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Friday, September 6, 1985



Photo by J.K. Yamamoto

Speaking at Aug. 29 press conference were (from left): Stewart Kwoh and Sumi Haru, Asian Pacific American Media Watch; Irvin Lai, Chinese American Citizens Alliance; Los Angeles city councilman Mike Woo; and Frank Rothman, chairman and chief executive officer, MGM/UA.

News in Brief

Chinese American organization endorses redress

LOS ANGELES—During its 38th biennial national convention, held August 6-10, the Chinese American Citizens Alliance passed a resolution to "support the proposed legislation in Congress to provide redress" to Japanese Americans interned during WW2. Submitted by CACA's Los Angeles Lodge, the resolution was passed August 9.

CACA also backed congressional legislation that would increase the yearly quota of Hong Kong immigrants from 600 to 5,000, with priority for those with family already in the U.S.

Boston detective suspended after Huang acquittal

BOSTON—Police detective Francis Kelly Jr., who is facing charges of using excessive force in arresting Chinese immigrant Long Guang Huang, was suspended with pay by Police Commissioner Francis M. Roache immediately following Huang's acquittal on all charges August 23 (see Aug. 30 PC). In announcing the decision, Mayor Raymond Flynn said, "[The] decision to suspend Detective Kelly with pay is appropriate under the facts and circumstances of the court's ruling."

MGM/UA sued over 'Year of the Dragon' portrayal

LOS ANGELES—The Federation of Chinese Organizations of America and Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Assn. have filed a \$100 million suit in Los Angeles Superior Court against MGM for allegedly libeling their members as Chinese mafia. The suit claims the film "Year of the Dragon," through the use of organizational names, wrongly implied that members trafficked in drugs and other types of organized crime.

Nairobi conferees deplore status of women in Asian countries

by Diane Narasaki

NAIROBI, Kenya—Equality, development and peace were themes of the United Nations Decade for Women and of the Non-governmental Organization's Forum '85, held alongside the U.N. conference in July. Over 11,000 women attended the forum to share strategies and assess the world's progress toward these goals.

Asian feminists gave many workshops; the greatest overview of conditions for women in Asia was given by the Asian Women's Research and Action Network (AWRAN), based in the Philippines.

The AWRAN workshop was a 14-country alternative Asian re-

port on the impact of the U.N. Decade for Women.

The group used equity and justice rather than economic growth as indicators of development, and thus produced very different reports from their governments. A Sri Lankan speaker opened by observing that Asia is experiencing a crisis of civilization. Panelists expanded on the point.

A Malaysian speaker gave an economic overview. She reported that the situation of many Asian women over the past decade has been stagnant, if not regressive, largely due to economic "development." Almost all Asian countries have undergone col-

Continued on Next Page

Disclaimer added to 'Dragon'

by J.K. Yamamoto

LOS ANGELES—MGM/UA, distributor of the controversial "Year of the Dragon," announced August 29 that it would add a disclaimer to the film stating that it is not a depiction of an actual Asian American community.

The story of a white police captain's war against Chinatown gangsters, "Dragon" touched off protests from Asian American community groups in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Seattle and Washington upon its release in mid-August. Protestors charged that it perpetuated negative stereotypes of Asians, especially Chinese Americans.

At a City Hall press conference convened by city councilman Mike Woo, who had initiated direct negotiations with the studio, MGM/

UA chairman and chief executive officer Frank Rothman read the disclaimer:

"This film does not intend to demean or to ignore the many positive features of Asian American, and specifically Chinese American, communities. Any similarity between the depiction in this film and any association, organization, individual or Chinatown that exists in real life is accidental."

Rothman said he hoped to have the disclaimers sent to Los Angeles and New York area theaters by the Labor Day weekend and that he would consider including other cities. The cost to MGM/UA, he said, was "substantial," but he declined to give an exact figure.

"We at MGM/UA," said Rothman, "are zealously protective of our rights under the First Amend-

ment. However, it is never our desire to intentionally offend any group of people... While the filmmakers did not intend to offend the Asian American community, all of us are sorry if the film has had such an effect... Given the reactions of various Asian Americans, a disclaimer is an appropriate response to those concerns."

When asked about his personal reaction to the film, Rothman replied, "I did not look at it as a film that was demeaning to a specific society of people. But that is not to say, or to even suggest, that somebody of Chinese descent might [not] look at the very same film and come to a different conclusion... Councilman Woo explained that to me."

Rothman said he had not discussed the matter with "Dragon" director and co-writer Michael Cimino, who has yet to respond

Continued on Next Page

Brazil consul general explains why he snubbed PANA conference

SÃO PAULO, Brazil—Organizers for the Pan American Nikkei Assn. (PANA) convention were reportedly upset by the absence and non-cooperation of the consul general of Japan at the convention held in July. The organizing committee had contacted the consul general for his cooperation in providing a reception and entertainment for delegates during their stay in Brazil, as the consulates in Lima, Peru, and Mexico City had done in prior PANA conventions.

While not condemning the convention, Consul General Rikio Shikima said that it was best if the consulate remained neutral in this affair. In an article for the July 20 São Paulo Shimbun, Shikima stated that there was no consensus among the Nisei and that many were in fact opposed to the convention. In addition, he continued, there was possible danger of a "racial element" entering the proceedings of the convention.

