

UCLA

Asian American
Studies Center

Reclaiming Our Narrative: Presenting *Foundations and Futures* Asian American and Pacific Islander Multimedia Textbook



FOUNDATIONS and FUTURES



May 9, 2026

10 AM - 3 PM

UCLA Luskin Conference Center

Directors' Message



Dr. Karen Umemoto



Dr. Kelly Fong

Today's launch of *Foundations and Futures: Asian American and Pacific Islander Multimedia Textbook* is an historic moment made possible by nearly 60 years of Ethnic Studies scholarship and centuries of ancestral knowledge. It represents the intellectual handiwork of scholars and writers along with community members on the front lines of historic movements. Over 100 authors wrote and curated over 50 chapters so that we can learn from our past and share our histories with the next generation. This project would not have been possible without the labor of love of hundreds who have taken part in its production so that our stories are seen. This is what we celebrate today.

These histories are more relevant now than ever. The stories of war, migration, colonization and empire, community building, sovereignty, and intergenerational trauma and healing continue to unfold everyday across the diaspora. We highlight experiences of resistance, resilience, joy, and the many forms of creative expression to nurture hope and to remind ourselves that our ancestors found ways to survive and thrive in the face of power and so can we. We hope that each of you will find reflections of your family and community in these narratives that nurture empathy, hope, and the courage to act.

We ask everyone to share *Foundations and Futures* with those you know—teachers, students, librarians, civic leaders, influencers, creatives, and others. By lifting our collective stories, we can shift the narrative of this country, center new perspectives, and work across the widening divides to create a more humane and just society for all.

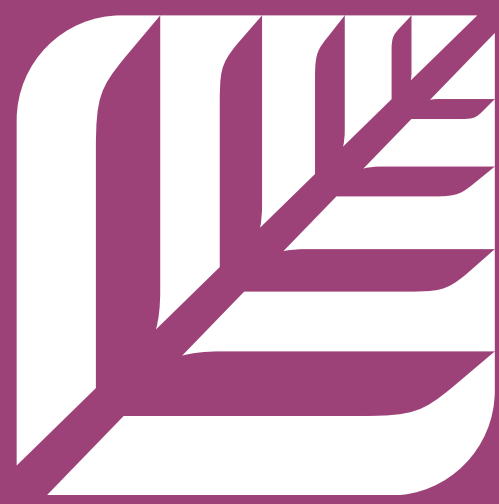
Six years in the making, this project would not have been possible without support from the Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, especially Asms. Al Muratsuchi, Mike Fong, and Phil Ting, for funding from the State of California. We also acknowledge the many philanthropic foundations and grassroots donors who contributed additional funds that were needed to complete the textbook. And please take a look at the “About Us” page for the long list crediting our community of staff, contributors, advisors, partners, and supporters who made *Foundations and Futures* possible.

We are excited to celebrate this major milestone with you. Let's continue to dream of ways to work together to bring *Foundations and Futures* into homes and classrooms around the country. We are also launching a new campaign to market the textbook to schools, provide teacher training, and sustain and enhance the textbook as a living document. Thank you in advance for your continued support!

In community,

Kelly Fong, Ph.D.
Karen Umemoto, Ph.D.
Co-Editors and Co-Directors of *Foundations and Futures*





FOUNDATIONS and FUTURES

An Overview

Foundations and Futures is a groundbreaking, free multimedia textbook that is rewriting American history to include the full power and complexity of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) stories. Created by the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, it is the most comprehensive collection of AAPI histories and experiences ever made available online for students, educators, and the general public.

Featuring 50 chapters written by more than 100 leading scholars, journalists, organizers, and community historians, the textbook spans over 20 AAPI ethnic communities across the United States, its territories, and the Pacific. With more than 1,500 videos, photographs, audio clips, poems, and interviews, plus over 200 ready-to-use lesson plans for high school and college learners, *Foundations and Futures* turns classrooms into laboratories of empathy, critical thinking, and social change.

