multicultural voices

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The Institute for Multicultural Research and Social Work Practice, San Francisco State University

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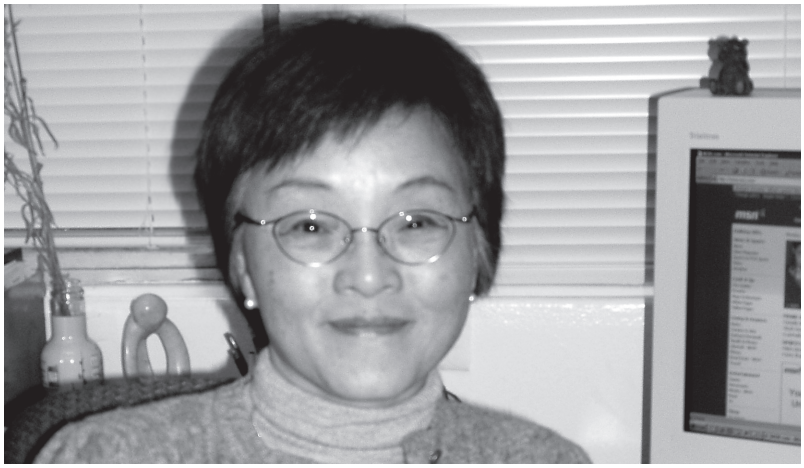

Professor Susan Sung. Picture by Rita Takahashi

Editor's Note

The Spring/Summer 2006 Issue of the Multicultural Voices is finally complete. This issue focuses first on the celebration of three faculty members' contributions and retirement from the School of Social Work at San Francisco State University. They are Professors Felix Rivera, David Shipp, and K. Morgan Yamanaka. Together they accounted for over one hundred years of teaching in the School of Social Work at San Francisco State University.

Second, this issue focuses on International Social Work. Writings from faculty and graduate students comprise most of the articles. It is befitting that this issue highlights the social work education in the global/multicultural context. April was the African American heritage month. May was the Asian Pacific Islander Heritage month. Included in this issue are a series of wide-ranging articles from a report of an international conference held in Hong Kong and Beijing (2005); a pilgrimage to the African diaspora; an article on world aging; and to a research study on the evolving definition of Asian identity as reflected by the Filipino college students today. Additionally, the international context to social justice and social work is reflected by the personal voices of international students who came to the U. S. to study and the U.S. faculty and students who went abroad.

The Institute for Multicultural Research and Social Work Practice (IMRSWP) and this editor wish that the above articles will instill our critical thinking and raise awareness to issues of social work education in global and local contexts.

We welcome your thoughts.

Best wishes,

Susan Sung
Editor

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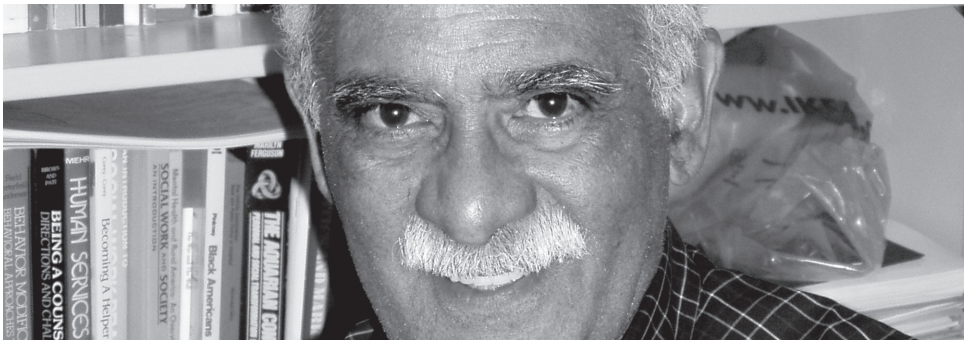
Cover Illustration and internal layout by María José Baños.



Professor Felix Rivera. Picture by Rita Takahashi.

Honoring Felix Rivera

Professor of Social Work (1973-2006)
San Francisco State University

Professor Felix Rivera: A Lifetime of Service to Social Work Education.

By Lisa Hines, Assistant Professor

Felix G. Rivera, M.S.W., PhD., one of the founding members of the Institute for Multicultural Research and Social Work Practice, is retiring this semester after 33 years of service at San Francisco State University. Dr. Rivera began his distinguished career as a social work educator in 1973.

For the past 45 years. Dr. Rivera was active in the civil rights movement, including working with the United Farm Workers in Delano, California, labor organizing and working in the War on Poverty. He has worked with Latino gangs, Cuban refugees, and helped develop many community based organizations.

His expertise in research and program evaluation was well recognized by community agencies and local/public funding sources, such as the San Francisco County jails, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Health Education and Welfare, the Federal Human Rights Commission, and the American Red Cross. He helped establish the then-called Chicano School of Social Work in San Jose, California. Other professional duties have included working in the field of redevelopment for the cities of Anaheim and San Francisco, National Institute of Mental Health, community development programs in Puerto Rico, Headstart, and various YMCAs.

His research and publications have influenced community organizing in communities of color. Dr. Rivera's publications have included chapters in books and numerous journal articles. He co-edited two books: ***Community Organizing in a Diverse Society***, which is currently in its 3rd edition, and ***Latino/Hispanic Liaisons and Visions for Human Behavior in the Social Environment***. He sits on the editorial boards of the ***Journal of Community Practice, Journal of Health and Social Policy, Journal of Progressive Human Services***, and the ***Journal of Ethnic Cultural Diversity in Social Work***, as well as numerous other organizational affiliations.

In His Own Words

In a 2003 paper, written in first person, Dr. Rivera looks back at the field of community organizing:

> As I reflect on my years in the field, I am not surprised by the knowledge that nothing has been written to date about the history of our struggles as students and practitioners of color in schools of social work, and what the implications of these struggles have meant for the teaching and organizing in our communities. I remember our enthusiasm as we met in New York in the early 1970s, as the Puerto Rican Faculty Development Project, under the auspices of CSWE. African American, Chicano, Asian American and Native Americans also participated with their respective groups. We were hopeful that practice frameworks and grass roots organizing experiences would be implemented in schools of so-

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Students' Voices

My Story

By Preeti Bhardwaj

In a country like India with vastly varied cultural, lingual and social background, development of human resources is vital for the equitable dispersal of the benefits of economic growth that the country has experienced in the past decade and continues to do so today. The exponential growth in the agricultural, industrial or technological sectors results in the exponential need for a competent labor force. This is especially so in India, because the vast majority of people are poor, uneducated and lack basic amenities. The common man, particularly in the rural area, can hardly comprehend the modern ways of living, education, and health care. Though the modern means of communication have brought the world right into most people's living rooms, individual and community development still require innovative and culturally relevant approaches.

So what does that mean for me to grow in such a society? It meant growing up in a rural conservative Hindu family in one of the poorest, populated and backward state of Bihar, India. It meant to be surrounded by caste and gender discrimination. As a child, although I belonged to a sub-system of the caste society, I did not think too much about the caste society. It did not bother me when my family told me not to mingle with children of other religions or caste. I was more interested in getting the same treatment as my brothers. I wanted to have the same opportunities as they did. Like the boys, I wanted to play freely, eat to my heart's content and be encouraged to learn. However,

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Honoring Felix Rivera

cial work, we fought for the recognition of culture, race, and ethnicity as organizing and pedagogical necessities, not as liberal concoction. We were dealing with life and death issues of racist violence, oppressive immigration policies, inferior education and malnutrition, to mention a few.

The Renaissance Years: 1970s- 1990s

The 1970s, was considered the "best of years" by Dr. Rivera. Reminiscing about SFSU faulty Dr. Rivera states:

> There were lots of programs being developed by faculty at that time. Some of the people around were Pat Purcell, he was a socialist, Tim Sampson, he was the union (CFA) representative, and Kenji Murase was founder of the IMRSWP. Mario Diangeli, Katherine Smith… the list goes on and on. Numerous programs were created during this period. For example, the ethnic and cultural diversity curriculum began in 1973. In 1975, the planned part time program was implemented. In 1978, the Asian American Social Work Training Project, the Native American Training Project, the Children and Family Training Project were created. Both the Community Mental Health Project and the National Institute for Drug Abuse project began in 1978. In 1979, the social development track was realized when the school of social work adopted the three track concentration MSW program. In the 1980s, Michael Reisch, School of Social Work Director (1986-1995) created a certificate program for non profit administration.

