

*Third Edition*

# Introduction to **ETHNIC STUDIES**

EDITED BY  
Brian Baker | Julie López Figueroa  
Boatamo Mosupyo | Gregory Yee Mark



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# “We’re Going Out. Are You with Us?” The Origins of Asian American Studies

*By Gregory Yee Mark*

## Introduction

Scholars trace back the beginning of Ethnic Studies in the United States to the student led strikes at San Francisco State College, now San Francisco State University (November 1968), and University of California, Berkeley (“Berkeley”) (January 1969). At most universities and colleges, Asian American Studies (AAS) is one of the major components of Ethnic Studies. I grew up in Berkeley and Oakland, California, and the beginning for me was the summer of 1968. I was a student at UC, Berkeley and majored in Criminology. Earlier that year, I had transferred from Merritt Community College which was on Grove Street (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Way) in Oakland. Three events that summer played key roles in creating and defining the Asian American Movement and my own lifelong interest and commitment to Ethnic Studies.

The first was a family generational journey that I still travel today. From age six to 19, I lived in Berkeley and my grandparents lived two blocks away on California Street. One day, in June 1968, my grandmother, Violet Wong, asked me to go downstairs with her to the basement and she pulled out an old film canister which contained three reels of 35mm film. As she was pointing to the canister, Grandmother told me “Gregory, you do something with this.” I took the film to Palmer’s in downtown Berkeley to a childhood friend and from the decaying reels he saved 30 minutes of film and transferred it to 16 mm film. Five years later, at our 1973 family Christmas party, 60 family members viewed the showing of the very first Asian American film, the 1916 silent movie, Curse of Quon Gwon. Grandmother starred in the black/white film which co-starred her sister-in-law, Marion Wong. Marion played the villainess but, most importantly, Curse of Quon Gwon was her project. A unique perspective about the film is that the key actors and people behind the scenes were Chinese American women. In fact, three generations of women in my family are in Curse of Quon Gwon. Aunt Marion conceived of the idea, raised the money, wrote the script, and directed the film. Today, I am

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still “doing something with it.” In 2006, Curse of Quon Gwon was selected to the Library of Congress’ National Film Registry. I am doing research on this pioneering film, and I hope to make the remnants of the film into an educational tool to examine the early Asian American community via film.

The second historical event was the founding of the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA) in Berkeley by Yuji Ichioka and Emma Gee. I attended AAPA meetings and activities, and considered myself a fringe member. The Asian American Political Alliance became the major political organizing arm of a large contingent of UC, Berkeley’s Asian American students and represented the Asian Americans student contingent in the UC, Berkeley Third World Liberation Front. The AAPA played a key role for Asian American visibility and leadership to the University administration and the public at large.

The third historical event was the August 17, 1968 demonstration in San Francisco Chinatown (Umemoto: 33). The purpose of this demonstration, which was my first demonstration/protest, was to bring attention to the numerous social problems that plagued San Francisco Chinatown. We wanted to push the Chinatown establishment to action and make the public, especially government agencies, aware of these hidden social issues. I remember the sign that I carried; it said, “Look around You, Chinatown Is a Ghetto.” This peaceful demonstration was especially important because it brought together community folks, university students (primarily from UC, Berkeley and San Francisco State), and even AAPA members.

The 1968 San Francisco Chinatown demonstration for the first time brought together Asian American community members and student activists advocating for their communities. Many of these students later became leaders in community mobilization efforts such as the International Hotel (I-Hotel) Struggle, Oakland Chinatown youth organizations, and Japanese American senior citizen programs in the cities of Berkeley and San Francisco. These community service projects have left their legacies through an extensive network of community-based organizations and created a pipeline for



young Asian Americans to become involved in today's social justice issues and social services. For example, the multi-service Asian Health Services in Oakland Chinatown can trace its origins to the '60s and young Asian American activists.

## The Asian Experience in America: Yellow Identity Symposium

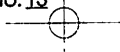
In November 1968, three months after the San Francisco Chinatown demonstration, I was talking to five other Asian American students in the Chinese Students Club (CSC) office, on campus in Eshleman Hall. At that time, I was President of the CSC. In 1968-69, Asian American students made up 10% of UC, Berkeley's student population. There were four major Asian American student organizations: the CSC, (American born Chinese); the Chinese Students Association (CSA, Chinese Foreign and immigrant students); the Nisei Students Club (NSC, Japanese American students); and Pi Alpha Phi (the Asian American fraternity). The first three organizations had offices on the fifth floor of Eshleman Hall.

