCB Asian Studies program found an office and meeting space in San Francisco Chinatown-Manilatown. Self-Help for the Elderly originally shared a meeting hall space with the United Filipino Association (UFA) at 832 Kearny Street, in the Victory Building, next to the International Hotel (I-Hotel). The UFA represented the I-Hotel tenants in an eviction dispute against the property owners, Milton Meyer & Co. After the signing of the lease between UFA and Milton Meyer & Co., UFA moved out of 832 Kearny Street and into the I-Hotel. Self-Help then subleased the space to the UCB Asian Studies program, and eventually moved to a new space. By February 1970, the location was solely rented out as the Asian Studies Field Office (ASFO).

Many projects originally shared that fairly large location, which had its own meeting hall, office area, large kitchen, and rooms for activities. Asian Studies classes were held at this location. Students interested in doing community field work used the office. The Chinatown Cooperative Garment Factory had a space in the location. In the evenings, many elderly utilized the office as a drop-in center. Daily meals were cooked by a Chinese chef who collected 50 cents per meal from the other community workers on the Kearny Street block: the Asian Legal Services and Draft Help, and Kearny Street Workshop.

The core of the ASFO were former AAPA members. AAPA would fold later in 1970 for a number of reasons. The intensity of strike activities was over and many members were involved in maintaining the institutional demands to legitimize Asian Studies. Others who did not agree with the outcome of the strike, in accepting an interim Department of Ethnic Studies and not a Third World College, stopped coming to meetings. Foreign-born AAPA members no longer saw a role in the U.S. and returned to Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other parts of Asia. One couple settled in Singapore, only to have all their political books confiscated by the police.

For myself and a few others, we left campus and began the next phase of the struggle by becoming more rooted in the community. There were discussions about this, and I remember being told that we shouldn't abandon what we began on campus. Some of the community youth who were in the same room when these discussions were held, were upset at proposals to drop our community work and return back to campus. I took on the position that our future was the community.

SINKING ROOTS

One of the last contributions by AAPA was the opening of Everybody's Bookstore on Kearny Street on January 1, 1970. Seed monies from AAPA members were collected to open the first Asian American bookstore in the U.S. There weren't many Asian American books in print at that time, and many of the books needed in classes had to be reprinted in copy shops. Some authors who did have printed works would bring them to resell at Everybody's. The bookstore became a community institution that challenged the more conservative community establishment.

By summer 1970, the Asian Studies Field Office eventually changed its name to Asian Community Center (ACC) to make it a more community-based organization. Programs and roots were being developed with confidence while relations with campus were no longer that amiable. The rent was being supported by elderly Chinatown residents who donated on a monthly basis. How this all started was that an ACC member went to Portsmouth Square and noticed that even during the rain, the elderly men would still sit outdoors in the park

because they had no place to go. We invited them down to ACC to get away from the bad weather. Soon we had programs and activities celebrating Chinese holidays, film screenings, and Mandarin classes. There were even food giveaways arranged by Loni Ding. There would be lines of cars in front, and volunteers would assist in loading them with surplus government food.

The conservative Chinatown establishment, their media, and organizations began to accuse us of being communists. One newspaper wrote that we were "the new Red Guards." We ran a film program, and when we started showing films related to the People's Republic of China, and promoting U.S.-China relations, we began to receive death threats. Some of the seniors, concerned about the Center's safety, brought their guns to events and sat near the door. One elder in his late eighties, with thick eyeglasses, carried a .25 caliber pistol. The elders had gone through Chinese exclusion and McCarthy periods, and were hopeful that ACC would be able to survive. They encouraged us to learn kung fu and brought us around to match us with local martial arts sifus (teachers). It was funny—after an intense workout, one person would light up a cigarette to fend exhaustion.

ASIAN COMMUNITY CENTER ARCHIVES

Pooling together money to open Everybody's Bookstore in January 1970 was the last AAPA activity. Everybody's Bookstore became a community bookstore affiliated with the Asian Community Center.

THE DIAOYUTAI INCIDENT

In April 1971, the Northern California Tiao-yu Tai Islands Sovereignty Defense League called for a protest rally in San Francisco Chinatown's Portsmouth Square, and all hell broke loose. The League was protesting against the U.S. giving away islands to Japan that historically belonged to Taiwan. The protest was particularly pointed at the Taiwan government (the KMT, or Kuomintang Party) for letting this happen. In response, the protest group began to receive death threats.

The Tiao-yu Tai committee was made up largely of foreign students from UCB, Stanford, San Jose State, San Francisco City College, and other locations. They asked ACC for assistance and I remember violence that took place that day. Gang members, paid by the KMT, assembled on the corner of Brenham Place and Washington, attacked speakers, seized the microphone, and swore at the audience. The protestors froze for a few seconds until a middle-aged merchant seaman countered and led others to retake the stage and mic.

