

The AACCP Newsletter

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Asian American Curriculum Project, Inc.

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AACP's Newest Book *To Breathe the Sky*

By Philip Chin

AACP is pleased to announce our publication of "*To Breathe the Sky*" by Grace Takahashi. This novel explores one of the least known aspects of World War II.

Behind the now ten well-known internment camps such as Manzanar, Poston, or Tule Lake that imprisoned 120,000 Japanese Americans there was another separate system of Department of Justice camps set aside for "enemy aliens." These were men seen as Japanese American community leaders or those suspected of having Japanese nationalist sympathies.

The first arrests occurred on the night of December 7, 1941, just hours after the Pearl Harbor attack. Teams of FBI agents working from pre-prepared lists arrested Japanese language teachers, Buddhist priests, newspaper editors, and prominent businessmen. Subsequent waves of arrests happened in the months following based on secret interrogations and informants. None of this was done under court orders or supervision and none of those arrested were ever convicted of disloyalty to the United States.

This novel starts in February 1942 when Yoshio Torikawa is arrested and taken to the county jail in Portland, Oregon. He is never accused of any crime but is still moved across the US from one secret camp for enemy aliens to another. Every move creates more uncertainty about his legal situation and anxiety from being separated from his family. The conditions are difficult, and, as months become years, his physical and mental health deteriorates. Meanwhile Yoshio's American-born wife and two young children are also uprooted from their home and face the trials of their own lives in internment camps without him.

To Breathe the Sky explores the effects of the loss of liberty and physical contact with family, the influence of culture and religion on the choices one makes, and the unseverable bond between parent and child.

Drawing both information and inspiration from the journals and correspondence of her Issei father and Nisei mother, Grace Takahashi has crafted a remarkable World War II novel. TO BREATHE THE SKY illuminates the largely neglected experience of lawful Japanese nationals ineligible for US citizenship adrift in a maze of alien enemy internment facilities, while offering fresh insights into what 120,000 excluded Americans of Japanese ancestry, two-thirds of them naturalized citizens, endured in ten US government-administered detention centers.

Moreover, by focusing attention on the interaction via censored mail between one innocent Issei internee father and his incarcerated wife and two young children in a distant "relocation" center, Takahashi deftly plumbs the depths of personal, familial, and community pain and despair that accompanied America's greatest wartime mistake. Takahashi's book is notable for achieving a dynamic equilibrium between the claims of fact and fiction; it is the very best sort of historical novel.

Arthur A. Hansen

Professor Emeritus of History and Asian American Studies

Director, Center for Oral and Public History

California State University, Fullerton

150 Years of Hollywood

An Editorial by Philip Chin

From my computer last night I corresponded with friends in England, Germany, Indonesia, Spain, and Turkey. In just a few minutes I can correspond with people that it would have taken months or even years to hear from just 150 years ago in 1857.

1857 was one of the most important years in history. Britain and France fought the Second Opium War against China, the Indian Mutiny broke out against the British in India, Dred Scott v. Sanford was decided by the US Supreme Court thus further inflaming regional tensions that resulted in the American Civil War, Ottawa became the capital of Canada, and a small city was founded in California named Hollywood.

One of my US correspondents urged me to have a look at the new Jet Li movie, "War." I replied that I didn't want to see Jet Li playing another gangster role in another American movie or any

other Asian playing another gangster either. Hollywood seems to have stereotyped all Asian men into certain roles; gangster, sidekick, waiter/servant, sadistic wife-beater, or asexual martial artist who doesn't even get a kiss from the leading lady after saving her life, like poor Jet in "Romeo Must Die."

What about casting Chow Yun Fat in romantic comedy? He's done that in his Asian films. What about casting him as the romantic lead opposite a white woman? Too shocking and daring? Not formulaic enough for Hollywood? Haven't seen anything like that since he was in "Anna and the King" back in 1999.

I'm tired of Hollywood formulas; the fourth or fifth incarnation of the same movie as "re-imagined" or as a sequel. These ancient movies and the Hollywood treatment of Asian men need to be retired. (Continued on Page 2)

Give Us Your Feedback

Please feel free to send us your reviews, comments, and book suggestions. You can contact us at - aacpinc@asianamericanbooks.com

Up Coming Events

Here are some events that AACCP will soon be attending. Invite us to your events.

Date/Time	Event	Location
Sept. 28 4:30-6pm	The Association of Chinese Teachers (TACT) is holding its annual kick-off	Four Seas Restaurant San Francisco, CA
Sept. 29-30 10am-6pm	9th Annual Silicon Valley Moon Festival	Memorial Park Cupertino, CA
Oct. 6 2-3:30pm	Celebration of Filipino-American Heritage Month – Authors Oscar Penranda, Abe Ignacio, Jorge Emmanuel, Vangie Buell, Marie Yip, Marianne Villanueva, and Gemma Nemenzo	SM Main Library San Mateo, CA
Other Event of Interest that AACCP May Not Attend		
Aug. 27-29	Poston Internment Camp Reunion	Golden Nugget Las Vegas, NV
Sept. 8 9am-4pm	Midori Kai Arts & Craft Boutique	MV Buddhist Temple Mountain View, CA
Sept. 15 6pm	San Mateo OCA's 20th Anniversary Asian American Achievement Awards	S. SF Conv. Center S. SF, CA
Sept. 20	Showing of "The Fall of The I-Hotel"	Oakland Museum Oakland, CA
Sept. 22-23	Kaiser Permanente San Francisco International Dragon Boat Festival	Treasure Island San Francisco, CA
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Sept. 25 7pm	Oliver Chin introduces his new book <i>Julie Black Belt</i>	Books Inc. 3515 California St San Francisco, CA
Sept. 27-29	California Council For History Education	Riverside Convention Center Riverside, CA

150 Years of Hollywood

(Continued from page 1)

So what does this have to do with England, Germany, Indonesia, Spain, and Turkey? We create perceptions about ourselves to the rest of the world through the media we present to them. The mother of my friend in Turkey is convinced that all Americans are violently obsessive gun nuts through the magic of American movies. A great way for Americans to start making new friends in the Muslim world isn't it?