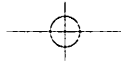
On that November Friday afternoon, six male members from CSC, CSA and NSC were talking about campus life. We started to talk about dating and one of the men, Gary, talked about a beautiful Asian American woman on campus who was from Sacramento. All the men knew who she was because she truly stood out on campus. In a dejected fashion, Gary told us that he had asked her out but she said a firm "no." He then asked her why she wouldn't go out with him. Gary said that she told him, "I only go out with White men." Then the six men let out a spontaneous groan. For the next two hours, I led my first discussion dealing with Asian American men and their relationships with Asian American women. A significant part of our discussion was about a topic which later became known as "Asian American Identity." After our impromptu discussion, Gary and another friend said that they really enjoyed the discussion and gained a lot from it. As I was going down the elevator, I thought to myself, "Why not expand the discussion beyond the six of us?"

As President of the CSC, I called together a cabinet meeting and asked the members what they thought about the Club organizing a conference about Asian Americans. At the first planning meeting, about ten people attended; the next meeting, about 20, and by December 1968, there were 60 people on the conference planning/implementation committee.

On January 9, 1969, CSC and some of the other Asian American clubs hosted the "Asian Experience in America: Yellow Identity Symposium" which was attended by 800 Asian Americans from around the United States but mainly from California. The symposium was the first national conference that was organized by Asian Americans, was about Asian Americans, and was for Asian Americans. I served as the symposium's emcee and we had three keynote speakers. They were Dr. Paul Takagi, Isao Fujimoto and Dr. Stanford Lyman. The topics ranged from Asian American history to the socio-economic political status of Asian Americans. Many

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of the Asian Americans who helped plan the conference and attended the meeting, later also participated in the Berkeley Third World Strike.

From that November, Friday afternoon to the day of the conference, I knew the conference was very important. I just did not realize how timely and important it really was. In fact, noted criminologist and Asian American scholar-activist Takagi, the symposium's lead keynote speaker, today often laughs, "Can you believe that?" regarding my 'boldness' in using the term "Yellow" for "Asian Americans," since it was not commonly used at the time. When Dr. Takagi was asked in May 2011 to reflect on his life's work, he wrote, "Perhaps Greg Mark asking me to keynote an event that he titled, The Yellow Symposium, was the beginning of my career!" Here, Takagi is referring to his criminology career that took a significant turn from traditional criminology to Asian American scholarly activism. To Dr. Takagi, the Yellow Identity Symposium was so significant, that he often humbles me by crediting me with founding Asian American Studies. By this he means the symposium was a primary catalyst in initiating the formation of the field of Asian American Studies. Just before he passed away in May 2009, the noted "Dean" of Chinese American Studies, historian Him Mark Lai, who attended the symposium, said regarding the symposium, "It was an awakening."

## The Sacramento Connection-full Circle

Another Asian American activist who attended the "Yellow Identity Symposium" was California State University, Sacramento (Sac State) student Wayne Maeda. In May 2011, Maeda stated that:

*Sac State 42 years ago was a place that had its political awareness shaped by the Civil Rights Movement, the war in Vietnam and the Black Power movement. It was, after all, in Sacramento in 1967, that Black Panthers carried guns into the Capitol. However, it was events in 1968 that shaped many of us who were just students then. 1968 began with the Tet offensive where the Viet Cong attacked across Vietnam with impunity, followed by revelation of Mai Lai massacre cover up, assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, Mayor Daly's thugs turned loose at the Democratic conventions in Chicago and San Francisco State and UC Berkeley campuses shut down in a push for Ethnic Studies. So there was a core of us becoming politically aware of issues of social justice and inequalities. But it was not until the 'Asian American in Experience: Yellow Identity Symposium' held in January 1969 that we began to think in terms of Asians in American and our identity. A number of us came back from this first ever conference on Asian Americans even more focused and dedicated to push for Ethnic Studies at Sac State. We consolidated a coalition of Black, Chicano, Native American and white radical students to push for hiring minority, women faculty and fundamental change in curriculum.*

