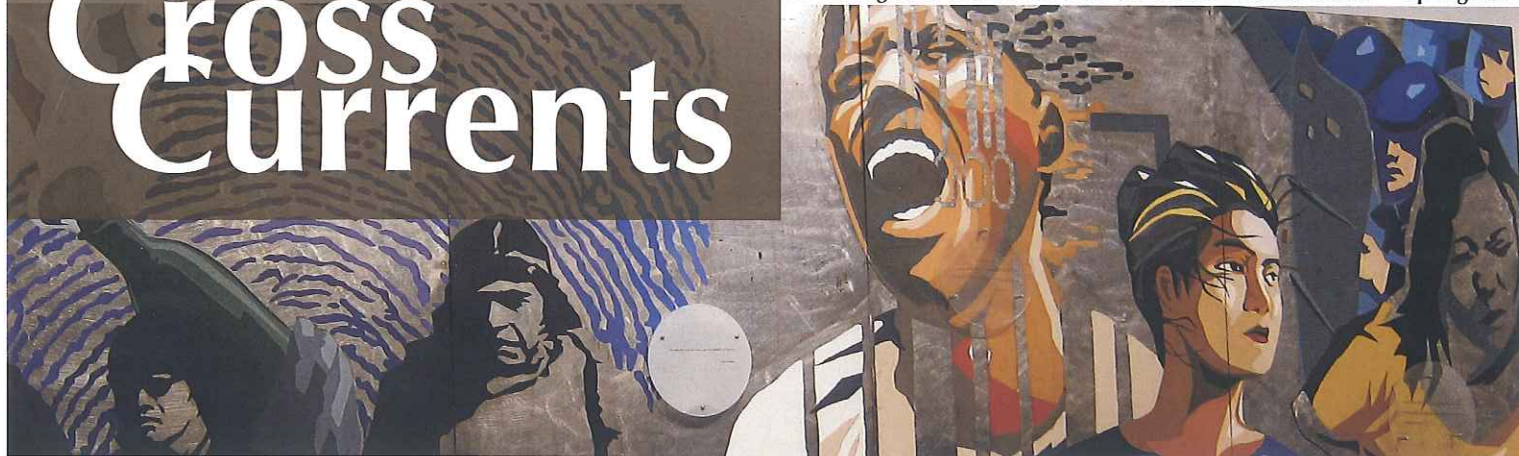


Cross Currents

Newsmagazine of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center Spring 2011



UCLA Asian American Studies Center Celebrates the Retirement of Long-Time *Amerasia Journal* Editor Russell C. Leong

On October 30, 2010, the UCLA Asian American Studies Center celebrated the retirement of long-time AASC Press and *Amerasia Journal* Senior Editor Russell C. Leong. Leong has been the Editor of *Amerasia Journal* since 1977, while also spearheading numerous projects for the Center and Press over the years, including many book titles and the *U.S.-China Media Brief*.

Over the past 33 years, Leong has helped to build *Amerasia Journal* into the pre-eminent journal in Asian American Studies, helping to shape the field by often covering topics and themes before they were explored anywhere else. Under Leong's direction, the journal gave voice not only to academics building Asian American Studies across the country and the world, but also to community figures, artists, and creative writers.

In a written statement delivered on his behalf at the event, former AASC Director and *Amerasia*'s founding publisher Don T. Nakanishi called his friend and colleague "the most influential and significant individual in the field of Asian American Studies" for his contributions. According to Nakanishi, "There are literally thousands of people around the country and throughout the world who have benefited from Russell's kindness, commitment, and mentorship."

The gathering featured speeches by Russell's friends and colleagues from all walks of life, as well as a short documentary piece on

Leong and his career produced by UCLA Center for EthnoCommunications Director Robert Nakamura. The event also marked the launching of the Russell C. Leong Literary E-Book Series, a twenty-first century venture conceived by him to showcase new and neglected Asian and Pacific writers of the Americas. Writers chosen for the Leong Literary E-Book Series will have their contributions designed and formatted in a downloaded E-Book format available through an "app" the Center is currently developing.

Money raised from the dim sum celebration for Leong will go to the technical development of the project and to awards for writers in poetry, fiction, and literary nonfiction over the next three years. For further information on this project or how to donate, please visit the *Amerasia Journal* blog (<http://amerasiajournal.org/blog>) and search for "Leong E-Book Series."

Since retiring from his post as Senior Editor of the UCLA AASC Press, Leong has been teaching in New York City at Hunter College as the first co-recipient of the Dr. Thomas Tam Fellowship. Leong will maintain an important role shaping future projects for the UCLA AASC Press, in addition to overseeing the Literary E-Book Series enterprise.

A special issue of *Amerasia Journal*, commemorating Leong's career as Editor as well as his many contributions to Asian American Studies and contemporary arts and letters is



Long-time *Amerasia Journal* Editor
Russell C. Leong

(Photo by Ann Chau)

in press at the time this issue of *CrossCurrents* is being completed. The special issue, guest edited by James Kyung-Jin Lee and King-Kok Cheung, includes analyses of Leong's work, creative pieces written about him, and tributes from China and Taiwan. For more information on the issue, please visit: <http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/aascpress/ajcollection.asp>.

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CrossCurrents, the newsmagazine of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, keeps readers informed of Center programs, including academic programs, research projects, publications, faculty activities, student achievements, and relevant university and community issues. *CrossCurrents* also covers important programs and projects related to Asian American Studies not directly sponsored by the Center.

CrossCurrents is published twice annually and distributed in the community by Center staff. For information on *CrossCurrents*, please contact the editor.



Director David K. Yoo (far right) holds a Los Angeles City Council Proclamation presented to the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. For story, see page 6. (Photo by Marjorie Lee)

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Join Us at the 2011 AAAS Conference in New Orleans

The UCLA Asian American Studies Center (AASC) staff will be on hand at the 2011 Association for Asian American Studies annual conference, held in New Orleans, Louisiana from May 18-21, 2011. The AASC will be hosting a special reception in honor of the fortieth anniversary of the founding of *Amerasia Journal*, the premier journal in the field of Asian American Studies. The event will be held at the following time and location:

***Amerasia Journal* Reception**

When: Friday, May 20, 2011, at 4:30 PM

Where: Bayside Room

The reception follows our roundtable, "*Amerasia Journal*—Past, Present Future: Publishing and Consuming Asian American Studies," held at 2:45 in Edgewood AB. Please join us!

