

ROOTS

ASIAN AMERICAN MOVEMENTS
IN LOS ANGELES ZINE

in conjunction with ROOTS: ASIAN
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS 1968-80S
at the CHINESE AMERICAN MUSEUM
JANUARY 19, 2017 - JUNE 11, 2017

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Introduction

Steve Wong

Roots: Asian American Movements in Los Angeles 1968-1980s (Roots) opens at the Chinese American Museum on January 19th, 2017, one day before Donald Trump becomes the 45th president of the United States. The timing of the exhibition is mostly coincidental, as we have been working with guest curator Ryan Wong for over four years to make this exhibition happen, but the exhibit certainly could not have come at a more

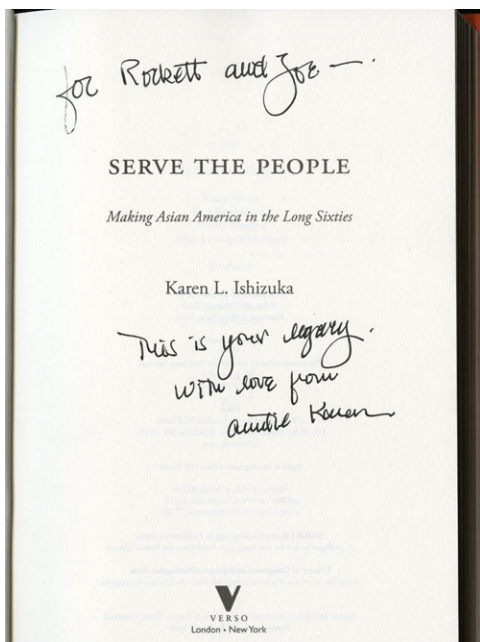


Maiya Kuida Osumi, Rockett Dylan Ito Wong, and Zoe Phoenix Ito Wong attending GRACE LEE BOGGS: A Conversation on Revolution June 2013

significant time: it is a time for a new generation of Asian Pacific Americans to learn about the Asian American Movement, to examine how a generation stood up to oppression, transformed their communities, and attempted to change our society, and a time to organize and fight both old and new forms of oppression.

My work, my passion, my worldview, and even my children are legacies of the Asian American Movement, for I curate exhibitions at the Chinese American Museum, I teach Asian American Studies at Pasadena City College, and I met my lifelong partner while we were both pursuing a Master's degree in Asian American Studies at UCLA - all of which came out of the Movement. Because of this, this exhibit is more significant to me than any other exhibition I have worked on. Because of this, I also need to be cautious (especially as someone who was not yet born during the early years of the movement), of not romanticizing, memorializing, or sentimentalizing the Movement. Guest curator Ryan succinctly writes that "looking at the Asian American Movement is not an exercise in nostalgia or historicization, but a vital way to reclaim the strategies and possibilities that emerge from organizing." It is imperative that this exhibit is used not only as an example of Asian Americans fighting oppression, but to ignite new ideas and action, and produce intergenerational conversations.

In the spirit of past self-generated, community-based publications like *Gidra* (1969-1974), and my generation's shorter lived *The World is Yours!* (1996-1997), we published this zine to accompany the *Roots* exhibition. It is my hope that this publication further explores our histories, and the relevance of Asian American Movements to today's evolving social justice issues. In this zine, we have assembled a diverse range of Asian Pacific American, activists, writers, poets, artists, and students to contribute new and previously published, yet relevant works. I hope that this zine will help promote intergenerational and cross-cultural dialogue. Ultimately, I hope that both the zine and the exhibition can be used as a foundation to navigate our future challenges as Asian Pacific Americans, and as a model of solidarity to fight for the civil rights of Queer, Muslim and undocumented communities and participate in the Black Lives Matter and Standing Rock movements.



Having some distance since the election, and through conversations with longtime activists (many whom have lived through much more challenging times), I have come to understand that progress is not, and should not be, an easy path without its impediments. The new national leadership represents a segment of this society that is not willing to accept the hard fought gains and achievements of our many social movements. Undoubtedly we now live in a more tolerant, more colorful, and less oppressive society that is different from the one that the Movement was born out of. Still, this society is far from the initial Movement ideals. This time in history is our one step back as we organize, mobilize and prepare for our two steps forward. Hopefully, this moment will be considered a reactionary hiccup in our progress to achieving our vision of America – an America that is just and equitable for all.

Roots: Asian American Movements in Los Angeles 1968-80s

Ryan Lee Wong

What is the Asian American Movement?

Maybe you've heard about Asian American activism in "the day," but never had a full sense of who and what that involved. Or, perhaps, you have been fed the image of Asians as a docile, apolitical mass in the news, Hollywood movies, and textbooks. If so, the visual culture of the Asian American Movement is a revelation.

Something about seeing these kids with long hair and army fatigues, posters celebrating Asian women with AK-47s, and manifestoes with fiery rhetoric shatters received knowledge—it can literally rewire your brain's understanding of Asian people here and across the world. In its inception, "Asian America" was a family, a collective awakening, a revolution.

From Little Tokyo to Chinatown to Historic Filipinotown to the West Side, in solidarity with Latino, Black, feminist, and international struggles, Los Angeles was a crucial and dynamic hub for defining Asian America. *Roots: Asian American Movements in Los Angeles 1968-80s* is the first attempt to collect and present this visual story, arguing that the past helps us make meaning of the present and future of our communities.

"Asian American" was coined around 1968, and developed over a long decade of art, community work, struggle, and study. The Asian American Movement was, indeed, many movements: sharpening the protests against the War in Vietnam, offering social services to Asian communities, fighting evictions and displacement, agitating for a communist revolution, analyzing the intersections of gender, race, and class, and more.

Politicized by War

For many young Asian Americans in the 1960s, the War in Vietnam was a brutal and urgent politicization. Watching the war unfold on the nightly news, a common sentiment was that America "killing people who looked like us." Unlike the mainstream anti-war movement, many Asian Americans saw the Vietnam War as genocidal, or at least imperialist. They placed the war within the larger history of anti-Asian racism in America and imperialist expansion into the Third World.



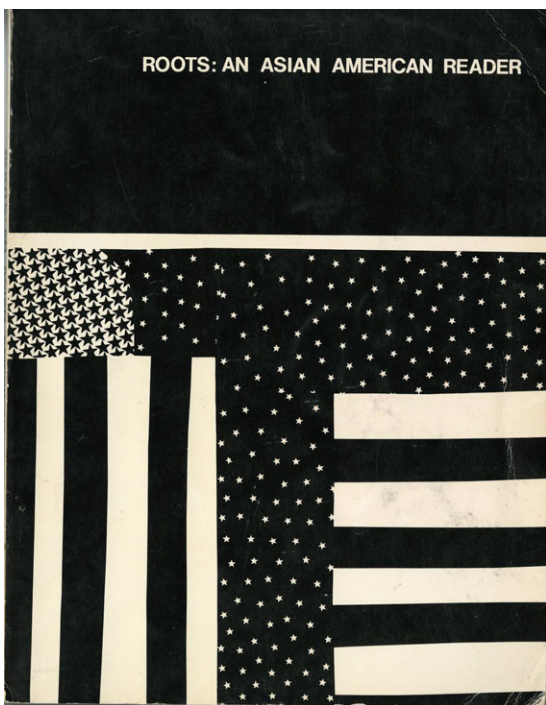
Anti-War demonstration on Wilshire Blvd, April 1971. Asian Pacific American Photographic Collection, Visual Communications Archives.

In 1969, Asians Americans for Peace was founded in Los Angeles. Groups like the Thai Binh and Van Troi Brigades (named after Vietnamese freedom fighters) formed to mobilize youth. Meanwhile, Asian Movement for Military Outreach addressed the psychological torture that Asian GIs endured among their battalions and in the field.

Students, History, and Self-Knowledge

The Asian American Movement began on college campuses, where the dynamic Black Power, anti-war activism, and women's liberation movements filled the hearts and minds of young Asian students. One of their first concerns—besides discarding the outdated “Oriental” in favor of “Asian”—was to understand their unique concerns. Understanding Asian people's historical and lived experiences was an essential part of the awakenings—collective and individual—that marked the Movement.

On campus, this took the form of new courses taught by students and organizers, as well as professors. These were the first classes in Ethnic and Asian American Studies, breaking the walls between classroom and community. Student organizations presented festivals and culture nights recuperating traditional music and theater, as well as producing new, often agitational, performances. Off campus, study groups, oral history projects, and demographic reports delved into the Asian American experience. Knowledge was not only a pursuit in itself—it formed a foundation for activism.



Roots and Resources

Founded in 1969 out of a campaign by student activist and faculty allies, the UCLA Asian American Studies Center quickly became a center for resources-gathering and scholarship for the Asian American movement. Asian American student organizations at CSULA, Occidental, USC, and other colleges soon followed. It was a vital hub and training ground for young activists, a place they could earn a salary while doing community work.

Roots, the publication which inspired this exhibition's title, was a course reader published by the UCLA Asian American Studies department in 1971. The editors, many of them young organizers themselves, defined the stakes and reasons for publishing such a volume in the preface: “the lack of appropriate materials in readily accessible form is one of the greatest immediate problems”

Roots was an experimental publication, a mixture of poetry, visual art, reports from organizers, opinion pieces, and historical research. It became an essential tool for early Asian American studies and circulated an estimated 50,000 copies over twelve printings.

Art and Communication

The Movement marked the first time Asian people collectively owned and created their own images in this country. Culture—musical, visual, written, performed—was a way to exorcise and subvert dominant American narratives. Young artists had to cut against the stereotypes and caricatures they had been fed since youth.

Art was “for the people”: and there was little differentiation between it and activism, and it infused the new identity of Asian America with anti-imperialist and multiethnic critiques. Los Angeles became home to the first Asian American films ever made. Community-based and politically-charged, they showed Asian struggles, families, and histories in a way Hollywood never imagined. A plethora of newspapers got out the word. From personal essays to reports on U.S. militarism and Asian communities, the concerns and goals of the Movement took shape in those worn and circulated pages.

