



What Does It Mean
To Be Korean Today?
Part II, Community
in the 21st Century

Amerasia Journal

ISSN: 0044-7471 (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ramj20>

Sa-I-Gu Revisited: Interview with Elaine Kim

Min Hyoung Song

To cite this article: Min Hyoung Song (2004) *Sa-I-Gu* Revisited: Interview with Elaine Kim, *Amerasia Journal*, 30:1, 229-242, DOI: [10.17953/amer.30.1.5623548047148276](https://doi.org/10.17953/amer.30.1.5623548047148276)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.17953/amer.30.1.5623548047148276>



Published online: 08 Feb 2019.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 31



View related articles [↗](#)

***Sa-I-Gu* Revisited: Interview with Elaine Kim**

Min Hyoung Song

Elaine Kim has been a pioneer in Asian American Studies. Her first book, *Asian American Literature: An Introduction to the Writings and Their Social Context* (1982), uncovered a large body of literature by and about Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino Americans.¹ In combining this literature in one study, Kim's book challenged the limited notion of Asian American literature found in *Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Asian American Writers* (1974), which included works by and about second-generation Chinese and Japanese Americans—and to a lesser extent Filipino Americans.² The book's introduction also left open the possibility of even greater expansiveness, explicitly making the category of Asian American literature flexible and available to future revision. In the years since the book's publication, such openness has turned out to be necessary as unprecedented immigration during the 1980s, especially from Asia and Latin America, changed the demographic shape of the United States' and acted as a catalyst for the boom experienced by ethnic studies in the 1990s. Perhaps it is because of its prescience that *Asian American Literature*, two decades after its initial publication, continues to remain an important reference point and resource for scholars interested in Asian Americans, ethnicity, and race in the study of literature. In an influential essay with a title that seems to speak for itself, "The Fiction of Asian American Literature," Susan Koshy takes issue with scholarly reluctance to theorize more thoroughly what it means to group disparate creative works under an unstable,

MIN HYOUNG SONG is an assistant professor of English at Boston College and the author of *Strange Future: Pessimism and the 1992 Los Angeles Riots* (forthcoming from Duke University Press, 2005).

racially marked category like "Asian American literature." She especially holds out Elaine Kim's work as one exception. Though methodologically out of fashion according to Koshy, *Asian American Literature* "remains, to date, the only book-length study that attempts to treat Asian American literature as a whole. Most other critical work offers thematic, sociohistorical, or rhetorical analyses of individual texts, authors, or ethnic groups focusing on generational narratives, assimilation, motifs of resistance or feminist emergence, or the challenge of stereotypes or clichés."³

While *Asian American Literature* continues to exert its influence over a field of inquiry that is finding its institutional legs across the country, and not just in California, Elaine Kim herself has become one of the field's most active, restless, and productive scholars. In the past few years she has been involved in a number of projects that have pushed against the boundaries of the field of Asian American Studies. Interestingly, most of these projects have been collaborative endeavors, which suggests that she finds the usual academic valuation of single-authored monographs limiting and not conducive to the kind of cultural work her projects seek to perform. With Chungmoo Choi, for instance, Kim strengthened a growing conversation between Asian American and Asian Studies by collecting several path-breaking essays on Asian American subjects in a special volume of *positions: east asian critique*, itself a journal dedicated to stretching the boundaries of area studies. In a similar vein, she co-edited (also with Chungmoo Choi) a collection of essays specifically on the relationship between Korean and Korean American women entitled *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism*. Gender has been at the center of most of her projects. In addition to *Dangerous Women*, Kim has edited, with the collective Asian Women United of California, *Making Waves: An Anthology of Writings By and About Asian American Women* and its sequel *Making More Waves: New Writings by Asian American Women*. Kim also co-edited (with Norma Alarcón) another volume of essays entitled, *Writing Self, Writing Nation: A Collection of Essays on Dictée by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha*. The focus on Cha's only book, published just before she was murdered in a New York City parking lot, is suggestive of the kind of literature that interests Kim most: one that has no respect for genre, form, or other restrictions on artistic expression, and that restlessly pursues a vision sensitive to race, gender, nation, and other dominant markers of difference in unexpected and startlingly illuminating ways through its violation of such restrictions.⁴