Giving to the Center

If you are interested in supporting the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, please visit our homepage at <http://www.aasc.ucla.edu>, then click on the "Gift Giving" button at the top of the left column. Your donation, regardless of amount, has a powerful impact on the research and educational activities that take place in our Center. We greatly value and appreciate your help in making our work possible. Alumni and friends interested in making a gift to the Center by endowing a scholarship, supporting faculty research, making a planned gift or other gift, should contact:

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Director's Message



The earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear issues in Japan and the accompanying loss of life and devastation have been truly heartbreaking. It is a tragedy of epic proportions that continues to unfold. Living in earthquake territory of our own in Los

Angeles, the events in Japan have been sobering indeed. Individuals, organizations, and other units at UCLA have been involved in relief efforts of varying kinds, as have a number of our community-based partners in southern California.

On a much smaller scale, but with direct impact to UCLA, has been the furor over the "Asians in the Library" video recorded by a UCLA undergraduate that went viral on YouTube and in a matter of days, had over a million viewers. In the video, the student rants about Asian "hordes" who have invaded her university and whose bad manners include speaking on their cell phones in the library to the tune of "ching chong...."

The Asian American Studies Center and Department issued a statement (please see our website: <http://www.aasc.ucla.edu>) in which we emphasized larger issues of institutional climate and culture. UCLA is the only UC campus without a diversity requirement, and students have fought for this for over a decade and, while no one sees this as the solution, it would be a step in the right direction.

Amidst the unimaginable and the moronic, the Center has been active as ever. On the cover, we recognize the retirement of Senior Editor Russell Leong whose vision and creativity have guided *Amerasia Journal* for over three decades. The Center also recently helped host the screening of the Academy Award-nominated short documentary, *The Warriors of Qiugang*. In what we plan to be an annual event, the Center honored faculty, graduate, and undergraduate scholarship recipients. Exciting research is taking place on many fronts, continuing our efforts to bridge campus and community. Thank you for your on-going support of the Asian American Studies Center.

David K. Yoo
Director & Professor

UCLA Asian American Studies Center Co-Sponsors Screening of Oscar-Nominated Documentary, *The Warriors of Qiugang*

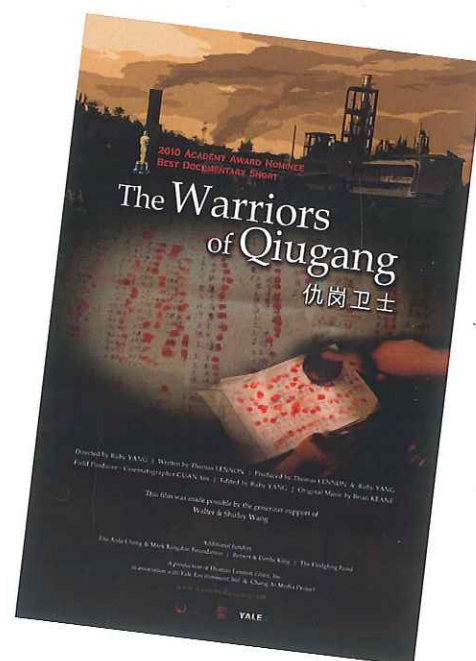
The UCLA Asian American Studies Center, which houses the Walter and Shirley Wang Endowed Chair in U.S./China Relations and Communications and the *U.S./China Media Brief*, along with the Center for Chinese Studies and the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, hosted a screening of the documentary, *The Warriors of Qiugang*. Produced by writer Thomas Lennon and director Ruby Yang, *The Warriors of Qiugang* was nominated for Best Documentary Short Film for the 2011 Academy Awards. The screening and film were generously supported by Walter and Shirley Wang.

The documentary is a timely account that depicts how the small Chinese village of Qiugang in Anhui province fought over a five-year period to close down a manufacturing plant that had negatively impacted the local environment. The film documents how food and crops in the rural region were affected by pollution from the factory, as well

as how alarming incidences of cancer in the local population were on the rise. The film follows the villagers as they advocated on their own behalf to local governments all the way up to Beijing, organizing rallies and gathering petitions. It is a testament to the grassroots efforts of the villagers to make their voices heard in protecting their community and the people who live in it.

To mark the premiere of *The Warriors of Qiugang*, the event featured a roundtable discussion, emceed by Professor Tritia Toyota of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, including Lennon, Yang, and Professor Yunxiang Yang, Co-Director of the Center for Chinese Studies. Of the film, Dr. Toyota said, "Qiugang's struggle to take back its ravaged environment from unscrupulous polluters is an inspirational story. It is my hope that the Academy's recognition of *Warriors* brings to light China's efforts in environmental protection as a model for the world."

For more information on *The Warriors of Qiugang*, visit the film's website: <http://www.warriorsofqiugang.com>.



AASC Honors Two Phenomenal Women

Helen Agcaoili Summers Brown

Helen Agcaoili Summers Brown passed away on January 25, 2011, at the age of 95. Known as “Auntie Helen” by many, Helen Brown was an early supporter of Asian American Studies at UCLA as a member of the interim steering committee that drafted the proposal for the Center in 1968. She is also the first known Filipina graduate of UCLA, receiving her degree in 1937.

Born to Trinidad Agcaoili and George Summers in Manila, Philippines in 1915, Brown and her family moved to Los Angeles after she graduated high school. After attending Pasadena City College, she enrolled at UCLA, where she would later earn Bachelor’s in Education and a Master’s in Social Work in 1939. Upon graduating from UCLA, Brown worked for the Los Angeles Unified School District, where she became instrumental in reaching out to Filipino American students and teachers for the school district. On her own, she accumulated an unrivaled collection of resources on Filipino American social history, making the archive available to students and teachers.