“Secretly rooting for the other side”

The Movement marked the first time Asian people collectively owned and created their own images in this country. It was no small feat: young artists had to cut against the stereotypes and caricatures they had been fed since youth. These lines from “We Are the Children” on the seminal album *A Grain of Sand* capture this tension:

Foster children of the Pepsi generation Cowboys
and Indians ride, red man, ride! Watching war
movies with the next-door neighbor Secretly
rooting for the other side

Culture—musical, visual, written, performed—was a way to exorcise and subvert dominant American narratives. It infused the new identity of Asian America with anti-imperialist and multiethnic critiques. The verse above both names a dominant paradigm then re-appropriates the image of the heroic cowboy and soldier by actually identifying with the ‘villain’—in this case, the indigenous and Asian combatants.



Chris Iijima and Joanne Nobuko Miyamoto performing, date unknown. Asian Pacific American Photographic Collection, Visual Communications Archives

Community and Place

Mao told his followers to “serve the people,” and Movement activists took the call to heart. In the context of Los Angeles, they found their calling in historic Japanese, Filipino and Chinese American communities. Often neglected by government agencies and limited by language access and social stigma, these neighborhoods needed jobs, health services, and education access.

As these younger, college-educated, radicalized Asian Americans worked in the community, they built intergenerational bridges and emphasized the importance of place. Their battles against eviction and redevelopment took on a double urgency: both protecting historical communities and the new Movement centers that shared spaces with them.

“Hell no, we won’t go!”

In the early 1970s, Little Tokyo was marked as a blighted area by the L.A. Master Plan, and the landmark Sun Building was to be torn down and replaced with a luxury hotel. The Sun Building housed the Japanese American Community Services, Asian Involvement Office (or JACS-AI, a more youth- and movement-focused wing of the older service organization), elderly Latino residents, Japanese cultural spaces, and small businesses. In 1973, the Little Tokyo Anti-Eviction Task Force formed to combat the evictions. It disbanded a couple years later, and was replaced by the Little Tokyo People’s Rights Organization (LTPRO).

The LTPRO waged a multi-year battle of fundraising, demonstrations, community outreach, and Nisei Week outreach. They demanded the construction of a Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (JACCC), jobs for Japanese workers, and senior housing. In 1976, residents of the Sun Building were finally evicted. In a pyrrhic victory, the LTPRO and organizing was able to secure the Little Tokyo Service Center, founded in 1979, and funding for the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, which opened its doors in 1980. Many of those activists also went on to found the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations, which called upon the U.S. government to recognize the legacy of internment.

While Little Tokyo was marked for redevelopment and pushing out an elderly community, activism in Chinatown activists focused on providing services for the expanding and underserved population. The Asian American Tutorial Project began in 1969, bringing students from colleges around the city to create a “Saturday School” for area youth.

Castelar Elementary School in Chinatown, with its many Chinese- and Spanish-speaking students, became a hub of organizing. Initially government-funded, Chinatown Youth Council provided after-school activities for youth, film screenings, a food cooperative, and ESL classes for adults. Later, CYC activists established Teen Post, a youth center on Chung King Road. The Chinatown Education Project, meanwhile, focused on a tutoring program, field trips for youth, and publishing a newsletter for parents. In 1979, when a student at Castelar was killed in an automobile accident, residents picketed City Hall demanding, and later winning, traffic lights and a crossing guard.

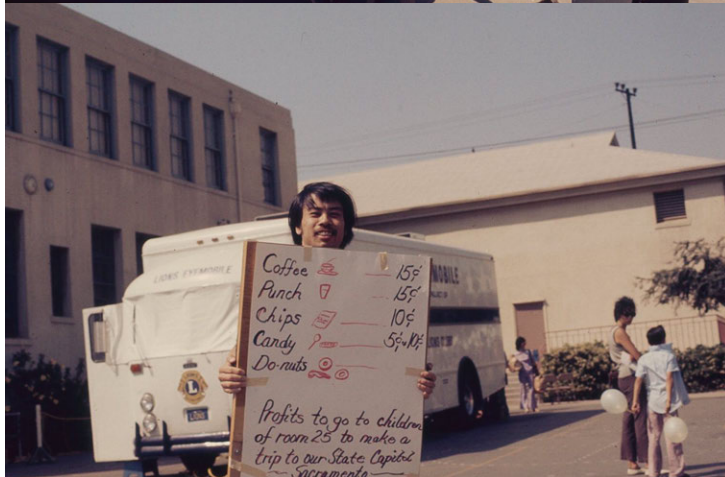


A group of activists gather to oppose the redevelopment of Little Tokyo. Asian Pacific American Photographic Collection, Visual Communications Archives

Feminism and LGBT Movements

The Movement suffered from misogyny and homophobia. Though perhaps less so than other Third World left groups (e.g. there were fewer instances of physical abuse and assault), women and queer-identified people fought for presence, voice, and their issues.

At the same time, the analysis of a “triple oppression” of class, race, and gender for women, and the creation of a multiracial LGBT identity, opened a profound reworking of patriarchal and heterosexual norms. These movements within the Movement are crucial not only to appraising the Asian American Movement, but offer vital case studies for our intersectional present.



Health fair at Castelar Elementary School, date unknown. Courtesy of Susan Dickson

Rap Sessions

Though *Gidra* included women on its staff and women's issues in its pages, a series of "rap sessions" led to a special women's issue in 1971 with the word "Liberation" and a large Venus symbol on the cover. The issue linked international questions to those at home, from war brides and G.I.s to struggles of women within the Asian American Movement. The focus on the global and the local was also present in the popular International Women's Day celebrations. Beginning in 1974, the festival united many of the different Movement groups in a common recognition of women's struggles.



Organizing meeting for the first women's issue of *Gidra*, 1970. Courtesy of Mary Uyematsu Kao

Radicalism, Anti-Imperialism, and the Third World

From its outset, the Asian American Movement was globally focused, anti-imperialist, and revolutionary. Asian Americans took the horrors of the Vietnam War personally—the brutal images on their televisions spoke to America's devaluation of Asian life. But their critique extended further than the war. According to a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist analysis, the problems of Asians in America stemmed from Western capitalism, which naturally led to violence against Asian people and nations.

Asian groups started to draft ten-point programs calling for self-determination, services for their communities, and a socialist revolution. These organizations were, for many, the burning engine of the Movement. Cadre would engage in community work, organize in factories, and debate in study session in order to one day fundamentally remake society.



1971 issue of *Katipunan*. Courtesy of Florante Peter Ibanez

International Movements

Asian Americans looked at international politics to help contextualize the conditions they faced here. In 1968, Japan discovered oil fields under the historically Chinese islands called Tiao-Yu Tai and tried to re-colonize them. Students and professionals (mostly Chinese American) protested the move on college campuses and in front of embassies. It was truly an international movement, joining similar protests in Hong Kong. The next year, the Ampo Funsai (“Smash the Treaty”) movement launched in response to a U.S.–Japan Security Treaty, which included pickets in Little Tokyo against these two imperial powers merging.

In 1973, the year after Marcos declared martial law in the Philippines, the Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino (KDP), meaning Union of Democratic Filipinos, emerged. The KDP challenged the more conservative members of the community, developed a strong anti-imperialist critique, and advocated for socialism. At Far West Conventions, the KDP pushed forth their message and attempted to pass resolutions that followed their mission.

Roots and Legacy

Studying the Movement isn’t an academic exercise, or a nostalgia trip. It’s to remind ourselves of the radical politics embedded in the DNA of Asian America. It’s to reclaim this history, which is either too misunderstood or dangerous for most classrooms. It’s for young activists and artists to build upon a legacy, rather than feeling they have to build from scratch.

Of course, the Movement shifted after its early years. In the late 1970s, America withdrew its forces from Vietnam and the tenants of the International Hotel in San Francisco were evicted after a multi-year battle—a real and symbolic loss of home for the Movement. In the 80s, President Reagan oversaw the decimation of funding to social services, which many Movement organizations depended upon. The American political climate was hostile to revolutionary politics, and most of the far-left groups either merged or disbanded.

Since that time, immigration from Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Pacific Islands has remade the face of “Asian America.” Asian America today is more diverse, fluid, and large than anyone could have imagined, with Los Angeles as its face. L.A.’s growing immigrant communities face workplace justice, housing, health services and education challenges, just as many of new arrivals did after 1965.

The Movement lives on in direct and subtle ways. We have Asian American Studies. Asian Americans Advancing Justice, the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center, Nikkei for Civil Rights and Redress, SIPA, and VC continue to anchor their communities. A generation of organizers who cut their teeth on picket lines and in late-night meetings now hold positions of leadership in non-profits, academia, and government.

But the most significant legacies of the Movement are intangible: the interpersonal ties, the body of culture, the moments of awakening. A generation of young people attempting to discover their roots found they would have to shape their own reality, too. That’s the greatest lesson of the Movement. For “Asian America” to mean anything, it must be an intentional identity: one tied to politics and community, defined by action.

UnALIENable Rights

Amy Uyematsu

1: Day of Remembrance, 2006

The Day of Remembrance marks the 1942 signing of Executive Order 9066 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, authorizing the evacuation and incarceration of 120,000 Japanese...

Did anyone warn us about the alien in unALIENable?

The FBI finds Dad
within hours
of Pearl Harbor

Somehow they know
he's a nisei student
from California

Somehow they find
his precise dorm room
at the huge University of Chicago

The FBI escorting him
to a train that leaves town
before midnight

Did anyone warn us it's happened before?

It is just two years
after Wall Street's fall
when the INS deports

Young Ignacio Pina and all
of his family of seven
their crime: being Mexican

Though Pina is born
in a state called Idaho
he will always be foreign

But he comes back to tell,
"They just kicked us out
with what we were wearing."

Did anyone warn us?

We can still hear the screams,
"Razzia!" ("Raid!") "Razzia!"
at nearby La Placita

We can hear those frantic mariachis
trying to rouse spirits
as hundreds wait at Union Station

Did anyone care?

No one remembers Dad's sister, Alice
who contracts TB at Manzanar
and never gets past her teens

Will anyone warn us again?

When our rights as citizens
undergo American subversion
and we're the unwanted alien

Which translates to detention,
relocation, confiscation,
degradation, repatriation, violation

***Did anyone warn us
about the alien
in unALIENable?***

2: Day of Remembrance, 2017

2017 signifies the 75th anniversary of
Roosevelt's signing of Executive Order
9066.