Despite being assured by convention organizers that PANA would refrain from any statements on race, creed or color discrimination, Shikima replied that when North American and Latin American Nikkei gather, the only common element of the gathering is race. This "racial element" could be misconstrued by other Brazilians as an attempt by the Brazilian Nisei to demonstrate their power, he said.

Because there were no social barriers placed before the Brazilian Nikkei, said Shikima, they have attained a respected social

position and are very successful. He felt it was unwise to alarm other Brazilians unnecessarily. Because the Nikkei in California, Mexico and Peru were mistreated during WW2, they had to respond, but because the conditions were different in Brazil, the strategies used in Peru and Mexico may have a reverse effect here, he continued.

It also appears that Shikima was apprehensive of the North American delegation. Pat Okura, a member of the U.S. delegation, said that, according to convention organizers, Shikima felt that the foreign delegations, espe-

cially the Americans, "were very militant, especially in pressuring the U.S. government for redress. He felt that this was a bold, militant, communistic move, so the consul general contacted 100 leading Issei citizens of Brazil and told them not to participate. As a result, there was very little Issei participation at the convention."

Added Okura, "Delegates were asked by the conference organizers to contact their local consulates and ambassadors upon their return home. I have just sent off a letter to Ambassador [Nobuo] Matsunaga asking for clarification, so I haven't received a reply yet."

—Japanese translation by Yuji Ichioka



Photo by Patty Honda

Flags of the countries represented in the Pan American Nikkei Assn. (PANA) adorn a plaque presented by Chuck Kubokawa (right), longtime civilian official with NASA, to PANA president Carlos Kasuga of Mexico City during the 3rd PANA convention, held in July in Sao Paulo. The flags were carried into space aboard the shuttle Discovery by astronaut Ellison Onizuka in January. A videotape of convention highlights will be shown at a PANA reunion scheduled for Oct. 12 at JACL National Headquarters in San Francisco.

Fundraiser planned for JA Museum

LOS ANGELES—Buoyed by news of the passage of a State Senate bill which would appropriate \$750,000 for the Japanese American National Museum in Little Tokyo, organizers of the facility are planning a major fundraiser.

A \$150-a-plate dinner will be held at the Bonaventure Hotel on October 18 with Hiroshi "Hershey" Miyamura, the only living JA recipient of the Medal of Honor, as guest of honor and KCBS-TV news anchor Tritia Toyota as emcee.

Dinner chairperson Toy Kanegai is seeking 1,000 reservations. Tables have already been reserved by such groups as 100th

Battalion Club, 100th/442nd Club, Nisei Veterans Coordinating Council, Military Intelligence Service Club, Home State Investments, Merit Savings & Loan Assn., United Programming, Japanese Cultural Institute of Gardena, West L.A. Japanese Community Council, the Architects' Consortium and Allright Parking.

Also on the dinner committee are Young Oak Kim, Buddy Mamiya, Harry Yamamoto, Tak Shida, Frank Fukuzawa, Jack Wakamatsu, Nancy Araki, Sue Kunitomi Embrey, Kats Kunitsugu, Mote Nakasako, Wayne Miyahara, and others.

Authored by Sen. Art Torres (D-S. Pasadena) and passed by a 27-to-1 vote, Senate Bill 1452 now goes to the State Assembly, where the Water, Parks & Wildlife Committee and Ways & Means Committee must pass it before it goes to a vote on the assembly floor.

The L.A. City Council has already approved a resolution, introduced by Councilman Gilbert Lindsay, providing \$1 million in matching funds for the museum from the Community Redevelopment Agency.

A five-year lease has been signed on 10,000 sq. ft. of warehouse space at 941 E. 3rd St. The group hopes to house the museum on a permanent basis in the old Nishi Honganji building at 1st St. and Central Ave.

Controversial hair salon vandalized

WEST HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — The JAPSS hair salon, whose name has been protested by members of the Japanese American community (see March 8 & July 12 PC), has been vandalized, with one sign stolen and the other spray-painted.

No one has been arrested for the act, which was committed between August 24-26. The owners are certain that Japanese Americans were responsible, especially since the word *baka* (stupid) was painted on the salon's neon sign.

Derived from the the five co-owners' first initials, the name JAPSS has been assailed by National Coalition for Redress/Reparations (NCRR) and other community organizations. NCRR has circulated petitions stating, "If this is permitted to go unchecked, it will slowly result in the term 'Japs' becoming openly acceptable... We demand the removal of this word so that Japanese Americans can be regarded with respect and equality."

Of particular concern to NCRR was the fact that two of the owners are from Japan, which could lead

others to believe that "Jap" is not a racial slur. Owner Shuji Kida has defended the name. "It sounds strong, and to me it's nice," he said in an L.A. Times interview, suggesting that the word could be infused with a new, non-derogatory meaning.

Although the article about the salon was prominently displayed in the Times' August 22 edition, Kida does not think it inspired the vandalism. Instead, he attributes it to the negative publicity generated by NCRR. "I'm not saying that they did it," he added.

But he felt that "Japanese Americans' image went down so bad" as a result of the incident.

David Monkawa of NCRR said he could "completely understand the sentiments" of whoever committed the act, but added that "change of injustices are made by large numbers of people led in an organized manner, not by individual acts of vandalism."

The owners will replace the sign, and Kida expressed no inclination to change the name. NCRR is planning a protest in front of the salon on September 14.