The timing of the "Yellow Identity Symposium" was significant for another reason. During the symposium's lunch break, my fellow classmate in Criminology,





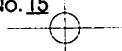
Maurice Williams, came by to see me. Maurice was a good friend who took me to African American parties and restaurants, and likewise I took him to Asian American parties and restaurants. Originally, he was a student athlete recruited to play football at Cal (UC, Berkeley). Maurice was the Black Student Union (BSU) liaison with other student groups. So Maurice told me that at last night's (Friday, January 8, 1969) BSU meeting, "We met last night and decided that we are going out. Are you with us?" I told Maurice, "Yes, we are with you." In other words, I was telling him that the Cal Asian Americans students would be part of the Strike, too. Ten days later, on January 19, 1969 the Third World Liberation Front began the Third World Strike at the University of California, Berkeley.

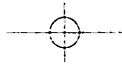
## The Fight for Ethnic Studies: The Third World Liberation Front

The Third World Liberation Front students went on strike for the creation of a Third World College that would incorporate four programs: Asian American Studies, Black Studies, Chicano Studies and Native American Studies. A significant part of the strike agenda was to achieve individual and community self-determination and to end racism. Third World (TW) was a term adopted from Frantz Fanon's book, The Wretched of the Earth. To the strikers, TW meant not only the underdeveloped countries of the world but also the working class people of color in the United States.

In the first two weeks of the Strike, it was exciting: peaceful picketing, marching around campus, listening to speeches from community folks and older student leaders, and handing out leaflets in front of classroom and administrative buildings. We had to have moving picket lines and not block the entrance to any buildings. We held our signs up proudly and over and over again shouted, "On Strike, Shut It Down, On Strike, Shut It Down!" and "Power to the People!" I remember the Asian American contingent holding long planning meetings to plan for the next day's strike events, sometimes meeting virtually the whole night. Then our representatives had to meet with the other Coalition members to agree on the days and even the week's strategies. As the Strike progressed, there was an increasing law enforcement presence. In the first week or so, it was the campus police and folks from the Dean of Students Office who monitored our activities. Next came the City of Berkeley Police Department, then a consortium of local police departments to augment the Berkeley Police Department, such as departments from Oakland and San Leandro, and then they were joined by the California Highway Patrol. Then the TWLF strategy changed from moving picket lines to what we called the "snake" which consisted of strikers moving around campus, making noise and disrupting classes that still met. As the number of student strikers declined from the daily grind and stress, the "snake" tried to avoid law enforcement and be moving targets. As the Strike progressed, the Alameda County Sheriffs or the "Blue Meanies"

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escalated the tension and violence even more. By the last few weeks of the Third World Strike, the National Guard was brought in with fixed bayonets attached to their rifles, and physical, violent confrontation became the daily standard mode of operation. They used tear gas and even brought in helicopters to tear gas us. Of course, tear gas did not know the difference between a striker and a student going to class. The end result was the campus being shut down because of the increasingly heavy-handed law enforcement presence.

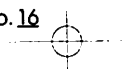
For the students the strike was very trying. In week six, I remember going to Cowell Hospital, the University student hospital, for treatment and the waiting area was filled with strikers. Everyone was just so tired, run down, and suffered from a lack of sleep and fatigue. I remember several personal low points in the strike for me.

The first low point was the increasing violence. I personally believed in non-violence and I still do. However, the Strike was becoming increasingly more violent. Two major contributors were the "Blue Meanies" and the National Guard. One day, from the fifth floor of Eshleman Hall, I looked down from the outdoor stairways balcony at the role of baton-carrying Sheriffs and fixed bayonets Guards trying to stare down protesters on the other side of Bancroft Ave. For some reason, one of the Sheriffs looked up and fired what I thought was a tear gas canister at me. I was not doing anything wrong or illegal, yet this man – this stranger – felt that he had the right to take a shot at me. It took all my self-control not to throw a chair down at him.

The second low point was a rumor that the strike was going to end. . . . that the University Administration was going to meet our demands. One of the members of the Black Student Union, Charles wanted to celebrate on the steps of Sproul Hall (the Administration Building). He brought some watermelon and then he asked me if I had any opium. (And no, he wasn't joking about stereotypes of Blacks and Asian Americans.) I was so disappointed in Charles that he, a fellow striker, negatively stereotyped me with the old images of Chinese Americans as opium addicts and dealers. He thought that because I was Chinese American that I had access to opium.