After retiring, Brown’s archives became the foundation for the Filipino American Reading Room and Library (PARRAL), which was housed in the Filipino Christian Church, opening to the public in 1985. Later known as the Filipino American Library, it was the first



Helen Agcaoili Summers Brown (center), with UCLA alumni Emily P. Lawsin and Augusto Espiritu and AASC SCP Coordinator Meg Malpaya Thornton (Photo by Emily P. Lawsin)

library of its kind in the United States and has been an invaluable resource to the community and scholars interested in the Filipino American experience. In 1993, Helen Brown was a founding member of the Los Angeles branch of the Filipino American National Historical Society.

Above and beyond what she did to advance the study of Filipino American history is the support “Auntie Helen” has provided generations of Filipino scholars, as a bridge between the community and UCLA. Her ties to her alma mater remained strong through her life, nurturing many students in Asian American Studies over the years. In a tribute to Helen Brown on her blog, Emily Lawsin, an alumna of the UCLA Asian American Studies Department (M.A., 2000) and currently a faculty member at the University of Michigan, writes,

“So many of us who research and teach Filipino American Studies owe a great deal to Auntie Helen. She was not only a teacher and librarian, she was like a Lola, a grandmother, who gave birth to several generations of Pin@y students and community activists.”

Helen Agcaoili Summers Brown is survived by her four sons and twelve grandchildren. A community tribute was held on March 19, 2011 at the Filipino Disciple Christian Church in Los Angeles.

Hisaye Yamamoto



Photo courtesy of J.K. Yamamoto

Hisaye Yamamoto—one of the leading lights of Asian American arts and letters—passed away on January 30, 2011, at the age 89. Born in 1921 in Redondo Beach, California, Hisaye Yamamoto was one of the pioneers of Asian American literature and among the first Japanese American writers to gain prominence. She is best-known for her short fic-

tion and memoirs, which powerfully and poignantly captured the experiences of Issei and Nisei, and the relationships between the two generations.

Literature and writing were always a part of Yamamoto’s life, as she began to write as a teenager for Japanese American newspapers. While Yamamoto and her family were interned in Poston, Arizona during World War II, she wrote a serialized mystery “Death Rides the Rails to Poston” for the internment camp newspaper. After the war, she returned to Los Angeles and gained recognition as a reporter and columnist for the *Los Angeles Tribune* from 1945-1948.

It was in the late 1940s and early 1950s that Yamamoto gained acclaim for her short fiction, with signature pieces such as “The Brown House” (1951) published in *Harper’s Bazaar* and “Yoneko’s Earthquake” was included in *Best American Short Stories: 1952*. UCLA Professor King-Kok Cheung has compared her work to some of the most accomplished American writers of the twentieth century, such as Katherine Mansfield, Flannery O’Connor, and Ann Petry. Her collection *Seventeen Syllables* won the 1988 Best Fiction award from the Association for Asian American Studies and she was granted Lifetime Achievement award by the Asian American Writers Workshop in 2010.

Hisaye Yamamoto has had a long association with Asian American Studies at UCLA, having participated in literary conferences held at UCLA and collaborating frequently with faculty and staff. While she published less frequently after the 1950s, some later pieces appeared in *Amerasia Journal*, such as “A Day in Little Tokyo” (1986) and “Pilgrimage” (1993). Of her immeasurable contributions to Asian American literature, Russell Leong writes, “It is Hisaye who has been the model for many of us—exploring new territories of gender, race, sexuality—even before the term ‘Asian American literature’ ever existed. ‘A Fire in Fontana,’ ‘Seventeen Syllables,’ and ‘High-Heeled Shoes’ are classics of American literature.”

Hisaye Yamamoto is survived by her five children, seven grandchildren, and two brothers. A public remembrance of Hisaye Yamamoto’s life and career was held on March 27, 2011 at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center in Los Angeles.

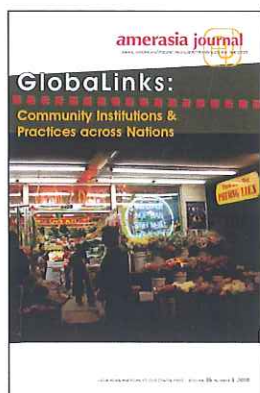
Amerasia Journal and AAPI Nexus Journal Release New Issues

The UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press announces the publication of *Amerasia Journal*'s latest issue, "GloboLinks: Community Institutions & Practices across Nations." Guest edited by Michel Laguerre and Joe Chung Fong, both of the Berkeley Center for Globalization and Information Technology, the special issue brings together research on globalized diasporic communities in the U.S. and Asia from scholars based throughout the Pacific Rim. The contributions to "GloboLinks" provide new insights on Asian American spaces and places from a wide array of intellectual perspectives, including history, cultural anthropology, urban studies, sociology, and political science.

"GloboLinks" recognizes that Asian and Pacific American communities are not limited by their institutional identities within local boundaries or defined by their political, cultural, or economic activities within national borders alone. *Amerasia* has worked with our guest editors to put together a selection of studies which examine social phenomena such as the self-political identity of communities, trans-Pacific youth, banking, voting and political campaigns, and community cultural development. "GloboLinks" urges scholars to rethink what key terms such as "globalization" and "transnationalism" mean in light of rapidly changing Asian and Pacific American communities.

A number of the articles present thorough historical studies and painstaking fieldwork in local communities to explain how they are connected to larger global frameworks. Other selections describe how local immigrant communities must negotiate larger social structures, be they economic or political.

For further information on *Amerasia Journal* and the current issue, please visit our website: <http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/aascpress/ajcollection.asp> or the *Amerasia Journal* blog: <http://amerasiajournal.org/blog>.



A API Nexus Journal recently released a special issue on mental health. This issue presents select papers from the first UCLA "State of AAPI Mental Health" conference held in 2010, a transdisciplinary gathering on mental health research, treatment, and practice. Professors Margaret J. Shih (UCLA), Gilbert C. Gee (UCLA), and Phillip D. Akutsu (CSU Sacramento) organized the conference and served as guest editors for this issue, which was released in conjunction with the second conference on April 22, 2011. (For more on the conference, see: <http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/aapimh/index.html>.)

