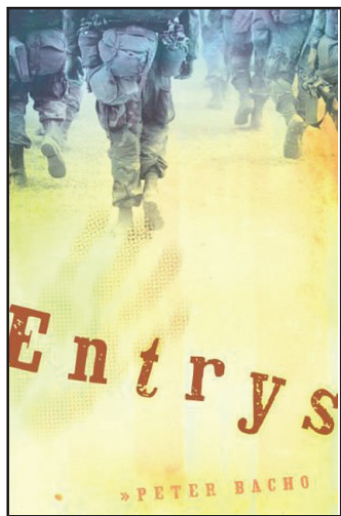


New and Notable Books



BY TERRY HONG | Special to AsianWeek



Fiction

ENTRYS

By Peter Bacho (University of Hawai'i Press)

A must-read novel about a Filipino Native American hapa Vietnam War veteran whose disturbing journal "entries" are juxtaposed with more reliable, objective narration. How the story plays out keeps you on the edge of your seat, book glued in hand.

A LONG STAY IN A DISTANT LAND

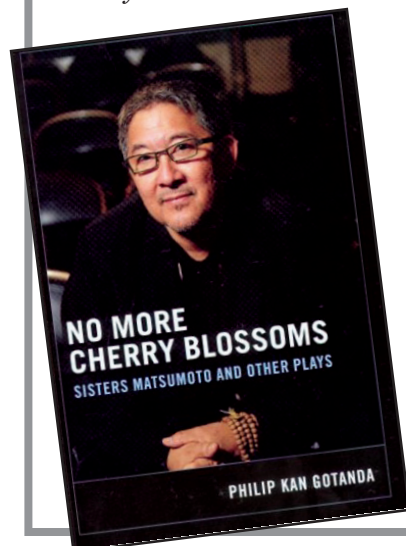
By Chieh Chieng (Bloomsbury USA)

Here's an auspicious debut about three generations of the Lum family of Orange County, California. They may or may not be trying to survive a death curse, and they have some of the quirkiest characters on both sides of the Pacific.

NO MORE CHERRY BLOSSOMS: SISTERS MATSUMOTO AND OTHER PLAYS

By Philip Kan Gotanda, foreword by Stephen Sumida (University of Washington Press)

Thrilling collection of four recent plays from one of my favorite playwrights: *Sisters Matsumoto*, *The Wind Cries Mary*, *Ballad of Yachiyo* and *Under the*

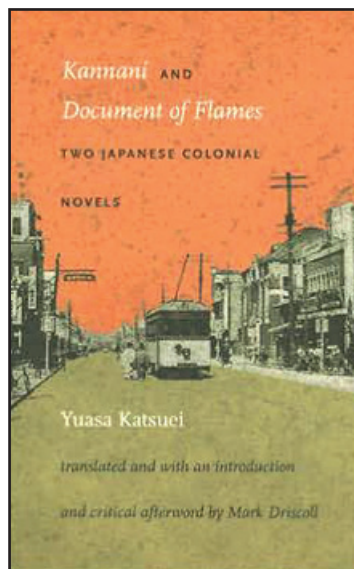


Rainbow, which combines two playlets, *Natalie Wood Is Dead* and *White Manifesto and Other Perfumed Tales of Self-Entitlement*, or, *Got Rice?*

KANNANI AND DOCUMENT OF FLAMES: TWO JAPANESE COLONIAL NOVELS

By Yuasa Katsuei, translated with an introduction and critical afterword by Mark Driscoll (Duke University Press)

The first available translation of important fiction highlighting Japan's colonization of Korea, *Kannani* exposes the brutality



endured by Koreans — even among the children — while *Document* follows a divorced Japanese woman in Korea who escapes prostitution to become an oppressive landowner. The most interesting tidbit is the mention of Dr. Seuss's *Horton Hears a Who* as allegory for the post-war relationship between America and Japan!

SNOW FLOWER AND THE SECRET FAN

By Lisa See (Random House)

Two interesting facts emerge: 1) young girls are bonded together to become *laotongs* (literally, "old sames") for life and 2) women communicate using *nu shu*, a secret women-only written language. In the novel, 80-year-old Lily recounts her long, intense relationship with Snow Flower, whom she betrays then reclaims. P.S. Alternative suggestion: Ruthanne Lum McCunn's *Moon Pearl*.

BOLLYWOOD CONFIDENTIAL

By Sonia Singh (Avon Trade/HarperCollins)

When her Hollywood agent sends D-lister Raveena Rai overseas to star in a Bollywood film, she gets stuck with a lecherous

director and a tongue-tied though gorgeous co-star. Fun, silly romp just in time for the end of summer.

