“Winding in and out, the weather blows an epic ‘tail’ of two cities . . .”
—Anida Yoeu Ali
From the Editor
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Russell C. Leong

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Interlinking Knowledge

IN HIS EDITORIAL DISCUSSING the “knowledge economy,” Pico Iyer states that we “overestimate how much we understand the world” in relation to historical and contemporary events. Likewise, in our understanding of Asian and Asian American Studies, we produce knowledge, but we may not always understand the complex shifts and currents of scholarship in relation to other stories and voices of the community, and what they imply. For example, in this issue, Jess Delegencia links his experience as a student at UC Berkeley with the U.S. anti-apartheid movement, the People Power Movement in the Philippines, and the Los Angeles Uprisings with the forming of his own identity in the U.S. and South Africa. New Pacific connections also reveal themselves in this issue: indigenous writer Syaman Rapongan, together with scholar Hsinya Huang, offer an oceanic perspective to challenge current global/continental ways of positioning the world.

Simply put, while we have qualitative and quantitative information, we sometimes lack the means and models to coordinate latitudes of knowledge across disciplines, institutions and nations. Thus, we must utilize new technology and new modes of absorbing and disseminating information on Asian and Pacific peoples, while at the same time, reclaiming our collective and indigenous cultures. We attempt to do so here in this publication by providing a useful “positioning tool” for both campus and community.

To suggest linkages among hitherto disparate subjects and practices, the second issue of CUNY FORUM (2:1) utilizes a stylized diagram (see next page) to produce a visual mapping of its contents, rather than with a conventional narrative introduction. We hope this mapping is a useful tool for those interested in urban sociology, comparative ethnic cultures, Asian American, Asian, Pacific, and comparative racial and ethnic studies, and indigenous studies, with a focus on the East Coast and its international linkages to the rest of the world.

A part of this mapping diagram was inspired by Peter Kwong’s concept of “mapping Asian American communities” to ascertain where, why, and how their geopolitical, cultural, and economic boundaries intersect. In the open-ended diagram which follows, I suggest key questions and thematic features that reveal linkages among social, political and cultural trends ranging from Asian American Studies “East of California” to the significance of documenting community voices both past and present. Thus, as a reader, scholar, or student, your reading of the CUNY FORUM is integral to the “mapping,” for you create the philosophical, political, or paradigmatic interpretation of its contents: a. Asian Pacific American Studies, b. Community Perspectives, c. Global Voices, and d. Latitudes. Today’s Asian Pacific experience is defined by latitudes of movement across historical, techno-media, and geopolitical spaces. You are the cartographer.
ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN STUDIES

Activism and Institutions

Keys:
1. What legacy do we inherit from activist and political movements, and how do we make their lessons relevant and useful to colleges and communities in the East Coast and Midwest?

2. What is the linkage between Vietnamese community development and the development of Asian American Studies at UMass Boston?

Features:
- Hispanismo in Asian American Studies: Cuba, Puerto Rico and Philippines (Augusto Espiritu)
- Asian American Activism from the 1960s to Now (Ryan Lee Wong)
- Asian American Studies and South Asian American Studies (Eiichiro Azuma, Grace Kao, Josephine Park, Fariha Khan)
- East of California and UMass Boston: Mentoring, Community Development and Curriculum (Peter Kiang, Loan Thị Đào, Sơn Ca Lâm, Songkhla Nguyễn, Shirley Suet-ling Tang)

Selected AAARI videos sources on featured authors:
- Tomie Arai
  www.aaari.info/14-02-21Arai.htm
- Mary Uyematsu Kao
  www.aaari.info/11-05-13Kao.htm
- Ron Kim
  www.aaari.info/2013banquet.htm
- Vivian Louie
  www.aaari.info/13-12-13Louie.htm
- Kevin Nadal
  www.aaari.info/13-11-08Nadal.htm
- Yoon Jung Park
  www.aaari.info/12-03-16Park.htm
- Syaman Rapongan
  www.aaari.info/14-01-06Forum.htm
- Muhammad Yunus
  www.aaari.info/2013banquet.htm

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Public Pluralisms

Keys:
How do we utilize pluralistic research methodologies including: public digital archives, oral history archives, critical journalism, and sociological fieldwork to advance Asian American public issues?

Features:
- Educational institutions, class, race, ethnicity, and academic success (Vivian Louie)
- Culture and Historic Preservation Methods (Pratt Center/Collective)
- Using Oral Histories to Chart Community History (K.W. Lee)
- Guide to Microaggressions (Kevin Nadal)
- Public Digital Archives (Raymond Pun)
GLOBAL VOICES
Asia, Africa, Americas

Keys:
1. How can individuals such as Nelson Mandela or Muhammad Yunus shape Asian American thinking?
2. What are cultural connections between Africa, Asia, and the Americas?

Features:
- Dr. Muhammad Yunus on thinking small and microcredit lending, and Ron Kim’s response
- Yoon Jung Park and Jess Delegencia share Nelson Mandela’s legacy on Asian Americans
- Anida Yoeu Ali and Kosal Khiev interpret Buddhism, Islam, Cambodia, and diaspora
- Jessica Hagedorn on Amiri Baraka

LATITUDES: The “Latitudes” (of literature and culture) are transnational, yet rooted in realities of local time and space.

— Russell C. Leong, Editor

Useful Mapping Sources:
- East At Main Street
- APIA Mapping Project
  www.historypin.com/protect/51-east-at-main-street
- The Newest New Yorkers
  Characteristics of the City’s Foreign-born Population, 2013
  www.nyc.gov/population
- Rethinking New York City’s Asian American Communities
  AAARI 2014 Annual Conference
  www.aari.info/2014communities.htm
I. Asian Pacific American Studies

“... they still called us ‘chink’ and ‘gook.’ We are like weeds and leeches in America – taking what isn’t ours: space, chances, life.”

— Sơn Ca Lâm
Steps Along the Curved Road

Loan Thị Đào, Peter Nien-chu Kiang (江念祖), Sơn Ca Lâm, Songkhla Nguyễn, and Shirley Suet-ling Tang (鄧雪齡)

“UMass Boston has worked to sustain the transformative intentions of Asian American Studies, grounding our efforts in the realities of trauma and healing shared by refugees and veterans from wars in Southeast Asia.”