We stand here as survivors -

We are the nisei children
American citizens
of issei parents forced
to remain aliens

It didn't matter
when they came for us -
citizens and aliens alike -
we were the enemy

We stand here as Japanese Americans -

Sansei, yonsei,
succeeding generations
who know how tentative
freedom can be

We must remember

The decade of betrayal
1929 through 1939
when millions of Mexicans
were "repatriated"

We hear the same accusations -
Latinos, now denigrated
to criminals by Trump,
blamed for not enough jobs

Distract the public
from corporate thieves,
round up "those" aliens
construct a border wall

We must warn all who'll listen -

Chinese exclusion in 1882,
Asian exclusion in 1924 -
the "yellow peril" attitudes
which shaped our laws

Now the target widens -
a rise in hate crimes since 9/11
with the Trumpsters calling
for bans on Muslims

There's growing fear
of a Muslim registry
the Japanese internment camps
a so-called "precedent"

And a President
who refuses to denounce
the unjust imprisonment
of 120,000 Japanese

We must defend each other -

We will not let you divide us
at attack on Mexican
or Muslim Americans
is an attack on all

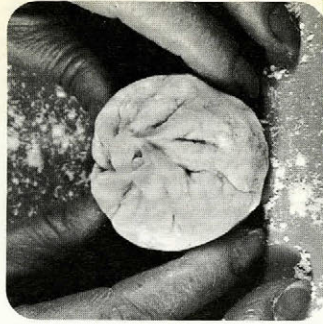
We stand together -

We will not be passive,
we will not be silent,
we will build unbreakable
bridges between us

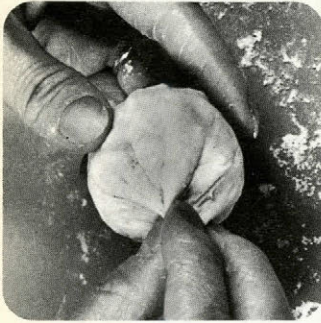
We are teaching each other
to be warriors for
peace and justice,
warriors for vigilant love



HOLD EACH OTHER.
TAKE CARE OF EACH
OTHER.



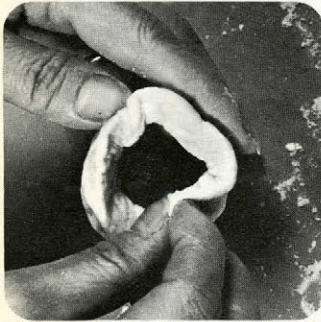
EMBRACE NEW IDEAS.



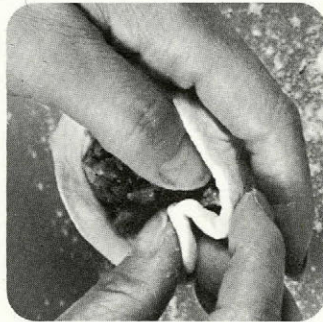
BUILD COALITIONS.



DON'T FORGET TO
BREATHE.



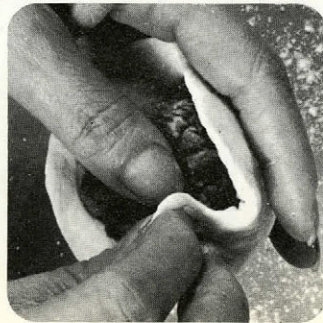
SPEAK YOUR MIND.
SHARE YOUR STORIES
AND OPINIONS.



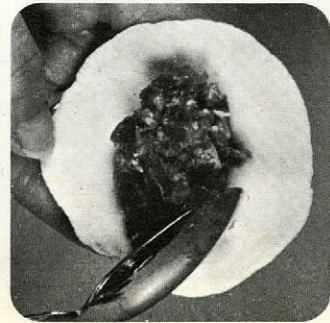
DON'T BE AFRAID TO
FAIL. PRACTICE.
PRACTICE. PRACTICE.



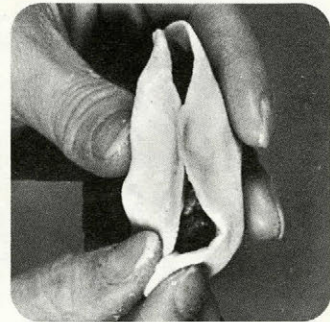
CENTER MARGINALIZED
VOICES.



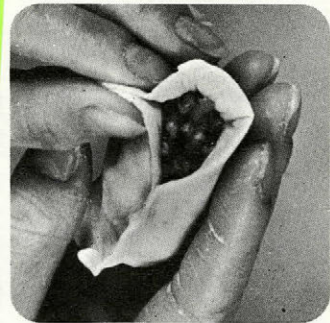
PRACTICE SOLIDARITY.



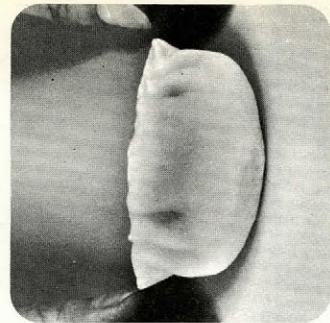
KNOW YOUR HISTORY.



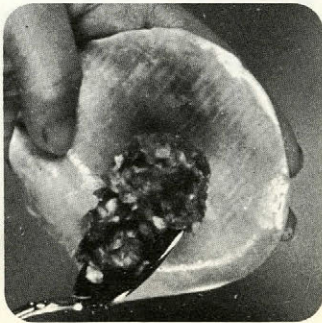
FIND COMMONALITY
ACROSS ETHNICITIES
AND PINCH THEM TOGETHER.



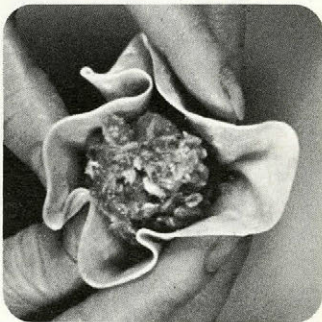
CONNECT WITH OTHER
ACTIVISTS.



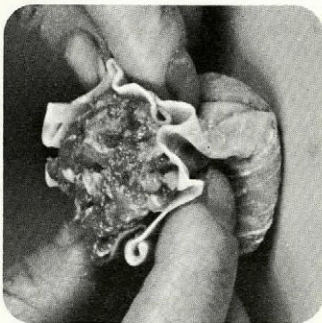
TAKE A LOOK AT THE ISSUE
FROM A DIFFERENT
STANCE.



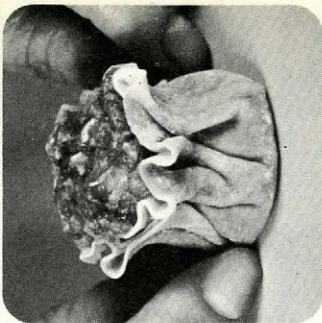
HAVE A STRATEGY.



BUILD COMMUNITY.



AMPLIFY VOICES.



SHINE A LIGHT ON
INJUSTICE.

RECIPES FOR RESISTANCE GENEVIEVE ERIN O'BRIEN



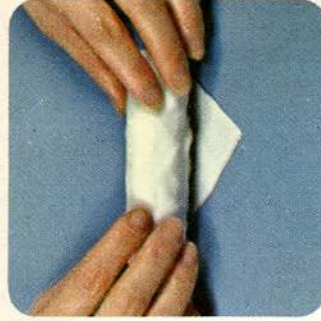
LEARN TO LISTEN.
PRACTICE ACTIVE
LISTENING.



BE AN ALLY. LEARN
AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
ABOUT OTHER STRUGGLES.



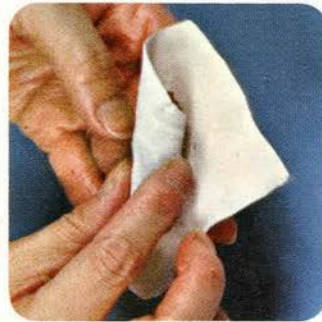
LISTEN TO YOUR
MOTHER.



ROLL DEEP WITH LIKE-
MINDED PEOPLE.



CARE FOR YOUR ELDER.
HONOR YOUR ANCESTORS.



TAKE NAPS. WRAP
YOURSELF IN A BLANKET
GET SLEEP WHEN YOU CAN.



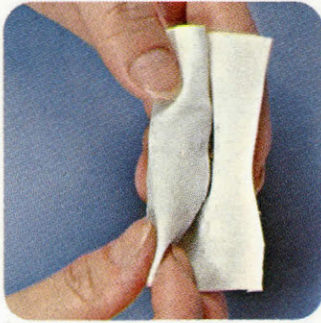
DON'T FORGET TO LAUGH.



SUPPORT YOUTH
LEADERSHIP. EMPOWER
YOUTH. INSPIRE YOUTH!



KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS.



TAKE AN ASIAN-AMERICAN STUDIES CLASS.



STRETCH AND GET IN SHAPE. STRONG PHYSICAL CONDITION IS IMPORTANT.



MEDITATE. FIND A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE.



DEFI STEREOTYPES. BE YOURSELF.



FIND A MENTOR BE A MENTOR.



BE HUMBLE.



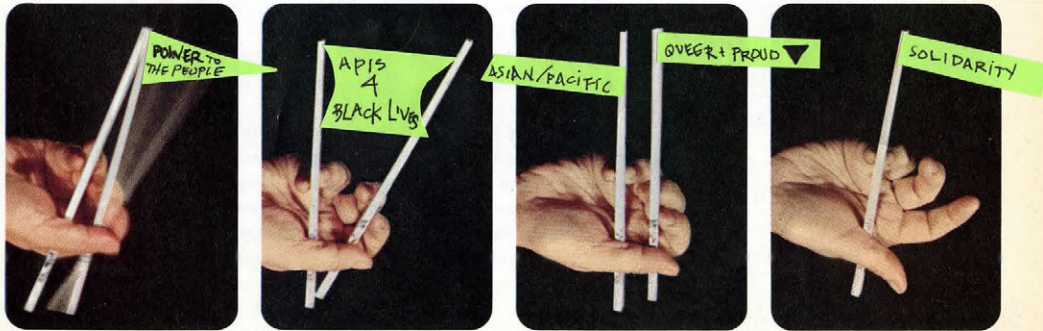
RESPECT AND HONOR A DIVERSITY OF TACTICS.