During the Nineteen Century, the early Chinese pioneers to the United States were frequently accused of smuggling opium into the U.S., operating opium dens and exposing/polluting White Americans to the drug. Actually, in the late 1700s, the British, French, Americans and most of the European powers smuggled opium into China and by 1900 essentially 27 percent of China's adult male population were opium addicts. So when Charles asked me if I had any opium, I was really disappointed in him.

By week eight of the strike, the end of the Winter 1969 quarter, on March 15, 1969, the UC, Berkeley Third World Strike ended. The TWLF and the University negotiated a compromise. The main demand was the creation of a Third World College. Instead we ended up with four separate Ethnic Studies programs which combined and became one Department. Somehow, Black Studies worked out an independent arrangement with the administration and they became a separate Black Studies Program. I could not believe this – after this intense Strike, a significant component of Ethnic Studies went off on its own.



By the end of the Strike, I was getting tired from the daily demands to sustain the strike but also I was getting upset with outside elements in the UC, Berkeley street community. As the Strike progressed they felt entitled to become involved with the TWLF strike. In the Strike's last month, they used it as an excuse for violence and trashing the University. I felt that this outside element and law enforcement moved the Strike more towards the confrontation mode than the Strikers. I learned a lesson from this. . . . six years later at San Jose State University, I was the Director of the Asian American Studies Program. I led a takeover of President John Bunzel's office because he was threatening to take away some of the meager resources from Asian American Studies. During the takeover, in the late afternoon, non-Asian Americans came to me and one of them said, "Let's break some windows and trash the administration building." I told them something to the effect of, "You don't tell us Asian Americans what to do. We determine our own strategies and our own destiny, and if you want, you can support us, but you don't tell us what to do." I never saw him or his friends again.

Sac State was highly impacted by the two Third World Strikes. Professor Wayne Maeda recalled that:

*Beginning an Ethnic Studies program, hiring faculty, developing curriculum, and the general demand for fundamental change at the campus level was made infinitely less confrontational by enormous sacrifices of students and faculty at both SF State and UC Berkeley. Moreover, they provided us models for classes, curriculum, and they even came to Sac State to provide guidance and inspiration to us. Thus, we were able to institute the first Asian American course in the Fall 1970 which was team taught.*

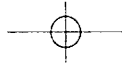
## The Very First Asian American Studies Course in the United States

During the first week of the Winter 1969 quarter, we went "On Strike" and on Wednesday nights, the first ever Asian American Studies course, Asian American Studies 100X, met. Since we were "On Strike," we had to meet in one of the off campus university's residence halls. Of course, we could not violate our own Strike by going to class on campus. There were 150 students enrolled in the class – and I was one of them. Professor Paul Takagi was the instructor of record. However, it was a team taught class that also included graduate students such as Floyd Huen, Ling Chi Wang, Bing Tom, Alan Fong and Richard Aoki. Class meetings were electric. There was this positive tension in the air that for the first time we were all meeting to learn about ourselves. Most students had attended Asian American weddings, baby parties, dances and even funerals but now we were studying "Our History, Our Way" (the slogan for the University of Hawai'i at Manoa Ethnic Studies Department).

We students networked, studied and discussed issues/topics that were relevant to our lives, and were simply awed by having the opportunity to validate our own

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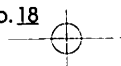
and our family's lives. Since this was the first Asian American Studies class ever, there were no textbooks. Therefore, each week, we had lectures and frequently guest speakers were brought in such as Edison Uno who talked about the World War II Internment of Japanese Americans. Another time, a European American Anthropologist, George DeVos, was brought to the class to speak. He came in with an arrogant attitude and was challenged by several students. The students questioned him regarding what gave him the right to tell us who we were. One of these students, Danny Li, is one of my close friends. He objected to the lecturer's "holier-than-thou" tone and questioned "whether a non-Asian would have the insights of people of color who had experienced racial discrimination firsthand."