BOTCHAN

By Natsume Soseki, translated by J. Cohen (Kodansha America)

A new translation of a Japanese classic that follows Botchan, the mischievous, fun-loving Tokyoite to rural southern Japan where he's assigned to teach in a boys' school. What's a rule-breaker to do?

Q&A

By Vikas Swarup (Scribner)

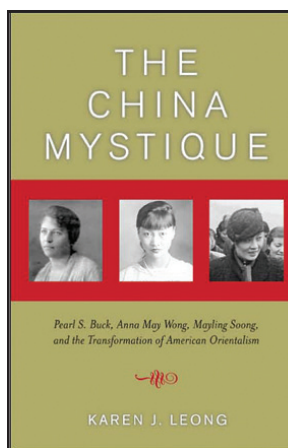
In spite of its devastating moments, this is one fabulous novel about the surprise winner of a billion-rupee quiz-show, similar akin to *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* Unjustly arrested and tortured for cheating, the uneducated orphan is rescued and spends the night with an avenging angel attorney sharing the life experiences that allowed him to know all the answers.

Non-Fiction

THE CHINA MYSTIQUE: PEARL S. BUCK, ANNA MAY WONG, MAYLING SOONG, AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN ORIENTALISM

By Karen J. Leong (University of California Press)

Leong examines the lives of this trio — author of *The Good Earth*, the APA actress of all time and the Wellesley-educated wife of Chiang Kai-shek — as the most



prominent women associated with 1930s and '40s China. It's more on the academic side, but offers lots of fascinating details to keep you reading.

THE ASIAN MYSTIQUE: DRAGON LADIES, GEISHA GIRLS, AND OUR FANTASIES OF THE EXOTIC ORIENT

By Sheridan Prasso (Public Affairs/Perseus Books)

Here's the everyperson — or should that be every non-Asian person's? — guide to debunking the Asian mystique, written by a non-APA with 15-plus years of experience writing about Asia. While the aware APA won't learn anything earth-shattering, the book's examination of absurd stereotypes is entertaining. The picture of the geisha with a Starbucks bag says it all ...

SHOCKWAVE: COUNTDOWN TO HIROSHIMA

By Stephen Walker (HarperCollins)

Marking the 60th anniversary comes a richly detailed examination of the three weeks that led up to the Hiroshima bombing.



While it reads like a riveting novel — scientists, politicians, military on both sides, tragic locals — knowing this is history makes it all the more haunting.

TAIWAN FILM DIRECTORS: A TREASURE ISLAND

By Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh and Darrell William Davis (Columbia University Press)

With the relaxing of government controls in the 1980s, Taiwanese filmmakers quickly established themselves internationally. Four directors, Edward Yang, Hou Hsiao-hsien, Ang Lee (whom we claim as one of our APA own) and Tsai Ming-liang get closely examined here.

Young Readers

THE SILVER SPELL

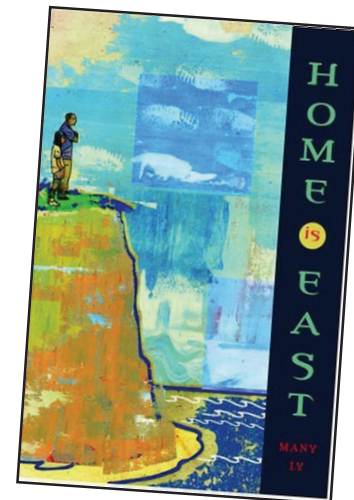
By Anjali Banerjee (Mirrorstone Books)

When Kellach and Driskoll's beloved mother reappears, after disappearing five years ago, the family's initial joy is overshadowed by the presence of evil. It's up to Kellach and his girl-power buddy, Moyra, to save their entire town.

HOME IS EAST

By Many Ly (Delacorte/Random House)

After her mother suddenly deserts the family, Amy and her father



are left alone to create a new life across the country in California. A heartbreaking coming-of-age tale about growing up Cambodian American, losing a parent, losing community and discovering new strength and independence.

And for the Younger Kiddies ...

PALIA'S FIRST DAY

By Michelle Edwards (Harcourt)

Pa Lia Vang starts her first day of second grade at Jackson Magnet, quickly encounters the "enemy of the second grade," makes friends with two nicer kids, gets in trouble, and then but is exonerated for telling the truth.

OHA THE WISE FOOL

Retold by Denys Johnson-Davies, art by Hag Hamdy and Hany (Philomel/Penguin)

A collection of short folktales about an entertaining little man who is both wise and foolish, beautifully illustrated with traditional hand-sewn tapestries.

FIRETRUCK SCHOOLBUS

By Salina Yoon (Price Stern Sloan/Penguin)

Another two delightful chunky books for the tiniest hands to manipulate and learn the basics of how these big vehicles work.