RECIPES FOR RESISTANCE

GNEVIEVE ERIN O'BRIEN

WE ARE NOT ALIENS, WE SPROUT
GENEVIEVE ERIN O'BRIEN

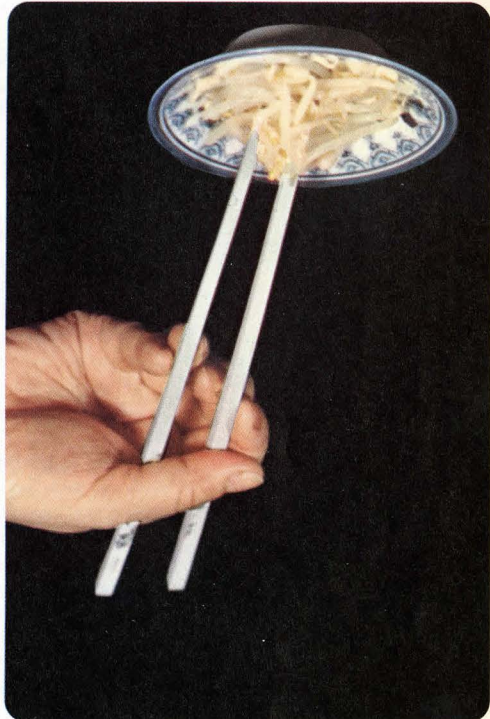
Eating with Chopsticks, Western Style—One of the Many Different Ways to Use These Handy Tools



Holding one chopstick $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way from its narrow (or round) end, cushion it in the curve of flesh between the thumb and forefinger and let it rest on the end of the little finger (1). Close the thumb over the chopstick to steady it; hold the second chopstick firmly between thumb and forefinger (2). Allow your middle finger to give the second chopstick support so that it is perfectly free to move, forming an angle with the first chopstick (3). Keep the tips even with one another at all times (4). The expert hand in these pictures is consultant Grace Chu's; she has found this technique an easy one for non-Chinese to master.



into your mouth from a lifted bowl. There is no one-and-only way to hold chopsticks, so shift this grip if necessary for comfort.



Hold chopsticks about an inch apart, at an angle to the food (5), and grasp pieces with the tips (6). Rice can be "shoveled"

Hawking *Gidra* in Tiananmen Square

Audrey Chan

In 1973, Andy Warhol made a series of silkscreen prints on canvas of Chairman Mao, one of which would find its way into the collection of the [Art Institute of Chicago](#). It was the first place I ever saw Mao's face, massive and impassive and cartoon-colored at fifteen feet tall. I would see it again on the cover of a children's biography book in my elementary school library and I figured that this Pop icon might make an interesting subject for my 6th grade research paper. Following my cheerful announcement at the dinner table, my father initiated me that evening to our family history: his birth at the dawn of the Chinese Communist Revolution, the public executions that my grandmother was forced to witness, that time he got in trouble for wearing his red 'kerchief as swimming bottoms at the local watering hole, the anxieties caused by neighbors reporting on each other to the local party official, the engorged children's bellies during the famines of the Great Leap Forward, the campaigns encouraging women to have countless babies to serve the revolution, how families were obligated to melt every scrap of metal from their homes into abject ingots, how landlords would be hung by their thumbs from door frames as examples. "Let one hundred flowers bloom" invited Chinese intellectuals to openly share their criticisms of the nascent regime; many of those outspoken individuals would find themselves summarily executed. I jotted notecard upon notecard with anecdotes and dates and names from my primary source in precise handwriting. We laugh now about how I cried inconsolably the night before the paper was due. My father had edited—rather, rewritten—entire passages of my immature prose that had been littered with historical errors and omissions. Our mining process would continue, with more and fewer tears, a caring and urgent negotiation, in a cyclical process that would repeat every few years thenceforward to today.

The tears belonged to my parents the night of the "June Fourth Incident" in 1989. The urgent monotone of the American foreign correspondent, the disheveled university students soaked in blood and sweat, the chaotic tumult caught in the glare of the prime time evening news camera lights. I was seven, we were up late, and I had never seen those stricken expressions on my parents' faces before. We watched the massacre unfold, the students demanding democratic reforms in the square named for the gate of heavenly peace. I would later wear a white t-shirt that was produced by the Chinese student organization at UIC that read in red, *We stand with him.*, under an artist's rendering of the man who stood alone before the tanks. I wore the shirt like a uniform until it was almost threadbare. Years later, I was looking through a photo documentary book of the massacre in our home and it was the inexplicable image of a man (a guard? a student?) collapsed against the side of a tank with pale pink entrails spilling out from his middle that would cause me to violently retch.

Over the years, whenever I went to the Art Institute, I would glance over as I passed the looming orange-faced bogeyman on the way to visiting my favorite Miró. The galleries have since been redesigned and *Mao* is not currently on view.

My Sculpey avatar hawks *Gidra* in Tiananmen Square in broken Mandarin as Warhol's *Mao* looks on.

Remaining copies of the Los Angeles-based Asian American Movement community newspaper, which ran from 1969 to 1974, have yellowed with age but contain multitudes: pan-ethnic Asian American solidarity, the Vietnam War through the lens of the Third World Movement for liberation, demands for inclusive narratives in the ivory tower, advertisements for Japanese American-owned businesses on Crenshaw, Amy Uyematsu's "The Emergence of Yellow Power in America," and facet upon facet of consciousness that was passed by hand from one reader to another. The paper's mascot would appear on the cover or inside every issue: a comically grimacing cartoon caterpillar wearing a conical hat and brandishing a pen, ready to vanquish the xenophobes, the war mongers, the roots of oppressive self-negation so symptomatic of assimilation.

"The newspaper took its name from King Ghidora, the villain from the popular film Godzilla. Ghidorah was a three-headed winged monster, an enemy of the public. While portrayed as the antagonist, Ghidorah should not be blindly vilified but recognized as an entity resisting an oppressive system that sought to eradicate his existence. Likewise, these Asian American youth were a growing force opposing a society that oppressed them." --Yoshimi Kawashima, Discover Nikkei

I've started reading the *Gidra* archives with some friends. It galvanizes us but we are constantly asking each other, "How have we never seen this before?" "How have we been denied this history--these heroes who look like us?"

We are so very far from being a stone's throw away from the last stone thrown. We are waking. We are waking.





Japanese American students from Los Angeles volunteering to help construct Agbayani Village, a retirement complex for Filipino farm workers in Delano, circa 1974. Courtesy of Kathy and Mark Masaoka.

JA Youth Groups and Agbayani Village 1974

Kathy Masaoka

Many Sansei had returned to Little Tokyo from college campuses and the Vietnam War with a desire to work in the community and to share some of their understanding of identity and history with younger Sanseis. With the overdose of 31 young people in 1971, there was growing education and acceptance of the drug problem in the Japanese American community. The overproduction of drugs (mainly downers or “reds”) by the Eli Lilly Company as well as stereotypes, male chauvinism and negative self-image had much to do with the drug problem, especially for younger Asian girls. As a result several youth groups formed, including one just for young women, called Asian Sisters.

Since there were still concentrations of Japanese Americans in different neighborhoods, youth groups were organized under different organizations - all with the goal of developing youth leadership which valued identity, and the importance of community. Involved Together Asians (ITA) in West Los Angeles formed a youth group and on the Westside some former members of the Yellow Brotherhood reactivated the organization with a younger generation. In Boyle Heights, the East Los Angeles Outreach Team helped to form the Young Spirits in a community with a declining Japanese population. In Little Tokyo, the Japanese American Community Services – Asian Involvement worked with youth from different parts of the city. These four groups came together to support the construction of senior housing for retired Filipino farmworkers called “manongs.” Before going to Delano, the youth collected canned goods for the United Farm Workers and held educational programs about the farming roots of the Japanese American community. Finally in 1974, all four youth groups drove up to meet the manongs and to help build Agabayani Village.



Little hands, shaping playdough and sharing tools—such simple ingredients: white flour, plain and pure, held together by salt and water with a shake of color (whatever) and lots of free-flowing energy, guided by nothing except the amazing minds of children intent on creating a form both beautiful to others and part of themselves. A long rambling thought simply suggesting that we take some clues or cues from children or, perhaps get back into the children in ourselves.

'Cause with our middle-sized hands we got into so many things and were shaky in handling the playdough of Community Day—Not experts enough to do things by feel and not sure if there was some secret recipe to follow—after all, for many, it was a first.

The old hands, confident and comfortable in recreating shapes and taste familiar to us, steadied and stabled our stomachs and our minds for theirs is a learned art—moving effortlessly and naturally. So how did all these hands fit together? Without chains and without grappling and groping for links, Community Day covered all our hands with its flour.

Kathy Nishimoto/Los Angeles

Gidra July 1971

I am enclosing \$ _____
in check or money order

Little hands, shaping playdough and sharing tools-such simple ingredients:white flour, plain and pure, held together by salt and water with a shake of color (whatever) and lots of free-flowing energy, guided by nothing except the amazing minds of children intent on creating a form both beautiful to others and part of themselves. A long rambling thought simply suggesting that we take some clues or cues from children or, perhaps, get back into the children in ourselves.

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Kathy Nishimoto/Los Angeles
(reprinted from Gidra, July 1971)

BANANA COMRADE CLUB

Russell Leong

NOTE: On Feb. 28, 2014, Xinhua, the major Chinese government news service described in an editorial the departing American ambassador, Gary Locke, as a "rotten banana" among other racialized epithets. Locke is a third generation Chinese-American, born and educated in America. In this poem, I reclaim "banana" and re-use it as parody. "Banana" (here a term coined by Asian American activists in the 1960s to refer to Asians who were "yellow on the outside" and colonized "white" on the inside), is used against Locke by the communist Chinese news agency. The other term in my poem, "tongzhi" is a pun--a play on the word "comrade" first used by Sun Yat-Sen in Republican China (1911), then in socialist China (after 1949), but also appropriated and used by contemporary gay and lesbian movement in Hong Kong to refer to sexual orientation (1990s+). Please note that Locke is neither a Maoist nor gay: these terms are being used to question the use of language, epithets, etc. invoked by others--including media-- against Asian Americans. The Chinese characters included in the poem are "Banana Comrades."

香蕉同志

BANANA COMRADE CLUB

(not BBC, but BCC)

"Farewell, Gary Locke,"
US Ambassador to China

The Xinhua editorial said,
from Beijing, explaining that Gary
was a banana
Yellow-skinned outside but
white inside...a third generation
American at that! Further,
the editorial said, a banana
outside too long becomes rotten!

Well, I happened to be eating
a too-ripe banana when I heard
the news, and I have decided to
to form:

BCC no, not BBC, but BCC
BANANA COMRADE CLUB!

香蕉同志

Whadda this mean?

The courage to be a person
in this world. Yellow skin.