Overall, the trajectory of Kim's scholarship since the publication of her first book suggests a number of recurring themes: a strong commitment to feminism tempered by an enduring concern for racial justice, a grounding interest in her own ethnic identity as a Korean American, and a desire to make connections and to build coalitions among peoples of color. All of these themes came together in late April 1992, when Korean Americans were pulled into the vortex of an unprecedented multiethnic civic disturbance that put a glaring spotlight on racial injustice in America, the vulnerable visibility but silence of individual ethnic groups, the divides separating peoples of color, and the women who often suffered the brunt of the social failures on display during the riots. It is unsurprising, therefore, that Elaine Kim became energized around various, and often experimental, attempts to make sense of the riots as it related to Korean Americans. With Eui-Young Yu, she published *East to America: Korean American Life Stories*, a collection of oral histories conducted with Korean Americans in Los Angeles.⁵ Kim also helped produce *Sa-I-Gu*. Made on the fly in the immediate aftermath of the riots, this documentary is comprised of several interviews conducted with Korean American women whose small businesses were destroyed or damaged by the riots. It is, as far as I know, the only social document that records these women's experiences and is still extensively screened in many college classrooms. As a record of the 1992 Los Angeles riots, *Sa-I-Gu* is invaluable.

On May 22, 2000, I talked with Elaine Kim in her office about *Sa-I-Gu*, the various concerns that have preoccupied her since its release, and the centrality of her Korean American identity in the academic and activist work that she has done throughout her life. In December 2001, we corresponded by email to update and hone what we had talked about. The following is the final product of our wide-ranging and candid discussion.

MHS: What compelled you to produce the documentary *Sa-I-Gu*?

EK: The Los Angeles uprising upset me a lot. I happened to be in Los Angeles shortly after, visiting friends who were working in the community. They had really been traumatized by what had happened. I was introduced to one of the women in *Sa-I-Gu*, the one who walks around among the ruins of her swapmeet shop saying, "How could they do this? It gives me the shivers. I don't want to ever come back here." □ I met her at her apartment in Koreatown. She

seemed cheerful enough, but when she showed us a front page picture in the newspaper of the burnt out spot where her snack corner had once stood, she burst into tears. □ She could not stop sobbing. She had been sort of kidding around about how her husband wasn't there during the "riots." He didn't help her with the shop because it had to do with food preparation, "women's work." □ He had left all the work to her. □ At the start of the unrest, she didn't know what was going on. She didn't even know there was a Rodney King verdict. She was just there doing this snack corner. □ She said all she knew was her apartment and the store. That was the sum total of her twenty years of American life. Now, everyone was having a conversation about the uprising, but she had no part in it.

I met another woman who talked about how frustrated she had been because she could not tell other Americans how she felt about the situation, since she could not speak English. She said she was so excited when a PBS reporter asked her to talk to the camera. Her daughter was there and could translate for her. They had been at a small demonstration in front of City Hall a few days after the peace march, asking for help because their store had been burned down and they were no longer able to make their living. Some people inside the building were throwing things from the windows at the group. She had gotten hit with an ink bottle or some white-out, so she had some ink on her face, but she really wanted to have her say at last. That night, when she saw her interview on television, all they had was the image of her dirty face. They didn't translate what she said. □ Maybe it was too much trouble or too expensive to bother with a voice-over or subtitles. So she never had her say. She wept when she related what had happened.

We thought that it would be really great to find a way to give these Korean immigrants a chance to have their say. □ That's when I called Dai Sil Kim-Gibson and Christine Choy to see if they would be interested in working on a video. □ Ninety days after April 29, we went to Los Angeles with some borrowed equipment. □ We didn't have any time to raise money.

MHS: *Sa-I-Gu* comes across as very polished when you view it. □ It's tightly constructed. □ I'm surprised to hear the project was so rushed.

EK: That was due to the skill of Dai Sil Kim-Gibson. We shot the video in June, and she completed the editing in November.

MHS: What kinds of criticisms did the documentary receive?

EK: There were many criticisms. □ I think people felt very sore about the uprising to begin with and maybe embarrassed by the video. □ Many Korean Americans were ashamed of the merchants, thinking of them as crass and crude. For the previous ten years, there had been news stories about conflicts between Korean merchants and African American customers. The image of Korean merchants was almost always negative, especially among people of color and poor people. Progressive people were sometimes ashamed to have these grody immigrants in their plaid polyester pants saying uncool things about people of color and not even knowing anything about the Rodney King verdict. Some Korean Americans wished we had not focused on the merchants. They wanted Korean American workers in the stores, who had also been displaced by the uprising but received little or no media attention, to have centrality in our video. Actually, none of the people we interviewed had workers. They just ran their stores themselves. We would have had to find the owner of a larger business that could afford employees.