Danny later moved to Hawai'i in the fall of 1971 to continue graduate studies in Chinese History and he was involved in community-base organizations in Honolulu's Chinatown, whose multi-ethnic residents were also facing 'urban development' relocations, just like elderly Chinese American & Filipino American residents in the International Hotel (I-Hotel) in San Francisco's Chinatown. As with other involved Asian Americans, the Strike and the Movement provided Danny and many others a beginning of a lifelong commitment to end racism, social injustice and improve society.

Another friend who was involved in the Strike and AAS 100X was my close childhood and adult friend, Floyd Huen, M.D. Floyd was one of the early leaders for Asian American Studies. He wrote the first proposal for Asian American Studies, and represented AAPA on the TWLF Central Strike Committee. This Committee made the long- and short-run decisions for the Strikers and negotiated with the university administration. After Asian American Studies became a program at UC, Berkeley, Floyd became the first program administrator. He was the AAS Coordinator from 1969-70 and taught the pioneering courses "Introduction to Asian American Studies" and the "Pacific Rim Seminar."

Floyd had been one of the hardest working members of the Asian American student contingent. Prior to the Strike, Floyd felt in love with another student activist who was deeply involved in the Strike, AAS 100X and in general the creation of Asian American Studies. Her name was Jean Quan. Jean was an undergraduate student in charge of communiqué during the TWLF strike. At UC, Berkeley, she co-taught the first Asian American Women's course with Emma Gee and edited and wrote the Asian Women's Journal. Later, in the mid-1980s, Quan was the Western Regional Coordinator of the Justice for Vincent Chin campaign.

January 1969 was truly a highpoint for me personally and for the Asian American Movement. "The Asian Experience in America: Yellow Identity Symposium" was not only successful but also the first national Asian American conference ever, anywhere in the U.S. Asian American Studies 100X was an amazing experience. . . . it was very dynamic, exciting and historical because it was the nation's first Asian American Studies class. At that time, where else did Asian Americans teach a course about their own history and social issues affecting our own communities? The course even served as an integral part of the recruitment of students into the



Asian American component of the Third World Liberation Front Coalition. I served as a volunteer Teaching Assistant (TA) for AAS 100X. In my section, I had 30 students. A group of the students and I compiled a resource directory, conducted an informal needs assessment survey, and started to network with individuals and organizations in Oakland Chinatown.

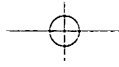
## Service to the Community: Oakland Chinatown

During the middle of the Strike, around February 1969, I started to reflect more about the roles that we, as Asian American students, should play to improve the quality of life in our communities. I assessed the needs in my own community – the community that had been a major part of my life – and what I could do as “an insider” to work on behalf of my own community. As a result, I started community service projects in the Oakland Asian American community or specifically in the City’s Chinatown. I was born in Oakland and raised in both the cities of Oakland and Berkeley. As a child and young adult, my father frequently took me to Chinatown to visit with friends, eat Chinese food, and visit Chinese societies such as the Suey Sing Tong. As a young boy, I got haircuts from the barber on 8<sup>th</sup> street, and this old Chinese woman barber gave us lollipops. I remember the corner (8<sup>th</sup>/Webster) grocery store whose owners, Mr. and Mrs. Gee gave me soda and crack seed. As a part of the Asian American Movement, I felt that I could use my education to better serve my community. In fact, at this time, I decided to apply to the School of Criminology graduate program because I thought that I could be more effective in my community work with an advanced degree.

In 1965, Oakland began to experience what many major U.S. cities experienced as a result of the change in United States immigration policy created by the Civil Right movement inspired-1965 Immigration Reform Act. This dramatic increase in the Asian American population, in particular, initially impacted the Chinese American and Filipino American populations. As a result, by 1969, Oakland’s Asian American community was undergoing a dramatic transition. Many new immigrants, especially Chinese, were moving into the Bay Area. Oakland Chinatown attracted many newcomers as demonstrated in the three Chinatown-serving neighborhood schools: Lincoln Elementary School; Westlake Junior High School; and Oakland Technical High School. As with San Francisco Chinatown, there was a critical need for bilingual education, job training, and bilingual services such as in health, affordable housing, and youth programs. Inspired by the Civil Rights movement, the Asian American Movement, and the Third World Strike, community based organizations were created as early as the mid-1960s to address these needs.