Looking back and commenting on the uniqueness of the faculty, Rivera explains:

> There was a culture of diversity rather than a diversity when convenient philosophy. Everyone was politically active and that was the consciousness of the faculty. We spread ourselves throughout the university and community and actively applied for committees. We made our voices heard. We used confrontational techniques and tactics as a means to an end.

Community Organizing in Schools of Social Work

Commenting on curricular themes Rivera states:

> One of the strengths of community practice is its multi-disciplinary approach and its variety of practice methods. To teach it solely as a grass roots organizing activity sells students short. They are not being exposed to other areas of community practice, which include, but are not limited to, administration, program development, community development, policy analysis, social planning, and social and evaluative research. Connections must be made amongst all these method areas, with emphasis given to employment patterns.

Further commenting on the current situation in schools of social work around macro practice issues, Rivera states: "Currently, 85% of students are in direct services. Social activism is not trendy. It's not a happening thing." There is so much need in other areas such as mental health and substance abuse. There's less and less passion for social activism by students. I mean, look at our school. For example, our social development students are less in number than say the concentration in Individuals Families and Groups. But I'm impressed with our international students. They have a critical consciousness of those of us in the 60s and I'm wondering where did they learn that."

Dr. Rivera offers several recommendations for the community organizing curricula:

- View community organizing as a direct service.
- Enhance content on Leadership.
- Globalization of community practice education.
- Expand our analysis on community power
- See racism as components of CO.
- Maintain a Multicultural Focus in community practice.

Although Dr. Rivera will be missed by faculty, students, and staff, his enthusiasm for multicultural community organizing lives on.

My Story | Cont. from p. 3

within my family, I saw girls being discriminated when compared to the "sons" –given less to eat, not encouraged to pursue education and married at the age of 18 or less. It is said that, at my birth, my grandmother almost collapsed when she heard that a girl was born. The disadvantage of being born a girl was so egregious that it prevented me from recognizing the privilege that I nonetheless enjoyed because of my higher caste.

I remember seeing my father struggling to provide food and basic amenities to a family of twelve which consisted of his parents, seven siblings and his wife and children. My mother was the first woman in the family to work outside of the home. Her decision was disputed by the male dominated patriarchal society. But the family had to give in, not because they wanted to, but because, if she had not worked, we would have had no food on the table. I have seen some of the social norms change for the better. My mother was married at 16, whereas I was allowed to complete my college degree before my father started looking for a suitable match for me. Education of girls is taking a front seat. More and more families are sending their daughters to school and motivating them to get a college degree.

The caste system in the urban Indian society is beginning to crumble. It may be because of the Government's policy of reserving jobs for minorities and the disadvantaged caste in the public sector and providing equal opportunities in terms of education and health services. However, acceptability inside homes has not yet come. In the last decade or so the urban In-

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Professor David O. Shipp.

Honoring David O. Shipp
Professor of Social Work (1974-2006)
San Francisco State University

David O. Shipp: Keeping the Vision.

by Liz Dunbar Knox, Assistant Professor

Dr. Shipp's teaching career began 32 years ago, in 1974, as one of the few new faculty members who came from the University of California at Berkeley. Dr. Shipp contends that the social context at the time was very instrumental in shaping the philosophical orientation in social work theory and practice. The prevailing dynamics were the driving forces that moved the faculty to design courses that addressed the disadvantaged and oppressed communities. This has been the focal point of the School of Social Work; but as he departs, he feels that the thrust of social work is no longer present. The leadership in the profession no longer carries the torch of social justice.

As Dr. Shipp reflects back on some of the joys and struggles of his experiences, the sunset of his retirement is apparent but his concern for the direction of social work is spoken with the diligence of a vanguard.

> "I don't believe that the new breed of social work educators is replacing those of us who are retiring. They will not be bringing the same orientation that was there in the late 70s and 80s that addressed disadvantaged and oppressed communities; primarily, the context is different. Activism on campus as it was in the 70s is not the same."

Dr. Shipp goes on to say,

> "Unfortunately social work today has lost its cutting edge to working with disadvantaged communities. Faculty today are not privy to the history of the turmoil going on in the Civil Rights Movement and the Third World Movement. Very few social work educators truly understand the dynamics of that time and how it played a major role in the development of the social work curriculum."

With a hint of some optimism in his tone, Dr. Shipp recognizes that this is a transition and things are beginning to change. When nudged to talk more about our present state, Dr. Shipp did not hesitate to add to his observation:

> "The vision of social work is not clear. I hope that the mission of social work does not become empty words. With an unclear vision, social work will not be able to gear toward the activism and idealism of serving the disenfranchised and advocating for social justice."

With a glimmer of hope, Dr. Shipp alludes that the diverse student body will hold the educators and faculty responsible and true to the mission of Social Work.

As a stroke of flashing thought, Dr. Shipp puts aside what he feels are ongoing issues in social work education. What now dominates his mind is an even more daunting era: Seton Manning, the first African American male in the Department of Social Work Education at San Francisco State University.

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My Story | Cont. from p. 4

dian economy and the society at large have witnessed a sea of change. Some of it could be attributed to the globalization of the market and some could be attributed to the western cultural influence that came with it. With globalization of the Indian economy, the media has become privatized. The market forces are moving towards capitalism and propagation of consumerism. Mass market is opening discussion on varied and relevant topics. Advertisements are targeting women and representing them as important decision makers in their families and societies at large. Yes, it is true that women are getting more autonomy but my question is -autonomy on what issues. Yes, they now have the power to decide which box of cereal is good for their children and which one to buy, but they do not have the power to participate in family and community decisions on larger issues, such as marriage, work, politics or economic choices. Another example of gender discrimination can be seen by comparing the daily wage of a man and a woman. In India, the daily-wage of a woman is invariably lower than her male counterpart. Thus, my argument is, even if women are allowed to participate, women are still living as second class people.

I came to United States with the hope that I will be treated equally and enjoy the opportunities and choices offered by a developed country. I was thrilled to see 24/7 water and electricity in my small apartment. However, after coming to America, I am again "looked at differently" and yet again "categorized" –this time based on my brown skin, different clothes and an accent—I am called an Asian-Indian.

Students' Voices

The Roots of Traditions

By Diane Davis

My friend Violet has 86 siblings. Her father had twelve wives and they all lived on the same land in separate little houses. Violet says she didn't see her father often as her mother was not one of the favorite wives, and there were too many children to receive personalized attention. She reports that her childhood felt normal, and she is extremely grateful that she was allowed to attend school. This was not true for many of the older female siblings who cared for the younger children, but Violet took her education seriously and became a nurse. She is now married with grown children and she shares her husband with two other wives.

Understanding and embracing traditions and cultural norms can be complicated in international social work. The challenge lies in setting aside existing paradigms in order to contextualize information in a completely new environment. This can seem problematic as our personal values often collide with cultural norms. The question then becomes, what is a tradition that is deserving of respect verses a human rights issue that is in need of advocacy for social change? Perhaps one answer might lie in understanding the historical roots of traditions. All traditions are created for a purpose and it is essential to understand the reasons behind customs within a cultural context if they are to be properly evaluated. This is often best accomplished by listening to oral histories in order to understand the reasons behind customs, traditions, and cultural norms.

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Honoring David O. Shipp

> "After Spring 2006, there will be NO MEN of COLOR. When I leave the School of Social Work…the history of having an African-American man as part of the program is gone. The faculty from the inception of the BA program 40 [something] years ago comes to an end.

A moment of silence summed up our shared concern. The reality is that the School is losing all men of color as we see the departure of Dr. David Shipp, Dr. Felix Rivera, and Professor Morgan Yamanaka. Dr. Shipp offers this phenomenon as an example to how the mission and vision of social work is interconnected and acted out.

