

A P A

PERSPECTIVES

National Association for Asian and Pacific American Education

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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

John N. Tsuchida, PhD & Esq.  
Chair, Department of Asian and Asian American Studies  
California State University, Long Beach

Dear NAAPAE Colleagues:

The 2010-11 academic/school year was a very difficult time for many school districts and institutions of higher education, and NAAPAE also faced formidable obstacles to overcome for our survival. We had to deal with a shrinking membership and the difficulty in finding a NAAPAE chapter or a member willing to organize our annual conference.

On May 14, 2011, eight members of the Executive Council (John N. Tsuchida, Betty Jeung, Susan Kagehiro, Kerry Lee, Gary Kamino, Myrna Garcia, Barbara Leu, and Ping Liu), along with former NAAPAE President Sally Chou, met at the Embassy Suites Hotel, Los Angeles Airport, to have a frank discussion on the future of NAAPAE.

We unanimously agreed that NAAPAE should continue to exist as a viable national organization of Asian and Pacific American educators, and to strive to achieve our organization's objectives of addressing the educational issues and needs of APAs, maintaining a network of educators and community people for the sharing information and resources, supporting research on APA educational issues, and encouraging APAs to aim for leadership roles.

We also decided that it would be very difficult for NAAPAE to carry out its mission without holding annual conferences, and that NAAPAE should organize a joint annual conference with the National Association for the Education and Advancement of Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese Americans (NAFEA). An outcome of these decisions is that a joint conference between NAAPAE and NAFEA will be held on October 7 (Friday) and 8 (Saturday), 2011, at the California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). The Department of Asian and Asian American Studies, of which I am the Chair, will host the joint annual conference.

I have already reserved conference facilities on our campus to minimize the conference cost, given the grave fiscal exigencies in many states, including California. Out-of-town presenters and attendees can stay at several inexpensive hotels/motels within walking distance of the CSULB campus.

These are some of the highlights the conference will include: (1) Dr. Sally Chou's workshops for APA educators interested in becoming principals and superintendents; (2) panels on teaching and learning Chinese, a Chinese teaching credential program, and Chinese immersion programs; (3) panels on teaching Japanese to

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**(President's Message Continued)**

heritage speakers, Japanese immersion programs, and supervising and mentoring Japanese Pedagogy majors from Japan; and (4) presentations on Cambodian American community issues and research projects in Long Beach.

We will shortly make available more details about the joint conference and issue a Request for Proposals for as many NAAPAE members as possible to present papers, panels, and workshops. As in the past, proposals on appropriate topics such as APA education, culture, family, communities, leadership, labor, immersion programs, and recent legislation affecting the education and well-being of minority students will be considered for presentation at the October 7 and 8 conference.

I hope many NAAPAE members will be able attend our annual conference, make presentations, share your experience and expertise with your fellow educators, and expand your professional and social network.

See you in Long Beach in October!

—John N. Tsuchida



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## APA Perspectives

Submissions for the newsletter are welcome and may be edited for style and space. Send submissions to:

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Please send submissions for the next newsletter by

November 15, 2011

## TEACHING CHINESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE WITH BILINGUAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Ping Liu, PhD

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The power of children's literature to support development of students' literacy and growth is widely recognized (Cox, 2008; North, 2009; Tompkins, 2010). Literature can provide a meaningful context for students in developing language competence. Additionally, good books "may validate for children their own culture and open windows onto other cultures" and "help children understand how they and their neighbors think through moral issues and give them important experiences in clarifying differences and building consensus" (p. 6, Temple, Martinez, Kotota & Naylor, 1998).

By using bilingual books, learning a target language can effectively be integrated to enrich and enhance the study of the identified culture. This essay illustrates how a Chinese and English bilingual book, *The Mouse Bride: A Chinese Folktale*, can be used to plan teaching activities on culture and language.

### About the Book:

*The Mouse Bride: A Chinese Folktale* is an English-Chinese bilingual book retold by Monica Chang and illustrated by Lesley Liu, with English translation by Rick Charette. The book tells how the head mouse of a village selected a husband for his daughter. Many young mice (men) in the village wanted to marry his daughter, but he did not know whom to choose. Finally, the head mouse decided on a contest to choose the best son-in-law. He set up a platform for his daughter to toss a ribbon-ball, and whoever caught the ball would become the husband.