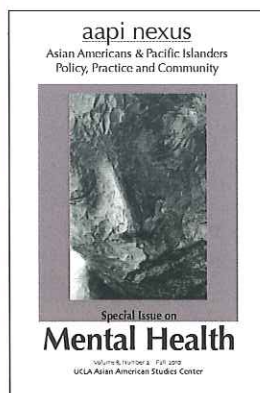
The goals of the two conferences and this special issue are to increase the understanding about mental health and service needs of AAPIs. The articles from this special issue highlight emerging research on the status, needs, and access for AAPIs, with topics ranging from current public policies, new research paradigms, to personal and cultural roadblocks in relation to mental health.

Contextualizing the challenges of addressing AAPI mental health, the editors' introduction illustrates how cultural, historical, and community diversity have led to underutilization of services and a lack of data. Marguerite Ro and Wendy Ho provide an overview of the California and Federal policies related to mental health. Frederick Leong and Zornitsa Kalibatseva introduce *comparative effectiveness research* (CER), which evaluates the efficacy of interventions. Phillip Akutsu and colleagues discuss client attrition with mental health services

among Asian American youth. Van Ta, *et al.* examine the correlation between cultural identity and depression among Native Hawaiian women. This issue also includes an article by Paul Ong and Albert Lee on Asian Americans and redistricting and how to form communities of interest, just in time for the 2010 redistricting plans for Congressional, Assembly, Senate, and Board of Equalization Districts.

For other information and subscription forms, visit: <http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/aascpress/nexuscollection.asp>.

—Christina Aujean Lee



AAPI Nexus Journal to Publish Special Issue with White House Initiative on Asian American and Pacific Islanders

The WHIAAPI gathered researchers, policy analysts, and community leaders from all over the nation in Washington, DC, from December 10-11, 2010, for the first-ever Research and Data Convening on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Participants decided that one major course of action would be to publish a special issue based on the knowledge, research, and recommendations shared at the convening. Through a joint effort between the UCLA AASC's *AAPI Nexus Journal* and the WHIAAPI, the journal will release such a volume in conjunction with the second anniversary of WHIAAPI in October 2011. The special issue will be guest edited by Professor Shirley Hune (University of Washington), Kiran Ahuja (WHIAAPI Executive Director), and Christina Lagdameo (WHIAAPI Deputy Director), in collaboration with the *AAPI Nexus* editorial staff.

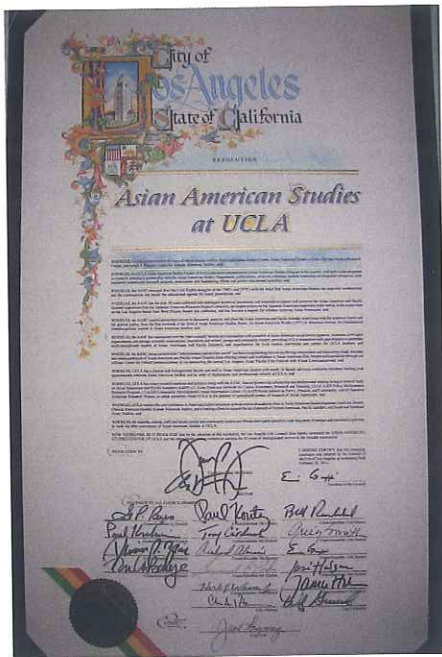
The WHIAAPI has identified five sectors—educational opportu-

nities, healthy communities, civil rights, economic development (which includes sustainable neighborhoods), and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders—on which to focus federal efforts in improving the quality of life for AAPIs. The goals for this special issue are threefold: (1) to demonstrate how researchers and practitioners are innovatively overcoming the barriers to identify the needs and disparities in our communities; (2) to provide information that can be used to address the needs of AAPI communities; and (3) to support data-driven policy changes and advocacy.

AAPI Nexus Journal is published by UCLA's Asian American Studies Center to promote applied scholarship on critical issues facing Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and the larger society through articles written by community leaders, practitioners and professionals, and engaged academic researchers.

—Melany De La Cruz-Viesca

Los Angeles City Council Honors the 40th Anniversary of UCLA Ethnic Studies Centers with Special Proclamation



On February 25, 2011, the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, along with the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies, American Indian Studies Center, and the Chicano Studies Research Center, participated in a special event at Los Angeles City Hall honoring forty years of Ethnic Studies at UCLA. Councilwoman Jan Perry presented the Ethnic Studies Centers with proclamations from the City Council, citing our outstanding service over that time.

In a special proclamation honoring Asian American Studies at UCLA, the Los Angeles City Council described the AASC as the “most comprehensive Asian American Studies Program in the country.” The citation noted the history of Ethnic Studies at UCLA going back to the civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The procla-

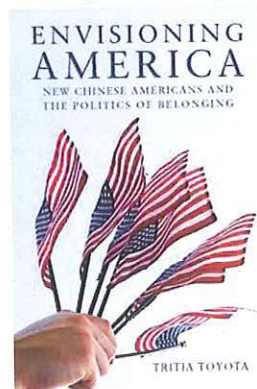
mation honored the AASC for “42 years of distinguished service to the broader community.”

In addition to recognizing UCLA’s groundbreaking academic programs in Asian American Studies, the City Council acknowledged the many research projects initiated by the AASC. The list included AASC Press publications *Amerasia Journal* and *AAPJ Nexus Journal*, along with the multimedia work of the Center for Ethno-Communications. Also, such research initiatives as the Asian American Network for Cancer Awareness, Research, and Training and the Asian American Pacific Islander Community Development Census Information Center were commended. As the proclamation states, “no other university rivals UCLA in the number of specialized centers for research on Asian Americans.”

Los Angeles Chinese American Museum Hosts Book Reading and Signing for Tritia Toyota

On November 15, 2010, the Chinese American Museum, located in downtown Los Angeles, hosted a special event honoring Tritia Toyota, Research Scholar for the UCLA Asian American Studies Center and Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Departments of Anthropology and Asian American Studies. At the well-attended, high-spirited event, Dr. Toyota read from and signed copies of her well-received book, *Envisioning America: New Chinese Americans and the Politics of Belonging*, published by Stanford University Press in 2010.

The critically acclaimed book presents a study of how the civic activities of recent Chinese immigrants in southern California suburbs have challenged widely-held notions that Asian Americans are politically apathetic. As noted Asian American writer Helen Zia has remarked, “Toyota’s insights on race, ethnicity, and movements for positive social change are essential to understanding American democracy and demographics.”



