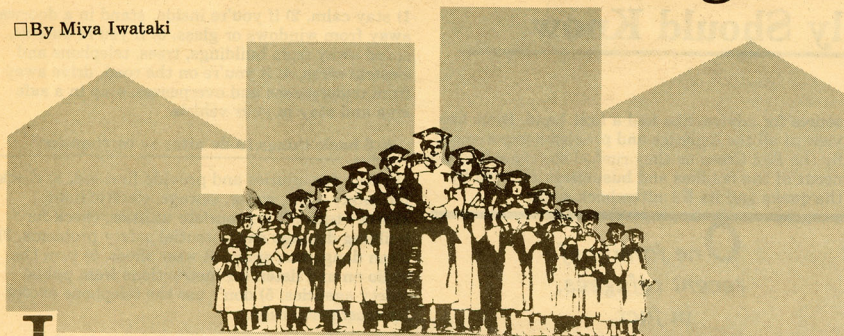


Hail! Hail! To L.A. High!

□ By Miya Iwataki



Just went to my high school reunion... for the first time. It triggered off a lot of emotions/memories/feelings that I am still trying to sort out.

We have changed. Not so much physically, although some have probably put on a few pounds. But we still look pretty good. Especially compared to some of the others, like many *hakujins* who seem to age so quickly and visibly. I found myself walking around and seeing balding men in tuxedos strolling the banquet room, causing me to wonder, "Is he part of the hotel management or in our class?"

You just have to admit, we Asians do not show our age. Am I gloating?

There seemed to be an undercurrent of things psychological. Watching people relate to one another after so many years of separation, I sometimes got the feeling I was outside of my own body, carefully watching my own interactions.

I noticed a tendency to fall into the old roles of how-we-used-to-relate-to-each-other. And yet, we tried to deal with and incorporate our current realities. As I said, I am still trying to sort it all out. (I can't seem to find appropriate words and adjectives to describe this unique experience).

It's been a heavy year, one in which we in the Asian Pacific community have seen a lot happen in terms of reparations, the struggle for political, economic and social power, and so many other issues in which we have had a part.

In fact, the reunion immediately followed the National Democratic Council for Asian Pacific Americans very first national convention. There, we had heard from the best of our legislators and the top presidential candidates and scrutinized our current position. I was not entirely able to "switch reels" and mentally prepare myself for a reunion with people from a different time in my life.

My psyche was on overload. Each friend or classmate I bumped into or spoke with triggered off very specific memories. It was *deja vu* for me, and I was Marcel Proust writing the first chapter

of *Remembrances of Things Past*. I think I had a lot of fun, but like I said, at times, it was almost surreal.

I distinctly remember one of the little contests that the reunion committee had organized to take place throughout the evening. For this contest, they asked who was had the youngest spouse. What a dumb contest, I thought. (Other contests were to find out who had married the most often, who was married the longest, who had changed the most at your table, etc.) Those who were married to someone forty or younger were asked to raise their hands. They were instructed to leave them up as a committee member counted down the years. The last hand up had a spouse in the early twenties.

Now, keep in mind that everyone was busy talking and catching up with old friends throughout these contests. For most of us, this was far more important and people only looked up when a "winner" was announced.

When the person with the youngest spouse was asked to come up front to center stage to collect a prize we naturally assumed it would be one of the men. To our collective surprise, up walks a woman looking really sharp in four inch stiletto heels and a very fitted black dress with a see-through top. It was a twist, a great moment, and all the women reacted by yelling, "ALL RIGHT SISTER!" It was a nice reflection of the social

changes that we have seen since high school.

Another nice surprise was a guy that I had remembered as the class clown. He is now an inventor and has just moved back to the U.S. from Europe. One of his inventions, in fact is a standard part on my Honda Prelude.

My friend Steve (also an alumni) and I reflected on the reunion on the way home. It occurred to us that for many, high school may have been the happiest days of their lives, their glory days. For them the reunion was, from the very outset, a happily anticipated and joyful event where they could remember all of the great things they did.

A number of people even booked suites at the hotel, and after the official party ended at 1:00 a.m., there were four different parties to hit. I vaguely remember getting home around 4:00 a.m., dreading the all-day staff retreat that I knew I had to attend five hours later.

One note: the hotel should have put all the reunion suites together. Guests near our party rooms, kept calling security to complain about the revelry. Well, what can anybody expect? We had reverted back to our high school party behavior, although (luckily for them) in a slightly mellow manner.

I mentioned to Steve that although the high school years were the best for some, it was a very traumatic time for me, filled with many intense ups and downs. But then again, I guess my whole life has been like that, since I always choose to take the "path less trodden."

That's why I'm always saying... **GAMBARE!** □

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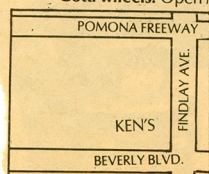
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Family Health

Earthquake: What Your Family Should Know

□By John Miyabe, MA, MPH

Lots of times, the way we as individuals look at the world is impacted not only by what we see nor merely by what has gone before. Something as mundane as the kinds of questions we ask ourselves and our families could have a profound effect on how we view our surroundings. With this premise in mind (and for the subject of this column), let's agree that the questions we pose to ourselves, and more poignantly what we neglect to ask, could affect our families' health.

Following this time of concern about earthquakes, I noticed how active the Red Cross was and how quickly they reacted when quake victims needed help. They were especially noticeable in the Whittier area during the last 5.9 (nee 6.1) trembler. I wondered first, how to prepare myself and my family for the "big one," and second, if there might be something unique to our community regarding the earthquake and its aftermath. I hadn't the foggiest idea.