Introduction

IN OCTOBER 1986, an invited gaggle of fifty faculty and students convened at Cornell University for a historic East Coast Asian American Scholars Conference to lay the initial groundwork for an Asian American Studies network "East of California." Resolutions unanimously passed by participants included statements of support for institutionalizing an Asian American Studies program at UMass Boston and an Inter-College Research Institute in Asian American Studies at the City University of New York, along with a call to reconvene in the future to assess the progress of East Coast Asian American Studies programs. Russell Leong, then editor of UCLA’s Amerasia Journal, was one of two non-East Coast participants. We greatly appreciate Russell’s fresh invitation from CUNY FORUM after all these years.

Prior to 1986, only one course with dedicated Asian American Studies content had been offered at UMass Boston. Created in the 1970s by the pioneering Nisei sociologist, T. Scott Miyakawa, the course remained dormant following his death in 1981 until Peter Kiang revitalized it in Spring 1987 as part of a local, long-term, community capacity-building plan to firmly establish Asian American Studies at the region’s urban public university. Step by step since then, a critical mass of core faculty has developed a range of individual and collective strategies to:

- Facilitate socio-culturally responsive and academically relevant learning communities that support student persistence, mentoring, and connection at our urban working-class commuter university;
- Document significant issues, needs, and interventions in local Asian American communities and on campus, recognizing that our own students and alumni are themselves members and participants within local neighborhoods, workplaces, and community-based institutions;
- Build research and development capacities in local Asian American communities through connecting ethnic studies perspectives, interdisciplinary methodologies, and analytic frameworks with students’ and alumni’s diasporic social networks and cultural/linguistic knowledge;
- Produce and preserve original collections of locally-relevant source materials, such as oral histories, digital stories, spoken word performances, directories, maps, and photo/video/print archives.

Meanwhile, our esteemed campus colleagues, Rajini Srikanth, Karen Suyemoto, and Paul Watanabe also played presidential or co-founding leadership roles nationally for the Association for Asian American Studies, the Asian American Psychological Association, and the Asian American and Pacific Islander Policy Research Consortium. Their contributions ensured that expressive arts, empirical social science, clinical practice, policy impact, and the interests of marginalized populations were mutually and integratively advanced by Asian American Studies agendas nationally, as well as in our own program.
I AM GRATEFUL THAT EDITOR RUSSELL LEONG has invited me to share my reflections about Asian American studies from the Midwest perspective and to be sharing this stage, so to speak, with colleagues whom I am sure have served and led their respective institutions for far longer than I have. After obtaining my masters in Asian American Studies (AAS) and my doctorate in History at UCLA, I moved to America’s “heartland.” For the last thirteen years, I have been affiliated with Asian American Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In the last three years, I have been in positions of leadership in the Department of Asian American Studies, starting as Associate Director and then as head of the department. So what I have to say about Asian American Studies comes from this midwestern Big-10 perspective. In what follows, I offer an account of my current research project on hispanismo, a kind of interdisciplinary study that has been made possible by my positioning in the Midwest. I also offer a view of the current opportunities and challenges being at the University provides for Asian American Studies and a perspective for moving it forward in the future.

Where Hispanismo Comes In
As Leong writes, attention to the Asian diaspora in Latin America has been surging in recent years. In both creative writing, which has witnessed an increase in the number of Asian works in languages other than English, and in academic research led by pioneers like Evelyn Hu-DeHart, with its explorations of transnational migration, poets and researchers are recasting what it means to be “Asian American” in new and profound ways. In many ways, I think we are being propelled towards Latin America by the demographic transformations occurring in the U.S. itself, which is dramatically “hispanizing” American culture. By hispanismo I mean the discourse surrounding what it means to be Spanish, the attempt to establish cultural and personal connections with Spain and Spanish culture. It might seem that “Spanishness” has nothing to do with Asians in the Americas. After all, hispanismo in practice has often been synonymous with “whiteness.” Indeed, Latin Americans of African and Asian descent, as Erika Lee points out, especially in the case of Peru, have been on the receiving end of racial hostility engendered by those who would exploit nationalism and pass anti-Asian laws on the basis of a common hispanic heritage.

But as compelling as this story of hispanismo’s oppressiveness might be, it is only one facet of this complex evolving discourse. For one, it does not explain why nationalist intellectuals of color from Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines would embrace hispanismo as proudly as those of white Spanish descent, thus suggesting that the discourse at least has the potential for transcending racial or ethnic divisions. For another, it also does not explain why hispanismo has provided a recurring idiom of protest against the American empire in Latin America and the Philippines during much of the twentieth century, thus suggesting that hispanismo does not have to be an essentially regressive political discourse. Indeed, colonial nationalist intellectuals were drawing upon two major strands of hispanismo, “two Spains” – one a conservative Catholic tradition, and the other a socialist multicultural vision – as discourses of resistance against U.S. colonialism and Americanization.
The University of Pennsylvania’s Asian American Studies Program: Reflections

Eiichiro Azuma, Grace Kao, Josephine Park and Fariha Khan

“In the 1980s, Penn students (some of whom later became Asian American Studies faculty and community organizers) would not take ‘no’ for an answer.”

— Grace Kao

Eiichiro Azuma

IN MARCH OF 2013, the University of Pennsylvania’s Asian American Studies (ASAM) celebrated its fifteenth-year anniversary. We are a small but vibrant ethnic studies program that not only mirrors the traditional ethnic studies vision of uniting scholarship, student activism and community service, but also endeavors to constantly adapt to the shifting intellectual needs of UPenn’s undergraduate student body. Our inception was inseparable from student activism and community support back in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Currently, ASAM consists of four standing faculty members with a full-time Associate Director. All faculty are tenured — Grace Kao in Sociology, David Eng and Josephine Park in English, and myself in History. We belong to our respective home departments, as ASAM does not have its own faculty line. Dr. Fariha Khan, a specialist in South Asian American folklore, has a dedicated role as Associate Director, and also teaches core courses for the program. ASAM offers a minor in Asian American Studies, and we have contributed to the diversification of undergraduate curriculum in UPenn’s School of Arts and Sciences. Comprised of those who pursue the minor, our Undergraduate Advisory Board takes the initiative in organizing student-led conferences, lectures, and other events while advising faculty from the student perspective. ASAM has a close partnership with the Pan-Asian American Community House, a student service division that is a part of the Vice Provost for University Life.