The incident sealed in my mind the seriousness of what we were trying to do. It also reminded me of the conditions that many had to deal with in their daily lives. Later, retaliatory threats

亚洲人民
联合中心
ASIAN COMMUNITY
CENTER

ASIAN COMMUNITY CENTER ARCHIVES (LEFT AND ABOVE)

During the I-Hotel eviction, the Asian Community Center doors were battered by riot police. Days later, ACC members draped a protest banner from the roof of the emptied building to demand the city to reopen the I-Hotel for the tenants and community centers that were evicted.

were heard throughout the Chinatown grapevine. We got the word out that we were there to serve the community, and not another gang out there wanting to become "king of the hill." Eventually, the tensions dissipated. The one positive we got out of this was that no one died.

Many of the Tiao-yu Tai committee members stayed on to work in ACC. Most of us were American-born, but with the foreign students coming on board, we now had the powerful addition of Chinese language speakers and writers. Later, the new relationship helped establish Wei Min She (Serve the People), an anti-imperialist community-based organization that lasted from 1970-1977. Wei Min She, I remember, was one of the few organizations that was respectful of how people related and worked with each other, taking in member opinions—non-hierarchical and mass-based. Not all organizations were that way.

PERSONAL STRUGGLES AND HEALING

My wife Bea and I were heavily involved in the fight to save the I-Hotel and the Asian Community Center in San Francisco Chinatown. She did trade union work with the ILGWU (International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union). But in 1981, Bea suffered a horrible injury and became disabled in a wheelchair. We had to pull ourselves together, not just in terms of dealing with her health situation, but also finding some way to continue all those things that inspired us from the earlier period.

We were living in New York at the time and Bea, while walking through a subway station with her coat and a knit cap on, was shot in the back of the neck by a young 19-year-old woman. The woman was schizophrenic and had been hearing voices telling her to shoot a Chinese man. She had taken a gun from her mother's closet in Louisville, Kentucky, and got on a bus to Newark, New Jersey. The young woman was loitering around the subways station when Bea happened to pass by.

Bea was paralyzed from the neck down—C6 and C7 paralysis. I was working when I got the phone call. Someone from the hospital had found my contact information in Bea's purse. They said that she had been injured. I didn't know what that meant. Did she get hit by a car? They told me to please come down to the hospital. I went, and that's when they told me what had happened. We figured she would eventually recover, but after a couple of weeks, one of the interns said that she wouldn't—it was a long-term paralysis because her spinal cord had been severed. The head doctor was never direct with us about her not being able to recover. I figure he didn't want to dash our hopes.

Bea was 29. We had gotten married seven years earlier in 1974 at San Francisco City Hall. I remember that was the same year as the Jung Sai Garment Workers Strike. Bea was an officer in the garment workers union and had gone there to find out what the labor dispute was about. There were some fifty Chinese immigrant women being harassed by the police at the picket line, so Bea stepped in to help. A Chinese woman striker had been hit by a company truck and couldn't move. The police accused her of faking it and this angered the picketers. The police arrested 54 people, including Bea. She bonded with the workers after the arrest and developed very long-term friendships with them.

I guess you can say that the person who shot Bea was a victim of the system, just as much as Bea was a victim of the shooting. I don't feel any anger at the unstable young girl who shot Bea. It had to do with the lack of institutional support for the mentally ill. Of course there are a lot of "what if's": What if Bea hadn't been there? What if she had had alternative transportation? All these things run through your mind when you experience something like that, but it's always after it happens. It's one of those things that stay with you because the injury is permanent. I think we try to cope by staying busy, and running Eastwind Books of Berkeley, after we

PHOTO BY JAMES SOBREDO

Harvey Dong and his wife, Bea, (pictured in front) host an author event for the book Beyond Lumpia, Pansit, and Seven Manangs Wild: Stories from the Heart of Filipino Americans, *at the bookstore they own and operate, Eastwind Books of Berkeley.*

purchased it in 1996, was a good healing mechanism for us.

I was also involved in building the house that we currently live in. I took it upon myself to learn construction. I attended construction school at Laney College and learned carpentry. The program had its students build affordable homes in West Oakland. I tried my best to turn something horrible into something more positive. I became friends with other carpentry students, and we all went into house-building and construction around the time of the 1989 San Francisco earthquake.

Bea and I have three kids. We ended up living downstairs at her folks' place in Oakland, across the street from Highland Hospital. Later we moved to her grandma's old building in Oakland Chinatown, right across the street from Harrison Railroad Park. They used to have old trains there. We lived there for five years or so. Our two youngest children went to Lincoln Elementary School. The oldest went to Westlake Junior High, then McChesney Junior High, and then Oakland High.

My instructor from Laney College, Ozzo Morrow, was an African American man who was paralyzed in a wheelchair from a construction accident. Ozzo would come and hang out with us when we were working on building our house. He would joke with us. He wanted to form a partnership to do other construction jobs in the Oakland area. He and Bea used to sit there and supervise from their wheelchairs. A few years afterwards, Ozzo passed away as the result of health complications related to his disability. I was honored that he proposed to the Laney College administration that I be his replacement as instructor of Construction Technology.