During the last month of the Strike, I went out into the community and networked with Oakland Chinatown organizations such as the Chinese Presbyterian Church. I also attended board meetings of the Oakland Chinese Community Council (OCCC), which at that time was the primary social service organization in Chinatown, and served as their youth representative.

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Lincoln's principal, Mr. Moynihan, was on the OCCC board. At that time approximately two-thirds of Lincoln School students were Asian American, primarily Chinese American, many of whom were immigrants. At board meetings, Moynihan expressed his concern regarding the difficulties faced by these non-English speaking, new arrivals from Asia, and how these students needed special assistance. I volunteered to help, thinking of the many Asian American students involved in the emerging Asian American Movement who would likely answer to such a call for service.

In AAS 100X, I had worked with a small group of students from one of its sections. These students and I did a preliminary needs assessment of Oakland Chinatown. One of the greatest needs was for the community's youth. The three primary public schools serving Chinatown expressed their concern for their recent Asian American immigrant students and there was a growing youth violence and gang problem in this community.

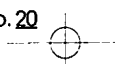
In the Spring 1969 quarter, three new additional Asian American Studies courses were offered. One of the courses was the "Asian American Communities" course which was also referred to as the "Asian American Field Work" class. I was a TA for one of the sections which was called the "Oakland Chinatown" section. There were 40 students in my section. In this course, we assessed the needs in Oakland Chinatown even more extensively, researched this community's history, and started a community service project. In this needs assessment as well, it was clear that one of the community's greatest needs was in its youth. At the time, there were no social services targeting the youth.

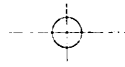
Considering the needs of Oakland Chinatown based on our needs assessments, coupled with Moynihan's appeal for help at Lincoln, I recruited students from the AAS Field Work course to tutor at Lincoln, and the Lincoln Elementary School Tutorial Program was born.

The Program was geared toward all Lincoln students, and its goals included improving their reading and writing proficiency. However, for those students with limited English speaking abilities (primarily Asian American immigrant children), the program also aimed to improve their English verbal skills.

In this way, the AAS Field Work course served as a direct pipeline to the Lincoln School Tutorial Program. My section of the Field Work course supplied the majority of the 35 tutors in the program. The program was a success, and continued for at least for four more years. According to Moynihan, the immigrant children's English proficiency scores dramatically improved. Furthermore, this project was a manifestation of one of the first times an AAS course was directly involved with local Asian American communities and literally applied theory and research to direct practice. In addition, it helped to jumpstart a new community based organization focused on Asian American youth in Oakland.

In August 1969, I founded the East Bay Chinese Youth Council, Inc. This wouldn't have been possible without my having roots in this community, the partnerships that I had developed with youth in the community, and with the support from Reverend Frank Mar of the Oakland Chinese Presbyterian Church.





## The East Bay Chinese Youth Council, Inc.

The East Bay Chinese Youth Council (EBCYC) was formed to improve the quality of education, provide employment training and opportunities, prevent youth violence, and provide recreational activities for Asian American youth in the East Bay. From 1969-1973, it ran an impressive array of youth programs and simultaneously sought to empower these Asian American youth. We were able to obtain funding via sub-grants from the Oakland Model Cities Program and the Oakland Unified School District, two recipients of a federal program called Neighborhood Youth Corps (NYC).

With this funding, one of EBCYC's programs was the summer Neighborhood Youth Corps that in 1970 and 1971 employed 133 and 230 Asian American youth respectively between the ages of 14 and 18. Some of these programs were: a community school for immigrant youth; community celebrations; film festivals; and medical needs assessment; and general community outreach.

In 1973, the youth council changed its location and name but continued many of the initial programs. The name changed to East Bay Asians for Community Action (EBACA). EBACA continued the medical outreach program, and in 1974 expanded to a one-room clinic.

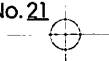
The clinic is now called Asian Health Services (AHS), and it has become one of the region's primary community health centers. AHS is an ever-expanding center which offers primary health care services to 21,000 adults and children and offers over 101,000 patient visits annually. Occupying a three-story building in the heart of Oakland Chinatown, AHS has 36 examination rooms and also has a dental clinic with seven chairs. Its staff is fluent in English and nine Asian languages (Cantonese, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Korean, Khmer (Cambodian), Mien, Mongolian, Tagalog and Lao) (Asian Health Services: 2011).

