

The AACCP Newsletter

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AACP Proudly Introduces Our New Book

Swimming in the American *A Memoir and Selected Writings*

By Hiroshi Kashiwagi

Introduction to

Swimming in the American

By Philip Chin

What does it mean to be judged guilty by the United States Government of disloyalty in wartime? *Swimming in the American* by Hiroshi Kashiwagi is about the ups and downs of being Japanese American in the 20th Century chronicled in autobiographical short stories, poems, and a play. Those few years of internment during World War II forever colored Hiroshi Kashiwagi's life as a writer, actor, and playwright. Hiroshi was a "No-No Boy," one of the rare Japanese Americans punished for refusing to swear loyalty to the United States and to serve in the US military during World War II, because of the action shown by the government to its own citizens by locking them up without cause. His autobiography shows the unvarnished truth of the internment camp experience, the injustices, the resistance, and the ordinary. Not everyone interned was a saint and not everyone who lived outside of the camps was indifferent or evil as many narratives distort. One short story shows the humanity and decency of even a used car salesman doing the right if not the popular thing.

Growing up as a Japanese American in California during the Great Depression, mixed in with the accepted racism, are the normal experiences of growing up in all times; friends, jobs, farm life, and of course, a growing adolescent awareness of sex. Usually viewed through a nostalgic haze these experiences are the truth, not always to the writer's credit, that provide surprising insights into the culture and life of those increasingly distant times.

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A Book Review

by John Philbrook

Hiroshi Kashiwagi's *Swimming in the American* is quite a bit more than its modest subtitle - "A Memoir and Selected Writings" - would suggest. Though starting chronologically from his birth in Sacramento, California, to Japanese immigrant parents, and maintaining chronology throughout, the distinction between "memoir" and "selected writings" soon blurs. The main narrative tells of struggle and growth through times difficult and good; an increasing sense of otherness, culminating in the shameful internment of Japanese-Americans; of the development and distillation of a Japanese-American sensibility in the man and the writer; and ultimately the journey of the human soul. Sometimes events are narrated in the present tense, adding greatly to immediacy; sometimes, as in narrating "No-No Boy" decisions, from the vantage of age and distilled reflection. Vignettes are incorporated into the narrative until after World War II has been breached, then they increasingly take on lives and chapters of their own. "Jap", for example, recounts a head-on yet subtle dealing with prejudice. Soon character sketches, essays, and reflections abound. Most moving in its simple honesty is the recounting of the death of the author's father, what was and what was regretted.

Interspersed are poems on such unusual topics as a rural radio station, a wry reflection on gardening advice from author Richard Brautigan, and snails viewed from a librarian's perspective, graceful, witty, or humorous as demanded by the chosen subject. Generously there are also prose poems and even a play.

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Hiroshi's experiences after the war reflect the struggle of Japanese Americans to reconstruct their lives and to achieve success for themselves and their descendants. It wasn't until the 1970s and 1980s that the community overcame the shame of interment and began the fight for justice. Just as he had stood up for his rights during World War II, Hiroshi Kashiwagi was among those in the forefront fighting for justice - in his testimony in front of congressional committees and in his continuing work to bring the story of the internment to younger generations.

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Though ostensibly a memoir *Swimming in the American* is as much about Mr. Kashiwagi's life long passions: reading, writing, and acting. This is a long and diverse life, well lived, well reflected upon, and, above all, well and enthrallingly told.

Come meet Mr. Kashiwagi on April 9th from 10:30 to 1 pm at the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) in San Francisco. He will be reading from his book and signing them too.

Update on the He vs. Baker Case **Enough is Enough**

A second editorial by Leonard Chan and Philip Chin

As you may recall from our past newsletter articles on this case, the He (the biological parents) and Baker families are in a bitter custody case over Anna Mae. Anna Mae, who is now six, is the biological daughter of Qin Luo "Casey" and Shaoqiang "Jack" He. The last court case left Anna Mae in the custody of the Bakers. The Tennessee Court of Appeals in Jackson is currently hearing the case.

Here are some links to articles that will help you learn about the He vs. Baker case.

- Our newsletter article and editorial on this case - <http://asianamericanbooks.com/newslets/NI0304.htm>
- General article on the case - http://familyrightsassociation.com/horror_stories/he/two_couples_fight_for_girl.htm
- sfgate.com article on the case in general - <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2005/02/15/national/a000556S27.DTL>
- sfgate.com article on the current court case - <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2005/02/16/national/a153611S62.DTL>

First of all, I don't know all the details of this case. All I know about the case is from what I read on the Internet and in newspapers. Plus I am not an expert on families and child psychology. But as a casual observer, I must say enough is enough.

Let's please hope the court makes the right decision this time and gives Anna Mae back to her biological parents. Besides the cultural bigotry issues that we explored in our last editorial on this subject, here are my latest thoughts on why I think the He family should get their daughter back.

To the Baker's -

What will you tell Anna Mae when she grows up? How will you convince Anna Mae that her biological parents didn't want her back and that they didn't love her? When Anna Mae gets to her teen rebellious phase in life, how will you be able to handle her added resentment that may surface as result of her belief that you forcibly kept her from her real parents? She'll most likely use it against you.

