

Intersectional Approach to the Study of Asian American Feminism's Obstacles and Developments

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I explore the interlocking forms of oppression, which Asian American women experience. I also show how they have created communities of resistance and transformation towards social justice. Asian American women as a group collectively changed from being omitted from the predominantly white middle-class feminist movements and racial endeavors to a distinct group incorporating feminist, anti-racist, and anti-class discrimination elements and worked in collaboration with various other groups. This paper will attempt to argue that accepting and dealing with intersectionality played the roles of both an obstacle and a catalyst in the formation and evolution of Asian American feminism and activism. Bravely facing the past and coming to terms with complex identities have always been the way to move forward for Asian American women.

KEYWORDS: Intersectionality¹, Asian American², Feminism³.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 1982, several disgruntled workers in Detroit, blaming Japan for factory closures, brutally murdered a Chinese American Vincent Chin. This landmark civil rights case brought out the voice of Asian American journalist and activist Helen Zia. Her message--- that the incident was not the first time, nor would it be the last time that Asian Americans were targeted and used as a scapegoat--- resonated nationwide, especially with previously neglected Asian American women. The emergence of Helen Zia was an important juncture in Asian American movements as well as Asian American feminist movements as she galvanized the mass community of Asian women to come together and openly demand change for a common cause.

Growing up in a first generation Chinese immigrant family within a mostly white neighborhood in the 1960s, Helen Zia felt first-hand the routine yet multidimensional oppression that was plaguing millions of Asian American women because of their identities as women and as Asian Americans. Her father, being intellectual and a past scholar from China, instilled in her a willingness to stand up to unfair treatment but also confined her within the traditional Chinese teachings of feminine passivity and dependence. As she battled her own clashing identities and beliefs, she gradually developed a deep-seeded wish to speak for the invisible and make known the layers of challenges, which Asian Americans, in particular Asian American Women, faced.

Zia remains active today and has inspired new generations of Asian Americans to continue her work. Her image as a strong, opinionated, and out-spoken Asian American woman and her later roles as a journalist, a writer, and a persistent fighter for Asian American rights, feminine equality, LGBTQ rights, etc. make her the epitome of Asian American women successfully integrating their complex identities and overcoming exclusion from most major discussions in both their racial and sexual groups. Nevertheless, Zia is not alone in her struggles; her path to activism is well-treaded by prior Asian American women with their attempts at speaking up for themselves accompanied by a multitude of backlashes. Although much remains to be done, what Zia and others like her have achieved from the late 20th century up until today are the outgrowth of the enduring effort of those who came before them.

In this paper, I explore the interlocking forms of oppression, which Asian American women experience. I also show how they have created communities of resistance and transformation towards social justice. Asian American women as a group collectively changed from being omitted from the predominantly white middle-class feminist movements and racial endeavors to a distinct group incorporating feminist, anti-racist, and anti-class discrimination elements and worked in collaboration with various other groups. This paper will attempt to argue that accepting and dealing with intersectionality played the roles of both an obstacle and a

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catalyst in the formation and evolution of Asian American feminism and activism. Bravely facing the past and coming to terms with complex identities have always been the way to move forward for Asian American women.