From here, Dr. Shipp expands on his teaching philosophy that is grounded in knowledge and skills that are addressed from the perspective of women and people of color. As with all good social workers, he uses himself to draw the learning that is needed in the area of administration, fiscal management, and the pupil personnel services. Dr. Shipp confirms from his own experience that fiscal management was the area that students were most often not exposed to in their social work education. As he found himself advancing the administrative ladder, he recognized that the knowledge was not always there; therefore, he had to seek out information. He acknowledges that he came across a few supportive administrators who helped to shore up his confidence while he learned. Dr. Shipp has infused his experience, knowledge and skills into the courses he has taught over the years in social work administration and computer technology in social work. His greatest memories will be of the students who have graduated, gone on to become good to excellent administrators in social service agencies and community programs.

Close to Dr. Shipp's heart and the apparent emotional froth in his throat was his passion for the area of school social work. He has developed and administered the Pupil Personnel Services Credential (PPSC) program in the School of Social Work. With a clear vision and a steadfast commitment, Dr. Shipp has made sure that he leaves the PPSC status in good standing with the State Commission. Dr. Shipp is quite adamant in how the activity of our continued certified PPS credential program connects with our vision. "You cannot live in the Bay Area and not have some inkling of what is happening to Oakland schools…Richmond schools…San Francisco [schools]…and unfortunately Berkeley [schools]. School social work…is a natural connection to working with disadvantaged and oppressed communities." According to Dr. Shipp, our School's commitment should be heard, loud and clear.

Our interview draws to a close but Dr. Shipp has made it clear that he will still be involved. His years as a director of the Department of Social Work from 1979-1985 and a term as the Associate Dean of Behavioral Sciences in Fall 1985 should be clearly written in his history at San Francisco State University. He now joins the emeriti professors who have stayed true to our mission. His legacy as a beloved teacher and mentor to thousands of social work students will continue in the field of social services. Equally, his legacy as a mentor to many faculty of color on campus will be felt and appreciated for many years to come.

We give you our profound appreciation, for your tremendous contributions and your dedication to students...to our School of Social Work. It is now up to us to carry the torch and be keepers of the vision.

> *There is nothing more dangerous than to build a society, with a large segment of people in that society, who feel that they have no stake in it; who feel that they have nothing to lose. People who have a stake in their society, protect that society, but when they don't have it, they unconsciously want to destroy it.*
>
> **By Martin Luther King**

Professor Morgan Yamanaka. Picture by Rita Takahashi

Honoring K. Morgan Yamanaka
Professor of Social Work (1962-2006)
San Francisco State University

The Legacy of a Japanese American dedicated to Social Work

By Susan Sung, Professor

Professor Yamanaka, age 83, is officially retiring from San Francisco State University in June 2006. We should not be surprised that, in his impeccable suit and proud walk (albeit supported by a cane sometimes), we will continue to see him on campus, mentoring students and alumni, socializing with faculty and staff, and working diligently on projects in his office. Professor Yamanaka is an icon in the social work community, and his life experience is exemplary of this country's struggle for social justice. His 44 years of dedication to the School of Social Work is a hard act to follow—we will always look toward him for inspiration and guidance.

His father named him "Kunitake"

Professor Yamanaka was born in 1924 in San Francisco. His father named him "Kunitake" which means "the root of the country." Two years later, his parents sent him and two older brothers to Japan to be raised by their maternal grandparents. He lived in a "very rural" part of Japan for five years. When he was seven years old, his parents brought the children back to San Francisco. He started grammar school in San Francisco like all other immigrant children, without knowing a word of English. His parents did "domestic work" (father as a cook and mother as house-cleaner) in the Pacific Heights district of San Francisco.

As Professor Yamanaka reminisced, "Somehow I survived not knowing English when I first started school. My parents spoke little English… My life was divided into two: the public school life with the "English" students and teachers, and the non-school life of Japanese school and Buddhist temple. Everything was segregated." He had no relationship with his public school classmates. He remembered that the Chinese and Japanese were not allowed to live outside of their communities. The only exception was for those who were allowed to live where they worked, such as his parents.

In 1942, two months short of graduating from high school, Professor Yamanaka and family were ordered to leave San Francisco and to report to one of the fifteen assembly centers in the U.S. 120,000 Japanese Americans experienced the same fate. The U.S. was at war with Japan; and the Japanese Americans were sent to concentration camps for no other reason than that they were Japanese by ancestry. Professor Yamanaka's family stayed at the Santa Anita Race Track in Los Angeles for six months, where his home was a horse stable. His family was transferred to Topaz, Utah for a year, and Tule Lake for three years. When Japanese Americans were allowed to leave the internment camps four years later, they were banned from settling in California, under the order of Governor Warren. The legislative order was "No Japs in California".

Professor Yamanaka stated, "Most Japanese Americans reasoned that you can't help it. You accept it." In 1946, he was one of the

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The Roots of Tradition | Cont. from p. 6

After waiting on the side of the dirt road for nearly one hour, the public transportation arrived and Violet and I boarded the matatu. Violet was greeted by a woman that she knew. They were both very excited to see one another and they began speaking very rapidly in Luhya, the tribal mother tongue that I did not learn in my two years in Kenya. Violet introduced me to this woman, saying it was her "co-wife," meaning they shared the same husband.

I asked Violet about her thoughts of sharing a husband, and out of that conversation, I gained an understanding that allowed me to respect the reasons for the inception of the tradition of polygamy. Violet explained that long ago, Men had large plots of property and they needed able bodies to help cultivate the land. Infant mortality was extremely high as many babies died of disease such as malaria as well as dehydration due to diarrhea. Sustenance farming was how people survived, so men married multiple women for the purpose of procreation. In this case, the purpose and origins of polygamy were not based in oppressive measures toward women. Violet recognized hardships with polygamy when the co-wives did not get along, and she also talked about opportunity because they had money to send her to school. Had her father not sired many children, Violet is convinced their family would have been poor and she would have been relegated as a house girl for another family.

Violet then talked about how culture is changing because the needs are changing. Land plots are smaller, and the infant

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The Roots of Tradition | Cont. from p. 7

mortality rate has drastically decreased. Where large families used to mean prosperity, they now are a financial burden. Violet noted that her father had twelve wives, her husband had three wives, and her sons only have one wife. This is an example of how logical traditions evolve as the needs of a culture and community change.

Yet there are many traditions that are borne from oppressive measures. The Luhya tribe has historically practiced wife inheritance. Women did not have a high place in society, they could not own land, and there was tremendous shame is being a widow without an income or provisions of care. Therefore, when a husband died, the wife went to the brother. Thankfully, the Luhya's have also rethought those traditions as the AIDS crisis is being spread throughout extended families due to wife inheritance.

Examples abound in traditions that were created for respectable reasons verses those steeped in oppressive origins. Male circumcision is a right of passage around the age of twelve where the village elder would circumcise the boy while a weeklong celebration ensued. The traditions are now shifting to allow for a medical staff to complete the circumcision with safe tools while the traditional celebration continues. The Luhya's have not practiced female circumcision, yet there are other tribes, such as the Maasai, Samburu, and Meru that continue with this practice without questioning the oppressive reasons this tradition began in cutting out the clitoris of a women. Female circumcision is a rite of passage

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Kunitake Morgan Yamanaka

last 200 detainees to leave camp because "we were called the rabble-rousers." The Government gave the Japanese Americans $25 each and a one way ticket—his was to Chicago. He headed east to New York where his brother was; he "looked for a job where you get food. So I was hired as a dishwasher, worked myself up to being a pantry cook, short order cook and waiter."

After leaving the internment camp, he was known as "Morgan", his middle name. Kunitake became the first initial in his name.

In late 1946, Professor Yamanaka headed back to San Francisco, discovered a course called sociology at San Francisco City College. He received his bachelor degree in sociology from the University of California at Berkeley. He studied for a year in the doctoral program in sociology and later transferred to social welfare where he could study the "social interactions of people and race relations." In 1953, Professor Yamanaka received his Master of Social Work degree at U.C. Berkeley.

For six years, Professor Yamanaka worked as a group worker at the International Institute of San Francisco. In the late 1950s, he became the director of the Mission Neighborhood Center, administering the Precita Mission Community Center, and the Good Samaritan Community Center. Community leaders and fellow social workers still recalled his relentless effort to advocate for social services for the Latinos in the Mission District.