This is more than a textbook; it is a national movement to transform how America sees itself. From Japanese American incarceration to Pacific Islander diasporas, from South Asian community organizing to the cultural contributions of Southeast Asian refugees, *Foundations and Futures* reveals how AAPI communities have always shaped the United States—and why their stories are essential to a more just, inclusive democracy.

Built on an innovative, Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant digital platform, the project offers translation tools, reading supports, and customizable display features to ensure access for learners of all abilities. As states across the country adopt Ethnic Studies and AAPI curriculum requirements, *Foundations and Futures* gives schools, districts, and communities a powerful, scholar-informed, classroom-tested resource—free, online, and ready to use.

Schedule



9:00 AM - 10:00 AM — Refreshments & Registration

Emcees: Arlene Inouye and Christian-Joseph Macahilig

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 10:00 AM | Performance
UCLA Naya Zamaana |
| 10:15 AM | Welcoming Remarks
Karen Umemoto |
| 10:25 AM | Legislator Remarks
California Asian American and Pacific Islander Legislative
Caucus (AAPILC) Chair & Assemblymember Mike Fong,
Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi |
| 10:30 AM | Unveiling the Textbook
Outreach Co-Coordinator Arlene Inouye and
Christian-Joseph Macahilig |
| 10:45 AM | Voices from the Classroom |
| 10:50 AM | The Power of Story: We are Legacy Bearers
Conversation with Akemi Kochiyama-Ladson, Helen Zia,
& Theodore S. Gonzalves Moderated by Thuy Vo Dang |
| 11:35 AM | Storytelling Pair-and-Share
Virginia Nguyễn |

Schedule



11:55 AM - 1:00 PM — Lunch

1:00 PM **Performance**
Kyodo Taiko at UCLA

1:10 PM **Virtual Remarks**
Chancellor Julio Frenk

1:15 PM - 2:00 PM

Introduction by David Yoo (Vice Provost, Institute of American Cultures)

Keynote by Dr. Maya Soetoro

Luskin Lecture for Thought Leadership

2:00 PM **Virtual Remarks**
Congressional Representatives Judy Chu & Ted Lieu

2:10 PM **Looking Ahead**

2:25 PM **Performance**
Tasi of One Man Band

2:30 PM **Community Time**



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Maya Soetoro

Luskin Lecture for Thought Leadership

Dr. Maya Soetoro is a Faculty Specialist in the College of Social Sciences at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. She also serves as the University's liaison to the Obama Foundation and works with the Foundation's Leaders program and Global Girls Alliance on initiatives in Hawai'i and the Asia-Pacific region. Previously, she was the Director of the Matsunaga Institute for Peace at the University of Hawai'i, where, in addition to leading outreach and development initiatives, she also taught Leadership for Social Change, Peace Movements, Peace Education, and Conflict Management.



**Award-winning educator
& leader in global peace
education**

For many years, she worked at the College of Education at the University, where she taught Multicultural Education, Social Studies Methods, and Peace Education at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Maya sits on several voluntary boards and is the Co-Founder of the non-profits Ceeds of Peace, The Peace Studio, and The Institute for Climate and Peace.



The Power of Story: We Are Legacy Bearers



PANELIST

Co-director of the Yuri Kochiyama Solidarity Project (YKSP)

Akemi Kochiyama-Ladson is a writer, scholar-activist and proud third generation Harlemitte. Akemi's writing and work is focused on understanding our shared histories and struggles and building solidarity across communities. The granddaughter of human rights activist, Yuri Kochiyama, Akemi is co-editor of *Passing It On: A Memoir* by Yuri Kochiyama and co-director of the Yuri Kochiyama Solidarity Project (YKSP) where she leads the YKSP Freedom School and education programs centered in history, culture and archives. The mission of the Yuri Kochiyama Solidarity Project (YKSP) is to strengthen and increase solidarity and opportunities to build collective consciousness and power in support of social justice and human rights for vulnerable and marginalized communities.