Intersectional Oppression Faced by First Generation Asian American Women

From the first influx of Chinese and Japanese women in the US in the 1850s, the dominant view of Asian American women in history is that they were prostitutes and picture brides, as a large number of the early Chinese and Japanese women population were sold, bribed or kidnapped into the trade. The historical stigmas of the Chinese and Japanese were attached to Asian American women as a whole even into the late 20th century, and they bore the maligned images imposed on them by dominant culture—"China Doll", "erotic Suzy Wong", "geisha girl", "bar girls", and "diabolical Dragon Lady"². These images have gradually transformed into the stereotype that all women of Asian origins or appearances are shy, submissive, and docile. Adding to these gender-specific social stereotypes was the image of the typical Asian Americans as "yellow peril" and the "model minority". In the words of John Dower, as a form of xenophobia, the racist color-metaphor of yellow peril was "the core imagery of apes, lesser men, primitives, children, madmen, and beings who possessed special powers"³ amidst a psycho-cultural fear of invasion from the irresistible, dark forces of Asia. Paradoxically, the stereotype morphed into the subsequent myth of the model minority, which depicted Asian Americans as well-behaved, polite, withdrawn and achieving a higher degree of socioeconomic success because of their unobtrusiveness. William Petersen who first published the idea of model minority in a 1966 article, compared the accomplishments of Asian Americans in comparison to the non-Asian "problem minorities", whose rise in society were said to be obstructed by their resentment and outer expression of hatred towards the society. Both myths, though seemingly conflicting in ideology, sought to employ the mechanism of "divide and conquer", consciously isolating the Asian Americans from the African Americans, Latinos, and other minority groups, thwarting any solidarity and collaboration that could have promoted their causes. To gain political footing as first-class citizens, Asian immigrants themselves have been recasting their image in adherence to the Model Minority myth, since the end of World War II; self-representations of Asian American masculinity, femininity, and sexuality purposefully conformed to the social and political boundaries constructed by mainstream America.⁴ Thus, a strict gender role was enforced within the communities to encourage the discrediting of racial stereotyping, and most women either willingly complied or felt the need to maintain a veil of secrecy about familial, cultural, and gender issues in fear of jeopardizing their whole family's immigrant status.

Within Asian ethnic communities women were further confined by the traditional teachings of feminine passivity and subordination compounded by the emphasis on the honor of family. Inundated with feudal ethics, most Asian American families were of strict patriarchal lineage, with men being the designated heir and possessing hegemonic power. For Chinese American women, according to the teachings of Confucius, in a household, the responsibility moves from father to son, and the mother has to first obey her husband and then ultimately her son, when he grows up. The sole duty of a female is to be serve the males in the family and produce off-springs. Furthermore, these teachings condemn people, women in particular, who voice their family or individual troubles to outsiders, since the esteem of the family name is considered more significant than individual well-being.

Most Asian immigrant groups were geographically secluded within sub-societies such as little Tokyo's, China towns, and often, ghettos; hence, Asian American women could not overcome the stark disparities between each ethnic group, and failed to develop a collective female consciousness. Even with the few aspiring Asian American activists at the time, they relied on the current systems of male-dominant anti-racist groups as well as the white feminist groups, to address their concerns, and they were largely unable to combine the demands of their multiple identities into an all-encompassing movement specific to the needs of Asian American women. When the two groups pursued what seemed to be conflicting political agendas, Asian American women felt a disinclination to object to fellow Asian Americans because the pervasive rhetoric within their communities was that issues of racial origins deserve to be the central concern, and therefore gender specific demands should be disregarded. They saw themselves as Asian women and did not have the "luxury of fighting their Asian counterparts". Women's liberation was considered useless when the Asian American group was suffering from oppression.

² Yung, Judy. "Giving Voice to Chinese American Women." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 19, no. 3 (1998): 130-56. Accessed September 18, 2020. doi:10.2307/3347095.

³ Tim Yang, "The Malleable Yet Undying Nature of the Yellow Peril," Untitled Document, 2008, <https://www.dartmouth.edu/~hist32/History/S22 -The Malleable Yet Undying Nature of the Yellow Peril.htm>.

⁴ Hsu, Madeline Y. *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heh.34121>. EPUB.

Third Wave Feminism and Intersectional Approach

The second wave of feminism is often accused of being elitist and ignoring groups such as women of color⁵. With the rise of third-wave feminism in the United States in the early 1990s, feminists embraced individualism and diversity. In the atmosphere, African American women led the way in becoming active and being included into the feminine conversation. Black feminism highlighted ways in which the single-axis conceptions of discrimination limited inquiry into the experiences of otherwise privileged members of the group, such as the male in Asian American groups and the class- and race-privileged women in feminist groups. In the 1989 landmark essay "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the term intersectionality, which highlighted the layered oppression women of color faced and how different forms of oppression were not additive but were intermeshed and constructed within multiple social divisions⁶. It was used to reveal that power works in uneven and differentiated ways. The intersectional approach emphasized how both the anti-racial groups and feminist groups overlooked intra-group differences and were rife with generalizations. This theory has since been often employed in discourses about marginalized Black women or women of color in general.