In 1962, Professor Yamanaka was hired as a faculty member at San Francisco State University. Social Work was a part of Sociology. Between 1963-64, the Social Work Department was founded under the guidance of three faculty—Seton Manning, Bernice Madison and Morgan Yamanaka. At that time, Social Work was a discipline mandated by the State of California. Seton Manning became the first Director of the Department of Social Work at San Francisco State University.

Over the past four decades, Professor Yamanaka dedicated his teaching career to the undergraduate social work program. He formalized the field work program; developed a course that introduced students to the social service communities; and recruited incoming students to the social work profession. He was also instrumental in developing the curriculum for the graduate field education.

In addition to teaching in social work, Professor Yamanaka taught a course that he initiated in Asian American Studies, titled "The Legacy of Japanese American Internment in American History." He was also instrumental in establishing a social service certificate program at San Francisco City College. With the thousands of social work students who studied under him, Professor Yamanaka will also be remembered as an effective "no-nonsense" teacher. Professor Yamanaka is the "sensei" who leaves a strong impact on the professional standards that many of his students aspire to and uphold.

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IMRSWP Seminar. Picture by Rita Takahashi.

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Kunitake Morgan Yamanaka

Ruthie, the love of his life

Professor Yamanaka stated that, last year, he and Mrs. Yamanaka celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. It is admirable to see the devotion that Professor Yamanaka and Mrs. Yamanaka have had for each other for the past half century. "Ruthie", as he so lovingly refers to his wife, was a social worker at the International Institute when they first met. They were married despite the objection of both sets of parents, because they were marrying outside of their race. As Professor Yamanaka recalled vividly, their parents did not give their blessings at the wedding; but it was still a wonderful event with close friends and colleagues. Professor and Mrs. Yamanaka have three children, all grown and in professional fields. The children continue to stay close to their parents.

Professor Yamanaka is known for his hobbies, which include collecting and maintaining Japanese swords, collecting Japanese art and antique, and training bonsais. Recently, due to a weakened back, he has limited his outdoor sports, such as skiing, snowshoeing, backpacking, mountain-climbing, and rock-climbing. An added love and enjoyment to Professor and Mrs. Yamanaka's household is their first granddaughter, whose first/middle name is Morgan Yamanaka.

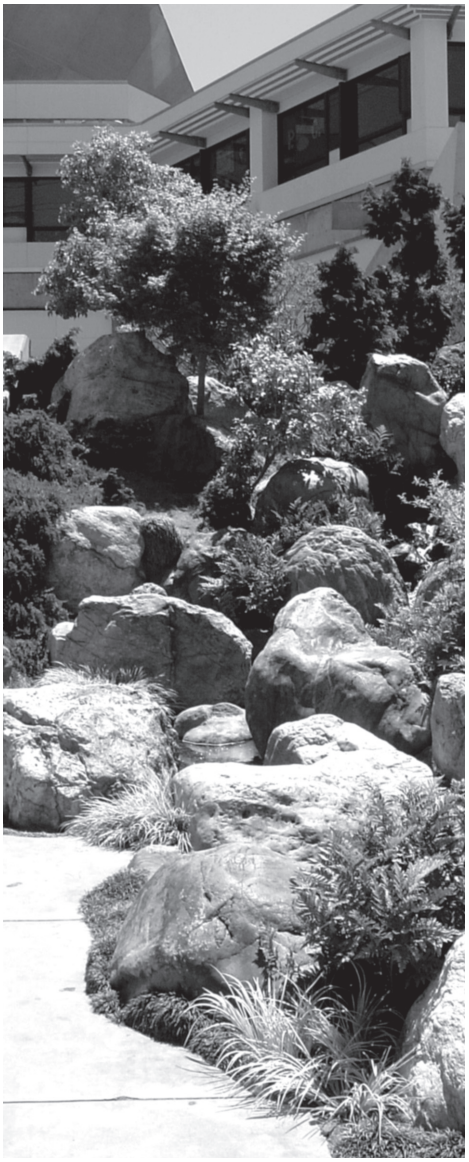
An Asian Waterfall on Campus

In 1996, San Francisco Board of Education recognized that Japanese Americans were forced out of the public schools during the WWII internment. Fifty four years after he left high school, Professor Yamanaka finally received his high school diploma in 1996. "Here I am a college professor without a high school diploma because of the evacuation. I think that's humorous!" At San Francisco State University campus, there is a prominent landscape of Asian motif–a cascading waterfall with rolling rocks. Students and birds love to spend a quiet moment there. This waterfall was erected in memory of the Japanese American Internment.

Humor and Students

What made Professor Yamanaka last four decades in higher education? Professor Yamanaka answered with a smile, "Humor and students."

Adieu, Professor Yamanaka! We will always look for you on campus and in the community. Your life and your words will always be a part of us.



Cascade at San Francisco State Univeristy. Picture by María Baños.

The Roots of Tradition | Cont. from p. 8

that defines womanhood and for many tribes there is no end in site as this is an honored custom.

In my work in Kenya, I sought to understand traditions by listening to countless stories. I did not feel it was my place as a white American to judge traditions such as polygamy, wife inheritance, and circumcision. When incremental shifts in the culture occurred, it was rewarding to hear that in many cases it was Kenyan's making those decisions for themselves, verses outsiders telling them how to live their lives.

Yet there is an ethical dilemma in the role of interventions, as the social work profession believes in equality and equity amongst all human beings. As social workers, do we respect all traditions because we allow for self-determinism in respecting culture? When is it appropriate to challenge customs that are hurtful? And how do we define what is hurtful? Are there universal standards that should be upheld regarding human rights issues, or is each culture its own entity that creates its own norms? We might say that our role is to advocate for the disenfranchised, yet we must be careful of how we define that in international social work as many individuals state that they embrace their cultural traditions without feeling oppressed.

Every society has customs that were created for a purpose but no longer seem to apply. Yet we often continue in these practices out of tradition. Lest we think examples of Africa are abstract, it would behoove us to consider examples in the United States. The tradition

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The Roots of Tradition | Cont. from p. 9

of a bride wearing white has evolved from a symbol of purity to a common practice. Men in American have historically been the breadwinners while wives were thought of as the nurturing caregivers. Culture is evolving to allow for women to work, yet there is still a stigma against men staying at home to care for children. We used to circumcise males at birth because of reasons for good hygiene. We are now one of the cleanest countries in the world, there is research that male circumcision is traumatizing, yet we continue with this practice. Some say they feel pressure to have their sons circumcised because it is a cultural norm and they don't want their child to be teased in the locker room, or to grow up feeling "different." So which of these traditions are benign and which could be construed as oppressive?

As social workers we are taught to be mindful of our own values, beliefs, and assumptions in order to embrace and respect others' self-determinism within their cultural framework. We are also advocates to help the marginalized find their voice, and the balance between the two can be tricky.

Contemplating the balance of respecting diversity of customs and promoting human rights can be an arduous process personally, professionally, and philosophically. Yet when we open ourselves to learn from others, we expand our own knowledge and awareness. This not only makes us more effective social workers, but I would suggest it makes us better human beings.

IMRSWP Director's Report

For Publication in Multicultural Voices (Volume 10, Number 2, Spring 2006)

By Rita Takahashi

This has been a productive academic year (2005-2006) for the Institute for Multicultural Research and Social Work Practice (IMRSWP). From September 2005 through May 2006, the IMRSWP:

- delivered two book forums on 30 November 2005 and 8 February 2006 (featuring the IMRSWP-published book, Diversity: Value, Promote, and Achieve (2005).

- gave a special presentation at the Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education (Chicago, 19 February 2006), "Hurricanes and Wars: Natural and Human-made Disasters for Civil Rights and Liberties." This panel was comprised of three IMRSWP members, Liz Knox (also panel chair), Yeon-Shim Lee, and Rita Takahashi.

- published two new issues of its newsletter, Multicultural Voices (Volume 10, Number 1, Winter 2006, Edited by Rita Takahashi and Volume 10, Number 2, Spring 2006, Edited by Susan Sung).

- presented four 2-hour multicultural video training sessions (25 February, 4, 11 and 18 March 2006) to students and faculty interested in producing videos with a social justice focus. Four MSW students conceptualized, organized, and delivered the training, including: Kristina Lovato-Hermann (coordinator of the video education series), April Ellis, Tania Chan, and Elena Martinez.