Envisioning America covers post-1965 Chinese American and Asian American political projects, detailing how naturalized Chinese immigrants became active civic and political players in southern California, particularly the San Gabriel Valley. Dr. Toyota suggests this is the case because they are racialized Americans, despite their educational backgrounds, their financial resources, and the transnational social networks in which they participate.

UCLA Korean American Alumni Association Honors *The Korea Times-Hankook Ilbo* Chair, Jerry Kang

In December 2010, the UCLA Korean American Alumni Association at its annual holiday party honored and recognized the establishment of *The Korea Times-Hankook Ilbo* Chair in Korean American Studies and its inaugural holder, Professor Jerry Kang of the UCLA Law School. Professor Kang and AASC Director, Professor David K. Yoo addressed the festive gathering in Koreatown, acknowledging the chair as a sign of the growth, generosity, and maturity of the Korean American community. Many Center staff and guests enjoyed the hospitality of the alumni association.

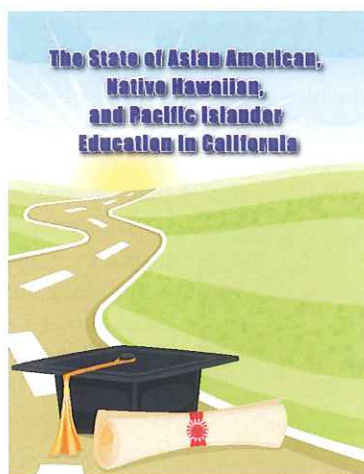


Prof. Jerry Kang, The Korea Times-Hankook Ilbo Chair

Through the generous endowment of the lead donor and UCLA alumnus Jae Min Chang, along with UCLA alumnus Mike Hong and Do Won Chang, *The Korea Times-Hankook Ilbo* Chair in Korean American Studies is the first endowed position to highlight the field of Korean American Studies, and is one of four endowed chairs in Asian American Studies at UCLA. Professor Kang is a leading scholar in legal studies on technology, with research comparing Internet laws in Korea and the United States.

UCLA AASC Participates in “The State of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Education in California” Study

In September 2010, the University of California Asian American and Pacific Islander Policy Multi-Campus Research Program (UC AAPI Policy MRP) Education Working Group released a report, titled “The State of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Education in California.” Prepared for California Assemblymember Mike Eng of the 49th District, the study included research undertaken by UCLA AASC faculty members Mitchell Chang, Lois Takahashi, former Director of



the UCLA Asian American Studies Center Don T. Nakanishi, and UCLA AASC Assistant Director Melany De La Cruz-Viesca.

The long-awaited study was released at a press conference at the Asian Pacific American Legal Center on December 2, 2010. The study focused on the accomplishments and challenges faced by Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Is-

lander (AANHPI) students in public K-12 and postsecondary education.

The study yielded four major findings. First, particular ethnic groups among AANHPI population had disproportionately high rates of dropping out of high school, which debunks the myth of Asian Americans as a monolithic “model minority.” Second, limited English proficiency and poverty impacted these dropout rates for certain AANHPI groups. Third, shared backgrounds between educators and students can enable a more culturally sensitive opportunities for teaching and learning. Fourth, financial aid is important, but not always sufficient, in encouraging the retention of AANHPI college students.

To view the report online, visit: <http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a49/pdf/API-Education-Report.pdf>.

Nationwide AAPI Consortium for Policy Research Established

At the first-ever research and data conference convened by the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI), four university-based centers agreed to establish a national consortium to support, and conduct applied social science and policy research on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

The founding institutions are the CUNY Asian American & Asian Research Institute (where the consortium will be housed), UC AAPI Policy Multi-Campus Research Program, UCLA Asian American Studies

Center, UMass-Boston Institute for Asian American Studies. Among the consortium's goals are to conduct research that draws on the disciplinary and regional expertise of faculty and research staff, to advance opportunities for students to conduct research, and to enhance public education and understanding of policy-relevant research. The consortium will assist in fulfilling the need of institutions for high-quality, professional researchers with expertise on Asian Americans. In pursuing these objectives, the consortium will strive to collabo-

rate with other stakeholders in and outside of academia and government.

The objectives for 2011 are to develop the consortium's organizational infrastructure, identify a fifth university-based center with expertise on Pacific Islanders and other centers that reflect geographic and population diversity, and work with the WHIAAPI to launch up to three projects with federal agencies. Professor Paul Ong has agreed to coordinate the consortium's activities, and can be reached at pmong@ucla.edu.

—Melany De La Cruz-Viesca

2010 Census Results Released

The day has finally arrived for those interested in 2010 Census data! The U.S. Census Bureau has 2010 Census Population Totals at: <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/data/>.

The Asian population was the fastest growing major race group between 2000 and 2010, increasing by 43 percent, the most of any major race group. For more information, see the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census Brief, “Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin”: <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf>.

Stay up to date on all Census activities!

Now available online:

* **VIDEO:** Accessible Census Data for Everyday Use

This video highlights two of the many innovative data tools created by the Census Bureau to help you better understand the results of the data, from which we learn more about the framework of our country.

Download: <http://2010.census.gov/media-center/census-data/data-tool.php>

* **MAP TOOL:** Mapping America: Every City, Every Block from *The New York Times*: <http://projects.nytimes.com/census/2010/explorer>

Note: *The New York Times'* use of Census data through this tool is interesting but of questionable value, since it utilizes the American Community

Survey (ACS) multi-year average. Using it to compare for population count changes since the 2000 Census is a practice that the Census Bureau discourages. For more on the ACS, please visit: <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>.

—Melany De La Cruz-Viesca



The AASC Features Current Research from Faculty Advisory Committee Members in New Research Colloquia Series

For the 2010-2011 academic year, the Asian American Studies Center has initiated a series of quarterly Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) colloquia. The aim of the colloquia is to feature the research of FAC members in a more informal conversation as part of the overall research profile of the Center. The casual presentations have described the current research of faculty, while cultivating a sense of camaraderie for all involved.