After the 1995 UN Beijing Platform for Action, intersectional methodology spreading globally and took root in Asia. It was one of the first international calls for action that included the core elements of an intersectional approach. With transnational support, Asian American women's activism further awakened, developing an awareness of their doubly disadvantaged positions as racial minorities and females.

Intergenerational Tension, Asian American Literature and the Asian American Female Voice

As newer generations of Asian American women were better assimilated into the US, they began to identify with the culture of their native country, America, rather than that of their ancestry. However, the striking discrepancy between the western world view and their parents' deep-rooted beliefs--where one highlights assertiveness, innovation and open-mindedness, and the other has fixed expectation of success and marked gender discrimination--created conflict between generations. The miscommunication between generations of women was rooted in a language of feminine silence shaped by traditional culture and acquired an additional dynamic in the context of immigrant life with the language barrier. Working-class immigrant children often had to act as English translators for their parents, inverting prevailing patterns of parental authority. The silence of their mothers and female relatives likely generated in new generations of Asian American women a sense of rootlessness, as they were deprived of continuity of experience not only with their Asian ancestors but also with their recent female relatives who either refrained or was forced not to speak up about their experiences. Much like many traditional western language uses, for many Asian American languages, the basis of communication is the understanding of the cultural emphasis on politeness or grace. The inability to read between the lines and grasp the implications behind the appearance of humbleness made them unable to thoroughly understand the unsaid meanings. Hence, for many daughters, knowledge about their mothers' lives and their thoughts was a "vaguely formed construct, pieced together out of impressions and assumptions". For some nisei women, the lack of connection between mother and daughter turned into "a helpless and alienated acceptance of statements at face value and the interpretation of silences as emptiness"⁷. With this feeling of detachment coupled with American society's systematic othering and oppression of people of color, Asian American women experienced identification crises. When they frequently experienced inconveniences, outright discrimination or unfair treatment because of their immigrant background and skin color, they even felt a bitterness and shame towards themselves, their family and their ancestry—they did not want to identify as Asian American women. This feeling existed for most Asian American women but was amplified especially for America-born Japanese women during their time in war-time internment camps. Mrs. Mikawa, a nisei women, discussed the deterioration of the mother-daughter relationship during the war time.

I retreated into myself. I hated being Japanese. I hated my mother, and I felt that she was responsible for this. We were put in one room, the whole bunch of us....We were in the same room, and I did not talk to her.⁸

⁵ Wikipedia contributors, "Third-wave feminism," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Third-wave_feminism&oldid=977639803 (accessed September 18, 2020).

⁶ Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241-299. Accessed September 1, 2020. doi:10.2307/1229039.

⁷ Von Hassell, Malve. "'Issei' Women: Silences and Fields of Power." *Feminist Studies* 19, no. 3 (1993): 549-69. Accessed September 18, 2020. doi:10.2307/3178100.

⁸ Von Hassell, Malve. "'Issei' Women: Silences and Fields of Power." *Feminist Studies* 19, no. 3 (1993): 549-69.

Longing to reconcile bifurcated identities and deal with the injustices that they suffered, Asian American women reclaimed their histories, dispelled cultural taboos, and witnessed the emergence of their own unique, but nevertheless, strong voices. The desire to critique and embrace the conventional Asian American culture prompted them to assess it more critically and comprehensively, directly addressing issues and latent problems that prior generations shunned away from. In the ground breaking book *The Woman Warrior* published in 1976, the California-born author Maxine Hong Kingston trafficked between ideals of tradition and modernity, torn but never afraid to explore what it means to be an Asian American woman "in defiance of two worlds"⁹. She names the "No Name Women"¹⁰ in her life, empowering women by creating individualized voices and defying the system of oppression in families. By breaking the family-imposed silence and devoting pages for her nameless aunt who became pregnant outside of marriage, she challenges the belief that women should be forgotten and erased from existence after disgracing the family when men who make the same mistakes are more likely to be excused from consequences. At the same time, she acknowledges the existing "whispered protests"¹¹ passed on quietly from mother to daughter through forms of talk-stories and legends, in which tales and literature play the role of constant reminders that women could transcend socially imposed limitations.