- completed an International Forum featuring Dina Redman, Liz Knox, and Susan Sung on 8 March 2006. Institute member, Liz Knox, organized, convened, and moderated the panel program at San Francisco State University.

- co-sponsored (with 4 community-based organizations: Japanese American National Library, Japanese American Services of the East Bay, Family Caregiver Alliance, and Kimochi, Inc.) and delivered the Asian American Seniors and Caregiving Demonstration Program on 29 April 2006. This program, which was organized and implemented by IMRSWP member, Christina Miyawaki, featured 5 community-based speakers: Dong Li Hou (Family Caregiver Alliance (FCA)), Kwi Ja Kim (FCA), Gwendolyn Harris (Zen Hospice), Unaifi Volavola (Sutter Home Health Hospice), and Christina Miyawaki (Japanese American Services of the East Bay). In conjunction with this program, Miyawaki wrote a press release, which was published in two Bay Area Japanese American newspapers.

- sponsored and completed the Social Justice Forum on 8 May 2006 featuring 2 IMRSWP faculty (Rita Takahashi and Lisa Hines) and 4 graduate students (1 in gerontology (Christina Miyawaki) and 3 in social work (K. Siobhan Grecvich, Rachel Pickett, and Tesa Rigel)). Lisa Hines, IMRSWP member, planned, organized, and moderated the program.
paid tribute to Professor Kunitake Morgan Yamanaka, the 4th IMRSWP Director, upon his retirement. At a 15 May 2006 luncheon, Yamanaka was given a certificate of appreciation and a recognition award from the IMRSWP "for dedication and service to the IMRSWP and 44 years of commitment as a social work educator at SFSU".

At this luncheon, tributes and statements from faculty and students were read and presented to Yamanaka. A booklet containing tribute comments and photographs from faculty and students was also presented to Yamanaka. In addition, a list of "Top Ten Things We Will Miss the Most After Morgan Yamanaka's Retirement," written by IMRSWP members and compiled by Jamie Johnson-Glover, was read as a "roast".

Participants of the Hong Kong Conference, Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Asian Pacific Islander (API) International Conference:
Journey to China, August 2006

By Susan Sung, Professor

Over fifty educators from the United States attended an international conference in social work in Hong Kong and Beijing in August 2005. The API/China/Hong Kong Conference was initiated by the Asian Pacific Islander Social Work Educators Association (APISWEA) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

The concept of a global conference was first raised four years ago at the Annual Program Meeting of the CSWE. A group of API educators explored various venues and decided that China could be our starting point. China has recently experienced a phenomenal increase in social work programs—with less than 5 to over 200 schools in the past few years. Our goal for the collaborative effort was to network with our sister schools and educators in Asia. The goal was to share our understanding and build our knowledge base on how social work could be effective in serving Asian cultures and Asian communities globally and locally. Among the questions that we asked were: How do we define social work in a global context? Can social work paradigms which are rooted in western cultures be applicable and effective in cultures and histories different from the west? When does universalism become colonialistic? How can social work be indigenized and be based on the roots of the society? With our recent emphasis on the "best practice" and "evidence based practice," it is imperative that we search for the strengths and effectiveness of interventions from other cultures and societies. When and how do local and global perspectives to social work intersect and interface?

Armed with questions and not answers, and eager to learn and not to impose, the API social work educators in the U.S. began to journey to different parts of Asia. My own interest in social work in China began 20 years ago when my sabbatical leave was spent in Fudan University in Shanghai. Three years ago, my Fulbright Senior Specialist Award enabled me to visit three universities in China and Hong Kong.

Today, social work is a well recognized discipline in many parts of Asia; however, it continues to struggle with the integration of the eastern and western cultural norms. The market economy in China has brought economic boom and, at the same time, the need to care for the poor and disenfranchised as the disparity between the rich and poor becomes deeper and wider. Policy makers and educators struggle to define the relationship between public responsibility and basic human needs.

The planning for the API/China/Hong Kong Conference took a year and depended fully on electronic communication. Five sponsors financed the conference: The API Social Work Educators Association of the CSWE, the University of Southern California, the Hong Kong University Department of Social Work, the Chinese University Department of Social Work, and the Hong Kong Politechnic Uni-

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Students' Voices

A Time In My Life:
A white girl heading deep into a black township in South Africa

By Kerri Berkowitz

The township is called Soweto. Soweto was a black township in South Africa, known to be extremely dangerous, plagued with crime, drugs, unemployment, and poverty. When I was eight years old, I do not recall the exact circumstances, I accompanied my "maid", Rahaba and her children into the township where her family resided. It was a day that Rahaba had to take care of something and I was out in the community with her. My parents never would have permitted me to enter into the township, or any township for that matter.

We drove into the township that day with my forehead frozen to the window, wide-eyed, and terrified. The comfort zone of my beautiful, brick, gated-in house, swimming pool, manicured lawns bursting with exotic flowers and trees, smiling parents, protective guard dogs, and hidden gun in my father's closet, was no where to be seen. I felt naked without the shield of my white privilege, and completely vulnerable to the terror and wrath of the black African. I was entirely out of place, and everyone knew it. Rahaba continuously looked behind at me with a worried eye to make sure I was OK, and her children sat in the car with awkwardly intense eyes fixated on me. I stood out like a sore thumb, and received continuous gazes of curiosity from the people on the street who noticed the odd sight of a little white girl in the backseat of a car, heading deep into their township.

I remember feeling shocked by

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A Time In My Life | Cont. from p. 11

the sight of her house, no bigger than my living room and kitchen combined. The roof was made out of tin held in place by weighed down buckets of cement. Streams of muddy water ran from the pool of water collected under the water tap beside her house—a tap shared by both her and her neighbors. Beside the front door stood a massive tin barrel filled with ash, and burnt remnants of old newspapers. As I looked around, I noticed many more of these tin barrels standing in front of the numerous shack houses. Some were smoldering.

The front door leading into Rahaba's was jammed, and Rahaba had to use the power of her wide hips to push the door in. It was very dark inside with minimal streams of sunlight shining through the small rectangular windows and there were three twin mattresses pushed against the wall of the bedroom and kitchen in one. I remember asking Rahaba where her toilet was, and with her hand she motioned towards the back door. I peered out of the back door and shocked by the sight of the toilet shed three houses down. One of Rahaba's children told me that the entire block of houses shared the one toilet, and that none of the houses had electricity. I could not believe my eyes, and felt very confused, frustrated, and scared. I remember not feeling well and telling Rahaba that I wanted to go home. I ached for the comfort of my home, as I was unprepared to handle the truth and reality of apartheid. I was unable to comprehend the extent of the gap in the distribution of wealth and poverty in the country, nor had I developed the capacity to appreciate the significance of what I was experiencing that day in Soweto. All I knew

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Asian Pacific Islander (API) International Conference

versity School of Social Work. Each sponsor contributed $5000 to the China Association of Social Work Educators (CASWE). With the sponsorships and the registration fees, the CASWE was able to invite over 300 social work educators from around China to attend the conference.

The title of the conference was ***"When East and West Meet: Global and Local Perspectives to Social Work."*** The Conference was held in Hong Kong on August 1-3, 2006; and Beijing on August 4-6, 2006. From the U.S., fifty educators from twenty two universities travelled to China (Hong Kong and Beijing) to participate in the conference.

The Hong Kong Program was hosted by the Chinese University of Hong Kong. It included presentations on the first day and a visit to Zhongshan University on the second day. The Beijing conference contained over 100 workshops for three days. In addition to educator from China and the US, there were participants from Malaysia, France and Canada. Seven-ty five percent of the workshops were presented by educators from China and 25% by educators from abroad. Simultaneous translation was provided at the plenary sessions where presenters spoke in Chinese and/or English. The main themes at the conference included:

1. Social work education and accreditation standards.
2. Social security: government versus personal responsibilities.
3. Aging: Approaches in the East and West.
4. Youth and families: one child policy and its impact on family structures; youth delinquencies; and approaches to family discourse.
5. Social work from the grassroots perspectives—learning from the past.
6. Case studies of social and economic development in urban and rural districts in China.
7. The role of social work in Chinese public and private sectors juvenile delinquency and domestic violence

The opening ceremony of the Beijing conference included the presentations by high officials on the state of the economy and welfare in China. One and one-half days of workshops and scholarly exchanges followed. Banquet dinners, acrobat shows, and visits to social service agencies were scheduled for the third day. I joined the group that visited elementary summer schools—one was an inner city school for the upper middle class whose children took lessons in music instruments, ballet, swimming and art. The other school was located on the outskirt of the city with children of migrant parents; the school depended on "charity" to survive. The migrant children sang and performed in their "Sunday best"; very few visitors left dry-eyed after the performance.