PANELIST

Textbook contributor for "Fighting Anti-Asian Violence: Justice for Vincent Chin"

Helen Zia is a writer and activist. The daughter of immigrants from China, Helen was born and raised in New Jersey. For more than four decades, she's been outspoken about human rights across race, gender, orientation, and other identifiers. In 2023 she launched the Vincent Chin Institute to support AAPI communities against hate through multiracial solidarity to continue the 40-year Asian American civil rights effort to obtain justice for Vincent Chin. Her latest book, *Last Boat out of Shanghai: The Epic Story of the Chinese who Fled Mao's Revolution*, was an NPR Best Book and finalist for a PEN America prize. Her book, *Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People* chronicles the civil rights struggles of Asian Americans in the contemporary U.S., while *My Country Versus Me* chronicled the ordeal of physicist Wen Ho Lee, who was falsely accused by the FBI of being a spy. In 2010, she was a witness in the case for marriage equality that went to the Supreme Court. A graduate of Princeton University's first coeducational class, Helen quit medical school to become a community organizer, construction laborer and autoworker, after which she discovered her life's work as a writer.

The Power of Story: We Are Legacy Bearers



PANELIST

Textbook contributor
for “Filipinx American
Histories”

Theodore S. Gonzalves, Ph.D., is a scholar of comparative cultural studies, curator at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History, and former interim director of the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center. His work brings together scholarship, cultural practice, and community engagement, with a focus on Asian American and diasporic histories. He has held teaching positions in the United States, Spain, and the Philippines, and was a tenured professor at both the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, where he served as chair of the Department of American Studies. Gonzalves is the author and editor of several books, including *Stage Presence: Conversations with Filipino American Performing Artists* (2007), *The Day the Dancers Stayed* (2009), *Carlos Villa and the Integrity of Spaces* (2011), and *Filipinos in Hawai‘i* (2011, with Roderick N. Labrador). His most recent book, *Smithsonian Asian Pacific American History, Art, and Culture in 101 Objects* (2023), received the Smithsonian Secretary’s Research Prize.



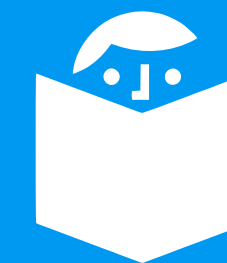
MODERATOR

Textbook contributor
for “Vietnamese
American Experiences”

Thuy Vo Dang (she/her/hers) is an Assistant Professor of Information Studies and Asian American Studies at UCLA where she co-directs the Community Archives Lab. She holds a Ph.D. in Ethnic Studies from the University of California, San Diego and a B.A. in English and Asian American Studies from Scripps College. Her previous role was Curator for the UCI Libraries Southeast Asian Archive and Research Librarian for Asian American Studies. With research and teaching expertise in Southeast Asian diaspora, ethnic studies, oral history, and community archives, Thuy brings an interdisciplinary approach to co-creating digital humanities and archival documentation projects with educators and community-based organizations. Her current research and community engagement work center “refugee archival praxis” in the Vietnamese diaspora. She is coauthor of the books *A People’s Guide to Orange County* (2022) and *Vietnamese in Orange County* (2015) and has published her research in *Amerasia Journal*, *AAPI Nexus*, *Journal of Critical Archival Studies*, *Health Promotion Practice*, *History Now*, *Ethnic Studies in Academic and Research Libraries*, and *Toward a Framework for Vietnamese American Studies*. Thuy is also a long time board member of Arts Orange County and the Vietnamese American Arts & Letters Association.



Storytelling Pair-and-Share



FACILITATOR

**Co-Founder & Director
of Educate to Empower**

Virginia Nguyễn is a 20+ year history educator, curriculum writer, and speaker in Irvine, CA, and a proud daughter of Vietnamese refugees. As Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director of Educate to Empower, a PBS SoCal Local Hero recognized community organization rooted in love, joy, and justice, she has spent her career cultivating spaces where students and communities can learn, heal, and rise together. She served as a curriculum writer for the Vietnamese American chapter of *Foundations and Futures*, bringing community memory, lived experience, and *tâm sự* (sharing deeply from the heart) to one of the most comprehensive AAPI educational resources ever created. Her work is grounded in the belief that education carries the promise to liberate us all: to remember where we come from, to cultivate belonging, and to embrace the histories that guide us forward.