Community Affairs

NEW YORK—The 2nd annual East Coast Asian/Asian American Jazz Festival is set for Oct. 25-27 at Jazz Center of New York, 380 Lafayette St. Produced by Cobi Narita and Universal Jazz Coalition, the event begins at 8:30 Fri.-Sat. and 7:00 Sun.

Scheduled performers: Fri.—the piano trio of Haruko Nara, Sumi Tonoaka & Kuni Mikami, Bob Kenmotsu Quartet, and Jason Hwang & Glass Shadows; Sat.—Jon Jang & trio, Kiyo-to Fujiwara Quintet, and Fred Houn & the Asian American Art Ensemble; Sun.—Eiko Ono & Satoshi Inouye with Jason Hwang & Genevieve Lam, Jude Narita's "Coming Into Passion/Song for a Sansei," and East of the Sun Orchestra. Admission is \$10 per evening. Call (212) 505-5660.

LOS ANGELES—The Asian Pacific Legal Defense and Education Fund (APLDEF) and Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC) Joint Employment Discrimination Project holds a community fundraiser Sept. 19, 5:30-8 p.m., at Noguchi Plaza, 244 S. San Pedro St., for Tom Ohgi and Wally Shishido, L.A. County Health Services employees who are contemplating a class action suit against the county for denying them promotions in spite of their qualifications and seniority. Tickets: \$20 each (tax deductible); RSVP by Sept. 13. Make checks payable to Legal Center Joint Project, 1010 S. Flower St., #302, L.A. 90015. Info: (213) 748-2022 or 626-4471.

"Seiji Kunishima—Studies," drawings for commissioned works and related sculptures, opens Sept. 7 at Doi-zaki Gallery, 244 S. San Pedro St. Gal-

lery hours: noon-5 p.m., Tue.-Sun. Info: (213) 628-2725.

USC's Asian Pacific American Support Group holds its 1st annual awards dinner Oct. 3 at the Hyatt Regency. Keynote speaker is USC president James Zumberge. In addition to the scholarship recipients, three USC alumni will be honored: Olympic gold medal winner Sammy Lee, architect Toshikazu Terasawa and USC Board of Trustees member Gin Wong. The late Soichi Fukui will be posthumously awarded for his contributions to the community. Proceeds go to APASG Scholarship Endowment Fund. Contact: J.D. Hokoyama, director, Asian Pacific American Student Services, (213) 743-4999.

SAN FRANCISCO — Kimochi, Inc. holds its 2nd annual "Sansei Live!" fundraiser Oct. 19, 7 p.m., at Gift Center Pavilion, 888 Brannan St. Proceeds go to support services Kimochi offers for the elderly, such as hot meals, counseling, transportation and health screenings. The program includes entertainment and dancing. Tickets, \$35 each, are available through Kimochi, 1581 Webster St., S.F. 94115. Info: Rhonda Hirata, (415) 982-8400.

California Japanese Alumni Assn. holds its 2nd annual scholarship dinner in the Imperial Room of Miyako Hotel Oct. 4, 7:30 p.m., preceded by a cocktail hour at 6:30. Scholarships are awarded, in conjunction with JACL's scholarship program, to students enrolled at any UC campus. Guest speaker is Bill Honig, Supt. of Public Instruction. Cost for the dinner-dance is \$25. A round of golf for "Cal" alumni

is scheduled for noon at Presidio Golf Course. Contact: CJAA, 735 Bryant St., S.F. 94107; (415) 543-5900.

FOR THE RECORD:

"Cultural Barriers of Asian Immigrant Women," originally scheduled for Sat., Sept. 7 at Japanese American Cultural and Community Center in Los Angeles, has been postponed until Sat., Nov. 2. Further details to be announced.

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Them Were the Days

EAST
WIND

Bill
Marutani



THE OTHER DAY, while driving into town, I saw a boy playing with an old automobile tire, rolling it along the sidewalk to see how far he could keep it rolling as he pushed it with his hands. I was suddenly reminded of my boyhood days when we used to roll a metal hoop, perhaps taken from an old barrel, and using a cross-piece stick guiding the hoop in whatever direction we wished. I hadn't seen that since my childhood days, and I wondered if I could still perform that feat.

One of these days, I think I'll give it a try. For old times sake.

BACK IN THOSE days, our Issei parents were not in the custom of showering us with store-bought playthings. Something about *shimatsu*, or if that didn't

work, *zeitaku*. (How those two words served to thwart the many wants of a child!) So we devised and made our own means of play and entertainment. Finding one side of a pair of roller-skates, we'd take them apart and nail them underneath an old 2 x 4, place an orange crate on top at the end, nail down a stick for handles—and off we went, pumping down the road. It's a wonder that a number of us kids didn't end up as highway fatalities.

WE ALSO MADE our own mobile "tanks" by taking our mothers' used up sewing spools. A rubber band would be inserted through the middle, fastened at one end, the other having a stick tightly wound by the rubber. Set it on the ground and the "tank" would climb small obstacles. We even placed notches on the edges of the spool for gripping. We'd pit each others' tanks against one another. And for kites, some old pea poles (sometimes not-so-old, which would bring a reprimand) would be split, formed into an appropriate cross, covered with newspaper glued down by yesterday's *gohan*,



and we'd have her flying. With strings used for stringing the peas.

I've purchased store-bought kites for our children, but somehow those things just didn't have the "flavor" of the kites we used to make as kids. They somehow lacked the aerodynamics that a busy kid's mind was able to devise.