In *Unbound Voices*, the author Judy Yung, recorded and reflected on the life stories of Chinese immigrant women. Through the documenting oral history, she shows the power of first generation Asian American women as they established their families in San Francisco and made a life from the Gold Rush years through World War II¹². In addition to voicing the negative Asian American cultural baggage, she also provides a rich collection of stories showing feminine resilience and strength as she highlights Chinese women's struggles for advancement in both private and public spheres. The work lends immediacy and authenticity to the way society learns about the lives of Chinese women, and dispels the image of quiet vacuous women and unveils their strength and integrity of character. She firmly believes that by accepting and confronting their complex identities and history can help "bridge our differences and come to terms with our collective past---how we got to be the way we are and how we can make it better."

In addition, Asian American women began entering the labor market and other professions as they overcame their initial helplessness and dependence on male figures in their families. Kingston, and others like her, publicly recounted the experiences of discrimination and oppression in work place and everyday life. Asian American women resisted racist attitudes with the individual "small-person's voice that makes no impact". Their voices were faltering and separate. However, through the process of recording and vocalizing these incidents of oppression they raised public awareness and introduced the pass-way through which subsequent generations of women could bring forth their opinions more collectively. The willingness to do so also manifested that the notions of being a foreigner was wearing off, and from this sense of belonging stemmed later activism.

Intersectional Approach in Action: Asian American Women Activism

The difficulty with transforming the myriad "small person's voices" into organized grassroot activism is women's fractured identities and the host of disparities within the Asian American ethnic group. Asian American women who considered themselves feminists were primarily from middle class, college educated, and had professional backgrounds. Loo and Ong charged that feminism had failed to address the specific concerns of Chinatown women.¹³ Women unfamiliar with the movements often adopted a more selfish mentality and felt ambivalent about her socio-cultural situation, uninclined to participate in feminism or any other social movements. However, some Asian American women organizations tapped into the democratic and egalitarian atmosphere in the early twentieth century and employed intersectionality as a way to turn what Ruth Wilson Gilmore described as fatal couplings of power and difference into actions and self-formed organizations that addressed concrete problems. Intersectionality was used as a social movement strategy. They formed study-groups, writers' groups, women's clubs(such as the Japanese issei) to discuss issues specific to them. Organizations such as the Asian Immigrant Women Advocate (AIWA) formed. AIWA, did not focus on social divisions separately, nor did it organize along narrow identities such as Japanese or Chinese immigrants, middle

⁹ John Leonard, "In Defiance of 2 Worlds," *The New York Times* (The New York Times, September 17, 1976), <https://www.nytimes.com/1976/09/17/archives/in-defiance-of-2-worlds.html>.

¹⁰ Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts* (New York: Knopf, 1977).

¹¹ Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts* (New York: Knopf, 1977).

¹² Judy Yung, *Unbound Voices: a Documentary History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999).

¹³ Fong (1997) "Asian-American Women: An Understudied Minority," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 24: Iss. 1, Article 7. Available at: <http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol24/iss1/7>