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Participants visiting the Peking University. Picture by Karl Sung.

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Asian Pacific Islander (API) International Conference

The following are highlights and observations of the themes and discussions:

1. **Social work education and accreditation standards:** In China, social work training is being provided in various settings, such as universities, training centers, community centers, and civil ministries. The certification of the educators who provide social work education, and the certification of the trainees who graduate from these institutions become a critical issue. Many institutions are searching for models of accreditation from abroad; yet, local concerns were expressed about the high cost of centralizing the educational standards, the need for policing such a system throughout a vast nation, the difficulty of establishing standards that are relevant to varying forms of social needs and social structures within the country, and the difficulty of searching for faculty and curriculum in an educational system that is limited in resources and public support. Notwithstanding the issues of establishing the infrastructure, there is the larger question of whether transplanted and transposed western models could work effectively in a socialist/eastern country. Social work's effectiveness is limited by the defined parameters of cultures, human dynamics, and political/social issues.

2. **Social security and provisions for the aging population:** Baby boomers are aging globally. Some Asian countries, such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan have established Provident Funds, whereby the employers and employees contribute toward the employees' retirement. The administration of the fund is controlled generally by the government. In China, the retirement fund was only available to those who worked for the government, the so-called "iron bowl". With the market economy, the percentage of the elderly with the "iron bowl" has decreased tremendously. The government has recently stipulated businesses to contribute to employees' retirement fund. However, the competitive nature of businesses and the constant mobility of employees have made it a difficult mandate. In addition, the working population finds it extremely difficult to support their elderly, which has been a customary practice in the past. This situation is exasperated by the fact that, due to the one child policy, each working adult may conceivably be supporting four parents and eight grandparents.

3. **Health and education:** Two decades ago, China was a country with public healthcare and public education. It was a country where any individuals could seek medical care from hospitals and attended schools up to ninth grade. Today, "public" education requires tuition; and "public" hospitals require fees in order to receive service. Social work has become an inevitable part of the equation when the poor and the disadvantaged cannot meet their basic human needs. The question of public responsibility versus private need is a human and economic issue.

4. **Economic and social development:** The disparity of the haves and the have-nots is becoming a deep divide in Asia. There is a critical need for social and public policies that can equitably redistribute resources and encourage economic and social development. Among the issues that were raised are: what role should government assume in regulating and redistributing resources for health, education, and welfare; how should the government participate in the market economy; and more importantly, in what ways can an infrastructure be established to ensure accountability and standardization within the government.

5. **The role of social work:** Two decades ago, "social work" was considered a by-product of the capitalist system. Social work was viewed as a job for the do-gooders working in charity organizations. Today, social work becomes an integral part of the government and the grassroots—it is needed for social planning, policy making, health and welfare administration, and community development. It is a crucial element to national budgets, such as research/planning and services for health, edu-

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A Time In My Life | Cont. from p. 12

was that something was shifting inside me, leaving me feeling ill, uncomfortable, and aching to be back in the luxury of life as I knew it to be. After what felt like a lifetime, Rahaba said it was time to head back home. To my home: to my world. When we were stopped at a traffic light at one point, I remember seeing a girl on the corner of the road look at me in the car, nudge her mother, and point in my direction. Both the girl and woman stood there staring at me until the light changed and we drove away.

As we crossed the defining lines of Soweto heading back into my familiar realm, I felt a minor sense of relief from the immediate threat of danger. Even an eight year old was conditioned well enough to know that Soweto was a dangerous place to enter. As we rapidly approached the boundary of my safe suburb, (that wasn't really very safe as the threat of danger existed at all times), I continued to feel confused and frustrated—unable to comprehend the reality of what I had experienced—leaving me feeling shaken up with no outlet of expression. Rahaba continued to act in a secretive way, knowing that she committed a major crime by bringing me with her into the township. I felt nervous too, and decided to keep the happenings of the day a secret from my family as I knew Rahaba probably would have been fired had my parents found out where I had been, leaving me feeling extremely insecure and unsettled.

It wasn't until my teen years, having immigrated to the United States, that my experience in Soweto hit me with full force, forcing me to confront my life as a privileged, white, middle class

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A Time In My Life | Cont. from p. 13

South African little girl, living a reality nice and neat. A reality dominated entirely by racism, segregation, and oppression. A reality, that was a misrepresentation of the true reality of the country, the people, the struggle.

As an adult, and looking back on the experience I had that day in the township, I feel slightly disappointed in the fact that I wasn't able to hold on to the feelings stirring within me that day in Soweto; feelings of truth in the acknowledgement that something was profoundly wrong with the way of life in South Africa. Instead, I quickly readjusted to the mentality of white power and privilege. The fact that I fell back into the general sentiment of racist thought shows the intense power of the collective, and the amount of energy, commitment, strength, understanding, and risk it takes to challenge the norm, and break free from such conditioning.

Having direct experience with the institution of racism in the form of apartheid and having first hand knowledge of the implication of such a power structure, I am able to understand the intensity, danger, and repercussions of collective thought. I am able to identify its power and influence in many different forms of oppression, and appreciate the struggle surrounding it on all sides. This defined knowledge through personal experience has greatly impacted my social work practice to this day, as the danger and consequences of collective and controlled thought extends across the geographical lines separating the township of Soweto from every other neighborhood, community, society, and country around the world.

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Asian Pacific Islander (API) Social Work Educators:

cation, social security, and social services. It is a tool for addressing social ills and human relations.

The conference was an invaluable opportunity for exchanges among the educators. Are we any closer in answering the questions that we posed when we first planned the conference? Probably not. The conference further stimulates our critical thinking. Can social work be indigenized? How shall East and West intersect and interface? How can the East and West be positioned in "equal footing" both in terms of theories of social work interventions and in terms of shared knowledge building. Does "best practice" mean adjusting and adapting other cultures to western frameworks? Or does "best practice" mean re-defined framework/theories that utilize the strengths of eastern and western cultures?

Beijing Conference, participants outside the conference site. From left: MJ Hwang, Wichita State University; Sau Fong Siu, Wheelock College; Terry Lum, U. Minnesota; Melissas Gorton, Columbia University; Ada Miu, Columbia University; Doman Lum, Sacramento State University; Rowena Fong, U. Texas, Austin; Susan Sung, San Francisco State University; Mo Yee Lee, Ohio State University.

Filipino Ethnic Identity and Acculturation:
Influences to Help Seeking Patterns

By Cheryl Estrella Bulaon

Introduction

This study explores the ethnic identity and acculturation of self-identified Filipino students at San Francisco State University (SFSU) and how these variables affect their attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help.

It is important to view the historical context of colonization in the Philippines in order to understand how ethnic identity and acculturation can affect Filipinos' views of professional psychological help. The Spanish colonized the islands in the early 1500s when the islands were "discovered" by Ferdinand Magellan. In 1946, after four decades of colonization, the Philippines declared its independence from the Spain. Filipino language and religion reflect strong Spanish influence.

The United States' presence in the Philippines started in the late 1800s when the U.S. acquired the archipelago as a military conquest from Spain. During the U.S. occupation in the Philippines, three themes were stressed by American rule—education, health, and political development. As American values permeated the Filipino culture, Filipinos came to embody the American values. Sociologist Constantino (1972) described this as the mis-education of Filipinos as the youth were educated in the English language and "ideals were slowly eroded to remove the last vestige of resistance…attract the people to their new masters," and "dilute their nationalism."

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Filipino Ethnic Identity and Acculturation

Method

This study consisted of a random sample of 265 registered students who self-identified as "Filipino/a-American" at San Francisco State University in 2005. Participants completed a 66-item questionnaire which was formed by three scales: the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) which measures a participant's self-esteem toward race/ethnic identity; the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (Suinn & Lew, 1987) which measures a participant's level of acculturation by preferences in social groups, food, language, music, and community; and the Attitudes toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (Fischer & Farina, 1995) which measures a participant's attitude toward seeking psychological and emotional help.