Following the outstanding leadership of Drs. Kao and Park, I have just become the director of the department. Because I am new to the position, I have decided to gather and present the personal observations by our core faculty and staff. As my colleagues explain later, UPenn poses a particular set of challenges to the operation of ASAM in terms of its convoluted bureaucracy and institutional politics, as well as its student body, even when those of Asian ancestry (albeit inclusive of international students) constitute as much as one quarter of the entire undergraduate population. Compared with many other institutions, we probably have a larger presence of South Asian and Muslim students, and the good majority of Asian Americans on the UPenn campus are also immigrants (1.5 generation included) and children of immigrants, rather than your typical fourth-generation Chinese and Japanese Americans. Having hailed from upper-middle-class backgrounds, many of our students are also very professional-minded, often busy with the prescribed coursework for a degree in Business, Engineering, Pre-Med, and so on. The university culture here is not always kind or open to what we do. Indeed, not until a few years ago did we finally come to have a “cultural diversity” requirement in our overall undergraduate curricula (thanks partially to the efforts of Dr. Kao and our dedicated students). These factors oftentimes make it difficult to bring students into our classroom. Still, every year we are blessed with a committed bunch of students — an indispensable part and indeed a very foundation of our program throughout its existence.

Below, I present short reflections by Professors Kao, Park, and Khan. (Professor Eng could not contribute due to time constraints.) Combined, their accounts shed light on the challenges we have faced, as well as the accomplishments we have made in our fifteen-year presence at UPenn.
“It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.”


EACH GENERATION OF ASIAN AMERICANS FACES its unique set of alienations: invidious stereotypes resulting in a unique double-consciousness. Such “two-ness” was akin to the conflicted feelings of generations of African Americans whose worth was earlier measured through the eyes of others, as W.E.B. Du Bois points out.

For Asian Americans, such stereotypes included that of the perpetual foreigner, model minority, job-stealer, and alien, which have recurred during generations and waves of immigration. Other names — entitled, whitewashed, ghetto, terrorist — are newer. These perceptions made by others had also created a sensation of “double-consciousness” among Asian Americans.

Yet today my generation — born in the Reagan era, growing into maturity after the dismantling of the Berlin Wall and the Tiananmen Square student generations — is said to lack consciousness altogether — to be self-centered and apathetic. We are accused of being unable to recognize our racial and cultural colonization, let alone resist it. Nowadays, Asian American activism may mean blogging about TV stereotypes or throwing a frat party. But these generalizations belie the real, vibrant, and innovative efforts of a new generation of Asian Americans organizing around undocumented youth (e.g. the DREAM Act), or joining in community meetings or rallies to combat gentrification. It’s my view that accusations of indifference only breed indifference.

Looking for a way out of this bind, a way to understand Asian American as a political project, I began looking into the generation that defined it. Less than fifty years ago with the 1965 Immigration Act, “Orientals” were let into this country in significant numbers for the first time in modern history. More recently than that, a group of college students in the Bay Area started using the term Asian American so that they didn’t have to say “Oriental” anymore. Though some of those activists’ families went back several generations in America, this was an altogether different way of seeing the world: the first generation who called themselves Asian Americans.

It was an identity born in basements and classrooms, Asians with long hair sitting in circles debating Maoism, debating the budget for the new community center, debating who was dating who, debating whether they should carry guns. The artists clipped out any photo they could find of an Asian person that wasn’t a stereotype, source material for imagining this new identity. The activists were always in meetings, always on the streets; rarely in class if they were students, or at their desk jobs a second longer than they had to be. Many of the activists were artists, and vice versa. No one thought they were making a career out of it.
II. Community Perspectives

“Children and grandchildren of the lost tribe make up a precious link to the source of the Korean American experience.”

– K.W. Lee
The Hidden Story of What Drives Success: Institutions and Power

Vivian Louie

“We have been telling and selling the story of ‘good groups’ and ‘bad groups’ for over a century.”

FOR ALL THE COMPARISONS BETWEEN GROUPS, both historical and in the present day — who’s up, who’s down, who’s got the winning formula, who doesn’t — the real point goes missing. The hidden story of what drives success has to do with the power of institutions to shape what opportunities groups have or don’t have, and what they can do. That said, we do not often bring into the dialogue that institutions and policies do matter. And that’s why this loop — the fascination with why some groups are motivated to do well and others are not — keeps replaying.

Replaying the Loop
The media headlines seem to have a new shine to them — “Asians as the New Jews?” contrasted with “Jews as the New Establishment WASPS” and “What Drives Success: What Drives Groups to Achieve.” Words like “hard work” and “meritocracy” abound. The story told by this coverage (and some of the responses) is the familiar one that Americans typically tell ourselves — certain groups are motivated to achieve, and others are not. We buy into a common ethnic fallacy, namely, we see the power of ethnicity everywhere and attribute ethnic cultural causes to ethnic patterns of inequality.¹

Let’s begin by recognizing that for all the seeming “newness,” this is a very old story. We have been telling and selling this story of the “good groups” and the “bad groups” for more than a century. The groups seen as doing better have varied along with whom they have been compared to — European Jews v. non-Jewish Europeans,² Asian Americans v. African Americans and Latinos, West Indians v. African Americans,³ and so on.

Biological Determinism and Culture
The reasons attributed to the success of the “good groups” though have stayed remarkably similar. Arguments based on genetics or biological determinism, come around every so often, affirming social inequalities such as racial ranking on the basis of biology.⁴ Aside from the dubious merits of such claims, it is always useful to look at the prevailing social forces that might make such an argument so attractive. As the late Stephen Jay Gould shows, biological determinism was used to justify restrictions upon immigration in the nativist years after World War I, which eventually closed the door to large-scale immigration from 1924-1965. Biological determinism was used to impose quotas to restrict the admittance of American Jews into social, political and educational realms, including elite universities.

And then there is culture, the perennial favorite. Perhaps the allure of this argument is that culture seems more knowable and more subject to human will, than genetics and the extent to which they can interact with environmental factors. Culture seemed to explain differences amongst earlier waves of European immigrants. That’s supposedly why the children of Jewish immigrants did so much better than the Irish and the Italians back in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries:⁵ American Jews supposedly had a high regard for education that fueled their rapid upward mobility through schooling. But was it really just culture? Jewish immigrants arriving in the United States after the 1880s had some key advantages, like a middle-class orientation, high rates of literacy that came from the tradition of close reading of the Torah, and job skills that matched what American industries sought.⁶
Culture and Historic Preservation: Recommendations for New York City Chinatown’s Future

The Pratt Center for Community Development and The Collective for Community, Culture and the Environment

The following is an edited and abridged version of the chapter on Culture & Historic Preservation from, The Plan for Chinatown and Surrounding Areas: Preserving Affordability & Authenticity, a report by the Pratt Center for Community Development and the Collective for Community, Culture & Environment (Pratt Center/Collective), for the Chinatown Working Group (CWG). The report was made possible by a grant from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC), which is funded through Community Development Grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The fiscal conduit for this report on behalf of the CWG was University Settlement.