class or lower class---it offered participants “many different points of entry and engagement”¹⁴. AIWA offered classes called the workplace literacy classes. In addition to offering English-language education and leadership training courses to help women improve their self-esteem, self-defense ability and prospects at work, the workplace literacy courses also taught women about their complex yet co-existing rights as workers, women, immigrants .etc. The women described AIWA classes as opportunities to diverge from the “monotony and isolation” of their daily lives and it also established new forms of relationality among immigrant women based on mutuality and respect rather than competition and fear---a collective female consciousness was forming. With places to renegotiate their “relationships in multiple arenas”¹⁵ women came to terms with the intersecting nature of their lives. Aided by the awareness of the multi-faceted nature of discrimination and sharpened leadership skills, women in organizations gradually redefined their roles from victims of oppression to grassroots leaders of social change. The group’s early organized movements were against unpaid back wages, labor abuse and other specific dilemmas that Asian American women faced when exercising their legal rights in industries and work places. These women-led movements conducted solely by and for Asian American women defied the social convention and proved their competence to themselves and to the society.

These activities also helped bridge the intergenerational gaps between mothers and daughters to some extent. As mothers were educated about the social movements of the period and became inspired by the endeavors of other marginalized groups, they could better relate to their daughters due to their shared educational background. When Jinmee, a Korea immigrant was assigned to write a paper about the struggle of Rosa Parks to desegregate public transportation, she asked her American-born daughter to proofread her paper. But her daughter noticed something more important than the typos: she felt a stronger intellectual and cultural connection with her mother.¹⁶ The children’s understanding and support of their mother fostered the acceptance of men, who were initially opposed, to new domestic responsibilities. Women’s domestic footing was enforced.

As Asian American women explored who they were as a group and came to terms with their identities, they were able to incorporate intersectionality into the third-fourth wave feminism. Asian American women have come to comprehend the structural elements of American society that produce sexism and racism and have become better adept at dealing with the particularly compounded issues of their own group. The ability to identify differences between movements and organizations has increased the potential to promote commonalities and therefore build coalitions between Asian American feminist groups as well as other groups of women. In the words of Roberts and Jesudason “an intersectional lens can reveal, on a given issue and between separate identity groups, perspectives of both privilege and victimhood, and thereby create a connection around shared experiences of discrimination, marginalization, and privilege.” The intersectional interventions have facilitated collaboration between Asian American women and feminists in general. As seen in the recent Women’s March in 2017, the mission of the march was to harness the political power of diverse women, and an intersectional platform called Unity Principles was formed by leaders with diverse backgrounds. The march was the manifestation of inter-group collaboration and their ability to find common ground. Female groups were inspired and invigorated by each other on their way towards a common goal.

Political Activism as Feminism: Being Included in the Human Rights Conversations

In feminist movements, the correlation between human rights and female rights has been a controversial topic. Though most would agree that female rights are an integral aspect in the fight for equal human rights and political rights, some claim that additional monitoring bodies should be formed by women, while others support the establishment of “separate but equal” women’s rights committees within institutions. In reality, singling out a group in protection of their rights could lead to stigmatization and marginalization. It is when mainstream entities acknowledge the diversity of women’s experiences and address issues that are not only typical but specific for all women, then women no longer have to choose between protecting their rights or human rights. As Hilary Clinton famously stated at the 1994 Beijing Platform for Action, “Women’s rights are human rights.”¹⁷ To achieve this, it is not enough to simply add a gender dimension to the existing systems, when the male experiences are accepted as the norm . Women have to overthrow the systematic misconception

¹⁴ Chun, Jennifer Jihye, George Lipsitz, and Young Shin. "Intersectionality as a Social Movement Strategy: Asian Immigrant Women Advocates." *Signs* 38, no. 4 (2013): 917-40. Accessed September 18, 2020. doi:10.1086/669575.

¹⁵ Chun, Jennifer Jihye, George Lipsitz, and Young Shin. "Intersectionality as a Social Movement Strategy: Asian Immigrant Women Advocates." *Signs* 38, no. 4 (2013): 917-40. Accessed September 18, 2020. doi:10.1086/669575.

¹⁶ Chun, Jennifer Jihye, George Lipsitz, and Young Shin. "Intersectionality as a Social Movement Strategy: Asian Immigrant Women Advocates." *Signs* 38, no. 4 (2013): 917-40. Accessed September 18, 2020. doi:10.1086/669575.

