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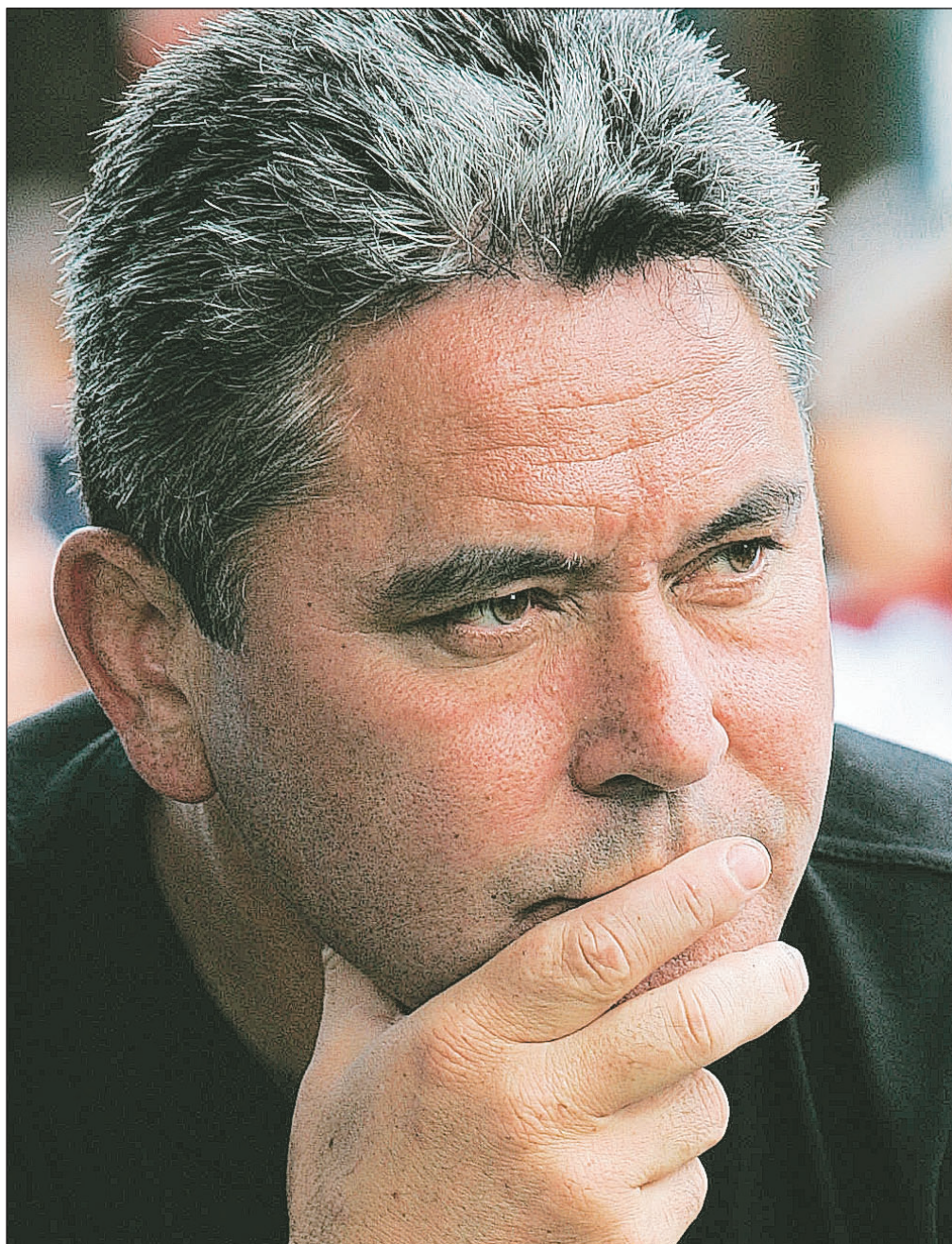


PHOTO: AMOS CHAPPLE / NEW ZEALAND HERALD

John Tamihere and Pita Sharples are going head-to-head in Auckland's Tamaki Makaurau seat. *Full story pages 12-13.*



PHOTO: CHRIS SKELTON / HERALD ON SUNDAY

## Cartoon book tackles anti-Asian racism

by Kirsty Charles

An author has challenged racism against Asians in a new book of political cartoons published over the last century.

Associate Professor Manying Ip says she hopes the book is a shock for mainstream New Zealand.

"I hope it is a wake-up call so that they are forced to confront that and say 'well they are not pretty pictures'. And many of them are not," she says.

Dr Ip, of the Asian studies

department at the University of Auckland, was inspired to use cartoons because they are the "street level view" and "people can check the public pulse" by looking at them.

She says they reflect what most people probably thought at the time.

Her biligual book, co-authored with Nigel Murphy, is called *Asians at my Table: Asians as New Zealanders see them*.

Many of the early newspapers portrayed Asians as a "faceless

Mongolian horde".

Dr Ip, who migrated here from Hong Kong in 1974, says the cartoons show an underbelly of racism in New Zealand not only in the early 1900s, but also today.

She says now the racism is not as blatant but it is similar because people do not differentiate between Japanese, Korean or Chinese, calling them all Asians.

She says the book shows that Asians have been seen as a threat to New Zealand for many years.

"Asians can't win. Either you're exoticised and don't fit in, people speak to you in half speed English, think you're dumb and can't drive, or you become highly successful and they say 'you are really a Kiwi'," she says.

"If the Chinese gooseberry is really good then it becomes the kiwifruit."

New Zealanders need to accept the presence of Asian groups as a reality and stop looking at New Zealand as the "better Britain of the South Pacific" as a model for

our cultural identity, Dr Ip says.

"Our history conflicts with our geography. Our history is that we are Anglophile. We can't help that, but our geography is here, at the fringe of other big civilisations like Asia and Polynesia."

She says given that New Zealand is an immigrant nation and made up of so many cultures, people here cannot expect to all be the same.

New Zealanders need to broaden their view of cultural makeup and make the most of diversity.