

Ad Hoc Committee for an Asian Center
Summary of June 4, 1972 Meeting

1. Bill Kochiyama, Temporary Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, began the meeting at 3:00 p.m. with a presentation on the background of how the idea for an Asian Center originated. He spoke of the closing of the storefront, "Chickens Come Home to Roost," in June of last year and the vacuum left when there was no longer a place for young people to meet and talk, for organizations to hold meetings, and for programs to be run for and by Asians. Those who felt this vacuum began to work on the idea of an Asian Center. Five consecutive meetings have been called. The number of people attending has steadily increased from the 7 who first met at a residence in Hoboken to 10 and 20 respectively at the Japanese American United Church of Christ and St. Christopher's Church in Chinatown. It was decided to hold a community-wide meeting inviting Asians of Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, East Indian, Korean, and Polynesian background to present the idea and to enlist support.
2. Bill also made a presentation on the possible programs that could be run from such a center, including educational, cultural, recreational types as well as counseling and referral services, Asian community theatre, mixed media workshops and later more ambitious programs such as a day care center and a food coop. He emphasized the existing talent and capabilities in the Asian community to carry out these programs.
3. George Naito, a member of the Ad Hoc Committee and also working for the City's Urban Renewal Program, made a report on the type of space sought and the location. Tentatively, space is being considered in Manhattan on the west side in the area between 14 Street and 59th Street. A minimum figure in terms of expenses would be \$250 which would include rent, utilities, and maintenance. Ideas being explored include possible purchase, rental of two floors in an existing building, purchase or rental from the City for a nominal fee.
4. A question from the floor was asked about how many organizations were involved thus far. Those named included the Chinatown Health Clinic, Asian Coalition, Basement Workshop, Asian Americans for Action. It was pointed out that even in Chinatown a central information place was lacking. The need for a center seems to be more urgent in the Japanese community.
5. Another question regarding the organizations represented today revealed that they were predominantly Japanese :JACL, JAA, Japanese American United Church of Christ, Triple A. It was also brought out that this was a particularly busy weekend for many other groups including those in Chinatown which would explain their absence.
6. Bun Yoshikami reported on the financing of such a center. Independent financing was a possibility among those interested in the center. It would not be difficult to file for incorporation as a non-profit organization and thus allow contributions to be tax deductible. Pledges could be sought on a monthly basis from people of all ages be it \$1 or \$50. It was pointed out that young people are able to raise money as the case with Yellow Pearl where \$2,500 was raised through benefits. Bun also pointed out that grants are given to those projects which have begun and which show evidence of

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interest and support. By beginning the project you are in a better position to ask for grant money in many cases.

7. Chris Iijima spoke of the need for other than financial contributions that of time--to go to meetings, to research locations, to call people, to widen the participation, then to set up activities. It was also brought out that programs already existing could be brought into such a center, as the media group in Chinatown.
8. The idea of an Asian Center combined with a home for the aged was brought up for discussion. The JAACL and JAA and other organizations are working on such a project. It was brought out that the center being proposed would not in any way compete with plans being laid by other organizations. This center is a small beginning to serve immediate needs.
9. Tak Iijima made a motion that a permanent committee be set up including the Ad Hoc Committee and any new volunteers. A special effort would be made to invite others not attending today's meeting to join. The motion was passed. Volunteers: Taxi Wada, Yoshio Kishi, Lori Kitazono, Eugenia Morita.
10. The meeting of this permanent committee was set for Wednesday, June 7 at 7:30 at St. Christopher's Church, 48 Henry St.