Results

Five choices were given for participants to self identify themselves: "Fillipino", "Asian", "Filipino-American", "Tagalog/Illocano/Cebuano (or other region of the Philippines)" and "American". Close to half of the participants (43%) identified themselves as Filipino-American; the next largest group was "Filipino" (35.85%), followed by "Regional Filipino" (13.58%).

Regional Filipinos. Participants who identified with a certain region of the Philippines showed low level of national (Filipino) ethnic identity and high acculturation (preference toward mainstream language and social groups). They showed positive attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help.

Filipinos and Filipino-Americans. Filipinos and Filipino-Americans had mid-range scores of ethnic identity and acculturation indicating that Filipinos and Filipino-Americans are bicultural. Biculturalism is the process by which an individual changes his/her social skills, attitudes, and values when in contact with another culture. These individuals incorporate and integrate two cultures into their way of life. These participants showed neutral attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help. As described by Revilla (1997), these individuals have negotiated their cultural backgrounds in creating their identity.

Asians and Americans. Asians and Americans scored the lowest in levels of acculturation (preference toward race/ethnicity based social groups and community) and scored the highest in Filipino ethnic identity level. They had the least tendency toward seeking professional psychological help. Strobel (1996) points out that many Filipino-American college students strive to learn about their culture in order to "undo the effects of internal colonialism and oppression." This finding is congruent with previous studies. McLaughlin and Braun (1998) found that Filipinos delay seeking assistance until serious physical symptoms appear; Sue and Sue's (1974) found that Asian students under-utilize psychiatric services when compared to American students; and Takeuchi et al. (1988) found that in the Filipino population, the most significant barriers to utilizing services was shame at admitting to having a problem and lack of awareness about seeking help.

Implications to Social Work Practice

Through the understanding and awareness of the impact of ethnic identity and acculturation, social workers can carefully select services that would yield success. For example, it would be misleading to think that acculturated "Americans" and "Asian Americans" would be receptive to seeking professional mental health care. In fact, the study

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Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertion and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.

By Martin Luther King

Students' Voices

A Long way to Social Work School

By Raj Khadka

I come from Nepal, a small, land-locked country in the lap of the Himalayan mountains. During my early school days, I heard people call it "Shangri-La", a mythical paradise. We were proud to say that NEPAL stands for "Never Ending Peace and Love". It was not from any false pride, for Nepal had remained isolated from the world wars and widespread terrorism of the twentieth century. Moreover, Nepal is the land of spirituality, the birthplace of the founder of Buddhism, Gautama Buddha, the light of Asia. My sense of pride was lessened with my experiences of the real world. Upon entering my intermediate college (high school in the U.S.), I encountered the real situation of my country—the rampant poverty, corruption, caste and gender discrimination, social injustice, and inequalities. These forces started to play in my adolescent mind.

How could I escape from the grim social reality? I could only console my soul and mind by involving myself in social welfare in my country. However, I was already working in the Junior/Youth Red Cross services; so I intensified my efforts there until I completed my undergraduate school. I worked for the disaster management, first aid training, hospital volunteer work and so on. In 1999, I got a chance to be an international intern for the American Red Cross (Bay Area). It was really a great experience. I was motivated to do some more noble work than before. I was unhappy at seeing children not going to school and not utilizing

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A Long Way | Cont. from p. 15

the opportunities of free education. I later noticed that they lacked textbooks, stationery, and school dress. Many had to help in household work like taking care of younger siblings, cattle, and other home support. Along with my friends, I took the leadership in founding a non-profit Young Education Nepal (www.yen.org). With the small fund that we collected from friends and "philanthropists", we helped support youngsters going to school.

Next I left my small village of Doti in western Nepal, and migrated to the capital city, Kathmandu. I was hoping to pursue a degree in sociology but could not due to the lack of a good school. I pursued a Master's degree in English but it did not fulfill my passion for social welfare. During my visit to San Francisco Red Cross Chapter in 1999, I met Dr. Walter Krumm who was interested in my passion to pursue social work education at SFSU. He was (and is) positive in helping me achieve my dream. My main objective of pursuing the M.S.W. degree is to advance my understanding of the theoretical frameworks of social welfare. Moreover, my ultimate objective is to bring my social work practice and knowledge back to Nepal to help my fellow country people.

In class and while reading social work textbooks, I would find useful ideas relevant to addressing the social issues of my country. My thoughts would go to Nepal, forgetting the reality that oceans separated me from home. I would become overwhelmed when I remembered the decade-long ongoing insurgency, which has already taken the lives of tens of thousands of people, and

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Filipino Ethnic Identity and Acculturation

showed that they were most resistant to seeking help. It would also be necessary to understand the acculturation process when serving the newly immigrated Filipinos. Understanding these concepts will build culturally competent practice.

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Kids in Africa. Picture from clippart Art Explosion 600,000.

International Social Work in The African Diaspora

By Liz Dunbar Knox, Assistant Professor

For the past 30 years, the National Association of Black Social Workers has sponsored an International Education Conference geographically situated in the African Diaspora. The focus of the International Conference has been to serve as a linkage between African American human service workers with social workers throughout the Diaspora. This annual event, generally occurring in the summer, has taken participants to African countries where they could safely travel and to parts of the world that inhabit descendants of Africans who arrived there primarily from enslavement. The conference serves as a study and travel program that has become an educational exchange between the "Americanized Africans" and those of African descent from the host country. The International Conference has become a rich source of information and knowledge about the history and experience of those who were forced to travel to new and different lands for the sole purpose of economic exploitation.

The African Diaspora is defined as the disbursement of people of African descent to lands that are not of their native Motherland

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International Social Work in The African Diaspora

Africa. It has been documented that African people were transported to the Americas, North, Central and South; Europe to include England, France; and the Caribbean Islands which became known as the Middle Passage. As NABSW travelers trek to the different lands, they are presented with the historical connection that brings together the Diaspora. Conferences have been held in Jamaica, Egypt, Kenya, Barbados, Panama, Costa Rica, Spain, Togo, Aruba, Venezuela, Morocco, Ghana, Brazil, Benin, South Africa, Tanzania, Grenada, London, Virgin Islands, Paris, St. Lucia, Puerto Rica, Trinidad-Tobago, Zimbabwe, Cuba, the Gambia, Senegal, and Belize, Central America.

As the conferences evolved and developed each year, the intercultural relationships have left donations that include educational materials, clothing, medical supplies, and often books by and about African Americans that are requested by representatives of the host country. Monetary donations are designated to not-for-profit agencies. We are currently looking at ways to make use of computer technology to bring distance learning to some of the countries that are in need of social work education.

My involvement over the past six years has included trips to South Africa, Zimbabwe, Barbados, the Gambia, Senegal, and Belize. For the summer 2006, there will be a planned trip to Brazil. These journeys have become a source of re-awakening because I have an opportunity to experience a part of my cultural heritage that I have only learned through my readings and interaction with those who have traveled to the United States. Each stop has served as a spiritual relief as much as it has been an educational experience. There are tremendous opportunities for social work education to increase its presence and participation in the second largest continent in the world, Africa. The continent's human and natural resources have been ravaged by colonialism, continued poverty and starvation both natural and man-made; wars of genocide; the greatest wide spread of HIV/AIDS; and the delayed world response to voices and faces that can only be expressed by the media. As unbearable this may read, what is so heart-warming and encouraging to witness is the spirit of the people. Without words, we see children playing when they are healthy; women who are natural entrepreneurs; men who are proud to take care of their families, and villages or communities that celebrate their culture and history. As social workers and social work educators, we need to look for ways to support the African people consistent with their culture and heritage. We owe it to our profession.

Little african girl. Picture from clippart Art Explosion 600,000.

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disabling unimaginable number of others. My heart would break reading news of school-going children killed in a cross fire or in an ambush; poor Nepalese girls being trafficked to Indian and Middle East; and people facing an uncertain and threatening future.

Despite all this turmoil, I see a ray of hope in the distant future. As every beginning has an ending, the insurgency will end at some point. It will be my day to pack my backpack for home and apply my knowledge and experience in the land where I was born.