## The I-Hotel

One of the founding principals of Ethnic Studies was a commitment to service to our communities and "to do community work," which later also became known as "community service." For the past 20 years, this model of bridging the community with mainly higher education has been more popularly called Service-Learning. Yet little acknowledgment is given to the contributions of Ethnic Studies to the development of the Service-Learning paradigm. Service-learning in its purest form — community service — was actually a critical part of the original mission of Ethnic Studies, and was in fact practiced as early as 1969 with the formation of Ethnic Studies.

The UC, Berkeley Asian American Studies students focused their community work (service) on five projects in Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco. In Berkeley the project centered upon the Issei (first generation Japanese Americans). In San Francisco, students worked with Issei in Japantown (J-Town), Chinatown with garment workers, a book store, and the International Hotel (I-Hotel).

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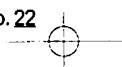
The most immediate and high impact project was “Save the I-Hotel.” In 1969, the Hotel was home to manongs (first generation Filipino American farmworkers) and elderly Chinese. One of the leaders to emerge from the struggle to save the I-Hotel and also, a key participant in the Berkeley Third World Strike, was Emil DeGuzman. DeGuzman was born and raised in San Francisco. In April 2011, he said:

*My father would take me down to Kearny Street as a little kid along with my younger brother. I had a godfather who had his photography shop under the Palm Hotel near Washington and Kearny Street. The Palm went down in 1968 and the I-Hotel was next. So I was very familiar with Manilatown growing up. When the fire happened that killed three manongs in March 1969, the Third World strike had just concluded . . . and we had fought so hard and learned so much, we were ripe to battle in the community. . . . Fortunately, my roommate Dwight Scott and myself organized students both from the strike and non-strikers who were anxious to be active to make a difference in the lives of their people. We did community work but it allowed us to join with the United Filipino Association representing the tenants to fight the owners. The success of the struggle which is true even today is the intergenerational unity where the young people unite with the elderly was the winning combination that drove the fight for eight years to stop eviction of the tenants at the I-Hotel.*

*In the summer of 1969, I had a wonderful work study job working for the Dean of Students at the University of California, Berkeley . . . Our proposal was an Asian American Film Festival (Asian films for Asian American audiences) in several Bay Area Asian American communities.*

*It was the one of the best times in my early student years because the summer was hot and the campus was bustling with activity. The Third World Strike had ended months prior after the Winter of 1969. This long fought struggle opened doors for minority students in the university. The victory to open an Ethnic Studies department was a major concession from the University Of California Board Of Regents. The TWLF movement had achieved new respect in persevering in the fight for the principle of self determination in higher education.*

*The summer was a time when the university was transforming and a new era was emerging. Our positions and the film festival was a new direction the university had taken at the time. The creation of Ethnic Studies created new dimensions and opportunities that had a rippling effect outside the university. Nationwide other students of color were making the same demands and receiving concessions by their universities and colleges for Ethnic Studies. Communities gladly accepted our invitations to promote the film festival in their community centers. We chose four communities: San Francisco Chinatown, Manilatown, Japantown and Oakland Chinatown. (The screenings happened in the summer of 1969.) The films that were chosen were from Japan and China. Our budget allowed us to produce fliers and print posters to publicize the movies. In Manilatown, it was shown in the International Hotel. The films chosen were mainly*





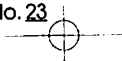
*Japanese films since there were none found with English sub-titles from China and the Philippines. The directors were all famous: Akira Kurosawa, Kenji Mizoguchi and Yasujiro Ozu.*

*Dwight and I had no experience organizing a festival . . . (and furthermore, we were not that) familiar with Asian films. Through the outreach and contacts, we were encouraged to make the University of California, Berkeley serve our communities which never could be imagined one year before. The film festival was a success. Many hundreds of young and elderly came to see the films with translators there to speak if the audience was monolingual speaking.*