Emcees



Arlene Inouye is currently the UCLA Asian American Studies Center *Foundation and Futures* Multimedia Textbook Outreach Co-Coordinator, after retiring from LAUSD (Los Angeles Unified School District) as a Speech Therapist and UTLA (United Teachers Los Angeles) Officer. She was part of the team that led UTLA through a union transformation for the “Schools LA Students Deserve” that centered on social justice and authentic community relationships. Arlene was born and raised in Los Angeles and attended Los Angeles Unified Schools along with three generations of family members. Her grandparents emigrated from Japan to Boyle Heights and Stockton, and her family was incarcerated during World War II. In addition to coordinating outreach efforts with *Foundations and Futures*, Arlene has Co-Directed her first documentary “We Build Power”, and does voluntary labor organizing in Asia.



Christian-Joseph Macahilig is an Outreach Co-Coordinator for *Foundations and Futures* through the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. Prior to joining the team, Christian taught middle school Social Studies in his hometown of New York City. His work in education is shaped not only by his time in the classroom, but also by his early involvement in Filipinx collegiate organizations, where he helped plan and facilitate conferences centered on leadership development, identity, and community-building. Since then, he has worked with educators, community partners, and cultural institutions to expand the presence of Asian American and Pacific Islander histories in classrooms and public learning spaces.

 **Connect us with at textbookoutreach@aasc.ucla.edu**

California Assemblymembers



California Assemblymember Mike Fong represents the 49th Assembly District, which includes portions of the San Gabriel Valley. His priorities include reducing homelessness, protecting the environment, expanding access to higher education, and helping businesses create jobs. He serves as Chair of the Assembly Higher Education Committee and Chair of the Asian American and Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus. Prior to his election to the Assembly, Mike served as an elected trustee on the board of the Los Angeles Community College District. Fong graduated from CSUN with a Master of Public Administration in Public Sector Management & Leadership and from UCLA with a B.S. in Psychobiology and a minor in Education. He is an avid fan of Dodger Baseball and UCLA athletics.



California Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi represents the 66th Assembly District, located in the Los Angeles South Bay. A longtime South Bay resident, husband, and father, and a former Deputy Attorney General with the California Department of Justice and a former Torrance School Board member, Muratsuchi's priorities are jobs, education, health care, the environment, public safety, and veterans. An educator, former Torrance School Board president, and champion for public education, Muratsuchi currently serves as Chair of the Assembly Education Committee and previously served as Chair of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Education. He is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, and the UCLA School of Law. Muratsuchi has taught at El Camino Community College and UCLA, and he is a proud member of the American Federation of Teachers, Local 1388.



Congressional Representatives



Congressional Representative Judy Chu was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in July 2009. She represents the 28th Congressional District, including Pasadena and the west San Gabriel Valley of Southern California. Rep. Chu serves on the House Ways and Means Committee and on the Subcommittees on Health, Worker and Family Support, and Oversight. She also serves on the House Budget Committee. Chu served on the Monterey Park City Council, where she was Mayor three times, then in the State Assembly and on California's State Board of Equalization. In 2009, she became the first Chinese American woman elected to Congress. Earlier in her career, she helped to establish Asian American Studies at UCLA, teaching one of the first courses on Asian American women.



Congressional Representative Ted W. Lieu represents California's 36th Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives. Ted is serving in his sixth term in Congress and sits on the House Judiciary Committee and Foreign Affairs Committee. He was elected by his colleagues to serve as Vice Chair of the Democratic Caucus, making him the highest ranking Asian American to have ever served in House Leadership. Ted is a veteran, having served on active duty and then in the Reserves for the Air Force. He retired in 2021 with the rank of Colonel.