Some Korean Americans on the East Coast were upset that Edward Lee's parents' house had a lawn. It was a single-family house in a poor neighborhood in Koreatown. Maybe there was even a palm tree nearby. For one thing, they didn't think we should focus on a comfortably middle-class family. And then they didn't know that poor people in Los Angeles often live in single-family houses with lawns. Poor people on the East Coast often live in high-rise housing projects.

Some people didn't like the fact that the film focused so much attention on the theme of a mother losing her son. To them, it was the same old "precious son" trope, a manipulation of the devoted mother idea. "Why would you keep re-inscribing that patriarchal image as the central theme of the documentary?" they asked.

Many people thought there should have been more African American voices in the film instead of just Korean

Americans. They wanted us to include discussion of Soonja Du's killing of Latasha Harlins.⁶

Others did not like the fact that the Koreans who were interviewed talked about money—losing money, needing money, and losing the means to earn money.

Some people even criticized the video for featuring women. They accused us of focusing on women because to do so was trendy.

MHS: Whom were the criticisms coming from?

EK: Korean Americans and some other Asian Americans. I don't mean to say that everybody hated the film, because they didn't. Some people were really moved by it, especially those whose parents were merchants. I saw their eyes glittering with angry tears. Some people told us they were glad that someone had finally showcased Korean immigrants, who were so silenced in the days and months following April 29. □ But others wished that we had featured more politically aware Korean American spokespeople who wouldn't say things like, "The Mexicans and Blacks looted my store" or "If the American government had supervised the Black people better, they wouldn't have done those things to me." They figured that a more politically sophisticated Korean spokesperson wouldn't have said these kinds of things. □ They felt it was embarrassing to sit watching with non-Koreans while the people on the video were saying ignorant things that they didn't agree with, even though they too were Korean American.

MHS: So, if you had decided to excise what they said when what they said were terrible things, it would be like depriving the Korean American women in the documentary of a voice all over again?

EK: Yes. Although of course filmmakers always exercise editorial control. They choose what to include and what to exclude. For instance, there was one woman who really hated and feared African Americans. She was a wreck watching African American children like a hawk, thinking they were all about to steal something from her store. We didn't include her comments. And one woman's husband talked about money a lot. He said he'd been ruined in Los Angeles, while he could have gone back to Korea like his friends, who became "rich millionaires." We ed-

ited him out, mostly because we had decided to feature the women. But also his comments were too complicated to include without some explanation.

MHS: I want to return to the criticism the documentary received for a moment. □ Regionally, where was it coming from?

EK: It was from all over. One middle-aged Korean man in Chicago was furious that the video seemed too sympathetic to merchants, whom he thought of as a bunch of racists who deserved everything that had happened to them. Some Los Angeles Asian Americans didn't want anyone to mistake them for Koreans. People from YKU [Young Koreans United] or former members of YKU wanted another take on the story, but I am not sure what that would have been, since they hadn't paid much attention to Korean America up till then. Most of their focus had been on Korea.

Right after the video was screened in New York, I received a letter from a group that called itself the Korea Working Group, complaining about almost every part of the video.

MHS: I'm really surprised to hear about that. □ I show the video often in my classes, and the students always respond to it very positively and are moved by it. Since you mention YKU's interest in Korea as opposed to Korean America, did any of the responses touch upon the Kwangju Uprising in the early 1980s?⁷ □ Was there thinking about the linkages between Korea and the United States by the people in the audiences and by the people interviewed in the film?

EK: I think that Dai Sil Kim-Gibson was really interested in bringing out the immigrant's life in Korea. I wanted the video to show how the hopeful dreams that the immigrants brought with them to America had been shattered by social and economic realities here. In this way, the Hollywood-induced images of the U.S. as benevolent abroad and inclusive at home is indirectly critiqued. I know that John Lie and Nancy Abelmann tried to connect the way people felt about the Los Angeles uprising with Korean history in their book *Blue Dreams*.⁸ The artist Min Yong Soon drew important dates on her stomach that included both the Kwangju and the Los Angeles uprisings.