Brown skin. Red skin.

Black skin. White skin.

Inside, no color but the color
of Spirit and Passion.

Banana Membership:

Is free. Because it supports

All the consequences of freedom.

And damn the states, East or West

Who don't.

Comrade. It once meant soldier
to soldier, linked arms, comrade
in the revolutionary sense.

Sun Yat-Sen, father of the Chinese Republic
used it first. Then the communists.

Then gay and lesbian activists in Hong Kong
flipped the word on its head, using
it to mean LGBT.

So Comrade has a long long history.

Let us extend this history, and embrace

All bananas.

BANANA COMRADE CLUB.

It ain't the Joy Luck Club

Folks playin' mah-jong till dawn

No, this is a new dawn

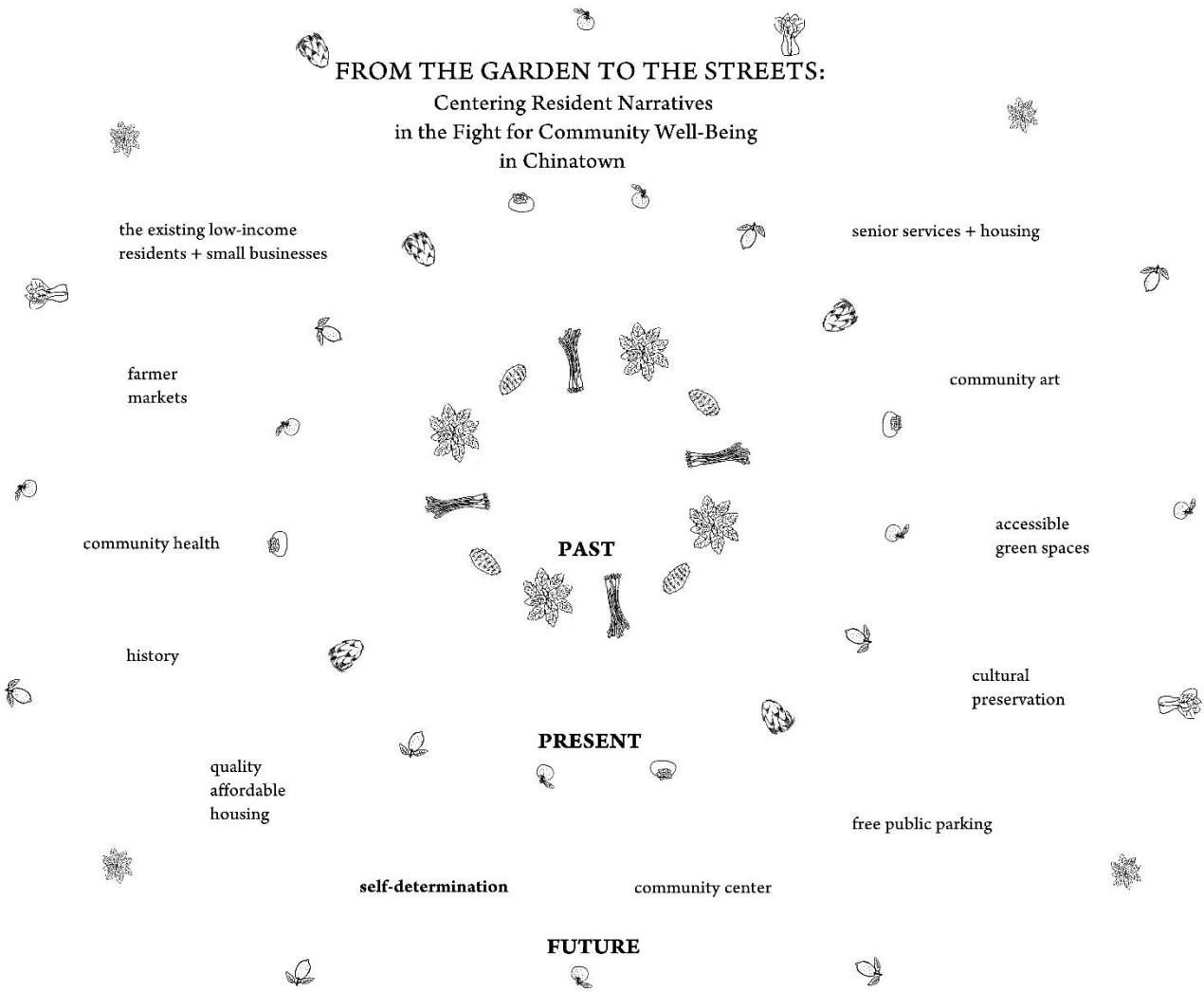
Bananas, of all stripes, generations
and orientations—
Move History Forward
To the soft yellow dawn
Illuminating the South China Sea

May all the islands along
the archipelago, from Okinawa
to Taiwan, from the Philippines
to Indonesia, place their boats into the sea
Changing the old latitudes of what was
and what we will become....

No longer banana republics
We found that we are old comrades
in the Banana Comrade Club.

FROM THE GARDEN TO THE STREETS:

Centering Resident Narratives in the Fight for Community Well-Being in Chinatown



love + power from the community | **the residents (especially our seniors)**

our ancestors
Chinatown Community for Equitable Development

organizing takes many forms

#fromthegardentothestreetsinchinatown

stories + art | **community members**
Frances Huynh

The Streets Between Us Exhibit | CCED, July 2013



So I've had quite a bit of history here. This used to be a food co-op. I helped out in a food co-op when it was here.

The issue is - **self-defense of our community is entailed**... It's underground. It's here in this community but people don't talk about it, right? The poverty, right? What about some of these senior citizens here? Or these working mothers? The rent going up and food and all of that being so expensive. Or health care needs and stuff like that. Yeah, this is a colonized community here...

We have a right to come together and practice our culture...

We have to organize ourselves.



Mo Nishida | Resident



I'm a business owner here in Chinatown for almost 10 years. It's called JJ Wireless. It's located in the Dynasty Center.

The first three years, it was a struggle... For a while, we always wondered how we were going to survive in an economy like this. And then we found the strength by looking at **our children** and saying this is the reason why we work so hard. It's because of them.

I always wanted to you know, **contribute as much as I can** and make Chinatown better, stronger - more vibrant. I know it has potential. Now we need leadership, vision, to make Chinatown what it can be.

John Allan | Business Owner



Almost all these people here are my friends that I play basketball with. I've been **playing at Alpine Park** since I was in middle school or high school.

It became our tradition.

I find my community really friendly. And like **you can see people already talking to each other even on the street**. I always think it's nice to have people outside the house. People walking, commuting to each other.



Sophat Phea | Resident



This store is Jin Hing Company. We are the oldest existing Chinese American jewelry store in Southern California... We're sort of a combination of a place that serves the community and a place sharing Chinese culture.

We've been in this building since 1950. This store is a **family business**. And it was started by my father and grandfather in 1933 in *Old Chinatown*, in essentially across the street from what's now the Chinese American Museum.

This is a picture of some of our old customers. They are looking at a gift they want to buy... traditionally, people give gold jewelry... People sort of hold on to that tradition.

It's been a **store that has really served the community**. It's amazing that we've been here that long... We know sometimes three and four generations of customers.



Robert Lee | Business Owner



When I was younger - Across Alpine is Castelar and Castelar is my elementary school... My dad would put me in the Alpine after school program... I would always go to Alpine and that's where I got my homework done. That's where I hung out with my friends. Castelar is also where I also met my first mentors back then and that's where I learned to build relationships with older people and just have that **sense of knowing that there's someone out there that cares for me** besides my parents.

I notice that there's more art galleries. I notice that they're definitely beautifying the community... It's good to beautify the community, but at the same time, **let's create things that the community can benefit from**.

...what Chinatown really means for me is just a place for community...

Christily Chiv | Resident



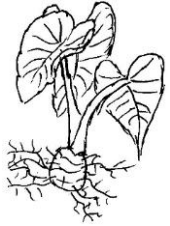


A quietness lingers as we set up shop. Empty streets fill with the jostle of clothing racks. The multiple clicks of stoves turning on. The soft smack of noodle to plate. Doors open.

Uprooted.

The ground beneath you still rumbles with the sound of our feet walking.

Our homes standing where your money now lies. We cry out.



Chinatown,

Can I still call you home when they hand off the keys to the door we've walked through for over thirty years? When they fill our rooms with cement and powder, the hammers breaking through the walls where we sleep? When they tell me a check for a few thousand is enough to make me leave and then sell the place for millions? When the zeros in my monthly rent start falling off the pages? Can I still call you home when I'm forced to leave? Can I still call you home when they start moving in? Can I still call you home when you no longer look the same?



I happily sneak a piece of ginger into my mouth,

Folding it under my tongue.

My tiny fingers stained with its faint smell,

As I grasp mom's hand.



My great grandma sits in JC market splitting green beans, laughing with her friends.

PAST

What do you miss about Chinatown? 你懷念華埠什麼?

- Wing Hop Fung
- Carnivals at the parking lot (now Jia Apartments) during Chinese New Year celebration.
- Chin Hing restaurant
-

What is your earliest memory of Chinatown?

你最早的唐人街記憶是什麼?

My earliest memory of Chinatown is not of this Chinatown, but the one at the produce market. I think maybe my parents thought this one was for tourists. They always went to "九龍街" (9th St.), normally Man Fook Low, for better occasions, New Moon. So my earliest memory is eating a X 叉燒包 (BBQ pork bun) at Man Fook Low. They were bigger then - I had to use 2 hands to hold it. It was my favorite food for a while & I really missed it when we moved & didn't go there any more.

PRESENT

What do you like most about Chinatown today?

你最喜歡今天華埠是什麼?

I AM GETTING MORE
in touch with the
community

What is your current relationship to Chinatown?

你和什麼唐人街有什麼關係?

I AM A PARENT OF A SECOND GRADER IN THE MANDARIN DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM AT CASTELAR ELEMENTARY. OUR FAMILY PUTS ON PUNK ROCK CONCERTS (SAVE MUSIC IN CHINATOWN) TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE MUSIC PROGRAM. THIS YEAR, WE ALSO ORGANIZED FAMILIES TO FIGHT OFF A CO-LOCATION BY A CHARTER SCHOOL.

What do you like least about Chinatown today?

你最不喜歡今天華埠是什麼?

GENTRIFICATION BREAKS MY
HEART.

Like colonization, it tells our people the same message over over again: that you don't have shit - not even shit you created for YOURSELF!