FROM SCROUNGING around we gathered boards, wheels, and what-have-you, and built go-karts, "boats," and, if we didn't have the time or the inclination,

just a plain raft. I recall one time a group of us *koko's* rafting on White River with poles (again, pea poles) and helplessly running adrift when the water grew deep and the poles became too short.

If the highways didn't get us, it's a wonder that the river didn't.

THE ISSEI PARENTS weren't quite that *shimatsu* as one might conclude from what is written here. I recall my first prized possession of a tricycle with which I went everywhere as a tyke, including places where a tyke or a

trike ought not to go. And do they still make Erector sets? The hours we used to spend conjuring up various structures with that set! And our first bicycle was one that my mother brought back from Japan, but which always was having flats. Then a Columbia balloon-tired bike with a front-end spring action. Had that one until the spring of '42 when we were all hauled off. Never did find out what happened to that bike. Never got it back.

AS THEY SAY, "Them were the days."

Is Perseverance Everything?

ONE THING
LEADS
TO ANOTHER

Bob
Shimabukuro



One of the most admirable characteristics of the Nikkei in the U.S. has been their ability to persevere in the face of what sometimes has seemed like insurmountable difficulties. Some have succeeded by "waiting out the storm," or exhibiting extreme self-control and self-discipline. Others simply changed their "act," so to speak, trying new fields of endeavor until something clicked. Still others managed to "just get by" hoping that recognition for a lifetime of struggle would come to those who strived for excellence.

But that quality, perseverance, the ability to absorb abuse, and

its accompanying acceptance of that abuse does have its drawbacks. For in this society, it is more the rule than the exception that quiet acceptance perpetuates the abuse.

Frequently, "ethnic" artists address this issue in their works. Black writers like Maya Angelou, W.E.B. DuBois, and Langston Hughes, have written on the contradictions inherent in the desire for survival in a hostile society; knowing when to "lay low" and when to "fight back" is paramount in the alive and victimized/dead and proud dichotomy.

Visual Communications' latest endeavor, "Yuki Shimoda: Asian American Actor," by John Esaki and Amy Kato, which premiered Aug. 24 at the Japan America Theater, skirts the issue of the basic contradiction and instead focuses on Shimoda's perseverance and dedication, and in the process, leaves few other qualities open for admiration/adulation.

As one who knew very little about Shimoda, I must admit that I was a little disappointed with the movie. I sat there trying to figure out why he was so special to so many people. I did find it inspiring in the sense that I wanted to go back to Portland, get my shop together once more and get back into woodworking, even if it meant little financial return. After all, if this guy could spend his whole life persevering in a career that offered so little in return, so could I. But by the next morning, that feeling had thankfully worn off.

The problem with this documentary is that the makers of the film were obviously awe-struck by Shimoda, and as a result, glossed over issues which could have made this film interesting and informative. Instead, the film turned into just another movie about another victim of the Hollywood system.

Shimoda, from what I could gather from this film, was pretty much a character actor, his most famous role being the houseboy in "Auntie Mame." Perhaps because of the demeaning nature of the role, or for some unknown reason, Esaki and Kato chose not to discuss this role with him. Yet it could have been very interesting to hear what Shimoda had to say about the role. What he thought about while doing it, and what he thought about it in his later years. I would have liked to have known what advice he had to give to younger Asian actors about character roles, its possibilities, its pitfalls.

In the process, younger actors could have built upon what he had experienced and learned; a legacy could have been established whereby actors like Mako, Gedde Watanabe, and even John Lone could have benefited.

Letters

Redress by Lawsuit

I couldn't agree more with Henry S. Sakai's letter (Aug. 9 PC) saying that redress is a matter of restitution for wrongs suffered by individuals and must be granted to individuals, not organizations. The violations that occurred were to constitutional rights and guarantees designed to protect individuals from their government. I also agree that the \$20,000 sought is inappropriately small.

I also agree with Naomi Kashiwabara's letter (Aug. 9 PC) on the reduction of the original \$25,000 to \$20,000. I'd only correct him on the year; it was 1978, I believe, when JACL launched its campaign with \$25,000 per. Using his same assumption of 5% inflation, the current value would be over \$35,000. If we used an interest assumption of 12%, the value would exceed \$55,000.

But it wasn't only the "Auntie Mame" segment that bothered me. The main thrust of the film was that of an actor whose talents were "wasted" because of the racism in the film industry.

But instead of openly discussing these attitudes, the film turned into an apology for Shimoda. Because there was no work, Shimoda did these demeaning ads; because he had no experience, and because he was culture-bound, he had such a hard time doing "Manzanar." This is not my idea of a tribute.

The movie isn't a bad movie. Perhaps others see perseverance as a great strength, enabling one to leap tall buildings and overcome all obstacles. As for me, I'm still wondering, "What's so special about Yuki Shimoda?"

I trust both writers and the readers of the PC are aware of the class action lawsuit filed in March 1983 on behalf of Japanese American victims of mass exclusion and detention. This lawsuit seeks individual restitution of over \$200,000.

The lawsuit is currently in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. A hearing is scheduled for Sept. 24, 1985 on procedural barriers raised by the government. Of course, it remains to be seen whether the suit will proceed to trial. But I have come to respect the courts as an arena for redress.