Some people thought that the wreckage of the people's livelihoods looked like the Korean War. You may have seen

Y. David Chung's video piece, *Turtle Boat Head* (1992), which goes with an art exhibition at the Whitney Museum in New York. The exhibition includes a kiosk that viewers walk into to find a continuous video showing a Korean immigrant behind a plexiglass convenience store window. The viewer is positioned as the customer. A voice says, "Hey papa-san, give me two Baby Ruths." The store owner goes, "What? What?" Meanwhile, footage of the Korean War pops into his head. The bombs raining down on the Korean countryside then turn into Tootsie Rolls and quarters and dollar bills. Later, the merchant daydreams about his suburban house far away from the ghetto store. He hits golf balls at a net, and the balls turn into napalm being dropped on Korea by U.S. planes. Then the footage of the carnage in Korea turns into Los Angeles footage.

I do remember someone saying, "This is not Kwangju. □ Don't kid yourself, *sa-i-gu* is not on the level with Kwangju."

I was part of a little group working with Korean and Korean American artists. The artists from Korea looked down on the Korean Americans, thinking that we were always looking at our belly buttons and talking about our heritage and our identities, while artists from Korea were concerned with global issues, such as labor exploitation, global capitalism, flexible accumulation. I consider this patently unfair. People from Korea usually don't have a clue about what it's like to live as a racialized person in this country, where race shapes people's daily lives, where everything from crime to sex to education to sports is racialized, seen through the lens of race. Also, they can't stop thinking that Korean Americans are another flake of skin off them. The only thing about Korean Americans that interests them at all is what Korean Americans reveal about them as Koreans. I've noticed this among Japanese as well. They're interested in Japanese American literature to the extent that it illuminates things about Japan-U.S. relations.

MHS: Were you thinking of Kwangju yourself when you made the documentary? □ I ask because I'm curious if you thought there was something special in the continuity between Koreans and Korean Americans. □ In an essay that came

out just after the riots, you talk about accumulated grievances, or *han*, that suggests such a continuity.⁹ □ Did you think of the riots as an extension of Kwangju?

EK: That's what I thought! □ That's what I hoped! I thought that finally, in the wake of Kwangju, we would realize Korea's relation to the United States was *jjaksarang*, one-sided love.

When I was living in Seoul in 1966 or 1967, Lyndon B. Johnson and his wife Lady Bird came for an official state visit. As someone who opposed U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, I was very critical of Johnson. I was deeply disappointed by what I considered the sycophant behavior of Korean people toward this American president. They put corrugated walls from the airport to downtown so that he couldn't see the slums from the road. On the cigarette packs, there were pictures of presidents Park and Johnson shaking hands. The picture was everywhere—on the buses, on the billboards. Schools, offices, and businesses were all closed down the day the Johnsons arrived, and everyone was supposed to stand at the side of the road throwing flowers and waving little American flags as their limousine sped by. They had to make a special king-size bed for Johnson because he was so big. When Lady Bird Johnson came to Ewha University, where I was teaching at the time, she started giving her speech as if she were in Taiwan. Someone corrected her, so she said, "Oh! Sorry! I meant Korea!" But no one seemed to think it was much of a gaffe.

In general, many South Korean people seemed to worship everything American—American products, American music, American movies, American books. Especially because I thought of myself as a refugee from American racism toward Asians, I found their unquestioning admiration for America and Americans very depressing.

MHS: Were these displays spontaneous, or were they forced?

EK: They weren't forced to line up, but the manipulation was so complete. You couldn't escape from it. □ At that time in Korea, the anti-communist law was so stringent that people weren't allowed to listen to music composed in Russia after 1917. When I was there, the 50th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution was commemorated in the Asian edition of *Time Magazine*, but in Korea the cover on all the

articles were cut out before that issue was put on sale. So, if people were enthusiastic about LBJ, it was because they never knew there was any criticism of him anywhere else in the world. Of course there were a lot of CARE packages and aid packages—books, bags of rice, and so forth—with wrappers featuring a handshake between Uncle Sam and South Korea. I met lots of people who wanted to go to Vietnam to fight beside the U.S. because they could get a much better salary than in the Korean army, they could get insurance for their families if they died, and they could experience being in a country that was worse off than theirs. I often felt as if I were from Mars.