At the announcement of the news, all young mice of the village showed up. But when the daughter was about to throw the ball, a big, black cat scared the crowd, and the daughter fell off the platform. Fortunately, a young mouse named Ah-Lang caught her and they ran away. However, the head mouse had not finished the selection of a husband for his daughter. He decided to search for the strongest force in the universe to be his son-in-law. So, he visited the Sun, the Cloud, the Wind, and the Wall but found only that Ah-Lang was the strongest. In the end, Ah-Lang and the head mouse's daughter got married and lived happily ever after.

Some interesting features of the book include the following. 1) Illustrations highlight red, the color of good luck and happiness in the Chinese culture. Red is also used the most for a wedding. 2) The mouse world

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## Teaching Language and Culture Continued

and the human world are portrayed in proportion, with the two worlds existing side by side harmoniously. Humans go about their business in a household, while the mouse village is in a corner of a traditional Chinese house. The mice are dressed in traditional Chinese costumes and engage in the same kinds of daily activities as the humans. Interestingly, even the sedan chair for the bride is built on a wicker-shoe, an appropriate size for the mouse bride.

### Learning Culture and Language:

#### 1. Discussion Topics for Culture Study

For teachers who plan to use the English version of the book, Chinese culture can be studied with an analysis of its characteristics and from a comparative perspective. The purpose is to help students develop multicultural competence and understanding. Topics for study may include family, wedding, and story moral, and discussion can be organized by making use of the illustrations.

Family: In the traditional Chinese family, the father is the head of a household. He makes decisions for his family, including whom his children marry. This role is portrayed in the story of the mouse village. The decision process is not democratic but rather dictatorial. The daughter's feelings are not considered; she is not asked whom she wants for her husband or how a spouse should be chosen. All the mouse daughter could do is to obey her father in every aspect.

The story helps students become aware that relationships in a Chinese or Chinese American family can be very different from those in other families. In addition, comparing past and present relationships helps students develop an understanding of changes evolved overtime. Moreover, comparisons between students' own life or and knowledge with the practice in a traditional Chinese family as described in the story can help students make a connection in learning.

Wedding: Students can study the traditional Chinese wedding through examining the illustrations. Their attention can be directed to key items associated with wedding: dowry, sedan for the bride carried by two, the groom leading the way (to his parents' house), both bride and groom dressed in red, and red veil worn by the bride. The story also reveals the traditional practice that a wife leaves her parents' house to live with the groom at his parents' house.

The information about the traditional Chinese wedding can be compared with weddings in China today (where many brides prefer to wear white wedding gowns) and in the United States. This information can be a good opportunity for students to develop an awareness of the changes between past and present as well as differences across cultures and contexts.

Moral: In addition to the study of Chinese culture, a teacher can guide students to analyze the moral of the story to support students' growth in multicultural understanding, critical thinking, or interpersonal development. Even younger elementary students are familiar with the main characters in the story (Ah Lang, father, daughter...), so it is not difficult for students to explore and comprehend what makes each of them unique.

Self-esteem and appreciation of others who are different from the students can be initiated from the analysis of the characters. The purpose is not to figure out who is the strongest but rather learn to appreciate everyone who is gifted and talented in a certain way. The talents may certainly include the ones that are linguistically and culturally specific.

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## Teaching Language and Culture Continued

### 2. Activities on Chinese Language Learning

This bilingual book can also be appropriate material in teaching the target language. A number of activities described below can be applied to the teaching of Chinese language to support student development in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These activities can be planned around the key characters.

Flash cards for all the key words can be made—the Sun, the Cloud, the Wind, the Wall and Ah Lang (the young mouse). A set of flash cards with pictures and Chinese phonetic symbols (or pinyin) would be appropriate to connect the symbols to students' prior knowledge to facilitate their learning. This set of cards can help students identify and pronounce the words correctly in studying and comprehending the story.

After students make good progress with the first set of cards, a second set of flash cards of Chinese characters can be made with reduced or no cues (either pictures or sound symbols or characters only). This new set is most useful for students to focus more on the words in reinforcing their learning of the target Chinese language.