First, we operate within the legal structure, using the principles and precedents established through the centuries. What we seek in compensation is the normal due to any citizen seeking to repair injuries inflicted through governmental misconduct.

Second, we place ourselves in an adversarial relationship to the United States. I find it refreshing. Unlike legislation, we are required to state our grievances explicitly and with detailed documentation and argument. This comprehensive statement of injuries to our constitutional and civil rights is now embedded as historic fact in our complaint.

Third and most important, we address, point by point, the breaches of constitutional and legal protections in order to repair them. This repair can only occur in the courts.

I believe your readers need to appreciate this effort at a judicial remedy. It is neither "better than" JACL's legislative efforts nor conflicting; it is an alternative of another group of citizens.

WILLIAM HOHRI
National Council for
Japanese American Redress
Chicago

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A Conventional Pleasure

FROM THE
FRYING PAN:

Bill
Hosokawa



ford to attend are pretty well set in their ways. But the conferences do serve a social function in that they enable ethnic Japanese in various Western Hemisphere nations to meet, talk and try to get acquainted. The last two goals are not without their difficulties, as I will explain in a moment.

The first of these conventions was held in Mexico City four years ago. The second was in Lima, Peru, two years ago. The next one, if it isn't sidetracked by galloping inflation and political unrest, will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, two years hence.

My wife and I attended the convention in Brazil and found both the conference sessions, and what little we were able to see of Brazil itself, a very pleasant experience. The workshop sessions were set on a high plane, covering such subjects as access to the justice system, the Japanese language in the Americas, social perspectives on Nikkei senior citizens, the Nikkei woman, rural farm organization, the Nikkei press and its future, and a psychological profile of the Nikkei.

But they were handicapped from the very beginning by a problem that besets most international meetings—an inability to communicate freely and easily

because of language differences. These were quadrilingual meetings, if there is such a word. The hosts spoke Portuguese. The other Latin Americans spoke Spanish. Delegates from the U.S. and Canada spoke English. Most, but not all, spoke varying amounts of Japanese. Japanese was the one common language, but you know how inadequately U.S. Nisei speak it. The same could be said for Nisei from the Latin nations.

It's fascinating at first to see a person with a Japanese face, with first names like Luiz, Roberto, Paulo, Americo, Alfredo and Eduardo lecturing in rapid-fire Portuguese or Spanish. Interpreters did their best to keep up. But that's a situation that doesn't enhance free and easy give-and-take discussion, which after all are the most interesting part of workshops.

Language was less important on other occasions, such as the Sayonara Banquet when tantalizing samba rhythms had dignified and mature Norte Americanos like my friend Joe Oyama swinging with what usually is called gay abandon.

For the record, let it be noted that nearly 500 persons attended, including 160 from the U.S., 26 from Peru, 5 from Mexico, 9 from Argentina, 3 from Uruguay, 6 from Colombia, 9 from Canada and 6 from Bolivia. Some Latin delegates said inflationary costs kept many others from attending.

Los Angeles from her position as a consultant on communicable diseases for the Health Dept. In 1984, after receiving \$5,000 compensation from the city for the dismissal, she donated the entire amount to the JACL redress campaign.

Feminist Ancestors

Togasaki's unusual background seems almost to have ordained her destiny. Her father was a young lawyer on his way to further study in France and England in 1886 when his sponsor ran out of funds and he was stranded in the U.S. Here he met and fell in love with Dr. Togasaki's mother, who had been sent by her mother to California to be, in Togasaki's words, "sort of a social worker," helping young Japanese immigrant women. Togasaki's grandmother was a leading feminist in Japan and a founder of the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

After marrying, Togasaki's father went into business in San Francisco, while her mother tended to the chores of raising the 9 children that were to come, as well as helping a Japanese midwife.

'Always Work To Do'

"There were always people around and always work to do," Togasaki recalls. She and her siblings were often called upon to take people to clinics, bathe babies, change diapers, cook and care for patients, all done with no charge.

With this background, small wonder that Yoshiye Togasaki chose medicine as a career, as strikingly unusual as this choice

More Misperceptions

MUSUBI

by
Ron
Wakabayashi



The outrage aimed at the new Michael Cimino film, "Year of the Dragon," is well deserved. The elderly man sitting in back of me summarized at the end of the movie to his friend, "You've just seen a B movie." More than the technical flaws, the concern from the Chinese and Asian American community concerns perception. The work is socially and ethically flawed.

Without doubt, there are misrepresentations of a variety of ethnic people, not just the Chinese, in the film. One difference for Asian Americans is that we will have no other major films set in our community for another good long while to countervail the misperceptions generated by this one. It is simply a larger scale phenomenon of reducing Asians in the media to caricature. Television does an equal injustice in the continued repetition of a narrow band of predictable caricatures, rarely showing the depth and continuum of the ethnic community.

"Year of the Dragon" would leave an impression that all of Chinatown is controlled and occupied by sinister forces. All of the restaurant owners, shopkeepers and typical residents

are part of this, not just the stereotyped gang kids.

It uses a number of Asian actors, notably Jone Lone, a competent actor with the good looks for the role of a leading man. As handsome as Lone is, there is no female interest at all for him in the film; perhaps this is a comment on the perception of manhood in the Asian community. Ariane is the love interest—no, the sex interest—of Detective White. She reacts to sexual mistreatment by falling in love with him. Meanwhile, the wronged wife of the law-and-order cop symbolizes the all-American good wife.