Background: In Fall 2008, the Chinatown Working Group was formed to create a community-based plan to ensure appropriate development for New York City’s Chinatown and its surrounding areas — parts of Lower Manhattan that are not currently protected by zoning. The CWG is comprised of 46 stakeholders, including community organizations, property owners, tenant groups, and Manhattan Community Boards 1, 2 and 3. In Spring 2013, with funding from LMDC, the CWG selected the Pratt Center/Collective team as their planning consultant to create recommendations and implementation strategies in the areas of Affordability; Culture & Historic Preservation; Economic Development; and Zoning & Land Use. Pratt Center/Collective concluded their research and report in December 2013.

To read the full report by Pratt Center/Collective, please visit www.chinatownworkinggroup.org.

Chinatown and its surrounding areas form a vibrant canvas upon which centuries of immigration have left their mark. In order to build the future of these neighborhoods we must recognize and preserve the significant elements of their past as well as their present. The Chinatown Working Group’s Culture, Affordability, Preservation and Zoning (CAPZ) working team has extensively studied Chinatown and its surrounding areas, with an eye towards historic preservation and supporting cultural programming and uses. This plan by Pratt Center/Collective builds upon their work and incorporates the working team’s recommendations into the broader community vision.
Lonesome Journey: The Korean American Century


Our Collective History

THE STORY OF ORGANIZED KOREAN IMMIGRATION is over one hundred years old now, but much of it remains to be told to the outside world. A singular irony is that its beginning chapter, spanning the first seventy-five years, is still missing, although its current pages brim with shining tales of one of the fastest-growing ethnic groups in the United States.

It’s an undying saga of the humblest on earth, standing all alone against the whole world, enduring the unendurable under unremitting serfdom, and rising to the noblest cause of freedom and independence for their conquered kingdom.

It is the story of a lost tribe whose lonesome journey in quest of its dream is yet to be remembered, refreshed and retold for succeeding generations. It is haunted by countless ghosts crying out for fulfillment of their unrequited longing for a homeland, free and whole, as a nation.

In the Korean ethos, it is the history of everlasting unrequited woes called hahn, of separations, departures, and wrongs imposed by unending draconian quirks of fate across the ages. It is a yet-to-be-heard account of a forgotten people whose spirit refuses to die until their hahn is assuaged, until they are released from the limbo of anonymity.

This collection of over seventy oral histories is dedicated to capturing whispers from the souls of those departed first-wave immigrants and “picture brides” interred here in foreign soil, and to filling that aching void in the collective memory of an ancient people of their early solitary passage to America.

At the dawn of this past century, the first boatloads of laborers, mostly single men, were dumped on the sugar plantations of Hawai‘i. They had fled wretched misery, hunger, and wars waged on their plundered kingdom by covetous powers. As they toiled in stoop labor in Hawai‘i and on the mainland, their homeland — under Japanese occupation — vanished from the world’s map and consciousness. A trickle of political exiles from Japanese colonial rule — coupled with arrivals of “picture brides” to marry single men to raise families — helped develop tiny but cohesive ethnic settlements both in Hawai‘i and on the West Coast.

The early sojourners were a patriotic lot, giving generously of themselves to the cause of Korean independence from Japan. Money bought with their blood and sweat went to finance a government in exile. Braver souls joined anti-Japanese guerrilla forces in China and Manchuria. Others trained as independent fighters. On this vast and indifferent continent, they harvested discrimination, isolation, and the indignities reserved for people without a country. Neither Japanese nor Korean, these “original Korean American” pioneers led an obscure existence; lost in the shuffle they did not count. In frustration, they bickered and slandered each other until at last Pearl Harbor rallied them behind a common cause.

They greeted the victory of the Allied Forces in World War II with a vision of dreams fulfilled only to witness their “liberated” homeland divided by big powers and plunged into a fratricidal civil war. And trapped in a way of life only partly of their own making, they died in nameless farm camps and rooming houses as birds of passage who couldn’t go home again.
IN RECENT YEARS, ACADEMIC LITERATURE has focused increasingly on the subject of microaggressions. Microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental actions (whether intentional or unintentional) that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward members of oppressed or targeted groups including: people of color, women, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) persons, persons with disabilities, and religious minorities. Some scholars today argue that racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination are no longer as blatant as they may have been in the past. Instead, people may demonstrate their biases and prejudices in more subtle ways, otherwise known as microaggressions. The purpose of this article is twofold: (1) to discuss how different types of microaggressions affect people’s lives, and (2) to provide a hands-on guide to strategies, approaches, and interventions to address microaggressions.

Types of Microaggressions
Derald Wing Sue and colleagues first described three forms of microaggressions:

- **Microassaults** are overt forms of discrimination in which actors deliberately behave in discriminatory ways, but do not intend to offend someone or may think that their actions are not noticed or harmful. These types of experiences are similar to the “old-fashioned” discrimination that existed in earlier times, but different in that people may not openly proclaim their biases. For example, when someone says “That’s so gay!” to connote that something is weird, the person is aware of the words that they choose; however, they may not realize that using such language is considered homophobic and can offend LGBT people. Similarly, when a comedian makes a racial joke or uses racial slurs, she or he intended to say the offensive comment, but would often end with “I was just joking” as a way of denying prejudice.

- **Microinsults** are statements or behaviors in which individuals unintentionally or unconsciously communicate discriminatory messages to members of target groups. For example, a person might tell an Asian American that she or he “speaks good English” as a compliment. However, in reality, such a statement can be offensive to Asian Americans, implying that Asian persons do not speak clearly. Instances like these can be especially upsetting to Asian Americans who do not speak any other language besides English, or whose families have been in the US for three or more generations.

- **Microinvalidations** are verbal statements that deny, negate, or undermine the realities of members of various target groups. For example, when a white person tells a person of color that racism does not exist, she or he is invalidating and denying the person of color’s racial reality. Similarly, when someone tells a woman that she is “being too sensitive,” or that an LGBT person “should stop complaining,” they invalidate the reality of discrimination in these people’s lives.
Public Digital Archives and Visual Resources for Asian and Asian American Studies

Raymond Pun

Today a treasure-trove of informational resources is available for the public to discover, share, and enjoy. Some digital resources are free and widely accessible, while others may only be available to researchers at a cost. Usually large research or university libraries are able to subscribe to these online resources at a high price since the providers or vendors are organizing and maintaining the data. However, there is a growing number of free digital resources which are just as valuable as the subscription-only databases.

