

ough the Wall

writing,

oken word.

I don't want to be playwright," he ad-
t to be able to do
along with writing

ng plays, Gotanda
his most recent ef-
d Soup," is the last
fficial trilogy docu-
apanese American

re "Song For a Nisei
81) which, accord-
is about the Nisei
Vash" (1986), about
ian. He said "Fish
cuments the Sansei

is the closure piece
and deal with this
da added.

ng his craft through
resulted in the inno-
ch to "Fish Head

ed that "Fish Head
"break ground" in
ntation. The play and
elves into the minds
rs, moves back and
d uses visual images
reate an atmosphere.

y pushes the themes
an be pushed until it
ny further," Gotanda
he play is very ex-
trayal of a dysfunc-

scribed another im-
y where one son, a

Vietnam veteran, experiences flash-
backs, which are acted out on stage.

"Fish Head Soup" incorporates
many of Gotanda's personal expe-
riences growing up in the Bay Area
city of Stockton.

"I remember that the fog was
thick," Gotanda said. "The smell of
peat dirt on dead tules smelled re-
ally earthy especially in the morn-
ing when the ground was wet. It
creates an eerie state."

He said that these images are
transmitted on stage. Gotanda also
included in the play, the sounds of a
bird that lives in the Stockton area:
the Red-wing Blackbird.

Gotanda agreed that many of the
images in the play are cinematic
and would be appropriate for a film.
In fact, he openly admitted that he
would like to someday adapt "Fish
Head Soup" into a feature-length
film like he did with "The Wash."

Plays like "Fish Head Soup,"
"The Wash" and Shiomi's "Uncle
Tadao," strike a chord with many
Nisei—one that is quite painful as
they present scathing truths about
the Japanese American family.

Truths such as dysfunctional
families and maladjusted children
are aspects carefully hidden behind
the closed doors of some Japanese
American families.

Asked if people have approached
him about this, Gotanda responded,
"Yeah. I've had people come up to
me and say, 'This is my family!'
This happened with 'The Wash.'"

He also explained that he wrote
these plays because the Japanese
American community rarely has a
chance to see itself in mainstream
media. Gotanda said that by pre-

sending these plays through venues
like East West Players, the commu-
nity, at least, has a chance to see
themselves and their struggles
played out under real life circum-
stances.

Concerning "Fish Head Soup":
"I wanted to see how far I could take
it to find what this is about."

As far as Gotanda's dilemma in
continuing his life as a playwright?

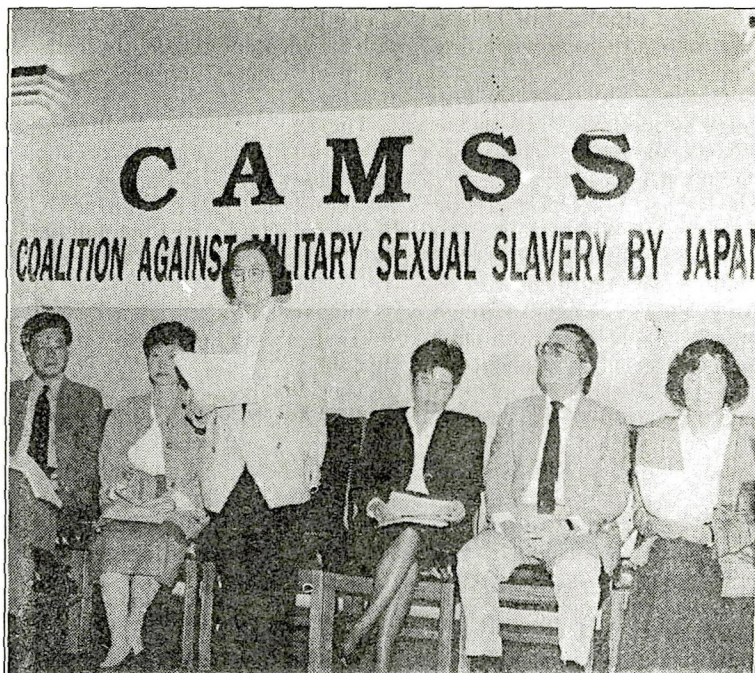
He explained that artists who
have reached the ceiling in their
creative process have a choice to
either take the next step into the
unknown or remain complacent cre-
ating the same work that they are
comfortable with. He wants to avoid
the latter at all costs.

Creating works like "Fish Head
Soup" and exploring other medi-
ums of art is Gotanda's attempt at
taking the next step. He still doesn't
know where that will lead. But until
then, we as fans will have to wait
and see.

"Fish Head Soup" stars Sab
Shimono, Nobu McCarthy, Nelson
"Ashita ar" "an Egi. The play is
ing direc. by Oskar Eustis and
produced by Nelson Handel. The
play also features original music by
Dan Kuramoto of Hiroshima.

The play runs on Thursday, Fri-
day and Saturday evenings at 8 p.m.
and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. Tick-
ets are \$18 on Thursdays and Sun-
days and \$20 for Fridays and Sat-
urdays. For more information, call
(213) 660-0366.

East West Players is located at
4424 Santa Monica Blvd., two
blocks east of Vermont Ave. Paid
security parking is available.