The pure gore of the film—decapitation, mass murder, executions—unavoidably means touching on the subject of death. The contrasts portrayed are significant. The funeral of Detective White's wife is filled with grief and mourning, a great deal of emotion. The deaths of innumerable Chinese have a circus air, parade and all, never exploring any feelings that are taking place. The myth that Asians do not value life in the same way as Westerners is reinforced.

The presence of Asian faces on the large screen had a drawing power. The absence of such images creates a hunger for them. I want to see more Asian actors in all forms of media, in different roles and varied situations. It is unfortunate that actors and actresses in our communities are given limited choices in their career fields. The results are more stereotypes for the general public and more outrage for the community.

A Lifetime of Helping Others

by Chizu Iiyama

Dr. Yoshiye Togasaki sits back, eyes closed, as she reminisces about her life. She speaks in a soft, gentle voice, though occasionally her eyes flash and her voice rises as she recalls the instances of prejudice and discrimination she has encountered as a Japanese American woman.

Now in her 80s, Togasaki (or "Doctor" as she is called by friends) will be honored by the Women's Concerns Committee of NCWNP-DC at their conference, "Japanese American Women in Transition: A Time for Change and Growth" on Sat., Sept. 21 at Laney College, Oakland.

She will be honored in recognition of her life of humanitarian service.

Public Health Servant

A great part of Dr. Togasaki's life has been devoted to improving health conditions for entire communities—in Manzanar Concentration Camp during WW2, in Italy with the U.N. Relief and Refugee Assn. in 1944, and in West Contra Costa County for the remainder of her illustrious career until her retirement in 1972.

Recalling the abominable public health conditions at Tule Lake camp and at Manzanar, Togasaki says with renewed indignation, "We had 5 doctors to take care of 10,000 people. There were open sewers, the barracks had no water, no stoves. And we had young families, many with new babies, and no vaccines, or DPT shots, or sanitary conditions for making baby formulas."

Trying to persuade the Army

bureaucracy of the need for basic health-care items, and for things like lab facilities to diagnose illnesses, was often a futile exercise, and she was forced to improvise and to write to doctor friends outside for needed supplies.

At one time, she was dismissed from Tule Lake camp as being "too disruptive."

'Fighter' Reputation

After the war, Togasaki served as Health Officer, then later as Chief of the Division of Preventive Medical Services in Contra Costa County from 1951-1972. As one of the top administrators in the County, she garnered a reputation as a fighter for health services—especially for children. Presently, she serves on the Calif. State Task Force on High Blood Pressure Education for Minority Population.

As well as her commitment to improving public health conditions, Togasaki is known for her strong support of civil rights for all people. She has been an active member of the American Civil Liberties Union and the JACL since before the war. She served as president of the S.F. chapter in 1947, and from 1951 on, has held nearly every office in the Contra Costa and Diablo Valley chapters.

It comes as no surprise to note that she strongly condemns the South African government for its system of apartheid.

WW2 Dismissal

At the outbreak of WW2, Togasaki was dismissed by the City of

was for a Japanese American woman at that time. She graduated from UC Berkeley in public health in 1929 and was later admitted to Johns Hopkins Medical School in Baltimore.

"It was hard in those days—only a few women doctors, and even fewer Japanese Americans," she said, recalling the many instances of blatant discrimination she endured, especially in her placement as an intern.

Nonetheless, she went on to Los Angeles to complete her residency in the area of communicable diseases, pursuing her abiding interest in public health and prevention of illnesses.

Numerous Awards

Along with her professional work, Togasaki has always been active in the community and has received numerous honors: AAUW Woman of the Year in 1969, the Soroptomist's Outstanding Woman of the Community in 1977 and the Sapphire Pin by the National JACL, among others.

Asked how she managed to give so much of herself, her answer was typically clear and direct: "I believe in what I'm doing, and I'm not afraid to speak out."

And, as I got up to leave, she donned a straw hat, picked up her garden implements and went out into the warm sun to gather some vegetables for me to take home—so thoughtful, so caring, and so in character.

Minidoka to be site of ceremony

JACKPOT, Nevada—"Return to Minidoka" will be the theme of the IDC/PNW bi-district convention, to be held at Cactus Pete's Convention Center, Oct. 11-13. Included in the convention schedule is a trip to Minidoka for ceremonies commemorating the 40th anniversary of the closure of the camp. Highlighting the ceremony will be the installation of a bronze commemorative plaque by the front gate and guard house of the original camp site.

JACL president Frank Sato, LEC chair Min Yasui and redress director John Tateishi will be speaking.

Attendance by Idaho state officials is also expected but not confirmed at this time.

The ceremony is scheduled for 10:30 a.m., followed by a luncheon in Twin Falls, and a return to Jackpot for meetings and workshops beginning at 2 p.m.

The registration deadline has been tentatively set at Sept. 27. However, registration costs have not been confirmed as of this date.

Inquiries should be directed to Elizabeth Beer, c/o Crossroad Travel, P.O. Box 1353, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83403, or to the following numbers: 800-824-6386 (nationwide), or 800-423-9911 (Idaho only).

No Shortage of Topics for 'Asians Now'

by J.K. Yamamoto

Eleven years is a long time for any TV show to last, especially if the subject is community affairs. But that is how long "Asians Now" has been informing Bay Area viewers about Asian American culture and issues every Saturday morning at 9 on KTVU-TV (Ch. 2) in Oakland.