In my career as a research librarian, first with The New York Public Library (NYPL): Stephen A. Schwarzman Building and now with New York University’s Shanghai Campus, I have often assisted students and scholars in locating primary sources, particularly images for their projects. As a librarian, I have been trained to examine websites and digital resources carefully and critically in terms of usability and accessibility.

I am always interested in discovering the latest digital library collection. Depending on how one looks at it, such digital repositories are either accelerating scholarly research or are dramatically slowing the pace of research since scholars must now address online resources that they never knew previously existed. Today, more and more libraries and archives are building, maintaining, and catapulting their holdings into the virtual world.

In this essay, I have selected and annotated some of the most useful digital visual resources available for scholars and students researching in the fields of Asian and/or Asian American Studies. This is a preliminary listing and by no means is complete, but it reflects resources I have commonly utilized in my work with scholars, researchers, and students. Faculty can easily incorporate these images into their teaching curriculum to enrich students’ perceptions and understanding of the East, including the studies of European Orientalism.

Once researchers find images that they would like to include in a publication, from there it may become complicated. Researchers will need to explore the site, contact the administrator, and request for permission to reprint the image. Each site handles these requests differently; some may charge a fee for reproduction due to copyright laws. These resources are frequently updated and new collections are often added to the sites as well.
III. Global Voices:
Asia, Africa and the Americas

“I just did it the opposite way. They [banks] go to the rich; I go to the poor; they go to men; I go to women; they go to the city center; I go to the remote village.”

– Dr. Muhammad Yunus
I'M VERY HAPPY TO BE HERE TONIGHT for the honor that you give me, and also for the chance that I get to meet the young people of the university here. I love that feeling of being on campus, being with the university, faculty, and the students, because whatever I have done grew out of that environment. And as you were introducing me, probably the impression you gave is that what I've accomplished is a difficult task. But it was such a simple thing that I did, not complicated, not great things as one would think. And that's what I specialize in, doing very simple things. And doing very little things. You know the word “microcredit” didn't exist in the dictionary of the English language, the kind of thing we were doing, telling people how it works, what it can do for people when it became a subject of debate and controversy. But we had to come up with a name to describe what we do. Since we give tiny little loans, we started calling it microcredit, tiny credit. Now looking back, probably a more appropriate word would have been “nanocredit,” so small. Micro really doesn't give you the impression of what it does.

And how did it begin? It was not because I was doing a lot of research or that I was a serious faculty member, not at all. The circumstances in which I was in Bangladesh, in that university, in that situation, kind of forces you to do something. The situation was so terrible around me, around the campus, around the country. So you feel the desperation of the situation which pushes you into doing something. So I simply jumped into that something not knowing what it was. And the university where I was teaching was located right next to villages, right in the neighborhood. It's not like the university here which is right in the middle of the city. We are right in the middle of the village. So you see the terrible conditions. It's a beautiful campus, but right outside, a terrible village. And the situation was extremely difficult at the time. This was the mid '70s, so you see right there that horrible situation of poverty. So as I go around in the villages, I observe whether there is something that I can do for any one person. Can I make myself useful to one person, even for a day? So what did I do during that time? I did all the little things for this person or that person — whatever I could do. But what happened is that I started to see the village, the life of the people very very closely, eyeball to eyeball. Then I started seeing the loansharking that goes on in that village. I don't know whether you have an understanding of what loansharking does to people, particularly poor people. They literally take full control of their lives by lending tiny amounts of money. So ugly you cannot just stand there and watch it, but that's what it is. And you feel so insignificant because you cannot do anything about it. And I felt horrible that I could not do anything. I felt like a useless person who sees loansharking. People are literally sucked dry by the blood-sucking loansharks. And it's not only in this village, it's all over the country, it's all over the world. So I thought I couldn't do anything. Suddenly, it came to my mind that I could do something! And it was a very simple idea, and I went right on ahead. The idea was: Why don't I lend the money so that people can come to me? Then they don't have to go to the loansharks. Why just go on shouting and writing articles about loansharking? I can do something by lending money. So I started taking money out of my pocket and started lending money.
“You have my word, Dr. Yunus, I’m going to continue your legacy in any way I can, at the local and state level.”

WHEN AAARI FIRST APPROACHED ME TO ACCEPT THIS AWARD tonight, I was overwhelmed with joy and emotion. You see, I’ve known Dr. Thomas Tam when he first founded this organization many years ago. He was one of the very few people who actually mentored me and advised me when I graduated from college. I was just a fledgling public servant, not knowing where to go. He took the time to sit down with me, someone whom he didn’t know, and advise me about what it was to be in political empowerment and gave me the opportunity to actually be involved with some of AAARI’s civic activities such as the 2003 CUNY Asian American Conference on Education and the 2005 CUNY Conference on Korean Americans, putting together panels and being a part of panels comprised of civic leaders.

After I found out that I was supposed to speak tonight right after a Nobel Peace Prize winner, and someone who defines social entrepreneurship, I had to think twice about accepting this award. I was a little intimidated. However, tonight is really a full circle of events for me. AAARI and Dr. Thomas Tam took a recent college graduate and allowed him to find passion in public service. Dr. Muhammad Yunus actually allowed me to sustain my passion in public service. When he was at the pivotal highest level of world recognition, every public service and public policy student was studying about microfinance and how to alleviate poverty in the world. The core of what Dr. Yunus does, and the philosophy which resonates with me very deeply, is that if you are willing to work hard and put in the extra hours, you deserve the opportunity to get ahead. You deserve upper mobility in society. That is the core philosophy that I believe in as a public servant, as a politician representing Flushing, Queens.

Having that kind of philosophy, however, makes me very frustrated these days. After a year of being in office as a New York State Assembly Member, we have serviced over 8,000 people in Flushing. And out of those 8,000 people, I’ve encountered so many stories, endless stories, of individuals working so hard but are just struggling everyday to make ends meet. I had an eighty-seven-year-old senior with no family, who came to my office back in February because he had a housing problem. He lived in an illegally-converted one bedroom apartment with five other seniors, and the landlord would not provide him any proof of residency, so he couldn’t collect any benefits. He had cataracts and a walker, and was just struggling to get by every single day. He got on one of those casino buses in Flushing every single day to collect those vouchers to resell them to make two hundred bucks for his share of the rent each month. There are thousands of seniors like that. We think Asian Americans are all living on Park Avenue and doing well. That’s not the case. One out of four Asian American seniors live in poverty. There are also affordable housing problems, small business problems, and education problems. These are the types of areas that I need help with from AAARI, to collaborate and come up with the best solutions to alleviating the problems in our communities.

