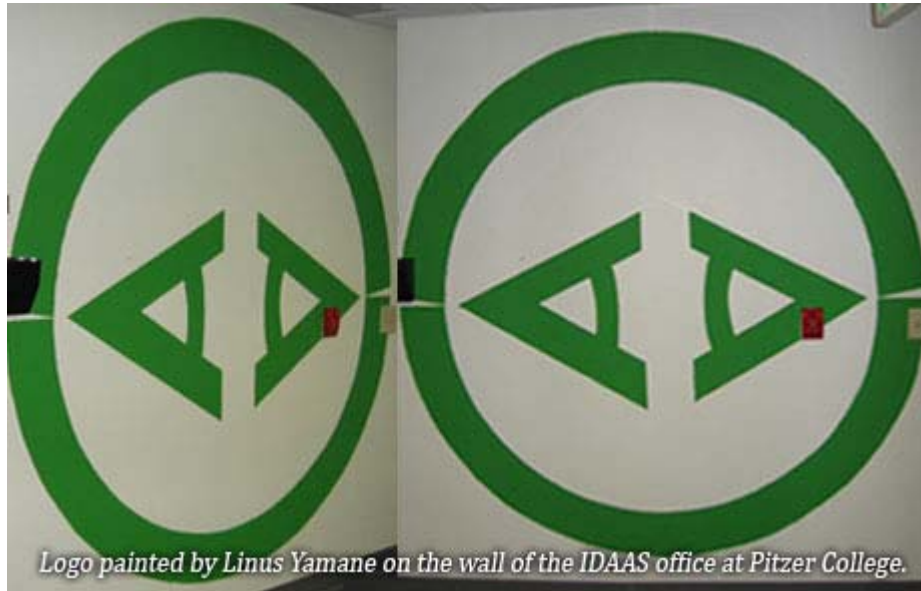


Intercollegiate Department of Asian American Studies (IDAAS)
About the IDAAS Logo



The Presidents of the Claremont Colleges approved the establishment of the Intercollegiate Department of Asian American Studies (IDAAS) during the 1997-98 academic year. In July 1998 IDAAS came into existence. Since I was the only faculty member with tenure, I became its first chair. The department itself occupied two shelves on one of my office bookshelves.

During the summer of 1998 I tried to lay some foundations for the department. Among other things, I thought it would be nice to have a department logo. One day I was visiting the Japanese American National Museum in downtown Los Angeles, and noticed that they had an interesting logo. The logo had these waves going east and west. I asked them who had designed it, and they referred me to James Miho.

James Miho is on the faculty of the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California. His work builds links between information, history and human behavior, and is in the permanent collection of many museums like the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Warsaw Poster Museum in Warsaw, the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., and the Museum of Modern Art in San Paulo, Brazil. He has been honored at the Cannes Film Festival, and recently won the "Life Time Achievement Award" from the American Institute of Graphic Designers. He has been an advisor to the NEA (National Endowment of the Arts), the Smithsonian Museum, the National Air and Space Museum, and the Museum of Contemporary Arts in L.A.

I called James Miho at his home, and told him that I was interested in having him design a logo for IDAAS. On Friday September 4, 1998 he came to my office at Pitzer. We talked

about the field of Asian American Studies, and the goals for our new department at the Claremont Colleges. He told me that he normally charges about \$12,000 for a logo. I told him that we unfortunately did not have any money. He said, "So, I would be doing this for free." I said, "Yes, and that we would greatly appreciate it." He said, "Well, let me think about it," and he left my office.

Two days later, on Sunday afternoon, James Miho called me at home. He had just read an article in The New York Times about a right-wing guide to colleges. The article talked about how the guide criticized Pomona College, and President Peter Stanley, for having "acceded to the demands of the political activists" in allowing the formation of an Asian-American studies department. He said, "I'll do it," and he hung up. I think it also helped that his daughter had graduated from Pomona College.

Several weeks later James Miho came to my office again with a sketch of a logo. It had two As representing "Asian American" without looking like a logo for American Airlines. He tilted the As on their side to represent two eyes looking East and West. He pointed out that the two eyes were not the same. He also made the logo green to represent an environmentalist aesthetic. I told him that I thought the logo idea looked great, and that I would run it by the department. The department approved of the logo, and we asked him for a final print. I thanked him for his work, and gave him a modest honorarium.

I related this entire story to President Stanley. He was very pleased that the publication of a college guide by some right-wing nuts would result in the gift of a \$12,000 logo to the Intercollegiate Department of Asian American Studies. Once we had our logo, we placed our orders for department stationery where it is prominently appears. This logo has always been on our IDAAS stationery. When IDAAS moved off my bookshelf, and eventually into a suite of offices in the Mead Building at Pitzer, I painted a six-foot version of the logo on the office wall. And now that IDAAS has moved into the new Lincoln building on the Pomona campus, I would like to paint the logo in the IDAAS seminar room as well, perhaps over winter break when I have some time.

- Linus Yamane