Performers



Naya Zamaana is UCLA's Premier South Asian a cappella team. The team was created in 2006 to celebrate the diversity of talent among South Asian youth in America. Our singers come from a variety of diverse musical backgrounds, from South Asian styles such as Hindustani and Carnatic music to Western styles such as pop, R&B, and rock. Our arrangements aspire to exemplify the distinct fusion of these cultures by blending both classical and contemporary South Asian music with modern Western music to create the unique blend that makes up our signature sound. Naya Zamaana's repertoire strives to represent the diverse cultures of the South Asian diaspora by singing in languages such as Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, and Telugu. We believe that our unique style of arranging helps us achieve our goal of exposing the vast world of South Asian music to a wider audience, providing them with a truly one-of-a-kind musical experience. Featuring: Alishah Mohammed, Srija Bhowmik, Ira Kulkarni, Proma Majumdar, Rakshitha Akkala, Shravani Venkatesh, Puja Anand, Sharabh Ojha, Paurush Pandey, Anivart Joshi, Sai Anish Kuppili, Vaardaan Singhania, Ajeeth Iyer



Kyodo Taiko is the nation's first collegiate taiko drumming team. Founded in 1990, we work to promote the art of Japanese American taiko drumming within the UCLA and surrounding communities, and instill within the community a sense of respect and understanding of the Japanese American culture. We perform as a team at many events around the UCLA campus and greater Southern California area. We also perform at UCLA NSU's annual Culture Nights and host annual Spring Concerts on the UCLA campus. Kyodo has two meanings, one is "family", and the other is "loud children". Featuring: Nico Franz, Alexander Shen, Natalie Kong Tokita, Aidan Lu, Brian Son, Justin Yoo



Tasi of One Man Band, full name, Toefa'atasi Fogavai was born and raised on the island of American Sāmoa before moving to Hawai'i at the age of 12. His love for music began at a young age, deeply influenced by his parents—especially his father. Despite having very little, music became a way his father kept the family connected through difficult times. Fogavai's passion for performing comes from the sense of freedom and joy he experiences while playing instruments and singing. In those brief but lasting moments, music allows him to escape the struggles of reality. He continues to pursue music with the hope that others, too, can find comfort, healing, and escape through his performances.

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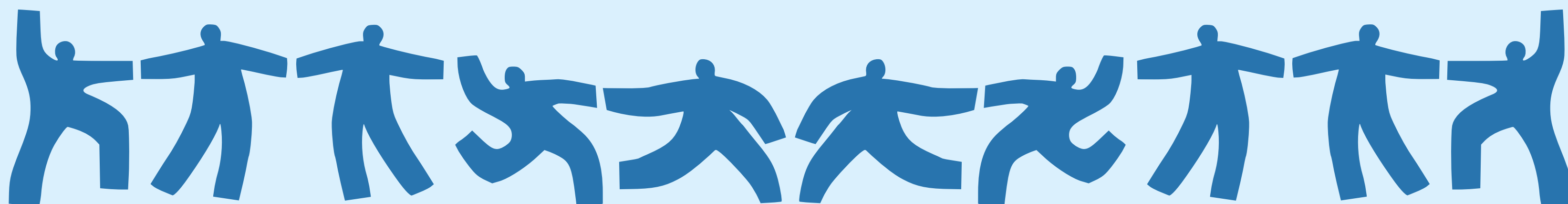
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Visit the website: foundationsandfutures.org



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Now that we've created *Foundations and Futures* (1st edition), we need your help to activate it into high school and college classrooms and living rooms around the world. Your donation will help us outreach and publicize this free-to-use resource, support teachers to use it in their classrooms, and continue to expand and improve content and learning features! Your support will help nurture empathy, mutual understanding and help bridge racial divides towards a more inclusive society.

Link: <https://crowdfunding.ucla.edu/project/49932>



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Stay up to date with *Foundations and Futures* by joining our mailing list!

Link to newsletter: <https://www.foundationsandfutures.org/get-involved/>



Outreach Information

Want to connect and collaborate, send us a message: textbookoutreach@aasc.ucla.edu



Donation Information

Foundations and Futures relies on the generosity of community members like you. Consider making a gift to the "AAPI Project Fund" today.

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