Balikbayan: the Filipino's Story

By Yvette Yambao

Over the winter break, I had the privilege of joining thousands of *balikbayans**(1) returning to the Philippines. It had been sixteen years since my last visit and I was eager to reunite with family. Not only did I experience the country's natural beauty and hospitable, island culture, but the stories of my *kababayan**(2), as well.

In Manila, *Ate**(3) Margie, a family friend and Environmental Management graduate student, discussed with me Manila's pollution problem. Her work toward social change has been an uphill battle. Often, her community organizing efforts to educate the public about the detrimental effects of dumping garbage in the Pasig River are in vain. Ac-

*(1) A Tagalog term to identify Filipinos returning to the Philippines
*(2) Fellow country men and/or women
*(3) Term of respect reserved for older sisters, but also applicable to older females

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cording to her, the poor are so preoccupied with meeting basic needs that waste management is hardly a priority. As a result, public health is also poor.

My friend Rommel gave me an optimistic perspective of local gay culture during a drag show in Manila's premiere Club Mwah. An internist, he attributed the country's increasing openness toward the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) community to socioeconomics. "Because we (the gay community) are largely upper class, we're gaining more respect." Unfortunately, this respect was barely apparent in the Iloilo province a week later, when my cousins introduced me to their friend Raffy. "Just call him 'Agay.' That's what we call them around here."

The country's high unemployment and underemployment rate was the topic of a late night conversation with my cousin Ate Mary Anne. She spoke of her difficulty finding work after being laid off as a bank teller three years ago. Ageism is rampant, which makes it difficult for those past 35 to find work, she explained. It explains why the Census cites increasing numbers of Overseas Filipinos Workers (OFWs). From April to September 2004, OFWs reached 1.06 million, which is up by 8.2 percent from 982,000 in 2003. Among the hopefuls are my cousin Angelo and his wife Michelle. In April, they will find out whether or not their application to Canada is granted. Their excitement was tinged with the sadness of feeling forced to leave their country, risking never to see loved ones again. I don't know how my mother did it forty years ago when she

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Grandfather with grandson. Picture from clippart Art Explosion 600,000.

World Aging

By Christina Miyawaki

The world is aging at an unprecedented rate. This worldwide phenomenon is caused by the advancement in technology and medicine, which has led to low rates of infant mortality and infectious diseases, improvements in nutrition and education, and the onset of aging babyboomers. The elderly population (65 and older) increased from 130 million (4% of global population) in year 1950 to 419 million (6.9%) in year 2000. The most rapid growth will occur after year 2010 when the baby boomer generation, born between years 1946 and 1964, begins to reach age 65 (www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs?RB5058/index1.html).

The United States is not an exception. Currently we have nearly 35 million who are age 65 and over. For the next forty years, the age 65 and older population is expected to double and the 85 and older cohort will triple. Along with general trends of America's population, minority populations are living longer and becoming more racially diverse. According to the Census 2000, the percentages of ethnic elderly were Black (8%), American Indian/Alaskan Native (0.4%), Asian (2.3%), Hispanic (5%) and others (0.7%), totaling 16.4% of the older population. This number is expected to grow to 22 percent by year 2020. (www.aoa.gov/prof/Statistics/minority_aging/facts_minority_aging.asp).

To prepare for these emerging challenges in the United States, the National Institute on Aging (NIA) , has developed the following recommendations:

Build the capacity of ethnically diverse and well-trained research workforce that will focus on minority issues.
It is crucial to understand the special needs of minority elderly in order to design appropriate interventions to improve their health status and quality of life.

Improve culturally appropriate health care delivery and information dissemination systems.
Many Asian, Hispanic and other ethnic elderly who come to the United States bring with them a wide variety of educational and language backgrounds. Oftentimes they are not receiving information about healthy lifestyle. Community and religious organizations, and public service advertisements such as foreign language newspapers, cable television, and radio can be helpful in disseminating this information.

Understand health differences associated with race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, culture and health behaviors.
In order to reduce health disparities among racial and ethnic elderly populations, we need to develop culturally appropriate screening tools and provide culturally sensitive health care services so that we can enhance the likelihood of ethnic elders to maintain health promotion interventions.

Currently in the state of California, there is a research group called Providing Information To Help Our Nikkei Seniors (PITHONS). They are comprised of a network of seven Japanese American social service agencies and two professors, who are in the field of aging and familiar with the Japanese-American elderly population. They received grants from the California Endowment and

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World Aging

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) last year and have been working along side the NIA's recommendations, specifically targeting the current Japanese American elderly and "pre-senior/baby boomer" generations. The objectives of this PITHONS project are to:

1. Develop a network of service providers and identify ways to strengthen, support and coordinate the work of the providers throughout California (convene regional seminars). They plan to create a template for community outreach and a health education program of issues vital to this "pre-senior" Japanese-American cohort in both English and Japanese languages;

2. Encourage more dialogue amongst service providers to share best practices, trends and lessons learned while supporting one another (Capacity Building of the Network) so that they can create a collaborative support network within the Japanese American social service agencies throughout California; and

3. Develop a community needs assessment instrument catered toward the "pre-senior" baby boomer Japanese American cohort (Data Collection) so that the collaborative service agencies will be able to determine the needs and effectively serve them as they age.

The PITHONS have completed the first phase of their collaborative efforts and created a draft of focus group interview questions. They plan on conducting focus group interviews among culturally sensitive social service providers and culturally competent social workers from April through June 2006. At the same time, they are in the process of developing a community needs assessment instrument, which is a specific ethnic-based, generationally-directed information outreach and data gathering effort, to effectively address the needs of "pre-senior" Japanese American baby boom cohort as they reach their senior years. This needs assessment instrument can be adapted to other ethnic groups such as other Asians and Hispanics by altering questions appropriate to the particular ethnic group.

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left for North America. She returned months later to attend her mother's funeral.

I also had the chance to meet with Haydee Canilla, a social worker with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). Among other social issues, she spoke specifically to the country's rising number of street children. Indeed, "abandoned and neglected children, working children, street children, victims of commercial sexual exploitation, abused children, displaced children, children in conflict with the law, children with disabilities and children of indigenous cultural communities" are first listed under the DSWD's target beneficiaries. A number of community-based, center-based and non-residential-based services are currently working to alleviate marginalized children. However, poor funding makes it difficult to provide quality services.

In the Philippines, social workers are largely contracted employees with no benefits. While Haydee is committed to her country's poor and marginalized people, the fragile economy makes her no different from Angelo, Michelle and others who are joining the mass exodus. Haydee gleefully shared news of passing England's qualification exam for overseas social workers. She hopes to practice there, where they are actively recruiting social workers.

I also heard stories of fun fiestas, white sand, lush rice fields and large family gatherings. But the ones of struggle confirmed my commitment to social work. As an American balikbayan, I return to work with oppressed people here to honor the struggles of oppressed people there, my ancestral homeland. ■

multicultural
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Our Mission

The SFSU School of Social Work's Institute for Multi-Cultural Research and Social Work Practices promotes respect for and acknowledge of diverse cultures. It seeks to develope effective methods for appropiately working in a complex and muticulturally diverse environment. It disseminates cross-cultural information through research, publication, education, and training. The central focus is on empowerment of individuals, families, and communities. The institute's commitment is to progressive societal changes. Collaborative and cooperative efforts in multible settings —from work place to ethnic communities— are emphasized.

Institute Background

The Insitute was established within San Francisco State University's School of Social Work in June 1988, as the Center for Cross Cultural Research and Social Work Practice. Kenji Murase, now Professor Emeritus, became the Center's founder.

Institute Goals

- Conduct research that promotes greater knowledge and understanding of diverse cultures.
- Develop methods to enhance effectiveness and appropiateness in working with diverse populations, using collaborative and participatory methods.
- Disseminate research findings and educational information to students, organizations, and the general public, via publications, presentations workshops, and consultations.
- Work with social work students interested in multicultural service delivery systems, and provide ongoing resources and support services to enhance their educational experiences.
- Conduct evaluations and needs assesments of organizations and communities.
- Analyse policies and make recomendations congruent to the institute's mission.
- Sponsor conferences and work-shops that focus pm cross-cultural research and social work practice.