COURTESY OF HARVEY DONG

Harvey Dong bringing students to Angel Island in 2009.

TEACHING & PUBLISHING

Right now, I'm still at Eastwind Books of Berkeley. Since 2002, I have also been lecturing a number of UCB classes: "Asian American History," "Asian American Communities and Race Relations," and "Chinese American History." In 2016, I received the Ronald Takaki Teaching Award for American Cultures from the college.

I would say that it's important for the next generation of activists, for people interested in making changes in society, to have a history from which they can base their work. When we were involved in the 1960s and 1970s, we were searching for information. Whatever we could find, especially when we went to the community and talked to a lot of elders, helped us develop the movement at that time. When we worked in San Francisco Chinatown, people were actually really happy to see us. They welcomed us. They warned us about repercussions from the establishment. And they wanted to incorporate what we were doing into what they were

doing—though their views tended to be more on the nationalistic side. So while we had differences with them, we also saw ourselves as a continuation.

Ideas and theories are really important to study and focus on. But what's even more important is the application of those theories—making contacts with people, listening to people, and learning to be good listeners; and being able to see yourself as a part of the community, as opposed to being an elitist.

In 1996, one of the first events we had at Eastwind Books was an Al Robles poetry event. In the store window, we had a photo display about the I-Hotel struggle. Little did we know, the owner of the property was the son of a San Francisco real estate developer. All of a sudden, we got an eviction notice! I suspect that the eviction had something to do with our support of the I-Hotel. I found a news clipping in which the owner's father had spoken at the San Francisco Board of Supervisors meetings, calling for the eviction of the I-Hotel tenants. It was very suspicious, but we didn't know for sure. We lost the original location, but in 1998 we were able to move into our current location around the corner.

Everything seemed to be going along well with sales. But then in 2007, the economic recession hit us, combined with the rise of Amazon's online bookstore. The bookstore took a big hit—a decline of more than 50 percent of its sales. We couldn't afford to pay for a full staff. We used to have two or three people working at the same time, but now we have a hard time surviving with even just one staff person.

It's been an uphill battle to survive, and we've had to be creative. We had to think on our feet. Right now, things are still shaky. We are trying to build a broad base of support in the community by having author readings and fundraisers. We have even published a few books under Eastwind Books of Berkeley. *A Village in the Fields* (2015) is a novel about the United Farm Workers of America by Patty Enrado. She was the daughter of farmworkers. It took her nine years to write the book. She sent out 65 requests to agents, but got rejected by all of them. So we worked with Patty at the recommendation of Evangeline Buell from the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS).

Another FANHS book we published was *Beyond Lumpia, Pansit, and Seven Manangs Wild* (2004), an anthology of Filipino American writers. Our other publications include *Stand Up: Archive Collection of the Bay Area Asian American Movement, 1968-1974* (2008), and the republishing of *The Forbidden Book: The Philippine-American War in Political Cartoons* (2004). We currently have two publications that are in the works, one about the TWLF Strike at SF State by Juanita Tamayo Lott and another about the TWLF Strike at UCB by strike veterans.

Eastwind Books is actually a location people can go to and find the broadest selection of Asian American fiction and non-fiction literature. We're in a unique situation because we are very urban, central, and near many different college campuses—UCB, SF State, Laney College, Berkeley City College, and Zaytuna College. Classes on Asian American and Asian Diaspora Studies at UCB, and Asian American Studies at SF State, order through us. Students are a big part of the customer base, but there are a lot of people from out of town—researchers from Japan—who just drop by, different people who are interested in Asian American and Asian diaspora studies, in ethnic studies, and fiction and non-fiction literature.

COURTESY OF HARVEY DONG

UC Berkeley joined with SF State professors and students to support the 2016 SF State hunger strike against cutbacks in Ethnic Studies. Left to right: Sonia Cristina Suárez (ES UCB Graduate Student), Abraham Ramirez (graduate student, UCB Ethnic Studies); Harvey Dong; Larry Solomon (Professor, SFSU Race and Resistance Studies); Ariko Ikehara (graduate student, UCB Ethnic Studies); Wesley Ueunten, (Professor, SFSU, Asia American Studies); Dan Gonzalez (Professor, SFSU, Asia American Studies).

PRESENT AND FUTURE

Today, I'm surprised, and not so surprised, that there's been an increased interest in the Asian American movement. It's a sign of big changes to come. Recently, there were two researchers from Okinawa—an internal colony of Japan. They wanted to look at how the Asian American movement related to African Americans, and how solidarity was built. All of what we have being trying to do—accumulating and building Asian American studies and making resistance central to that—is still relevant today: people changing the world, people wanting to change society, and people wanting to learn from the past.

What are the legacies of the past that are applicable to people today? There were social movements in the 1960s and 1970s, and even in the 1930s, that can be built upon for future generations. It is important to dialogue with each other and to be rooted in the community. I don't have a blueprint—only some experiences and mistakes over the past fifty years. But what has been tried before is full of lessons that we now have forever to learn from for the future.