I recently got questioned by a white American saying to me, "I hear you people eat cats." Words enough to make anyone boiling mad. I pointed out that there are people all over the world that eat strange things or what Americans would consider strange things. Sure, some Asians eat cats, dogs, or whatever. Some Americans eat grubs too. Others go trash diving as part of the green environmental movement. The media shows these limited images

Editor's Message

Hello Everyone,

How are you? How's your summer going? Are you back at school?

The AACCP newsletter staff is still a little bit in summer mode. Since Memorial Day, AACCP has been to nine events including ten days at the San Mateo County Fair. So we haven't had much time for any deeply research news articles. We hope to get back on track this fall.

Okay, here are a few words about some events on the schedule – OCA San Mateo is holding their annual Asian American Achievement Awards. This year they are honoring Noel Lee, CEO & President of Monster Cable, Yvonne Lee, San Francisco Police Commissioner and former member of President Clinton's Civil Right's Commission, and Jeff Adachi, Public Defender for the City and County of San Francisco. The money raised by this event will go towards OCA's scholarship, internship, and Speak & Lead Programs. To learn more about the event call 650-533-3065 or go to the OCA San Mateo website (ocasanmateo.org).

On October 6th, the San Mateo Main Library will co-host a Celebration of Filipino-American Heritage Month event. As listed in our schedule, this event is packed with local Filipino authors. Many of these authors' books have been featured in previous AACCP newsletters. We hope you can attend these events.

Thank you very much Philip, for your help with this month's newsletter. Thank you Austin for being our intern this summer. We hope you have great school year.

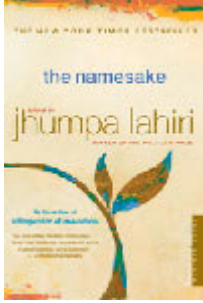

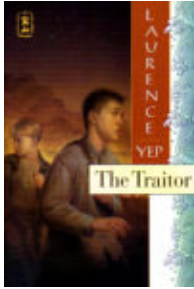
Leonard Chan
Executive Editor

of the world and creates a perception around them. Who is the media American that foreigners think is typical of us? Friends in all the countries I mentioned said Homer Simpson, the perpetually hungry, severely overweight, and stupendously unintelligent cartoon character is that typical American.

Unlike 1857, when messages from a limited number of media sources took months or years to travel, the Internet, satellites, and the mass production of media have made perceptions instantaneous around the world. I like Homer, but is he who we really are?

America, land of the violent, overweight, and perpetually stupid. Kind of hurts to look into that media mirror doesn't it? While we look at stereotyped Asians the rest of the world is also looking at stereotypes of us.

The following books are discounted an additional 20% from the listed price for subscribers to our newsletter. The discounts on these books end September 18, 2007.

	<p>To Breathe the Sky By Grace Takahashi 2007, 259 pages, Paperback. See the lead article in this newsletter for more information. Item #3471, Normally \$15.95 ... for newsletter subscribers \$12.76</p>
	<p>The Namesake By Jhumpa Lahiri 2004, 291 pages, Paperback. What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet; So Gogol would, were he not Gogol called. That's what Gogol, an Asian Indian American given the name of a 19th century Russian author, aims to find out as he journeys through life. Is he Gogol or is he Nikhil, the Indian name that he's adopts for himself? <i>The Namesake</i> is a classic story of an individual and his family coping with a multicultural life in America. Item #3472, Price \$14.00 - for newsletter subscribers \$11.20</p>
	<p>Public Japanese Gardens in the USA Present and Past Northern California By David M. Newcomer 2007, 309 pages, Paperback. If you haven't finished your summer vacation yet or are just looking for a place to visit on your days off, check out <i>Public Japanese Gardens in the USA: Northern California</i>. This is a comprehensive book that covers the history and the present state of public Japanese Gardens in Northern California. Item #3468, Price \$24.95 - for newsletter subscribers \$19.96</p>
	<p>Fables from the Sea By Leslie Ann Hayashi Illustrated by Kathleen Wong Bishop 2000, 40 pages, Hardback. Like its companion book <i>Fables from the Garden</i>, <i>Fables from the Sea</i> is comprise of a collection of enjoyable short stories with lessons at the end of each one. Many of the characters in the stories are creatures that can be found in the waters around Hawaii. Item #3469, Price \$14.95 - for newsletter subscribers \$11.96</p>
	<p>The Traitor Golden Mountain Chronicles: 1885 By Laurence Yep 2004, 310 pages, Paperback. In the early summer of 1885 in Rock Springs, Wyoming, an unlikely friendship develops between two teens - Michael Purdy and a Chinese American named Joseph Young. Their story takes place during the tumultuous real historical incident known as the Rock Spring Massacre of September 2, 1885, where 28 to 50 Chinese residents were murdered during a racially charged labor dispute. <i>The Traitor</i> is part of Laurence Yep's wonderful <i>Golden Mountain</i> series of historical novels. Item #3470, Price \$6.99 - for newsletter subscribers \$5.59</p>

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