I think that after Kwangju, many Korean people came to realize that that they had been having a one-sided love affair with the U.S., *jjaksarang*. Maybe the Korean American experience of the Los Angeles uprising had that kind of element as well.

I don't know if the people interviewed in the film necessarily thought of it that way. They did express that there was something wrong about the inequitable distribution of wealth and that they were innocents caught in the crossfire of some battle they had no part in creating. Some Koreans in Los Angeles who had believed that they had good relations with the Mayor and that they would be protected by the police became bitterly disillusioned when they realized that Korean Americans were of so little political consequence in Los Angeles after all.

MHS: Perhaps it has some connection with the criticism you received for focusing on the merchants? □ It was almost as if, from what I was hearing, that there was a way of dissociating yourself from them. □ "Oh, that's not the real Korean Americans." □ The real Korean Americans are exploited laborers who suffer from these kinds of people, or middle-class people who are progressive, and you have this unfortunate layer that makes us look bad. □ So what happens to them doesn't relate to the rest of us Korean Americans.

EK: Even though a huge proportion of us are Korean merchants?

MHS: That's why I was so surprised by the criticism you received, given the fact that so many Korean Americans were in the audience.

- EK: I think part of the problem was that Korean Americans had no voice before the Los Angeles uprising. Whenever there's no voice, whenever there's been only omission and misrepresentation, everyone is fearful of what might be said. We are waiting to pounce on it and tear it apart because we fear that this will be the only thing allowed to be said and that it will have to apply to all of us. When more and more Korean Americans emerge to express a plethora of perspectives, everyone can relax more.
- I think that many Korean Americans decided to go into media work as a result of the crisis in representation that became apparent during and immediately after the Los Angeles uprising.
- MHS: Well, I wouldn't know. □ Though I think L.A. is so saturated with Korean Americans and this kind of industry, you would think something like that would have been inevitable. The riots might have affected their thinking or their writing.
- EK: Or they might not have gone into journalism. They might have gone into high tech start-up. Maybe in recognizing betrayal by a system you are supposed to respect, they could see the affinities between themselves and someone like Mumia, which they would not otherwise have thought about before.¹⁰
- MHS: I'd like to switch gears for a moment. □ *WaSa-I-Gu* an important project for you? □ Did it get you more interested in moving toward a more Korean nationalist project? □ Or is that a loaded word?
- EK: Some other Asian Americans accused me of narrow nationalism. "You of all people," they said. I became sensitive to the fact that the Asian American movement was so Japanese- and Chinese-dominated. They would laugh if you said, "Can you imagine an Asian Studies program that would have two Korean professors and only one Chinese professor?" They could not imagine it. □ You could write a book on Chinese Americans and pass it off as being about Asian Americans, but you couldn't write about Korean Americans and pass it off as Asian American. Chinese Americans felt comfortable saying things like, "I went to a terrible Korean restaurant in New York" as if I were responsible. They felt that it was perfectly reasonable to

ask me to write something on Korean Americans but not on Asian Americans. Likewise, they expected Filipinos to write on Filipinos and Vietnamese to write on Vietnamese.

MHS: *Sa-i-Gu* was made in 1992, and you've done a lot of high-profile things on Korean Americans since.

EK: I'm not sure what to do. Because in a way everything I ever had, everything that's ever happened to me, whether it's bad or good, has had something to do with being Korean American. I can't get away from that. I don't want to get away from that. Still, I don't want to be tokenized.

MHS: If you look at the trajectory of your career, you started with the book *Asian American Literature*, and everyone hailed it as a first synthetic moment of panethnicity, and then in the panethnic reader on Asian American literature edited by King-Kok Cheung, you were asked just to do the Korean American piece.¹¹ □ Isn't there something ironic about this?

EK: I've been chastised for things I've written about Japanese Americans or Chinese Americans. "Why don't you just stick to Korean Americans?" In any case, what I'm interested in now is the relationships among people of color—Cubans and African Americans, Cambodians and Puerto Ricans, Koreans and Chicanos.

MHS: So does this mean you're moving away from a Korean focus in your work?

EK: Even if I move away, I'm never going to get over it. □ Do you ever think you will ever get over it?