Photos by MIKE HABATA/Rafa Shimp

CAMSS members at Thursday's press conference include, from
left to right, Dr. Stephen S. Kim of the School of Theology at
Claremont; Rev. Katherine Koh; Prof. Oaksook Kim of UCLA;
attorney Inja Kim; Arthur Song; and Prof. Chungmoo Choi of UC
Irvine.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Coalition Urges Japan to Take Responsibility for Korean War-time 'Comfort Women'

The group announces
plans for a Los Angeles
conference on Feb. 20.

By MIKE HABATA
RAFA CONTRIBUTOR

A coalition of Korean American
professors, academics and commu-
nity activists held a press confer-
ence Thursday urging the Japanese
government to take "full responsi-
bility" for the forced prostitution of
hundreds of thousands of Korean
"comfort women" during the Sec-
ond World War.

At a banquet room at the Woo
Lae Oak restaurant in Koreatown,
seven leaders of the Coalition
Against Military Sexual Slavery by
Japan (CAMSS) met with members
of the Asian press and other news
people to discuss their objectives
and to announce a conference semi-
nar later this month.

According to the coalition, at
least 100,000 Korean women were
coerced or abducted by the Japa-
nese military between 1940 and
1945 and shipped to army units
throughout Asia and the Pacific
where they were used for sexual
slavery and forced labor. After the
war, the government concealed all
records of these activities and only
last year acknowledged their occur-
rence.

The coalition urged the Japa-
nese government to make an offi-
cial apology to the 220 known sur-
vivors in Korea, take financial re-
sponsibility for the survivors and to
participate in the uncovering of in-
formation about the episode. The
commission also called for United
Nations investigations through its
Commission on Human Rights and
for Japan to revise its school text-
books to acknowledge the episode
publicly.

"The Japanese government is liv-
ing in a stage of denial," said Rev.
Katherine Koh, one of the three co-
chairs of the commission. Koh said
the government tried to offer the

survivors sums of about \$20,000
through Red Cross assistance in
return for their silence on the mat-
ter.

Prof. Stephen Kim of the School
of Theology at Claremont said "this
is not simply a Japan-Korea issue
but a human issue." The coalition
said its efforts went beyond the
single historic episode, and that all
history was characterized by rac-
ism and sexism. The members
pointed to the ethnic cleansing and
mass rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina
as well as the "riots last April" in
Los Angeles, and said part of their
efforts were aimed at educating
people throughout the world "as to
the dignity of all human beings."

The CAMSS will hold a confer-
ence seminar on Saturday, Feb. 20
at Youngnak Presbyterian Church
in Los Angeles.

For more information, contact
Inja Kim at (213) 387-1698 or
Jeannie Cho at (310) 208-2341.



Prof. Oaksook Kim speaks at a
press conference Thursday for
the Coalition Against Military
Sexual Slavery by Japan in
Koreatown.

OBITUARY

Little T Develo

Masami "Bob" Ho
Plaza and Tokyo V
man was 72.

RAFA SHIMPO SPECIAL

Masami "Bob" Honda,
developer of major projects
Tokyo, passed away yest
Good Samaritan Hospital
Angeles after suffering fro
ratory complications. He
72 years old on Feb. 8.

Honda, who was know
development of such stru
Honda Plaza, Honda Buil
Tokyo Villa condomini
been diagnosed with Hodgl
ease last November, acco
his daughter, Janet C
Koyama, whose residen
Shizuoka, Japan.

"Out of the oldtimers do
he was one of the last fe
Teiji Shintani, who has
Honda for more than 40 y
served as consultant on sor
real estate projects.



Masami "Bob" Honda

"Japanese people fro
seemed to be pouring mo
community, but my father
that the people that should
ing up Little Tokyo sho
Nisei and eventually the
said Koyama in a teleph
view in Los Angeles.

The successful Japane
can businessman's life w
sic rags-to-riches tale.
Koyama recounted the s
had celebrated his 20th
alone in Los Angeles, w
money only to buy a piece
He told me how lonely it
have a piece of bread on
(a milestone signifying
in Japanese culture). Y
strong, and knew he wa
succeed."

Honda was born in a
Spokane, Washington,
taken to Kyushu, Japan
was two years old. He
returned to the U.S. or
when he was 17. "My fi
sire to come to the Uni
was that he lived a poor li
and he wanted to be suc
send money to his bro
plained Koyama.

He worked at a chick
Norwalk before being r
Santa Anita Assembly
later Rowher, Arkans
World War II.



MARIO G. REYES/Rafa Shimp

Official de Tensions

markets.
ing Tokyo, Watanabe
overnment wanted to
known in Washing-
policy decisions on
an are made.

meanwhile, U.S.
er Thomas Foley
day that threats of
n by either side could
between the new U.S
and Japan.

iting Japan on a
as head of an eight-
essional delegation,
he two trading part-
endent on each other

"You shouldn't attach any burden
on it because he came to see me
today. I think we'll be friends and
we'll have a few disagreements and
a lot of agreements." He said he
wanted to meet with Prime Minister
Kiichi Miyazawa.

The president joked to reporters
that he was contributing to Japan's
trade surplus by allowing Ameri-
can photographers—and their Japa-
nese-made cameras and film—to
take pictures of the meeting.

During meetings this week,
Watanabe also is to see Vice Presi-
dent Al Gore, Secretary of State
Warren Christopher, Secretary of



Lisa Sugimoto

ACADEMIA

Nikkei Accepted into Program

CIVIL RIGHTS

Appeals Court Again Rules 1991 La

Appeals judge says it is inappropriate for the

Rights Under Law, whi