I’m very honored to receive this award. You have my word, Dr. Yunus, I’m going to continue your legacy in any way I can, at the local and state level. And thank you so much to AAARI for your tremendous work. Thank you!
I HAVE NEVER MET NELSON MANDELA. I lived in South Africa during most of my adult life and during Mandela's post-prison life, from 1995 to 2000 and again from 2003 to 2010, but I don't have any personal "When I met Mandela" stories. Nonetheless, Mandela played a big part in my life and I was tremendously saddened by his passing. As an American, I couldn't vote for him. In fact, I missed the elections by about a year, moving to South Africa in January 1995. But I still feel some legitimate claim to him as my former President because I had the opportunity to live in his new South Africa for a good long while. As many of our South African friends tell me, I'm practically a South African.

While it made no logical sense at all, I felt guilty that I was not in Johannesburg when he finally left us. I had been in South Africa earlier in the year, doing my annual bit of teaching at Rhodes University in Grahamstown and later catching up with old friends in Johannesburg, when he was in the hospital. Bill and Chelsea Clinton happened to be in the country during my month-long stay doing some PR for his foundation, and even they couldn't get into the hospital room to visit him. He had been so ill; there were all kinds of discussions and planning about how the university (and the entire country, really) would close down when he passed away. It was no longer "if," but definitely a "when." While I couldn't visit the hospital or do anything, at least I was there in solidarity with all the other South Africans who were living their lives, but niggled by constant worry about him, his failing condition, and what would happen to the country after.

I felt similarly guilty when I "missed" the riots in Los Angeles (I had been living and working in Costa Rica at the time). I imagine that there's a sense that when something so monumental, so historic, takes place in a city that is home, you feel a need to be there . . . and guilt when you're not. Although I now hold a Maryland driver's license and live in one of the D.C. suburbs, both Johannesburg (and by extension, South Africa) where I lived for nearly fourteen years, and Los Angeles where I grew up, where my parents are and where I went to college, will always be "home" (because for me, as for many others, home is in multiple sites). And on both these occasions I was not able to be present, in solidarity with my paisanos, my people, my comrades, when these huge events took place.

"Who is 'our' President?"
The notions of "home" and "country" are sometimes problematic issues for my daughter. While Siana has two American parents (one of us born in Seoul and a naturalized American), she was born in Nairobi, spent most of her life in Johannesburg, and only moved to the U.S. in the summer of 2010 when she was eight. America was a great place to visit with Grandmother Pearson or the Park clan, hanging out with mommy and daddy's friends, or going to Disneyland. It was a place where we went for vacations.

The year 2008 was a particularly confusing time for her. Siana was six or seven. We were living in Johannesburg. George W. Bush was serving his second term as President of the U.S. The Democratic presidential primaries were taking place. Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama were regular figures on our television and
WHEN I HEARD THE NEWS OF NELSON MANDELA'S PASSING at age ninety-five on December 5, 2013, I felt a sense of both grief and joy. I do not recall feeling this moved by the death of someone I had never personally met. Yet, there are persons who make such an impact on you that the mention of their name evokes thoughts from within. Nelson Mandela was one such person.

The ability of such individuals to change the course of history is often accompanied by an equally transformative social context. I recall the Civil Rights Movement with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the People Power Movement in the Philippines with Corazon Aquino, among others. Social, economic, and psychological forces all played a role in the historic significance of these movements alongside the unique qualities of their leaders.

While I mourn the loss of Mandela (the individual), I celebrate his legacy and the impact of the South African Liberation Struggle (the social movement). Both played a part in building my Asian American consciousness at an early age, providing me with instructive lessons on how power can be leveraged to achieve social change. I reflect on these lessons below.

Power of Political Engagement

My political consciousness as a Filipino/Asian American was first awakened by the Anti-Apartheid Movement. In fact, I was a junior in high school when I participated in my first public act of protest: a 1989 Los Angeles march involving thousands of people, calling for the release of a then imprisoned Mandela and an end to apartheid. In the 1980s, students in college campuses across the country held protests as part of a
The Buddhist Bug Project

THE BUDDHIST BUG PROJECT, or The BBUG, is the most ambitious body of work that continues my exploration of diasporic identities. The Bug is a creation inspired by two reasons: (1) a personal inability to reconcile my fascination with Buddhism alongside my upbringing as a Khmer Muslim woman, and (2) an attempt to capture a quickly-changing Cambodian urban and rural landscape. The project is a culmination of thematic interests in hybridity, transcendence, and otherness. Through an interdisciplinary approach, my work maps new political and spiritual landscapes. Meters and meters of textile act as skin, as a way for the surface of my body to extend into public spaces, and as a metaphoric device for stories to spread across an expanse. For me, The Bug is created from a sense of play and curiosity. S/he is a displaced creature destined to travel and wander amidst the “in-between.” This space, which exists between who s/he is and where s/he is, is in fact a powerful place for encounter, habitation and reinvention.

The Bug is created as an assertion of paradoxes, a result of a hybrid refugee experience, embodying the fluctuating inside/outside perspective of the transnational being. S/he longs for stillness while on a constant journey. S/he is a source for refuge while on a perpetual search for home. S/he is both a bridge and obstacle. S/he is a creature belonging in this world, yet appearing to be from another universe.

At the heart of my work is an interest in developing stories, usually narratives that exist outside of conventions. The Buddhist Bug Project continues a methodology in which personal narratives shape my art. I believe performing narratives is an act of social engagement that contributes to collective healing. For me, performance and storytelling become ways of bridging the interior and exterior space of self, as well as initiate critical dialogues between communities and institutions. My interdisciplinary works attempt to find crucial intersections between performing narratives and works that attempt audience engagement.
ABOUT BARAKA. I DON'T HAVE ANY POEMS OR PIECES ABOUT HIM per se, but I was certainly influenced by his very early poems (“The Dead Lecturer,” “Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note”), especially one called, “Beautiful Black Women,” which he recorded with musicians (the album can be found online and is called “Black & Beautiful, Soul & Madness”).