In the words of host and producer Serena Chen, the show "casts a wide net" for topics. In recent weeks, "Asians Now" has dealt with, among other things: Cantonese opera; Vietnamese fishermen; and a recipe for Cambodian-style eggplant.

Guests have included Ginatta Sagan of the Aurora Foundation and Rev. Lloyd Wake of Glide Memorial Church, who discussed, respectively, the human rights situation in Vietnam and the Philippines; and Mei Nakano of JACL's Women's Concerns Committee, who talked about women's issues, including the recent opposition to JACL sponsorship of beauty contests.

Chen credits Ian Zellick, head of KTVU's Community Affairs Dept., with creating the show. Having started a Hispanic community program, he decided to launch one geared for Chinese Americans. A community advisory committee recommended that the show serve Japanese, Korean and Filipino Americans as well.

When people were hired to work on the show, "media experience was optional, community experience was much preferred. You can teach someone technical things,

but you really couldn't make them feel for the community."

Chen, who at the time was a graduate student at UC Berkeley, was on a panel interviewing applicants for the Chinese American portion of the show. She found that "all the people who applied were media people who didn't even know what the issues were in the Chinese community."



Photo by Henry Lim

Serena Chen

Since no one seemed suitable, she decided to take matters into her own hands. "I've always been a ham, and I said, 'Well, once a month I can do it.'" She did a tape audition and was made a host as well as a producer. The show first went on the air in January 1975.

Each of the four ethnic groups had one show per month, and each show was bilingual. That format continued until 1981, when the staff decided a change was needed.

"We discovered over time that people couldn't remember which week to watch... It couldn't build up an audience because there were eight different hosts, two each week.

"The community was growing, and you just couldn't start adding ethnic groups in the same format, so they just wiped out the whole thing and started doing it with one producer, one host every week, in English."

Broadening Coverage

The show was thus able to increase its audience, albeit at the expense of those viewers who did not understand English.

While the show now covers more of the Bay Area's various Asian communities, the coverage isn't always as evenly distributed as Chen would like. "The Chinese and Japanese communities have been the longest established in the area, so they have more activities and more issues that come to the forefront, and more people can speak on it. So a lot of times there might be more Chinese and Japanese things on the show."

As for the other communities, "a lot of times I'll just pick up the phone and call up community leaders that I know and say, 'Hey, I haven't heard from you guys in a while. Can we do something?'"

Faced with an overabundance of material from the established groups, she feels an obligation to "try to balance it out and do outreach to the other communities."

"People ask me if I ever run out of topics," she laughs. "There's no way you can run out of topics."

Threat from FCC

The Federal Communications Commission's recent decision to deregulate TV stations does not bode well for the show, Chen says. Once deregulated, a station would not be required to broadcast a set number of hours of public affairs programming, in which case a show like "Asians Now" could easily be dropped.

The matter may not be resolved for years, and Chen is hopeful that appeals can delay the final ruling until a more sympathetic administration takes over.

When asked who watches the show, Chen replies, "It's real popular among everyone's parents—people in their fifties and sixties are used to waking up at a certain time of the day. They're usually Asian Americans, like Nisei or second generation Chinese and Filipinos. They'll watch the show religiously, and then they call up their kids and tell them what they missed."

"Young people will tape the show and watch it later. It's not easy for some people to get up at 9 o'clock on a Saturday."

Non-Asian viewers, she says, are people "who tend to watch public affairs programs... who want to be informed."

She adds that because her show used to follow "America's Black Forum," many Blacks "would end up watching my show. And even though we changed the time on 'Black Forum,' they kept watching ['Asians Now']."

"It's a very interesting mix of people."

'Years Not Wasted'

One day when Chen was on a ferry to Angel Island in San Francisco Bay, she received her most memorable viewer response.

"A Sansei came up to me and shook my hand, and said he watched the show, and said that he'd just written me a letter and hadn't mailed it yet, so he handed me this letter."

"I took it and I read it. He told me he was a Vietnam veteran, and that he was watching my show for therapy, and that my show was helping him not hate himself any more."

"So I thought, 'Oh! All my years not wasted!' It made all the difference to me."

Kimura case to go to trial in October

by Katie Kaori Hayashi

SANTA MONICA, Calif.—The trial date for Fumiko Kimura, who unsuccessfully attempted parent-child suicide on January 29 at Santa Monica Beach, has been tentatively set for October 21 by judge Robert Thomas at a pre-trial hearing August 6 at Los Angeles Superior Court in Santa Monica. The trial had been delayed by the postponed pre-trial hearing.

Kimura is a Japanese national who walked into the ocean with her two children. They were soon pulled out of the water, but neither child survived. Kimura, charged with two counts each of first degree murder and child endangering, has been incarcerated at Sybil Brand Institute for Women with bail set at \$100,000.

At the pre-trial hearing, Judge Thomas said that in the motion filed by Gerald Klausner, Kimura's attorney, "A lot of points were made, and some are pertinent."

Klausner appealed to the Superior Court to overturn the Municipal Court ruling because the police violated Kimura's constitutional rights. He said the ruling, based on Kimura's confession to the police, "wasn't a product of free will and rational intellect."