FUTURE

What does Chinatown lack that you hope to see in the future? 華埠缺乏什麼，你希望在將來會看到？

- wide park spaces ^{with programming for families}
 - free public parking
 - welcoming spaces ^{in new developments, including language accessibility.}
 - a variety of affordable food
 - workshops for older adults in different languages to learn new skills
 - food delivery for the rest of the CT residence.
 - more community festival
 - farmer markets and night markets that are not expensive food trucks.
- free events & free fruit picking
- 

Why does Chinatown's future matter to you? 為什麼唐人街的前途您會關注？

I AM THE PRODUCT OF GENERATIONS OF FREEDOM FIGHTERS BEFORE ME. I AM INDEBTED TO MY ELDERS.

What does Chinatown have now that you are afraid of losing in the future? 華埠現在擁有什麼，你害怕會在未來失去？

Businesses, schools, community centers, and houses of worship that are owned and defined by low-income Asian / Asian American people...



Snapshots by Jennifer Pham



Ms. Mar used to mobilize residents to demand for services for the Chinatown community. In between side jobs and tofu deliveries, she'd pass out fliers.

“We filled up City Hall!”



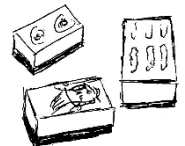
Ms. Mar continues to mobilize residents to demand for quality affordable housing. In between her infectious smiles, she shares stories and power for us to rise up.

If we don't ask for it, who will?



Grateful |

For all the seniors that continue to build, nurture, and sustain Chinatown. For every interaction and conversation, whether they're small or mixed with my struggling Cantonese/Mandarin/English. For the shy hellos as I walk down the street. For providing warmth even as strangers by making the moments I miss my own grandmas a bit easier. For the bomb food and informal street side produce. For filling the community with noise – laughter, yelling, stories, teasing. For fueling everything I do and hope to do to ensure you all are supported, highlighted, and respected.



MY STAPLED-AND-FOLDED LIFE

BEFORE I WAS AN ENGLISH MAJOR AT UCLA, I WAS A ZINE READER IN HIGH SCHOOL, MAXIMUMRUCKNROLL, FLIPSIDE, INK DISEASE—THOSE UNDERDOG PUNK ROCK RAGS INFORMED MY RECORD BUYING BUT ALSO MY AESTHETICS AND POLITICS, AND WHEN IT CAME TO THE PURPOSE AND POWER OF WRITING, NOT TO MENTION NO-BULLSHIT STYLE, THE CHEAP NEWSPRINT RAGS INFLUENCED ME MORE THAN THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY,

AFTER GRADUATING AND GETTING A JOB EDITING SECONDARY AND POST-SECONDARY TEXTBOOKS, IT WAS NATURAL TO CONTRIBUTE TO ZINES ON THE SIDE (FEAR OF GROWN UPS, FLIPSIDE, DIRT) AND THEN HELP START ONE. MY FRIEND ERIC, WHO I KNEW FROM PUNK SHOWS AT JABBERJAW AND UCLA TOLD ME HE WANTED TO START A ZINE ABOUT ASIAN STUFF AND I SAID, "ME TOO!" THE FIRST BLACK & WHITE, DIGEST-SIZED ISSUE OF GIANT ROBOT WAS STAPLED AND FOLDED ON ERIC'S FAMILY'S DINING TABLE NOT MORE THAN A MONTH LATER. THAT WAS THE END OF 1994,

NOT ONLY DID WE CONTINUE MAKING ISSUES BUT GR GREW INTO A FULL-SIZED MAGAZINE WITH A COLOR COVER, AND IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE WE STARTED GOING TO INDIE PUBLISHING CONVENTIONS AND MEETING PEERS! HEROES LIKE V. VALE AT RE/SEARCH, VILLAINS LIKE JIM GOAD OF ANSWER ME!, AND FRIENDS FROM PARALLEL UNIVERSES LIKE DAVID WALKER FROM BADAZZ MOFO,

THE MID TO LATE '90S WERE A REAL GOLDEN AGE OF DIY ZINES, COMICS, AND MUSIC, AND OUR ASCENT WAS TIMED PERFECTLY IN THAT RESPECT - AS WELL AS ALL THE STUFF THAT WAS GOING ON IN ASIAN AND ASIAN AMERICAN CULTURE, KUNG FU MOVIES AND GANGSTER FLICKS, PUNK ROCK AND NOISE MUSIC, DIECAST AND VINYL TOYS, LOWBROW ART AND JUNK FOOD FROM ASIA ... ALL THAT WAS STILL PRETTY HARD TO COME BY, AND NOT FOUND IN A LOW-BUDGET BUT SMART AND CURATED PACKAGE.

WE MADE A LOT OF FRIENDS AND FANS IN SMALL PRESS AND UNDERGROUND COMIX, AS WELL ASSUPPORTERS AND HELPERS TO MAKE A REAL SCENE.

GR WAS BEST KNOWN FOR TAKING OBSCURE, OUTSIDER, TRASHY, AND DISPOSABLE CULTURE SERIOUSLY, BUT WE ALSO LIKED TO GO IN THE OTHER DIRECTION AND TREAT SCHOLARLY TOPICS AS IF THEY WERE COOL TO KNOW ABOUT, STUFF LIKE DOG EATING, FOOT BINDING, AND MANZANAR, DEDICATING 20+ PAGES TO SURVIVORS OF THE YELLOW POWER MOVEMENT OF THE '60S AND '70S WAS PROBABLY ONE OF OUR MORE POPULAR AND MOST BOOTLEGGED SECTIONS, AND IT HELPED US SEE GR'S PLACE AMONG THE ASIAN AMERICAN MOVEMENT.

WE WERE INVITED TO DO A LOT OF COLLEGE TALKS AROUND THIS TIME, AND SOMETIMES EVEN GOT FROWN OUT AND PUT UP IN PLACES WHERE THERE WERE VERY FEW ASIANS, THAT WAS PRETTY COOL BECAUSE OUR READERSHIP WAS HARDLY ASIAN IN THE BEGINNING, MOSTLY HARDCORE FILM, MUSIC, AND ZINE GEEKS, IT WAS RAD TO SEE THAT WE WERE A SOURCE OF PRIDE FOR A CERTAIN GROUP OF NON-MODEL MINORITY AZNS. INTERESTINGLY, WE WERE ALSO BEING CALLED ASIAN CULTURE FETISHISTS, SELLOUTS AND AN ALL BOY NET FEST BY NEWER ZINES,

BENEFITING FROM ERIC'S ENTREPRENEURIAL DRIVE, OR WENT ON TO BECOME A GLOSSY MAGAZINE WITH INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTION AND HE SPUN OFF RETAIL STORES, GALLERIES, AND EVEN A RESTAURANT THAT RISED ON THE MAGAZINE CONTENT. I WAS ABLE TO QUIT MY DAY JOB IN 2000 TO EDIT OR FULL TIME AND CONTINUE TO WRITE ABOUT A LOT OF FILMMAKERS WHOSE MOVIES NEVER SHOWED AT MALLS AND BANDS WHOSE SONGS NEVER GOT PLAYED ON THE RADIO, NO INTERNET STREAMING OR SHARING BACK THEN!

WE DIDN'T DOCUMENT ASIAN CULTURE AND CONSCIOUSNESS AS MUCH AS WE PUSHED IT, THERE WAS THE RISE OF JAPAN'S SUPERFAT SCENE, ASCENT OF CONTEMPORARY CHINESE ART, AND STREET ART MOVEMENT. THE SHIFTING OF HOT CINEMA FROM HONG KONG AND JAPAN TO THAI AND KOREAN TO CHINESE AND PAN ASIAN. THE RISE OF DESIGNER TOYS AND FOODIE CULTURE. WHAT A RIDE, AND THE GARAGE IS ALSO WHERE I MET MANY LIFELONG FRIENDS INCLUDING MY WIFE WENDY, WHO HANDED GRAPHIC DESIGN STARTING WITH ISSUE 18.

IN 2010, THE PUBLICATION RAN ITS COURSE AFTER 68 ISSUES. MAYBE IT WAS BECAUSE WE JUST WROTE ABOUT STUFF WE LIKED, BUT THERE WERE OTHER FORCES; PAPER AND SHIPPING BECAME MORE COSTLY, ADVERTISING TURNED TOWARD THE INTERNET, AND OUR TOPICS NOT ONLY WENT OVERGROUND BUT COULD BE SKIMMED ONLINE FOR FREE. PEOPLE JUST STOPPED BUYING MAGAZINES, AND AFTER 16 YEARS MY GIG AS EDITOR ENDED. TO THIS DAY, ERIC RUNS THE ORIGINAL SHOP AND GALLERY WHERE HE GREW UP ON SAWTELLE IN THE SHADOWS OF HIGH-END HIPSTER SHOPS AND TRENDY RESTAURANTS THAT MIGHT NOT EXIST WITHOUT GR,

WHEN THE MAG BIT THE DUST, I WAS LUCKY THAT IT DIDN'T PROVIDE MY ENTIRE IDENTITY, BEING A HUSBAND AND DAD GAVE ME OTHER AREAS TO CONCENTRATE ON AND, LOOKING BACK, I WOULD HAVE BEEN SHITTY AT BOTH IF THE MAG MANAGED TO SURVIVE, LIFE WENT ON...

A FEW YEARS LATER, WENDY AND I HAD THIS CRAZY IDEA TO ORGANIZE ALL-AGES PUNK SHOWS TO FUND THE MUSIC PROGRAM AT OUR DAUGHTER'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, (YOU KNOW, LAUSD,) THE SAVE MUSIC IN CHINATOWN MATINEES WOULD CHANNEL THE TRADITION OF THE OLD HONG KONG CAFE, WHERE BANDS LIKE X, GERMS, AND BLACK FLAG PLAYED. ONE UNDERDOG SUBCULTURE (UNDERGROUND MUSIC) WOULD SUPPORT ANOTHER (UNDERSERVED IMMIGRANTS) WITH AN AWESOME RAFFLE AND KILLER BAKE SALE!