My poem “Motown/Smokey Robinson” (which is part of the collection Danger and Beauty, published by City Lights Press), was inspired by being blown away by that particular recording at writer Thulani Davis's home back in the 1970s.

Also, Baraka’s early and probably most well-known play, “Dutchman,” was influential on my own work as a playwright.

LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka: a most complicated man. Met him when I was a teenager — maybe fifteen or sixteen at the time — one afternoon at Kenneth Rexroth’s house in San Francisco. Can you imagine? Can't recall if he was already known as Amiri Baraka, but I do recall being absolutely tongue-tied. Rexroth foisted my attempts at “serious” poetry on the poor man, which made me want to die of embarrassment. I recall Baraka not saying much, except for asking why I used African images in this one poem. He was not unkind.

Once I moved to New York, I read/performed with Baraka twice — first at St. Mark’s Church in the East Village, and the second and last time at a music/poetry performance event that the late great Sekou Sundiata organized at Aaron Davis Hall in Harlem. Quincey Troupe performed, Craig Harris and his big band, Ntozake Shange. So did Sekou. Baraka had his entourage, his own musicians, his own thing going.

I am close to his first wife, the writer Hettie Cohen Jones. And am very fond of his two remarkable and accomplished daughters by Hettie, Lisa and Kellie Jones.

“hey girl, you sleep without dreams
and remember the barrios and how it’s all the same
manila / the mission / Chinatown / east la. / harlem/ fillmore st . . .”
from “Motown/Smokey Robinson”
by Jessica Hagedorn

Editor: I asked New York writer Jessica Hagedorn to reflect on Newark-born writer Amiri Baraka (1934-2014), a galvanizing influence upon many 1970s and 80s Asian and Asian American poets, including writers associated with the Kearny Street Workshop, Third World Communications, and New York’s Basement Workshop. Above is a portion of her e-mail to me on January 21, 2014.
“Challenge the traditional ways of thinking in Asian Studies, Asian American Studies, and Latino and Latin American Studies.”

– Augusto Espiritu
Traversing Syaman Rapongan’s Island Imaginaries

Hsinya Huang

Towards Trans-Pacific Indigeneity

USING SYAMAN RAPONGAN’S WORKS AS ANCHOR TEXTS, this essay focuses on transpacific flows and indigenous formations which traverse international boundaries. His work offers an oceanic perspective to balance continental ways of thinking, and supplements and challenges transnational approaches to imperialism, indigeneity, and globalization.

Syaman Rapongan is a renowned indigenous writer from Orchid Island (or Pongso no Tao in Tao language, literally meaning “island of the people”), located forty kilometers southeast of Taiwan. There, tribal men and women continue to live a life close to their oceanic tradition, which is part of the larger Austronesian culture. He left Orchid Island for school when he was a teenager, remaining abroad for decades to work in the city as an urban indigene. In the 1980s, he participated in the aboriginal demonstrations, of which the most significant was the Tao-led protest against the storage of nuclear waste on Orchid Island. Afterwards, Rapongan returned to his home island to learn from the elders his tribal traditions of boat-building and fishing, and, despite long and formative absence from his tribal culture, awakened himself to an oceanic perception of transnational island community. In his work, he depicts a larger oceanic perception of place and space, not only via an evocative sensibility for the sea, but also through a quest of the ancestral words passed down as bodily codes. Thus the ocean itself is reframed, and Orchid Island becomes part of the interconnected islanders’ heritage of the Pacific.

Rapongan’s Tao ancestors used to move freely in the Pacific Ocean, following the migratory route of the flying fish which was subject to the flow of the Kuroshio/Black Current. This north-flowing current on the west side of the North Pacific drives the flying fish migration which, in turn, shapes and reshapes the migratory route of the island indigenes. Because of the annual/regular movement among the islands, the islanders conceive of an extensive communal body of solidarity following the pathway of the current. As Rapongan’s people feed on the flying fish and center their rituals and calendars on the movement of the fish, both humans and fish traverse the Pacific, deterritorializing the ocean. At the very outset of his autobiographical fiction, Black Wings, Rapongan writes:

The dense schools of flying fish dye patches of the wide and vast ocean black. Each school consists of three or four hundred fish, swimming about fifty or sixty meters apart. They stretch unbroken for one nautical mile and they look like a mighty military force going into battle. They follow the ancient course of the Black Current, gradually heading toward the sea north of Batan in the Philippines.1

Syaman Rapongan sailing his boat. Courtesy of Syaman Rapongan
BOAT—A TOOL FOR MY JOURNEY ON THE SEA and also my second oceanic ancestor. I never imagined that I would ever travel alone on the sea. In the beginning I just wanted to rebel against my parents because they stopped me from studying in Taiwan. Further, it had always been my childhood dream, inspired by my youngest great-uncle, to travel alone on the waters. Rebellion was not something easy on our island within the tribe I belonged, despite my being the only son of my father. However . . . .

One evening in late spring of May 1964, when my father went fishing, I waited the entire night on the beach for his return. In fact, just like me, all the small boys of our tribe went to the beach and waited for their fathers to come back from fishing. The beach thus became the very space for our young ones to directly know the sea — and the origin for our learning about the ways of sea currents and of fish. Father stayed on the sea till midnight; he returned late because he stayed to catch large predator fish.

Of these large fish, our ancestors categorize them into various kinds such as yellow fin tuna, jack fish, dolphin fish, sword fish, and marlins. Some are suitable for men to eat while others are suitable only for women to eat. Thus in the tradition of our people, the men, to clinch their social status, have always gone out to catch large predator fish. However, that night my father didn’t catch any large fish. We kids would fall asleep so easily; besides, the beach was crowded with wooden boats in flying fish season. That night, I lay down in the space between two boats, dug a hole to fit my body, shielded by sands and stones, and just fell asleep. Father couldn’t see his son sleeping under the hidden space between boats. He went straight back to I-Mowrod, our homestead, and when he found that I was not home, panicked and began searching for me.

That night I had a dream, and it happened to be the very story that my father told on one wintry night in 1964 when I was in the third grade. There was neither electricity nor television on our island; in my tribe there were not more than a dozen Han folks who emigrated from Taiwan. In other words, it was nearly impossible to be exposed to legends, whether Western or Eastern. During winter nights, the light in every household came from the burning of firewood, providing not only light but also warmth to the body. On wintry nights my father and his friends used to catch fish with fire torches in caves beneath the coral reefs or hunt them in the sea’s shoals. Before setting out to the sea, he always told me legends of our people to make me sleep all the way to daybreak so that I wouldn’t hinder his habit of hunting fish at night. So, every morning I awoke to find fresh groupers or lobsters, and more, for breakfast.
In the Absence of the Towers, Gandhi

Yuyutsu Sharma

In absence of Twin Towers, it was his statue in Union Square that became solid shaft of my light in the whirling city of rattling trains, my memory key to the numbered streets of this mandala of steel, siren and seeds . . .

