

With DIGNITY and HONOR

tasks remaining before them from their
honored dead in the increased devotion
to the cause for which they have given
the last full measure of devotion. We
are here highly resolved that these dead
shall not have died in vain that the
nation shall have a new birth of freedom,
and that this government of the people, by
the people, for the people, shall not perish
from the earth.

A. Lincoln

Understanding
Racism

Unlearning
Racism

Second Edition

Preston Che Ping Ni

Review of

With Dignity And Honor

BY ROBERTO ALMANZÁN

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Cast member of *The Color of Fear*

Our nation is rapidly becoming a multiracial, multiethnic, and multicultural nation. All demographic projections visualize European Americans becoming a minority in this country, the only unknown is how soon this will occur. Several years ago in California, students of color exceeded 50 percent of the public school population; and, just recently, the population of people of color exceeded that of European Americans.

Many Americans are not prepared for the changes brought on by this demographic transformation and feel uncomfortable and sometimes even frightened, threatened, and angry. Eurocentrism and racism are the source of these feelings of uneasiness, anxiety and fear. Transcending a Eurocentric dream of America, unlearning racism, and becoming informed about and learning to value ethnic diversity—all human diversity—are the elements necessary for a successful evolution into a multicultural future. Successfully managing this multicultural evolution may be the greatest challenge our nation faces as it enters the Twenty-first century.

Preston Che Ping Ni, an instructor at Foothill College in Northern California, has written an excellent introductory text for students who are learning about ethnic diversity and the challenges involved in becoming a multicultural society. The book's format should appeal to students raised on MTV: with bold print, a lot of white space, short paragraphs, many potent quotations, and concise chapters. It is a fast read, moving along this terrain at a rapid clip.

In this short, well organized book, the author uses a chapter to cover all the definitions necessary to begin to understand racism and to discuss the issues. In a subsequent chapter, Preston Ni presents eight concepts that help readers understand important diversity issues. One premise is that this work, of unlearning racism and appreciating diversity, is not

about blaming and bashing white people, but about uncovering and unlearning the attitudes and thought patterns that support racism. Another idea, extremely important in my experience, is that indifference is one of the major attitudes that hinders progress. Some of the ways I have heard this attitude expressed by non-target people is it doesn't happen to me, everybody has a hard life, or not wanting to offend friends or co-workers. Some of the other concepts covered are white privilege, understanding the history of Americans of color, the impact of the media on stereotypes and ideal images, and discrimination between ethnic groups.

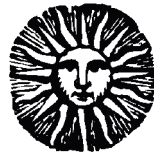
Additional chapters are devoted to actions the individual can take to repudiate racism and, especially relevant for students, how education and a proactive stance can be empowering. Quotations on concepts relevant to racism make up one of the last chapters. An example is this powerful quotation from Elie Weisel, "Indifference . . . is the epitome of evil. The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference" Another one comes from the National Spiritual Assembly of The Baha'is of the United States, ". . . the transformation of a whole nation ultimately depends on the initiative and change of character of the individuals who compose it." The last chapter presents sample teaching activities that students can engage in to further their understanding of ethnicity, culture, diversity, and racism.

This is what the work of eliminating racism and valuing diversity is about, step by step, person by person, educating and raising the awareness of all Americans. Sometimes this seems like such an overwhelming task, but as Preston Ni quotes Toni Cade Bambara, "The dream is real my friends. The failure to make it work is the unreality." This book can help college students, and other readers, take a step to make the dream real.

WITH
DIGNITY
and
HONOR

Understanding Racism
Unlearning Racism

Second Edition



Preston Che Ping Ni, M.S.B.A

Also by Preston Che Ping Ni

**HOW TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT AND
HANDLE DIFFICULT PEOPLE**

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BURGESS PUBLISHING

Edina, Minnesota

800-356-6826

612-820-4561

Fax 612-831-3167

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

James Baldocchi, Robert Gardner, Rick Herbert, Stuart Krantz, Lisa Nakamura, Bonnie Zeltmann, Michille Akhavi, Scott Lankford, Rowena Matsunari, George McKinney, Jim Seyfert, M. Tran, Br. Phillip K., May Tung, Sarah Pearson, San Francisco Men's Tribe, and the students, faculty and staff of Foothill College

The Dream is Alive . . .

“So long as there shall exist, by reason of law and custom, a social condemnation which, in the midst of civilization, artificially creates a hell on earth, and complicates with human fatality a destiny that is divine . . . so long as, in certain regions, social asphyxia shall be possible . . . so long as ignorance and misery remain on earth”

—*Hauntville House*

Our deepest fear is not that we
are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful
beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness, that most
frightens us.

We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant,
gorgeous, talented, and fabulous?

Actually, who are you NOT to be?

You are a child of the universe.

Your playing small doesn't serve the world.

There's nothing enlightened about shrinking
so that other people won't feel insecure
around you.

We were born to manifest the glory that is
within us.

It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.

As we let our own light shine, we
unconsciously give other people permission
to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our
presence automatically liberates others.

*—quoted by Nelson Mandela
1994 Inaugural Speech*

“Tell me whom you love, and I will tell you
who you are.”

—*Houssaye*

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