WITH NO EXPERIENCE AND PLENTY OF HELP FROM OLD AND NEW FRIENDS, WE'VE RAISED A DECENT AMOUNT OF MONEY FOR THE CAUSE AND ALSO STARTED ACCUMULATING A LOT OF AMAZING MEMORIES, ART, AND PHOTOGRAPHS THAT WERE SCATTERED ONLINE IN MY BLOG ENTRIES, INSTAGRAM FEED, AND FACEBOOK POSTS. IT TOOK A ZINE TO MAKE THEM REAL, SOMETHING OUR DAUGHTER CAN HOLD IN HER HANDS AND SEE WHAT WE DO FOR THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY.

BACK TO PUNK ROCK, BACK TO ZINES - NOTHING HAS CHANGED.

- Mantu Wong
1-30-16



Florante & Rose Ibanez, Serve the People Cake, performances in front of Katipunan Ng Mga Demokratikong Pilipino (KDP) stage banner.

Our People's Wedding.....KDP Style

By Florante Peter and Rose Estepa Ibanez

February 3, 2006

It was September 14, 1974, a little over a week after the infamous walk outs of the 1974 Pilipino People's Far West Convention at UCLA. I had found my lifelong partner and kasama, and Roselyn Adan Estepa became Roselyn Estepa Ibanez. We were married in a kinda conventional yet very unconventional way.

I had meet Rose about a year earlier for the first time at the 1973 Filipino People's Far West Convention (FWC) in San Jose. She was a vivacious, giggling San Diego State student who came as part of the Andres Bonifacio (ABC) Samahang Pilipino¹ delegation. My Los Angeles FWC delegation was comprised of a van full of high school and college students from UCLA, UC Irvine, and LA City College. As a co-founder of UCLA's Samahang Pilipino² and the newly formed UC Irvine Kababayan³, I was looked upon as a delegation leader. It was also in my Dodge van that almost everybody rode up in. Looking back it was a small miracle that we even made it to San Jose at all after taking what looked like a "shortcut" on the map, which took us up over the mountains that kept going up without seeing any other cars traveling in the opposite direction. As the sun started to set, our two lane had turned into a lonely gravel road, before bringing us down into the San Jose city limits.

Knowing that I was at the time kinda sorta looking for a girl friend, my young high schoolers contingent volunteered to help me locate one. As we entered the conference registration area I overheard a leader of the FWC San Diego delegation instruct his folks to "mingle". That's how I met Rose. She was chattering "mingle, mingle, mingle" along with her other girl friends and we bumped into each other. Perhaps this was love at first sight? Later during the FWC we attended an informal dance party and Rose and I Cha-Cha'ed to "September Song" by Earth, Wind and Fire. Was it a coincidence that we were wed in September? After that I spent a lot of money on gas traveling from UC Irvine to National City in San Diego on weekends. (It's probably important to note that this was during the first California gas shortage crisis – when you could only buy gas on even numbered days if your license plate ended in an even number and on odd numbered days if your plate ended on an odd number.) Luckily since Rose came from a Navy family, she could buy me gas from the commissary gas station really cheap.

¹ <http://filipinoamericanlibrary.com/Images/FWC.pdf>

² <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/%7Eesamahan/history.html>

³ <https://www.facebook.com/ucla.samahang>

⁴ <http://kabauci.tripod.com/>

While our long distance romance continued and became more serious, that same year we were both recruited into the Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipinos (KDP) - Union of Democratic Filipinos. She with San Diego chapter and I with the Los Angeles chapter. We were both originally approached by KDP leaders during the 1973 FWC but I really didn't think that much about it. Martial Law had been declared in the Philippines and my name was included in a Marcos Black List, but I was mostly concerned about fighting racism and injustice here in the US. As student KDP activists we helped organize Filipino clubs & their activities and took leading roles as representatives to Third World student coalitions. In the case of UC Irvine we helped establish the Cross Cultural Center and Rose was elected to the steering committee for the Southern Region of the West Coast Confederation of Pilipino Students. We also organized student field trips to tour the International Hotel and the United Farmworkers Union Agbayani Village built for retired farm workers. With the KDP's two political tasks 1) to mobilize militant support for the National Democratic Revolution in the Philippines, and 2) to participate in building the U.S. working class struggle for socialism we worked in various grass roots community projects and joined other anti-U.S. intervention demonstrations. We also actively sold the Ang Katipunan as the newspaper of the KDP at churches and at college campuses and recruited more activists to join us. (But I'm getting way ahead of myself.....)

I asked Rose to marry me on a warm evening as the sun was setting as we walked in Balboa Park and I gave her a temporary "cracker jack" ring. When I told my father we were going to get married and I was going to ask for her hand from her father, I was sternly informed that it was the parents whom had to talk to each other about this. I conceded and he made the call to my future father-in-law. Still in school and still attending meetings almost every night of the week, we planned the wedding as we went along and asked our respective KDP chapters and comrades to help us. Rose picked her bridesmaids, her sisters and activists and I chose my brothers and comrades. Then our parents on both sides wanted to have a church wedding but we wanted an outdoor people's ceremony. We compromised on a traditional Catholic Church ceremony but with a People's Reception pulled together by our KDP comrades. While we walked into St. Peter and Paul's Church to the traditional "Here Comes the Bride.." after we exchanged our vows we marched out to the tune "Ang Masa", a revolutionary song of the masses from the Philippines. We noisily honked our way to the reception at the UNION MUTUALISTA DE SAN JOSE Hall in Wilmington. (We met in San Jose and this was a Union organization...another coincidence?) We actually had a hard time getting a place because the original plan called for using the Filipino Community Center of the Harbor Area, in Wilmington (aka the Flip Hall) but the Filipino wedding that took place before ours at the same church, had already booked it. But it really didn't matter. Everything was seemingly falling into place and we were not running on the typical "Filipino Time" of usually an hour late.

KDP men including Russel Valpariaso, and my aunties had busily worked in the union hall kitchen to prepare the additional food bought by the KDP chapters and our parents to feed the overflowing guests from our combined families as well as our movement and student friends. It was a controlled chaos and the large red KDP Banner provided a bright backdrop to the small stage. Some of our honored guests including Warren Furutani and Nabuko, took to the stage to dedicate movement songs of struggle to our union. Taking the example from another movement wedding of friends we had requested a "Mountain Cake" and somebody actually baked and came through with it. The cake Mountain was symbolic to the story "The Foolish Old Man Who Moved Mountains" from Mao Tse-Tung.⁵ It speaks to continuing to struggle and little by little injustice can be overcome. Our KDP comrades, family and friends performed Filipino folk dances and sang both revolutionary and love songs. I wonder, is there a real difference? Even as the bridegroom I was required to play on stage with my Hawaiian Band led by Alex Ramos (aka Ronnie Diamond – The Hawaiian Climax Band) Surprisingly our parents and other more conservative relatives were not offended. Maybe it was the joy and celebration of the wedding itself that kept tempers cool and a radical ideology tolerated. Maybe it was the free flowing liquor being bartended by my uncles from a van in the parking lot. Maybe it was the great potluck food that we had asked in our invitations to please RSVP with. Plus we had a Lechon (roasted pig) and a goat. Ilocanos love goat and both our families are Ilocano. Maybe it was the generations getting along and people meeting and making new friends. Whatever it was, we were blessed that day and for the rest of our lives to have family, friends, and comrades to help us start our long journey as a couple dedicated to "move mountains".

5 It tells of an old man who lived in northern China long, long ago and was known as the Foolish Old Man of North Mountain. His house faced south and beyond his doorway stood the two great peaks, Taihang and Wangwu, obstructing the way. He called his sons, and hoe in hand they began to dig up these mountains with great determination. Another greybeard, known as the Wise Old Man, saw them and said derisively, "How silly of you to do this! It is quite impossible for you few to dig up these two huge mountains." The Foolish Old Man replied, "When I die, my sons will carry on; when they die, there will be my grandsons, and then their sons and grandsons, and so on to infinity. High as they are, the mountains cannot grow any higher and with every bit we dig, they will be that much lower. Why can't we clear them away?" Having refuted the Wise Old Man's wrong view, he went on digging every day, unshaken in his conviction. God was moved by this, and he sent down two angels, who carried the mountains away on their backs."

<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/red-book/ch21.htm>

Cut From the Same Cloth

Tanzila "Taz" Ahmed

Threading through my veins
Your being needles into my soul
Two sides of the world
Seamed into one.

It was your calloused fingers,
That caressed the cloth now on my bare skin-
It was your brow sweat,
That soaked into these stitches-
It was your tired hot breath,
That weaves into this stretch.

We were cut from the same cloth,
you and I,
Patterned from the same likeness,
Our brown skins coating us,
Like '*amarah bhoan*,'
Distant cousins,
Ripped apart at the motherland.

Except this one here was destined for economic export,
And you were destined to industry at home.

My land of opportunity
Is quilted with your life.
In this global economy,
Bangladesh is tattooed into the fabric of America.
Yet xenophobia frays at our existence here,
Othered into being from there.
Unwelcomed by those who wear these clothes.

My label may be thread bare and faded,
But make no mistake
The tag on the back of my neck reads
"Made In Bangladesh" too.
I am kind of like you-

Where your last touch
Destined for America,
Is my first touch
Longing for home-
Where the whirrr

Of your Singer machine
Is my Tagore song
Tugging me for more-
Where your
Survival tenacity
Makes me unravel
To the core.

It is your warm blood
That seeps into the seams
Of the rubble factory floor.
It is your singed skin
That is stitched
Into these conflicted clothes.
It is your salted tears
Squeezing out
Of the needle eye.

With just a switch of a stitch,
How simple your life mine could have been.

We are cut from the same cloth,
You and I.
I may not be Bangladeshi -
But I am "Made in Bangladesh",
Too.
Two sides of the world,
Seamed into one.

Dad's Disparity

Tanzila "Taz" Ahmed

It's not your fault, you know.
These streets were never paved with gold
They were made to control impossible dreams
Not the marginalized immigrant reality.

You tried, I can see.
As an economic refugee of the 1970s,
You were the first of now 5,000 Angelino-Bangladeshis
With a degree in engineering you are
One of only 45% of Bangladeshis to get a Bachelors degree
You bought your own house and your own car in your twenties
You brought over your bride-to-be then
You had me.
It was the 1980s immigrant American dream.

It was systematic, understand?
Internalized bias and racism led to a constant job search
For that perfect work culture fit.
Long-term employment affects Asian Americans disproportionately -
You were simply surviving
And quickly learned that minimum wage was not actually living
That blue collared life would lead
To a lifetime of struggle
To access equitable healthcare, education
Or fresh food and fresh air.