Larger than life figure standing in the grassy triangle, his feeble staff from South Africa shining from the glow of his compassion, his eyes looking onto the Green Market stalls from Upstate, Apple cider, wine, pretzels, Organic cupcakes, Dead Sea salt and across the Square Barnes and Noble store, Occupy Wall Street kids, skating Latinos and that black boy from Hudson River Valley his chessboard of Power Games spread on a little table with an empty little chair in the freezing cold waiting for someone to come and invest his precious coin or a dream to spend some quality time under the murky skies likely to turn cobalt blue a flame of a feather of a singing blue jay . . .

Author

Yuyutsu Ram Dass Sharma is a Himalayan poet, translator, and journalist from Kathmandu, Nepal. Punjab-born and widely travelled poet, Sharma is the author of ten books of poetry, the most recent of which include Nine New York Poems (Nirala, 2014); Milarepa’s Bones (Nirala, 2012); and Space Cake, Amsterdam (Howling Dog Press, 2009, 2014). Sharma has also translated and edited contemporary Nepali poetry in English. He has received fellowships including Rockefeller Foundation and Ireland Literature Exchange. Sharma represented Nepal and India at Poetry Parnassus held at London Olympics 2012. He edits Pratik, A Magazine of Contemporary Writing, and contributes to The Himalayan Times, Nepal’s leading newspaper. Currently, he is in the United States as a visiting poet at New York University.
Momotaro/Peach Boy: A Portfolio

“Momotaro is a story of possibilities and second chances, retold to explain the cycle of hope and grief brought about by war.”

MOMOTARO/PEACH BOY IS A PORTFOLIO of nine prints based on the popular Japanese folk tale about a baby boy who emerges from a giant peach and grows up to become a hero. The prints in this series form the pages of a fictional narrative, inspired by family memories of the forced internment of Japanese Americans and the experiences of Japanese American GIs in World War II. Each of the prints incorporate photographs of my father, grandfather and son, as well as cartoon characters, material from the National Archives, traditional Japanese motifs and illustrations appropriated from magazines and children’s books.

As a third generation Japanese American, I was interested in constructing a contemporary Japanese American folk tale that explores the relationship between art and history. Much of my work combines autobiography, oral history, and portraiture in the art making process. I am particularly interested in oral traditions and folk histories that have been created to explain historical events and have been passed down over several generations.

Momotaro is a classic adventure tale with many readings. During World War II, the Japanese government used Momotaro as a propaganda vehicle for promoting nationalism and imperialist expansion overseas. In the original folk tale an old couple nearing the end of their lives dream of having a child. They discover a giant peach floating in the river, and when they open the peach a baby boy leaps out. They name the baby Momotaro, or Peach Boy. When the boy grows up he goes off to fight the monsters who have been terrorizing his village. On his journey to Onigashima, the island of the ogres, he meets a pheasant, a dog and a monkey who agree to help him. Together, they defeat the wicked ogres and return to Momotaro’s village laden with riches. In both the traditional and contemporary versions of this story, the elderly couple is rewarded for a lifetime of hard work and self-sacrifice with a perfect child. Momotaro’s brave deeds redeem his aging parents in the eyes of society. The peach, an Asian symbol of longevity and fertility, is woven into Momotaro’s clothing in the form of a crest and appears as an ever-present reminder of the importance of family and community.

Momotaro was told to me as a young child, and it was not difficult to see my father as the brave young boy who goes off to fight the wicked ogres. I have tried to retell this story from both a child’s and an adult’s point of view. The story presented here is not a celebration of my father’s heroic deeds, but an examination of the ways in which we create folk heroes and share stories of survival by bending the truth, fictionalizing history, and embellishing memory. In the retelling, Momotaro becomes a story of possibilities and second chances generated by desperate acts, told and retold as a way to explain the endless cycle of hope, expectation, and grief brought about by war.
Yuri Kochiyama: Rites of Passage

ONE OF THE UNSPOKEN RITES OF PASSAGE for a third generation Japanese American (Sansei) from the 1970s Los Angeles Asian Movement was to visit the Kochiyama Family in New York City. For many a Sansei getting their feet wet in the Asian Movement, the Kochiyama’s embraced us as family and introduced us into a whirlwind of all kinds of people. The Kochiyama’s apartment might well have been described as “Movement Central.”

Since the early 1960s, every Saturday night was an open house at the Kochiyama’s where neighbors, foreign students, aspiring entertainers, professional athletes, civil rights workers, friends, out-of-towners, and parent activists would congregate, growing to be as many as 100 people. The Kochiyama open house tradition was a breeding ground for “decolonizing your mind.” Visitors were thrust into a diverse mix of persons who were involved in struggles from local to international, and in injustices from past to present.

One of my first impressions of Yuri Kochiyama was from a 1974 anti-war march in midtown Manhattan. We (maybe 2,000 people) were confined to marching three abreast on the city’s sidewalks, when we were suddenly besieged by New York’s “finest” on horses. They charged at us right on a street corner so as to split the march in two. Being from Los Angeles and having never seen cops on horses before, no less being reared at up against the wall, it was pretty intimidating. We found Yuri among the mass confusion of a disassembled march. Like a seasoned combatant, she said these kinds of police attacks could be countered by throwing down marbles on the street to make the horses lose their balance. That was my first lesson in street fighting with the cops.

I will always remember Yuri for her dedication and allegiance to Malcolm X — continuing not just his memory, but more importantly supporting his work. Malcolm kept alive Paul Robeson’s strategy to put the U.S. government on trial for its human rights violations against its own African American citizens. Malcolm kept alive Robert F. Williams example of defending Black people “by any means necessary,” which helped spur the Black Liberation Movement into being.

There was hope in the air. Yuri learned from all the great fighters of the African American revolutionary tradition, from Frederick Douglas to Mumia Abu-Jamal — that U.S. imperialism was not going down through the ballot box. Revolutionary change in the U.S. is not a dinner party by people of color in the White

Photo courtesy of the Kochiyama Family