Thus far, two colloquia have occurred this year, one on China in fall quarter and one on India in winter quarter. The first panel highlighted exciting new work undertaken by faculty and staff in China, featuring Professor King-Kok Cheung (Asian American Studies and English), Professor C. Cindy Fan (Asian American Studies and Geography), *Amerasia* Editor Russell Leong, and Professor Min Zhou (Asian American Studies and Sociology). Professor Cheung's presentation was based on her observations of Chinese interests in Asian American Studies from her recent stint as the Director of the University of California Education Abroad Program in Beijing, while Professor Fan discussed the experience of leading UCLA students to the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai. Leong, who has edited the *U.S./China Media Brief*, spoke on labor in China, and Professor Zhou explored



Prof. Min Zhou



Prof. C. Cindy Fan

her latest research on representations of racial identity in China, focusing on the way African immigrants are perceived there.

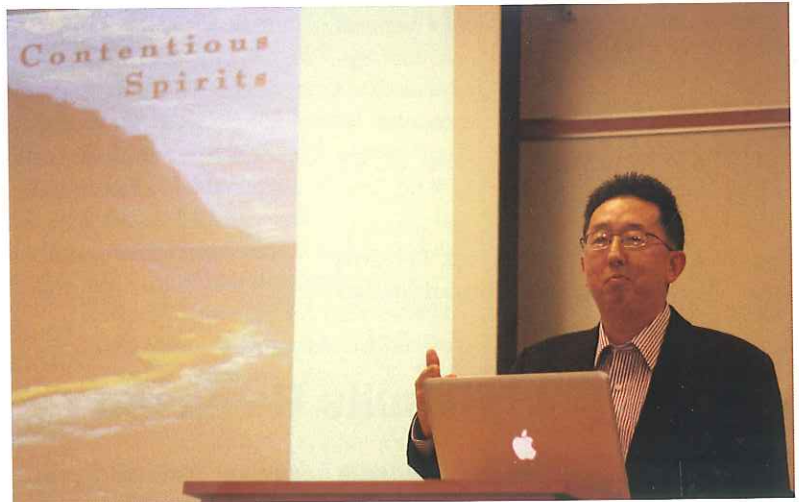
In winter quarter, the second colloquium explored faculty research that is taking place in India. Professor Vinit Mukhija (Asian American Studies and Urban Planning) and Professor Snehendu Kar (Asian American Studies and Public Health) described their ongoing and future projects. Professor Mukhija offered insights and background into urban development efforts in the Dharavi neighborhood of Mumbai, the setting for the film *Slumdog Millionaire*. Professor Kar described the various endeavors in which he is involved, from public health programs in India to social empowerment and photography projects locally.

The goal of the research presentations has been to build on the spirit of cooperation between the faculty and the members of the research center. The spring quarter FAC research colloquium is on photography as social commentary, and features Mary Uyematsu Kao (AASC Press Publications Coordinator), Professor Robert Nakamura (AASC Associate Director and Director of the UCLA Center for Ethno-Communications), and Professor Paul Ong (Asian American Studies and Urban Affairs).

AASC Director David K. Yoo Presents on His New Book, *Contentious Spirits*

On November 16, 2010, Professor David K. Yoo, Director of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, delivered his first research presentation since he assumed the post earlier in the year. The focus of Professor Yoo's talk and book signing was his recent work, *Contentious Spirits: Religion in Korean American History, 1903-1945*, published by Stanford University Press in 2010. Describing the contexts in which his research took place, Professor Yoo's presentation outlined how his book examines the impact of religious practice on racial representation and, at the same time, how racial identity shapes religious identity.

In *Contentious Spirits*, the first book wholly devoted to religion in Korean American history, Professor Yoo makes the bold and novel claim that religion is the most significant aspect in the social experiences of early Korean American communities. The book focuses on Korean immigrants and Korean Americans in Hawai'i and California in the first part of the twentieth century, and the role religion played in the racialization of Koreans after their migration to the United States. A leading scholar in the field of Asian American religious history, Professor Yoo expands on his earlier work in the acclaimed collection he edited, *New Spiritual Homes* (1999).



AASC Director, Professor David K. Yoo

Of *Contentious Spirits*, Michael Omi (University of California, Berkeley) writes, "*Contentious Spirits* not only gives us a moving historical account of Protestant Christianity and early Korean American community formation, but it also provides us with the conceptual categories by which we can situate and understand this history. David Yoo deftly reveals how religious institutions and practices were shaped by, and in turn helped to shape, the prevailing patterns of racialization, diasporic consciousness, and political resistance."

The event was sponsored by the Department of Asian American Studies, the Asian American Studies Center, the Department of History, and the Center for Religious Studies.

Photo Credit: Tam Nguyen

Latest Projects from EthnoCommunications

On March 15, 2011, EthnoCommunications hosted its winter quarter 2011 student film screenings, which presented a range of issues and diverse communities. Students Mihiri Tilakaratne and Stephanie Aguilar directed "I Take Refuge," which tells the stories of two Sri Lankan Americans who use their Buddhist temple to connect with their Sri Lankan Sinhala identity and as a place of refuge from prejudices they face. On the other hand, Jenni Nakamura and Dieu Huynh explore how a group of Christian Japanese Americans uses food to preserve culture and traditions of service that transcend generational boundaries in "The Heart of a Caring Cook."

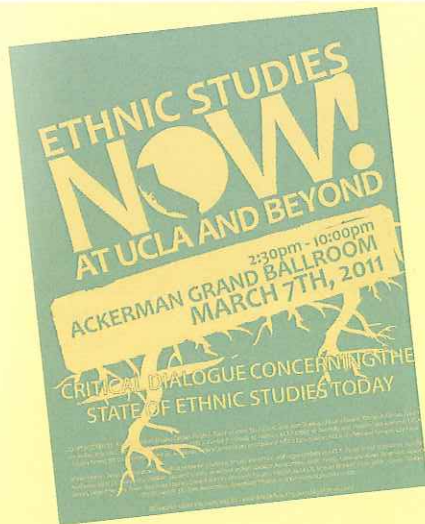
In "Journey," Asiroh Cham interviews Julie Thi Underhill, a mixed Cham-French American who searches to uncover her roots through filming Cham communities in Vietnam and Cambodia. Student Natasha Saelua explores how Tongan women serve elders as caregivers in "Tauhi Vaivai," while Melissa Jamero and Jermaine Abrantes document the legacy of Filipino laborers in the California Central Valley through the eyes of Herb Jamero and his property, where a Filipino labor camp once stood, in "Planting Seeds, Preserving History." Finally, Jessica Gin and Cheryl Yu directed "Made in P-Town," in which they interview artist-activist Johneric Concordia who grew up in Pilipinotown and now uses art activism to better his community.