It was structural, not individual, get it?
Because data showed that people of color under a certain per capita
Were not meant to access these.

In our family healthcare was needed
Because the home you could afford was right next to the freeway
Because children who live near freeways have a higher risk of chronic asthma
Because Asian American girls have a higher rate of depression and suicide
Because as aging South Asians, you and Mom collectively
Battled high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes.

That your wife would die from complications with her obesity
And that 34% of South Asians die from heart disease.
Because all this data tells us, is factual racial hierarchy.

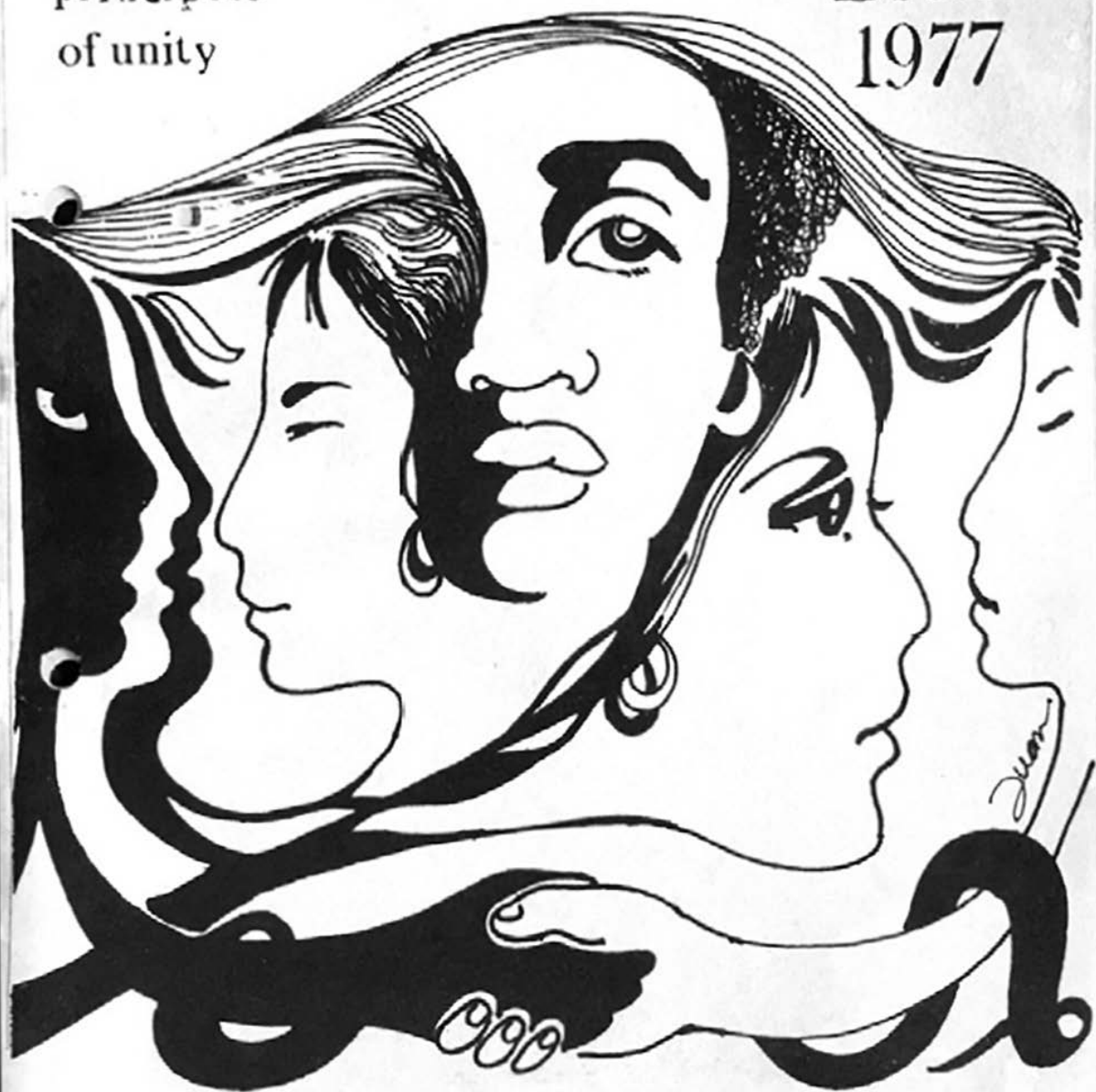
But you didn't know, you were a pawn in this data disparity.
Law enforcement is racial profiling
FBI is surveilling
Islamophobes are hate-criming
Sallie Mae is education debt collecting
Workplaces are discriminating and firing.

You are proud, I know.
But it's not you.
It is class, race, migrant and language -
These systems othered you into the margins of
Environmental, employment, healthcare, and education equity.
Discrimination,
Disparity,
Disproportionately,
Inequality.
Systematic supremacy.

But how were you to know, really?
They kept calling you a model minority.
And with no data to prove it.

INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY 1977

principles
of unity



The International Working Women's Day Coalition welcomes all of you to today's celebration. IWWD is being celebrated by working people throughout the world to honor the struggles and the advances of women. IWWD was established in 1911 to remember the historic struggles of women textile and garment workers in NYC who successfully fought for better working conditions. Even though this holiday has been suppressed in this country, it is ~~is~~ this fighting spirit which we'd like ~~like~~ to take as an inspiration to carry on the struggle against women's oppression everywhere.

We'd like to make it clear from the start what we believe in. We do not believe that men are our enemies. Nor do we think that giving a few women high positions in government or other offices changes the lives of the vast majority of women. Or that building a women's movement separate from other progressive movements is the solution to women's oppression. We see building a movement for social change which includes working class men and women of all nationalities.

As you can see from our displays and program that we in the IWWD Coalition come from many different communities and work areas. We are men and women of many different nationalities from all parts of the city. Most of us are active in the continuing struggles of our communities, campuses, and work-places. For example, we are supporters from the struggle against the Bakke decision, the struggle against evictions in Little Tokyo, and fights for workers' rights and union democracy on the job, childcare services, health services, and the fight against forced sterilization. In all these areas, we recognize the important contributions that women are making. We see how working class women are actively linking their struggles to the struggles of working class people and oppressed nationalities. This

IWWD Coalition has given us an opportunity to summarize our different experiences and strengthen our unity so that we can move ahead.

Let us share with you some of our conclusions.

We believe that women need to be brought into the work force in order to lay the foundation for full participation in the economic, political, and social work of society. This is why we must fight for ^{full and equal employment} ~~complete equality and full democratic rights~~ for women. Working women are among the most underpaid workers. We earn about 59% of what men earn for the same kind of work. ~~\$0~~ This means it would be economic suicide for our family, for example, if my husband did more household and childcare chores so that I could work more hours outside of the home. Our family would have to take a drastic cut in our living standards! And think of the hardship it is for the woman who is the head of a household and supports a family! We must fight for job security, decent wages, better working conditions, and the special demands of women to achieve equality.

In order for women to play a more active role in society, domestic chores and raising children must be seen as something for all of society to take up. We must fight for free childcare, quality health care, better housing, and other basic necessities.

In light of our demands, we working women must ask each other what kind of movement must we build in order to carry on the genuine struggle for the rights of working women. We have the understanding that US society is split into class divisions--- between a handful of very rich people who control the economic, political, and social life of the country and the rest of us--- the vast majority.

28 Historically in the US the ruling class ^{forces} ~~forces~~ women and oppressed nationalities to be the reserve labor pool. The ruling class uses this reserve labor pool to sabotage working class unity. For example,

when workers are strong and organized enough to make demands of their bosses, the reserve labor pool is used to hold wages down, weaken union, and ^{break} ~~burst~~ up strikes. This ^{also} lays the groundwork for women to fight with men for jobs---diverting attention from the real enemy--- the ruling class who profits ^{even more} from giving workers as little as possible. Through these concrete experiences, we working women know that our future in the struggle for women's equality is tied to the future of all oppressed people. The basic problems of working women are the problems of the working class, and it's important for the entire working class to fight against the oppression of woman, and for working women to fight actively for the rights of the entire working class.

In summing up our IWWD Coalition work, we must say that the future is bright. We see women rising up and taking a leading role in struggles in work-places, communities, and campuses. We in the coalition are from different struggles but we not only find ourselves uniting in words, but also in action. We have been working together to support the movement to stop all forced sterilization. We saw that women being forcibly sterilized were almost all from oppressed nationalities, many did not speak English as their native language. This is not only an outrage against women's right to decide whether or not to bear children, but it's an act of genocide against oppressed nationalities in the US. We ask that all of you unite with us in this fight against genocidal forced sterilization. Please leave your name at the forced sterilization display. Fight against this example of the special ϕ oppression of Third World women in the US.

We must say that the future is bright because we can also draw inspiration from working women in many parts of the world. ~~For example,~~ We can look at the example of China, a country that used to be held up as a negative example of overpopulation, disease, starvation, and

total oppression of women. Under the leadership of the CCP, the Chinese people are transforming their society into one that serves the masses of working people. Today, there is good health care, childcare, and full employment. Women have legal and political equality with men, and old ideas are being rooted out. The women of China and other sisters around the world teach us the importance of joining the struggles for women's rights with the general social and political movements for progress and change in society. Today, on the occasion of IWWD , we join hands with progressive sisters and brothers all over the world to honor the great contributions of working women and to advance the cause of liberation for working women, for the working class, and for all oppressed people!

LONG LIVE IWWD ???

Yvonne Wong Nishio's 1977 speech given in Los Angeles for International Working Women's Day. Written by Yvonne Wong Nishio and other progressive Chinatown women participating in IWWD coalition work.

Mom,

5/14/72

Needless to say the shit has been flying down here too. The pigs were called onto campus last Thur. They busted 52 people (including two friends) They'd have gotten me too if I hadn't outrunned one of those bastards.

I have joined about 3000 other students in support of the student strike. Instead of going to class I've been working with the Asian Student Mobilization ^{Committee} and conducting workshops in which we're trying to educate as many students as possible (particularly Asians) to the issues of the war. It's nothing else, the events of the past week have convinced me that the violent confrontations burn the movement out too fast and that prolonged struggle and political education are necessary to effect ~~the~~ change (the revolution can't be won in a week). On a gut level, however, witnessing friends and fellow students getting their faces smashed with night sticks has made me more militant in spirit than ever.

i came to
recognize
the dead
and could
only write of
the living.

S.MURA

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