Notes

1. Elaine Kim, *Asian American Literature: An Introduction to the Writings and Their Social Context* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982).
2. Frank Chin, et al., eds., *Aiiieeeee!: An Anthology of Asian American Writers* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1974).
3. Susan Koshy, "The Fiction of Asian American Literature," in Jean Wu and Min Song, eds., *Asian American Studies: A Reader* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 470.
4. Elaine Kim and Chungmoo Choi, eds., "Special Issue: Asian American Studies," in *positions: east asian critique*; Elaine Kim and Chungmoo Choi, eds., *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Asian Women United of California, ed., *Making Waves: An Anthology of Writings By and About Asian American Women* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989); Elaine

- Kim, Lilia Villanueva, and Asian Women United of California, eds., *Making More Waves: New Writings By Asian American Women* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997); Elaine Kim and Norma Alarcón, eds., *Writing Self, Writing Nation: A Collection of Essays on Dictée by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha* (Berkeley: Third World Press, 1994).
5. Elaine Kim and Eui-Young Yu, *East to America: Korean American Life Stories* (New York: The New Press, 1996).
 6. See Lou Cannon, *Official Negligence: How Rodney King and the Riots Changed Los Angeles and the LAPD* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999) 108-120; and Neil Gotanda, "Multiculturalism and Racial Stratification," in Avery Gorden and Christopher Newfield, eds., *Mapping Multiculturalism* (New York: Routledge, 1996).
 7. In 1979, the former dictator of South Korea, Park Chung Hee, was shot to death by the head of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, a powerful government organization, over a dispute about the government's formal response to widespread social protests led by student activists. In the ensuing political chaos, the general Chun Doo Hwan led a coup against the interim president, suppressed all social protests, and sent Korean troops massed along the border with North Korea that were putatively under U.S. military command to Kwangju, the capital of the southwestern-most province of South Cholla. Meanwhile, citizens with the help of the local police refused to stop protesting, and eventually took over the city for five days. All transportation in and out of the city, as well as a communications, were cut by the military, and Korean soldiers retook the city at great loss of life. The government reported that about 200 people died as a result of military action, though the actual figure is more likely closer to 2,000 lives lost. The U.S. refused to intervene in stopping what amounted to an illegal movement of troops from the demilitarized zone, and the newly elected President Reagan eventually embraced the new government. Until this uprising, many Koreans reportedly looked to the United States as a benevolent presence in their lives; after the uprising, a notable strain of anti-Americanism flared into popular discourses. Nothing perhaps better illustrates the reason for this change of perception than the picture of Chun Doo Hwan with President Reagan just after the latter's inauguration. Chun was the first foreign leader to be received by Reagan after his inauguration. See Donald Clarke, ed., *The Kwangju Uprising: Shadows over the Regime in South Korea* (Boulder and London: Westview, 1988); and Henry Scott-Stokes and Lee Jai Eui, eds., *The Kwangju Uprising: Eyewitness Accounts of Korea's Tiananmen* (Armonk, New York and London: M.E. Sharpe, 2000).
 8. Nancy Abelmann and John Lie, *Blue Dreams: Korean Americans and the Los Angeles Riots* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1995). See also their more recent essay, "The 1992 Los Angeles Riots and the 'Black-Korean Conflict'" in Kwang Chung Kim, ed., *Koreans in the Hood: Conflict with African Americans* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University, 1999), 75-90.

9. See Elaine Kim, "Home Is Where the *Han* Is: A Korean-American Perspective on the Los Angeles Upheavals," in William Gooding-Williams, ed., *Reading Rodney King, Reading Urban Uprising* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 215-235. Reprinted in Jean Wu and Min Song, eds., *Asian American Studies: A Reader* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 270-289.
10. Mumia Abu-Jamal is a journalist and a former member of the Black Panthers. He was convicted of murdering Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulker in a 1982 incident and sentenced to death. He wrote voluminously about his experiences in prison while waiting for his sentence to be carried out. Many activists took up his cause as a protest against racially biased incarceration rates and against capital punishment, which disproportionately targets more blacks and Latinos than other racial groups. He has recently been taken off death row and is currently serving a life sentence. See especially his memoir, *Live from Death Row* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995).
11. See Elaine Kim, *Asian American Literature*; and Elaine Kim, "Korean American Literature" in King-Kok Cheung, ed., *An Interethnic Companion to Asian American Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 156-191.