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“Stories of Ordinary Heroism” in UCLA’s Amerasia Journal

Los Angeles – The UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press is pleased to announce the publication of “The Migrant with a Thousand Faces,” the latest issue of Amerasia Journal. The issue explores stories of migration from multiethnic perspectives, covering the diverse experiences encountered by Asian Americans. The essays in this collection range from accounts of Japanese Picture Brides in Hawai’i at the turn of the twentieth century to the family stories of two generations of Hmong immigrants in the United States.

What ties together the pieces compiled in “The Migrant with a Thousand Faces” are stories of ordinary heroism. As editor Russell Leong describes the contributions to the issue, “From familiar worlds and ancient countries, ordinary women and men step into other worlds of adventure, tasks, trials, or challenges. Survival is the key to the actions they must take, and when such a person – woman or man – returns home, she or he must decide whether to improve the world they had left behind.”

The contents of the issue include:

* Pioneering Japanese Women

Kellie Yoshie Nakamura’s essay “Yeiko Mizobe So and the Japanese Women’s Home for Abused Picture Brides (1895-1905)” offers a nuanced study of Issei women who came to the United States through arranged marriages. Nakamura suggests an alternative account of these women’s lives in which they did not take on the stereotypical roles of wife and mother. Instead, the essay explains how these Picture Brides challenged gender discrimination, especially the physical abuse they endured at home.

* Korean Migrations

The experiences of persevering Korean military brides are the focus of Kun Jong Lee’s study of Korean American poet Ishle Yi Park. In the piece, “Ishle Yi Park’s The Temperature of This Water: Anatomy of Korean America,” Lee provides a rich literary analysis of Park’s poetry, focusing on the image of the migratory leatherback turtle as a metaphor for the Korean diaspora.

* Generations of Hmong Americans

Among the notable aspects of “The Migrant with a Thousand Faces” is its focus on the hard-won achievements of Hmong immigrants in the United States: The issue includes Pa Xiong Gonzalo’s first-person account of the lives of first- and second-generation Hmong women and a bibliography of the UCLA Hmong collection compiled by Asian American Studies Center librarian Marjorie Lee. Both Xiong Gonzalo’s poignant story in “Growing up Hmong in Laos and America” and Lee’s bibliography “Through Hmong America” add to the literature by and about the Hmong who resettled in the U.S.

after 1975.

* Kung Fu Communities

In his essay "Kung Fu Knight Errant: Globalized/Localized Chinese American Heroic Culture," Joe Chung Fong explores another ideal of heroism as he traces the development of Kung Fu academies in the U.S. Fong examines the Chinese concept of yingxiong and how martial arts training "promulgates the heroic tradition of Asian America" to national and even global audiences.

The issue closes with tributes to two pioneering figures in the Asian American community and friends of Amerasia Journal, filmmaker and activist Loni Ding and Professor Lucie Cheng, the first permanent Director of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. Loni Ding is memorialized by two people who know her the best, her daughter May Ying Welsh (a journalist working for Al Jazeera) and her husband David Welsh (once a senior editor of Ramparts Magazine in the 1960s). Professor Cheng is remembered by Professor Don Nakanishi and her friends and colleagues at the Asian American Studies Center.

This issue of Amerasia Journal costs \$15.00 plus \$5.00 for shipping and handling and 9.25 percent sales tax for California residents (\$21.39). Make checks payable to "Regents of U.C." VISA, MASTERCARD, and DISCOVER are also accepted; include expiration date and phone number on correspondence. The mailing address is: UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press, 3230 Campbell Hall, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1546.

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