What about when Anna Mae starts to wonder about her Chinese heritage, will you keep her from it as an added barrier because you want to sever all ties to her biological parents? Wouldn't Anna Mae's exploration of her Chinese heritage only serve to remind her of the family that was kept from her? And if you keep Anna Mae from her Chinese heritage might you be doing her harm by not letting her know her true identity?

She'll probably feel more like a kidnap victim than an adopted child. What psychological traumas will this cause?

It's tough enough for an adopted child to deal with the issues of being adopted, but unless you decide to hide the court cases from her and move to some deserted island, keeping Anna Mae will only bring major pains to you and her. No amount of money or well-heeled nurturing will prevent this. Do you truly have Anna Mae's long range interest in mind or just your own current self-interest?

Give Us Your Feedback

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

Up Coming Events

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

Date/Time	Event	Location
Mar. 12	Academic Success Day Exhibit/Sales	SC County Office of Educ. Santa Clara, CA
Mar. 12-13	Reading the World VII	USF 2350 Turk Blvd. San Francisco, CA
April 9 10-1:30pm	Hiroshi Kashiwagi Book Signing	JCCCNC San Francisco, CA
April 20-24	Association for Asian American Studies National Conference	Marriott Los Angeles Downtown Los Angeles, CA
June 2-5	State of CA Conference on the Internment of Japanese Americans Sponsored by CCLPEP	Radisson Miyako Hotel San Francisco, CA
Other Event of Interest that AACP May Not Attend		
Mar. 12-13	Marysville Bok Kai Festival	3rd & D St. Marysville, CA
Mar. 10-20	22st San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival	San Francisco, Berkeley, San Jose, CA
April 8-9	Assembly on the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians	Hastings College San Francisco, CA
April 8-?	PanAsia '05 Pan Asian Solidarity Coalition	U. Chicago Chicago, IL

Editor's Message

Hello everyone. This month, in a ten-day period, we are going to be at three conferences and one festival. If you go back to February 19th, we will have been to seven events in 23 days by the end of this coming weekend. So things are still quite hectic. For all of you doing email and phone correspondence with us, please forgive us for any delays in our replies and in our service, and thank you for your patience.

It's been great seeing you at these events. Meeting you makes the traveling worth it.

A reminder, if you ever unintentionally stop receiving our email newsletters, perhaps your email filtering software or Internet service provider is filtering out our emails. Please try to figure out how to include us among your allowed senders. If you have trouble solving this problem, you can always find our newsletters on our website.

Leonard Chan
Executive Editor

Come meet Mr. Kashiwagi on April 9th from 10:30 to 1 pm at the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California ([JCCCNC](#)) in San Francisco. He will be reading from his book and signing them too.

The following books are discounted an additional 20% from the listed price for subscribers to our newsletter. The discounts on these books end April 5, 2005.

	<p>Swimming in the American A Memoir and Selected Writings By Hiroshi Kashiwagi 2005, 244 pages, Paperback.</p> <p>Hiroshi Kashiwagi has had a remarkable life. He has been a librarian, an actor, a playwright, and a writer. Now discover Hiroshi Kashiwagi through his marvelous autobiography.</p> <p>Please read the lead story of this newsletter for more information.</p> <p>Item #3285. Price \$14.95 - for newsletter subscribers \$11.96</p>
	<p>Peek! A Thai Hide and Seek By Minfong Ho Illustrated by Holly Meade 2004, 30 pages, Hardback.</p> <p>A father and daughter play hide-and-seek in the midst of the animals near their house in Thailand.</p> <p>Author Minfong Ho and illustrator Holly Meade team up again to create this wonderful picture book. This is every bit as delightful as their Caldecott Award winning book Hush!</p> <p>Item #3281, Price \$16.99 - for newsletter subscribers \$13.59</p>
	<p>Kira-Kira By Cynthia Kadohata 2004, 244 pages, Hardback.</p> <p>Kira-Kira is a poignant story of two Japanese American sisters coping with moving to Georgia, 1950s and 60s racism, poverty, adolescence, and finally illness. Through it all they're able to find the Kira-Kira (glitter) in life.</p> <p>Kira-Kira was recently honored with a Newbery book award for children's literature.</p> <p>Item #3287, Price \$16.95 - for newsletter subscribers \$13.56</p>
	<p>My First Chinese New Year By Karen Katz 2004, 27 pages, Hardback.</p> <p>Here's a book that I didn't get to in time for last month's Chinese New Year celebration. But it's never too late for kids to enjoy and learn from such a nice book.</p> <p>Author and illustrator Karen Katz does an admirable job of capturing the customs of Chinese New Year and making it accessible to young kids.</p> <p>Item #3280, Price \$14.95 - for newsletter subscribers \$11.96</p>
	<p>The Mats By Francisco Arcellana Illustrated by Hermès Alègrè 1999, 20 pages, Hardback.</p> <p>A father comes home from a trip to Manila with beautiful hand-made customized sleeping mats for each member of his family.</p> <p>This award-winning book is a touching story of reverence and adoration of departed family members. First written in 1938 and then more recently adapted into a picture book, AACP is delighted to present this book to you now.</p> <p>Item #3288, Price \$13.95 - for newsletter subscribers \$11.16</p>

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