By the summer of '69, the Asian American population was 3,089,932 (U.S. Department of Commerce: 1973). This represented a significant increase from the previous decade. The three major Asian American groups were: Japanese (591,290), Chinese (435,062), and Filipino (343,060). The war in Southeast Asia was reaching a peak with the Tet Offensive just the year before. The Asian American Anti-War Movement was just beginning to take form and become visible in certain cities and campuses. This movement peaked a year later in April 1970 with the United States invasion of Cambodia and the increased intensity of the larger Anti-War Movement. At UC, Berkeley, Asian Americans as a united group were highly visible in the Anti-War demonstrations and marches. I remember at a planning meeting (April 1970) at the YMCA on Bancroft Avenue for one of the marches, there was a childhood friend who was attending this meeting. Ron, a Japanese American, was a Black Belt in Karate and a City of Berkeley Police Officer. I asked Ron, "Are you working now?" He embarrassingly said that he was working. We kind of laughed because it was obvious that he was working undercover to gather intelligence information on the pending march.

The summer of '69 symbolized a critical time for the United Farm Workers Union (UFW) and their link to the Asian American Movement. Early Union leaders such as Larry Itlong, Philip Vera Cruz, and Cesar Chavez were utilizing Gandhi's tactics of non-violence. Itlong and Vera Cruz, both Filipino Americans, also represented an important part of the 1969 Asian American population. This group was the manongs. Many manongs were farmworkers who worked in the fields with their Chicano counterparts. In order to improve farm workers' wages and work conditions, the UFW utilized numerous non-violent methods to achieve their goals such as strikes against non-union farms, boycotts of supermarkets such as Safeway that sold grapes and lettuce from non-union growers, a march to Sacramento, Chavez's well known hunger strikes. A short time after the TWLF Strike, Professor Takagi organized of a car caravan of Berkeley Asian American students and UFW supporters to go to the UFW headquarters in Delano to show our support for the Union and delivered carloads of bags of rice. I remember arriving in Delano and going with Professor Takagi and a small group of students into the UFW headquarters and walking into a back room. In this room, in a hospital bed, was Cesar Chavez.

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He waved to us to come closer to him. My impressions for those five minutes were how kind he was, passionate about his cause, humble, and angelical. Although Chavez was weak and in poor health from his hunger strike, there was a peacefulness about this experience that I will never forget. This experience has left a lasting impression on me. To move people, to move mountains, one can do it with the positive, unflinching attitude of “Si, se puede (Yes, we can).”

The Third World Strike to establish Ethnic Studies at UC, Berkeley was a hard fought battle to establish a new discipline in higher education, but also in K-12. The College of Ethnic Studies was established at San Francisco State University, and Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs flourished at universities such as Sacramento State and the University of Hawai’i at Manoa. Ethnic Studies and related race and ethnicity courses sprang up all over the United States. Just as important was a new generation of community organizers and community-based organizations that for the past 42 years have truly impacted the communities they were meant to serve.

Today, 42 years later, in 2011:

I am a Professor of Ethnic Studies and the Director of Asian American Studies at California State University, Sacramento. My community service work in Oakland was followed by decades of service in Honolulu, and, even today, I’m engaged in community service programs I have created in Sacramento. I continue to work for a more just and fair society for all.

Dr. Paul Takagi is retired and continues to write about, reflect on, and be a strong advocate for social justice. For over 43 years, he has been my mentor and friend.

Him Mark Lai passed away May 2009. His research, publications, and mentoring of students of Chinese American history lives on.

Danny Li is semi-retired on the Big Island of Hawai’i. He continues to fight for social justice and equality.

Floyd Huen, M.D. is Medical Director at Lifelong Medical Care and Over Sixties Health Center in Berkeley and Oakland. He continues to organize communities for social justice.

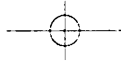
Jean Quan is the Mayor of the City of Oakland. She is the City’s first woman mayor and its first Asian American mayor. Mayor Quan brings her decades of training in the Civil Rights Movement to build a better and stronger Oakland.

Emil DeGuzman is the City and County of San Francisco Human Rights Commission Fair Housing & Public Accommodations Investigator & Mediator. He continues to fight for social justice and is an activist in the Filipino American community.

Dwight Scott passed away November 2008. I have never forgotten his commitment and friendship.

Sac State is fortunate to have Wayne Maeda going into his 43rd year of teaching in the Ethnic Studies Department. Since its inception, Wayne has been the foundation for Asian American Studies at Sacramento State.





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