¹⁷ Hillary Rodham Clinton, “FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON REMARKS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN ,” United Nations (United Nations, 1995), <https://www.un.org/esa/gopher-data/conf/fwcw/conf/gov/950905175653.txt>.

of sameness between women and men, and specific experiences of women must be included in the predominantly male conversations. Women have begun to realize that the personal is political: most problems that women have been facing in their day to day lives are actually a result of intrinsically patriarchal structures. Asian American women have been confronting these establishments through growing participation in politics and general political activism. Their entrance into male-dominated professions and politics is reshaping American society materially as well as ideologically.

These Asian American women are not so much driven by personal political ambition as by a desire for recognition of Asian American women and their competence. Lily Lee Chen, the first Chinese woman to serve in congress is a rising political star among democratic party leaders. Mindful of the promise of that vote, Chen has registered hundreds of Chinese voters in Monterey Park and assumed the role of spokeswoman for an ever-growing Asian population in the San Gabriel Valley. She has been a propelling force in the growing Asian American women political activism. "Lily has a real grass-roots, fundamental idea of what people need,"¹⁸ said Michael Eng, a Los Angeles attorney and president of the Chinese-American Political Action Committee. Based on first-hand experiences in an immigrant and less well-to-do community, she trains her attention on providing concrete solutions to problems related close to people's lives. Yet the underlying motivation for her work "is compensation for the guilt my mother had for never having a son", and to "give my father a message that despite (his) never having a son, I could achieve as much as any son could."¹⁹ Deriving in part from their familiarity and the inundation of reminders they receive of the expected feminine image, they know precisely which stereotypes to tackle, and are doing so, though quite deliberately, by asserting themselves in politics. As of now, the intentional focus on diverging from preconceived expectations for female conduct is still very much a liability for Asian American women, diverting their energy from solving problems in the most efficient manner. Nevertheless, they are taking conscious steps toward shattering societal stereotypes.

Tammy Duckworth, the daughter of a Thai Chinese mother and American father, was a combat veteran of the Iraq War, where she suffered severe combat wounds and lost both of her legs as well as some mobility in her right arm. She became the first female double amputee from war, the first Thai woman in Congress and the first senator to give birth while in office. Having endured inconceivable hardships after the attack that cost her two legs, Duckworth displayed remarkable tenacity and decided to run for public office²⁰. From her position in the House of Representatives to the Senate, she has been devoting herself to Civil Rights, and publicly supported ideas of equal pay for equal work, pro-women's rights stance, and immigration, and anti-racist acts. As an Asian American woman, she also vehemently emphasizes the particular forms of oppression that Asian American women face. What's important is that she, and many female politicians like her, are not categorizing themselves within the boundaries of absolute feminism. They have the freedom to deal with other issues closely pertaining to their lives and others' lives. As Tammy Duckworth said herself, "Being a badass is about being proactive and giving back to our local communities, working to advance the American ideals of equality and inclusion and standing up for yourself and for those around you to make sure every voice is heard."

Critics of this feminist development believe that assimilating gender, race-based issues into a comprehensive human rights discussion limits the potential of intersectionality and is therefore a retreat of Women of color's feminism. They view the phrase "women's rights are human rights" as merely adding a gender dimension to civic rights and liberal humanitarianism. Although it is paramount to sustain Asian American women coalitions and maintain activism of individual groups that prioritize their rights, it is also necessary to ensure that intersectionality and ever-growing power structures are acknowledged in the larger systems. Becoming politically active and including Asian American women's rights into the larger conversation is essentially a bridge to spreading intersectionality. It witnesses Asian American women's activism moving from the margins to mainstream. They are "utilizing" their layered identities and experiences to speak up for previously marginalized communities with often overlooked issues, and to promote policies to better address the complex problems of each such groups. The specific experiences of women must be added to traditional approaches to human rights in order to make women more visible and to transform the concept and practice of human rights in the culture so that it takes better account of women's lives. Asian American women are not juxtaposing their own issues alongside concerns of human rights and social justice, but rather, they are weaving them into the discussions without losing their distinctiveness.