When Kimura was interrogated two days after the incident, her brain did not function well because of the oxygen administered after her rescue, Klausner claimed. Moreover, the police confused Kimura by saying, "your son is dead," he added, describing their attitude as one of "no compassion" and "irrational."

"Fumiko wasn't mentally disabled at the time" but "the police stole the evidence," taking advantage of her confusion, he argued emotionally. "It was like stealing candy from a baby."

Continued on Next Page

JAM literary contest winners named

SAN FRANCISCO — Japantown Art and Media Workshop has announced the winners of its fifth annual Asian American-Pacific Islander high school literary contest. The contest included poetry and prose entries which addressed some aspect of Asian Pacific life.

Winners in the prose division were: 1st place (\$75)—Cindy Sui for "Towards a Good Future"; 2nd place (\$50)—Huyen Nguyen for "No Moment for Tears"; 3rd place (\$25)—Tracy On for "The Adoption." All three attend McChesney Junior High in Oakland.

Honorable mention went to Angel Sullivan of McChesney for "The Past Remembered" and Rudy Corpuz of Mission H.S. in San Francisco for "The City I Grow Up In."

Winners in the poetry division were: 1st place (\$75)—Huyen

Nguyen of McChesney for "Saigon"; 2nd place (\$50)—Nicole Muraoka of Los Angeles Downtown Business Magnet for "On a Dusty Road"; 3rd place (\$25)—Helen Yu of Galileo H.S., San Francisco, for "Phoenix." Donna Li, also of Galileo, was given honorable mention for her poem, "Colors."

1,000 compete in Nisei bowling tournament

RENO, Nev.—More than 1,000 Nisei and eligible non-Nisei bowlers from California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington, Utah, Colorado and Japan joined Nevada bowlers in the 8th annual MGM Nisei Invitational Tournament at the MGM Grand Lanes in July. The bowlers vied for a share of the \$19,700 prize fund, plus more than \$30,000 in high game pots.

The winner of the mixed team event, worth \$1,000, was the Dick Kawano Team from Los Angeles.

May Fudenna and Sakie Yamauchi of San Jose won the mixed doubles. Yamauchi and Joe Furu-ike of Watsonville won the men's double event.

Ted Yamada of Los Angeles and Alice Okazaki of San Jose took the men's and women's singles, respectively.

The 9th annual tournament has been tentatively set for July 24-27, 1986.

Chapter Pulse

Ventura County

VENTURA, Calif.—Snow cones and California sushi will be sold by the chapter at the International Food Fair, Sept. 8, 11 a.m.-5p.m., California and Main Sts. Proceeds will support chapter activities. Info: Oxnard, Henry Asakura, (805) 485-0481; Camarillo, Yas Umeda, (805) 484-1313; Thousand Oaks and Newbury Park, Marsha Miyasaka, (805) 499-2117.

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KIMURA

Continued from Previous Page

Klausner also said that Kimura did not understand English well and that police officer Mitchell Kato's Japanese was "totally inadequate." Kato intimidated Kimura with his "rough" and "gang member" talk, Klausner said. "It's illegal that prosecution use the data."

However, deputy district attorney Lauren Weis contended that the upper court had to respect the lower court ruling. She said that Kimura was "lucid" during the interrogation by the police and added that there was no evidence that Kimura was emotionally disabled.

Weis argued that Kimura's constitutional rights were explained to her both in English and Japanese. Responding to Klausner's charge that Kato mistranslated "rights" as *shugi* (principle) rather

than the correct word, *kenri*, she said that Kato translated the word as both *kenri* and *shugi* to help Kimura understand her rights better.

Kimura "said to the police that she understood English very well," Weis continued, and answered detective Ray Cooper's questions in English without the help of Kato. Cooper, she added, used only simple English, avoiding terms such as "incriminate."

"She also had good recollection and said that she decided to commit suicide," Weis said, adding that Kimura spoke of having "no money and no place to go." The statement, Weis emphasized, "was made by a lucid person with good recollection."

The pre-trial hearing will be continued on September 27, and the trial date could be changed depending on its outcome.

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Joyce Harada, 20, who authored and illustrated *It's the ABC Book* in 1982, has published a follow-up, *It's the 0-1-2-3 Book*, one of the few children's counting books which starts with zero rather than one. Both books are from Heian International, Inc.

Architecture

Toshikazu Terasawa of O'Leary, Terasawa, Takahashi and DeChellis was recently elevated to fellowship in the American Institute of Architects. He is a former L.A. commissioner of building and safety and is currently a member of

Little Tokyo Community Redevelopment Advisory Committee and other community organizations.

Awards

Kosaku Uyeda, research career scientist at Dallas VA Medical Center, has received the William S. Middleton Award, the highest VA scientific honor. He was honored for a body of work that includes the discovery of the metabolite that controls glucose metabolism in the liver and other tissues. Born in Japan, he became an American citizen in 1963

and received his Ph.D. from UC Berkeley.

Lloyd Hara, Seattle city treasurer, was awarded the 1985 Public Service Award for Excellence in Public Administration at the annual banquet of the American Society for Public Administrators' Evergreen chapter. Hara led and implemented five new computer systems that improved customer services and processing of bills, set up an investment management program, gave management information and reduced costs.



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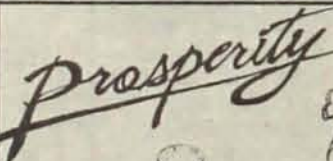
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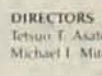
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