I took my questions to Cindy Ogawa, Volunteer Specialist and Asian Pacific Outreach Coordinator at the downtown office headquarters of the Los Angeles Chapter of the American Red Cross. Ogawa, who has been long active in the Asian community, so I figured she would be a good

source for advice. She had a first hand, front line view of all the logistics and problems experienced by the Red Cross as they rushed to respond to the needs of the families and businesses affected by the quake and its 5.1 aftershock sister.

One family of recent refugees, in fact, were practically forced to take aid they so obviously needed.

The American Red Cross is a nonprofit volunteer agency that assists in time of emergency. The Red Cross and the services rendered are a "gift from the people of America" to those in need and their services are free.

Ogawa noted, "A disaster is not something we like to think about. It cannot be predicted and it includes not only earthquakes, but fire, floods, chemical spills, etc. The best we can do is prepare and know what to do and where to go for help when we need it."

The Red Cross has prepared a brochure called *27 Things to Help You Survive an Earthquake*. It is printed in several languages and filled with facts to consider.

★ 4 basic things to do during an earthquake:

1) stay calm, 2) if you're inside, stand in a doorway away from windows or glass, 3) if you're outside, stand away from buildings, trees, telephone and electric wires, 4) if you're on the road, drive away from underpasses and overpasses, stop in a safe area and stay in your vehicle.

★ 6 basic things to do after an earthquake:

1) check for injuries and provide first aid, 2) check for safety—gas, water, sewage, electric lines, shorts—turn off appropriate utilities, check for building damage and potential safety problems, 3) clean dangerous spills, 4) wear shoes, 5) turn the radio on and listen for instructions from public safety agencies, 5) don't use the telephone except for emergency calls.

★ 14 survival items to keep on hand:

1) portable radio with extra batteries, 2) flashlight with extra batteries, 3) first aid kit including specific medicines needed for members of your household, 4) first aid book, 5) fire extinguisher, 6) adjustable wrench for turning off gas and water, 7) smoke detector (you should already have one of these installed), 8) portable fire escape ladder for multiple story dwellings, 9) bottled water, enough for all the members of your family, 10) canned or dried foods sufficient for your family for at least a week (both water and food should be rotated in normal household use so as to keep them fresh—canned goods have a normal shelf life of one year for maximum freshness), 11) non-electric can opener, 12) portable stove such as butane or charcoal (note: charcoal should only be burned



Picking Up The Pieces The Japanese Retirement Home Continued from page 1

The buildings didn't receive the major portion of the damage with the big quake. Only when the aftershocks occurred did the JRH start to tumble down. The buildings suffered structural damage and the residents suffered displacement and a disruption of their lives.

"I get the feeling that some of them don't know what has happened. Some of them are just wondering why this has happened to them, but none of them blame anyone," said Dobashi.

People stayed in the auditorium, living dorm style until the Retirement Home could contact the

families and make arrangements. It took about a week to notify the families after the evacuation. Most of the residents have been moved into their children's homes.

The remaining residents have no family, or family out-of-state. Fifteen of the 98 residents, whose average age is 86, have been relocated to the rooming house across the street which served as housing for the staff.

"Before the earthquake," reflected Dobashi, "residents had their own rooms and some independence. Now, many of these residents are living with their children, some of whom don't have enough room for them."

"Some of the people weren't really thrilled to take their parents in," stated J.D. Hokoyama, Director of Public Affairs and Fund Development at the JRH, "especially those without much room

or with lots of kids. And a lot of the residents didn't want to move into their kids' homes.

"You have to understand, these people can, for the most part, take care of themselves. Many of them just don't want to live under their children's roofs. They don't want to live by their kids' rules, they want to come back."

"It's hard for the families to take them back. The Issei are different than any other generation. They never had to take care of their parents because their parents were in Japan. The Nisei are the first generation to take care of aging parents," reflected Dobashi.

Calls from the families of the 73 residents who have gone to live with family have been received daily at the JRH. Children call asking when they can bring their parents back. Residents themselves have called inquiring when they will be

Asian American Population: 1980 and Projected for 1990 and 2000

Rank	Ethnic group	1980		Ethnic group	1990		Ethnic group	2000	
		Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent
	Total	3,466,421	100.0	Total	6,533,608	100.0	Total	9,850,364	100.0
1	Chinese	812,178	23.4	Filipino	1,405,146	21.5	Filipino	2,070,571	21.0
2	Filipino	781,894	22.6	Chinese	1,259,038	19.3	Chinese	1,683,537	17.1
3	Japanese	716,331	20.7	Vietnamese	859,638	13.2	Vietnamese	1,574,385	16.0
4	Asian Indian	387,223	11.2	Korean	814,495	12.5	Korean	1,320,759	13.4
5	Korean	357,393	10.3	Japanese	804,535	12.3	Asian Indian	1,006,305	10.2
6	Vietnamese	245,025	7.1	Asian Indian	684,339	10.5	Japanese	856,619	8.7
	Other Asian	166,377	4.8	Other Asian	706,417	10.8	Other Asian	1,338,188	13.6

Source: Leon F. Bouvier and Anthony Agresta, "Projections of the Asian American Population, 1980-2030," in James T. Fawcett and Benjamin Cariño (eds.), *Asian and Pacific Immigration to the United States*, forthcoming.