With the Downtown Community Media Center, EthnoCommunications also produced "Conversations: Asian American



Arts and Activism," a DVD which profiles various Asian American artists, including those who emerged during the Asian American Movement to others who are involved with the contemporary hip-hop scene. The artists include Chris Iijima, Rene Tajima-Pena, Nobuko Miyamoto, Geologic, Bambu, Qris Yamashita, and Nomi. The DVD includes how these artists have advocated for their community needs through writing, art, music, film, and dance. Ethno is field-testing this DVD with various professors, community workers, and educators to gather feedback that will be used to develop a more comprehensive "Conversations 2" DVD in the future for educational purposes. Please visit: www.centerforethnocommunications.com for more information and to view examples of EthnoCommunications' student films and productions.

—Christina Aujean Lee



To address the crises currently facing Ethnic Studies programs across the nation, concerned students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members joined forces to put together Ethnic Studies Now! at UCLA and Beyond, an all-day symposium held on March 7, 2011. The UCLA Asian American Studies Center was one of the organizations sponsoring the timely and important student-organized event, along with the other UCLA Ethnic Studies centers, numerous student

Ethnic Studies Now! Symposium Tackles Current Crises in Higher Education

groups, and the UCLA Office of Diversity and Faculty Development.

The symposium comes at a time when Ethnic Studies programs and curricula have come under increasing attack. Three of the motivating factors behind the event were alarming decisions to weaken Ethnic Studies nationwide: the widely-reported HB 2281 anti-Ethnic Studies legislation in Arizona, the proposed termination of Asian and Asian American Studies at the California State University-Los Angeles, and the suspension of the Community Studies Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Ethnic Studies Now! tackled these issues from a number of vantage points, including panels on the state of Ethnic Studies and the diversity requirement at UCLA, as well as a screening of the documentary, *Mountains That Take Wing: Angela Davis and Yuri Kochiyama—A Conversation on Life, Struggles & Liberation*.

The panel on the status of Ethnic Studies in the academy made a positive case

for the importance of Ethnic Studies at UCLA and elsewhere, while debunking assumptions and misconceptions about the field. The discussion featured Professor Grace Hong, UCLA Asian American Studies Department; Professor Cheryl Harris of the UCLA School of Law; Professor Glenn Omatsu of California State University-Northridge; Naazneen Diwan, organizer for Todos Somos Arizona and graduate student in Women's Studies at UCLA; and Eric Sanchez, an alumnus of the UCLA American Indian Students Association. One important point that the panelists emphasized was that the hostility towards Ethnic Studies only underscores their power and importance.

The event was capped off by a screening of *Mountains That Take Wing*, which features two trailblazers in the Ethnic Studies movements and the fight for human rights, Angela Davis and Yuri Kochiyama. Filmmakers C.A. Griffith and H.L.T. Quan were on hand for a Q&A session to discuss their film.

The Center Celebrates Faculty, Graduate, and Undergraduate Fellowship and Scholarship Recipients

On February 15, 2011, the UCLA Asian American Studies Center and the Department of Asian American Studies held the first-ever Awards Celebration to honor undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty who earned prizes, scholarships, internships, and grants over the past year. As AASC Director Professor David K. Yoo announced at the special event, over \$81,000 in awards were distributed to 36 students, thanks to the generous donors and supporters of student and faculty research in Asian American Studies.

Announcing the awards at the celebration were faculty members from the Asian American Studies Department. Professor Jinqi Ling presented the graduate student recipients, while Professor Lucy Burns introduced the undergraduate honorees.

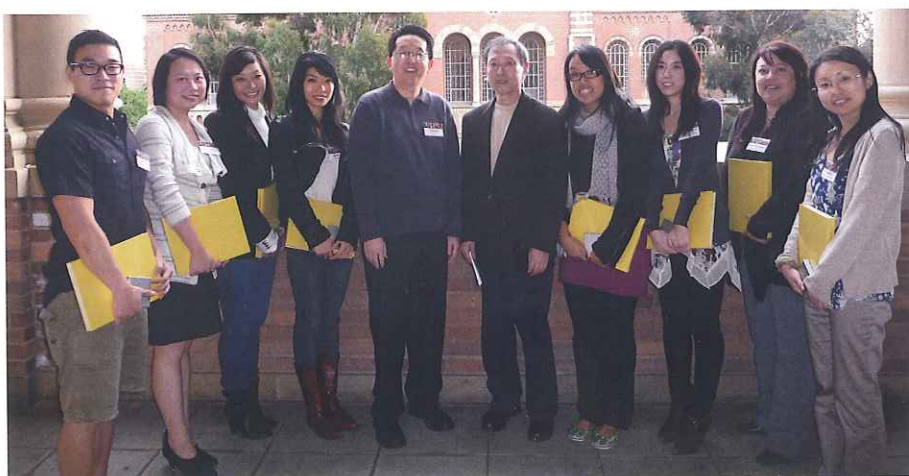
According to Meg Malpaya Thornton, AASC Student and Community Projects Coordinator, the new event was created to honor and recognize faculty, undergraduates, and graduate students for their excellent research projects and papers. The awards ceremony is envisioned as an opportunity to allow the awardees to celebrate their accomplishments with family and friends.

In addition, the celebration spotlights the wonderful and generous support of the donors who helped to make the research fellowships and awards possible. As Thornton explains, the Center seeks to encourage a culture of giving that the students can be part of, now and in the future: "We want to cultivate among students the spirit of philanthropy and have them donate back to our endowment programs so that we can continue to give these awards."

With the success of this year's inaugural awards celebration, the AASC is looking forward to making this event one that is held annually. For a complete list of awards, recipients, and their projects, please see the previous issue of *CrossCurrents* from Fall 2010, which is available online at <http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/cm/default.asp>. If you are interested in applying for scholarships or would like more information about contributing to the Center's scholarships and awards program, please contact Meg Thornton at meg@ucla.edu.