¹⁸ Mark Arax, "Lily Lee Chen : Her Roots--and Perhaps Her Political Goals--Lie Beyond Monterey Park," Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles Times, November 14, 1985), <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1985-11-14-ga-2678-story.html>.

¹⁹ Mark Arax, "Lily Lee Chen : Her Roots--and Perhaps Her Political Goals--Lie Beyond Monterey Park," Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles Times, November 14, 1985), <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1985-11-14-ga-2678-story.html>.

²⁰ Morgan Phillips, "Tammy Duckworth: 5 Things to Know about Biden's Possible Democratic VP Contender," Fox News (FOX News Network, June 25, 2020),

<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/tammy-duckworth-5-things-to-know-about-bidens-possible-democratic-vp-contender>.

II. CONCLUSION

Intersectionality in Asian American feminist development is not about destabilizing the government or overturning societies. It strives to influence existing structure and secure protection for Asian American women with their own experiences and transformations. As the Asian American lifelong activist Grace Lee Boggs once said, "it's a question of two-sided transformation and not just the oppressed versus the oppressor. We have to change ourselves in order to change the world." They underwent the process from passive to mobilization, from absence to mobility, from silence to establishment of purpose. They were inspired by other social movements, embraced some ideas, discarded others and fashioned new strategies of their own. The concept of Asian American feminism, like all vibrant visions, is not static. Its meaning expands as people reconceive of their needs and hopes in relation to it. As Asian American feminist groups recognize the extensive intra-group diversity, Asian American LGBTQ, disabled, working-class groups .etc. are also being included, expanding on the extent of intersectionality. For example, Asian lesbians have formed nationwide political groups such as Asia/Pacific Lesbian Network. Through it all they have experienced tumultuous change and modified their goals, but they have managed to root themselves close to the most fundamental issues of layered oppression.

Chow categorized Asian-American women into three categories in 1982. First, the traditionalist, who confines herself to the Asian cultural enclave and tends to be negatively disposed toward western culture; the second kind are assimilationists who defy traditional value, exist on the outskirts of both cultures, question parental authority, and define their success by the acceptance of Caucasians²¹; the third category is that of pluralists who integrate the useful aspects of their background into her present experiences, retaining facets of their own tradition but also able to fully participate in mainstream American society. In this paper these categories are seen as various phases of Asian American feminism development, from first to later generations of progress. The ultimate goal for an Asian American female individual is to be confident in defining her self-worth on a basis of racial, ethnical, and sexual pride, and be able to reconcile different cultures and identities for a pluralistic coexistence. The personal growth will then propel Asian American feminist development as it moves from the margins of society into the center and mainstream. Policies and programs concerned about human rights or equality in general should reflect the specific concerns of Asian American women as beneficiaries. From their specific realities, they can reveal universal concerns and truths about human rights and structures of society for all marginalized groups as they join forces with other groups to promote social equality for all people.

The battle is ongoing as Asian American women deal with current problems. In 2020, with the Corona-virus, a disease that is affecting people regardless of their race, ethnicity, or nationality, America has seen a retrograde in acceptance of Asian Americans, as the myth that Asian Americans are a deadly virus, is reinforced. The rage of American society is misdirected to this seemingly foreign group and many illogically respond to their own anxiety through violence with Asians as targets. Asian American women in particular have been struggling to deal with this vicarious rage which has made their fight for well-being ever more challenging. Reports have shown that in states and cities such as Louisiana, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Michigan that the majority of those who are infected and dying from the coronavirus are Black and Asian American especially female due to the poor medical condition. These women of color are confronted with exterior pressure and defamation as they struggle for basic subsistence as well as their lives and health. Facing unprecedented disaster, they seek to build Black and Asian American feminist solidarities to protect the minority American females. Organizations such as Asian American Feminist Collective have plays an important role in this cooperation. Asian American female struggles will continue across generations as they strive towards equality for themselves and humanity.

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