

August 3, 1981

Dear Members of the Public:

We, Nancy Hom, Genny Lim and Canyon Sam, former members of the Chinese American Women Writers Collective Unbound Feet, would like to clarify our position on the subject of Unbound Feet, a dispute which has just recently come into the public eye because of a statement circulated by Nellie Wong, Merle Woo and Kitty Tsui. We find it most unfortunate that these three women have chosen to air an internal dispute via the Unbound Feet mailing list (which they are now in possession of) at a time when both parties' attorneys are trying to reach a fair and orderly dissolution of the group. This destructive action is a flagrant breach of faith and can only delay any settlement between the two parties.

In the past year and a half we wrote and performed our work in many Bay Area and statewide locations. Our bookings averaged one performance a month. As Unbound Feet developed more clout, Nellie Wong, Merle Woo and Kitty Tsui wanted to use the group as a vehicle for their own personal politics rather than respect the diversity of the group. Because of the resulting irreconcilable differences, the group dissolved. The issue of the name (which was conceived in 1978 by Nancy Hom) continues to be a point of dispute. It is our feeling that since we were evenly split, use of the title by either parties would be unfair and would misrepresent the other half. Therefore, we proposed that in the event of a dissolution, no one party should be entitled to use the name. In addition, we took legal steps to ensure that no third party could appropriate the name.

Their contention that the three of us want the name stricken from Asian American and Women's history is absurd. We are proud of our work as Unbound Feet and have no problems with any of us saying that we were formerly of Unbound Feet. We also have no problems with the three of them continuing to work together under a different name. However, for them to capitalize on the name and reputation of Unbound Feet, which all six of us have earned, is opportunistic. Their motivation for continuing to use the name is misleading to the public and is not based on ideological or even political reasons. It is simply material. If we are truly the "Opposition" as they maintain, it would be logical that they would want to disassociate themselves from us in any way.

The use of the name by either side creates confusion and ambiguity. A case in point: Canyon was mistakenly and without her previous knowledge described as a member of Unbound Feet in the Lesbian/Gay Parade program and in the publicity for Mainstream Exiles. While we appreciate the public's support of Asian American Women's writing, we want to caution people not to be misled by the group Unbound Feet Three. You are not supporting the old group known as Unbound Feet, but a totally different group with a different sense of politics.

The Unbound Feet treasury has been held in trust in an authorized bank since the dispute began and will be liquidated at the time of settlement. Both these facts have been acknowledged to mutual satisfaction by the legal council representing both sides.

Statements made by us during this dispute have been deliberately and continually taken out of context and misconstrued in an attempt to discredit us before our supporters. This is typical of their tactics toward other organizations and individuals. Allegations that Canyon, Nancy and Genny are homophobic, sexist, nationalist and establishment are libellous, sensationalist and self-serving.

We want this dispute to be settled as quickly as possible. We again caution the public against supporting the group Unbound Feet Three. Do not attend their events thinking it is the same 6-member group. Lending credibility to their use of the name will only intensify the divisions among women and other progressive peoples. We will continue to work in our communities as writers, artists and activists. We can be reached at 827 Pacific Avenue #3, San Francisco, California 94133.

Sincerely yours,
Nancy Hom, Genny Lim and Canyon Sam