Faculty Research Grant awardee Professor May C. Wang of Public Health (center), with Director David K. Yoo (left) and Associate Director Robert Nakamura (right)



Graduate student honorees (left to right): Albert Joon Lee, Lin Chen, Jennifer Doane, Mila Zuo, Professor David K. Yoo, Professor Jinqi Ling, May Yang Vang, Wendsor Yamashita, Susan Nakaoaka, Marie Sato



Undergraduate awardees (left to right): Alvin Ho, Leaniva Tuala, Van Thi Huynh, Chi Ching Gabriella So, Luxi Chen, Professor Lucy Burns, Professor David K. Yoo, Lucia Lin, Patrick Nguyen, Kelly Osajima, Jennifer Nakamura, Sara Seto, Amy Kapree Lieu

All photos from Awards Celebration by Marjorie Lee

Asian American Studies Student and Alumni Achievements

Alumni Spotlight Mark Pulido

The UCLA Asian American Studies Center congratulates alumnus Mark Pulido, '93 on his recent election to the Cerritos, California City Council. Pulido's success in the political arena should come as no surprise, considering that he was UCLA's first Filipino American student-body president, serving during the 1992-93



Courtesy of markpulido.com

school year. Graduating as a double major in Asian American Studies and History, Pulido has been a strong supporter of Asian American Studies.

Pulido has had a distinguished career serving the community upon graduating from UCLA and completing a Master's in Public Policy at the University of Chicago. He has worked at various levels of local and state government, working as a legislative advisor to various California State Assembly members and having been on the ABC (Artesia-Bloomfield-Carmenita) Unified School District Board from 2001-2011, which included a stint as Board President.

The top vote-getter in the 2010 election, Pulido will no doubt be putting his background in Asian American Studies to good use, considering that Cerritos is a diverse, multiethnic city that includes large populations of Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and South Asian Americans. As Pulido told the Filipino American newspaper, *Asian Journal*, "We made history in Cerritos. This shows that it can be done anywhere. I want all the Fil-Ams here and across the country know that political empowerment is attainable."

Alumni Spotlight Kristina Wong

It's safe to say that few graduates of Asian American Studies at UCLA have followed the career path of Kristina Wong. Since graduating from UCLA with a major in English and World Arts and Culture and a minor in Asian American Studies, Wong has become an acclaimed performance artist and comedienne who also happens to be an educator and activist at the same time.

Wong has put all her talents to good use on recently released educational DVD based on her one-woman show "Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," which tackles the difficult subject matter of the disproportionately high rates of suicide and depression among Asian American women. Wong's witty, funny, and thoughtful work has been greeted by sold-out audiences nationwide during its four-year run, garnering rave reviews from local and national media. As the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* described "Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest,"

"Wong's one person show injects her trademark irreverent humor into a work of unblinking social commentary."

For more information on the DVD, which includes a discussion guide and reading list compiled by Wong, visit: <http://flyingwong.com>. You can also sample Wong's work at her website: <http://www.kristinawong.com/>.



Courtesy of flyingwong.com

Courtesy of WHIAAPI



Student Spotlight Sefa Aina

Current UCLA Asian American Studies graduate student and alumnus Sefa Aina ('97) was appointed to the White House Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. A former staff member at the Asian American Studies Center, Aina is the Director of the Asian American Resource Center and Associate Dean of Students at Pomona College.

As one of twenty members chosen from a pool of over 2,500 applicants, Aina's selection to the Commission is a testament to his tireless efforts. The Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders was reestablished by President Barack Obama on October 14, 2009, charged with mission of improving "the quality of life and opportunities for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders by facilitating increased access to and participation in federal programs where they remain underserved."

Aina has left an important mark on Asian American and Pacific Islander communities at UCLA, as an Assistant Coordinator for Student and Community Projects at the Center. He also helped to found community organizations focusing on education, such as the peer mentoring program Pacific Islander Education and Retention.

In Fall 2010, Aina returned to his alma mater to pursue a Master's in Asian American Studies. His current research follows his community work, focusing on the challenges faced by Samoan American youth in education.



Upcoming Events

May 2, 2011
4:30 PM -
6:00 PM

Writing Across Fences

A talk by LUNG YING-TAI

UCLA Fowler Museum

Separated by more than six decades of hostility and suspicion, and divided by divergent social and political systems, China and Taiwan have developed significant differences culturally. As an author who writes for both sides of the Straits, celebrated Taiwanese writer, and public intellectual Lung Ying-tai reveals how linguistic as well as ideological understanding and misunderstanding occur across the fences.

Sponsored by the UCLA Center for Chinese Studies and co-sponsored by the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. RSVP at china@international.ucla.edu.

May 2, 2011

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Asian American Studies Department
 Faculty Colloquia, Spring 2011

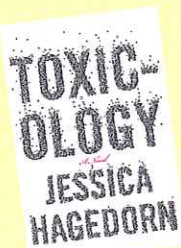
Readings by Jessica Hagedorn and R. Zamora Linmark

Royce Hall, Room 314

Please join the UCLA Asian American Studies Department for a book talk by acclaimed authors Jessica Hagedorn and R. Zamora Linmark. Jessica Hagedorn will be reading

from her novel, *Toxicology*, and R. Zamora Linmark will present from his new book, *Leche*.

The event is free and open to the public.



May 7, 2011

10:00 AM -

6:00 PM

8 + 1: A Symposium

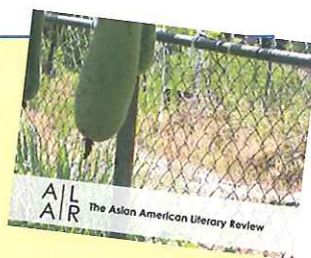
Voices from *The Asian American Literary Review*

Japanese American National Museum

A day-long celebration of nine of today's most accomplished and exciting Asian American writers. Free to the public.

FEATURING: Joy Kogawa • R. Zamora Linmark • Ray Hsu • Viet Nguyen • Brian Ascalon Roley • Reese Okyong Kwon • Kip Fulbeck • Hiromi Itō & translator Jeffrey Angles • Rishi Reddi

The event is organized by *The Asian American Literary Review*, with support from the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. For information, contact: editors@aalmag.org.



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