Character Game: A guessing game can be played with the flash cards. Every student has a set of flash cards and has each character card displayed at their desk. A teacher says/asks: "I can blow clouds away. Who am I?" Students are expected to pick up the appropriate Chinese character (or "wind" in this context) to show and pronounce the character(s). Then, a teacher asks: "What can blow clouds away?" Students are expected to respond with a complete sentence. After the students become better prepared for more independent work, the same game can be played in a group or between a pair of students for reinforcement.

Comprehension: Both sets of flash cards can also help students support their comprehension of the story. The key words can be lined up for students to get familiar with the story sequence and develop oral competence in story retelling. At the beginning, a teacher may show a flash card according the story sequence and ask students to name it and tell its characteristics. It may be necessary to ask questions or provide cues to offer support as needed. For instance, "What can the Cloud do to the Sun?" Such guided practice prepares students for independent work when they use the sequenced words to retell the story orally.

Character/Sentence writing: After students finish the activities described above, they are prepared for writing characters and sentences. A teacher may model how to write a sentence using a key word. Then students can write another sentence using a new word until they are done with all words. Students may be encouraged to use phonetic symbols for words they don't know how to write. With a list of sentences, the students can rearrange the sentences they wrote to express their learning and understanding of the story.

In sum, in the study of a target culture or international study, it is important to use children's literature to plan activities that go beyond food, festivals and flags (Liu, 2008; Skelton, Wigford, Harper, & Reeves, 2002). All of the above topics for discussion and activities can create an opportunity for students to engage in an in-depth study of culture and language by making use of the information presented in the story. Based on the needs and backgrounds of their students, teachers decide on what and how to teach in the study of target culture and language.

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### Teaching Language and Culture Continued

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### Moving? Changing Your postal or e-mail Address?

To help NAAPAE keep our records accurate, be sure to send NAAPAE your change of postal address or email address. If you change your email address without notifying us, we have no way of continuing to send you the newsletter and announcements. NAAPAE no longer mails hard-copy issues of the newsletter. Send your new address to Bob Johnson [bjohnson@hawaii.edu](mailto:bjohnson@hawaii.edu) and Susan Kagehiro [kagehiros@sfusd.edu](mailto:kagehiros@sfusd.edu).

### WINNING THE FUTURE

On March 14, 2011, AAPI leaders appointed by President Obama presented to the White House a report entitled “*Winning the Future: A Road Map for the Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Community*.” The report contains recommendations on how 23 federal agencies and offices can improve the everyday lives of AAPIs. The report addresses problems uniquely facing AAPIs, such as linguistic isolation, health problems that disproportionately affect AAPIs and bullying and other civil rights issues. Details outlined in the report were submitted by each agency to address priorities established by the White House Initiative -- creating healthy communities and sustainable neighborhoods, expanding educational opportunities, increasing economic growth and improving civil rights. You can read the report here by clicking on this link: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/list/asian-americans-initiative/facts-data.html>

### INVITATION TO THE 10TH ANNUAL NATIVE HAWAIIAN CONVENTION

The Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement is thrilled to invite you to celebrate and participate with in the 10th Annual Native Hawaiian Convention, themed “Community Leaders & Solutions—Where Success Happen” or “Lalawai Kakou, E Hana Kaiaulu,” scheduled August 23-25, 2011, at the Hawai‘i Convention Center.

The Annual Native Hawaiian Convention is the largest gathering of community members, organizations, policy makers, legislative representatives, and federal agencies interested in Native Hawaiian community development. This year we've planned some exciting sessions including the Grants & Philanthropy Forum with the Ford Foundation and the White House Initiative on Asian American Pacific Islanders. Additionally, we're coordinating a Policy Roundtable on Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islanders and Tribal Leaders Roundtable. For more information: <http://www.cvent.com/d/hMuJtLJFkOn76YDEPJLfq/ynz9/P1/1Q>



## A LETTER TO MY DAUGHTER

Yukiko Inoue, PhD, University of Guam



The first time my mother met my father was the day of their marriage ceremony. At that time, an arranged marriage was quite common, and they knew what would be expected of them: the prevailing notion was that a man demonstrated his value at work, and woman did so at home. Even during my school days, homemaking (including training in sewing and cooking) was a required subject for—and exclusive to—girls. Boys had opportunities to take science and art classes instead.

It is well known that persistent vestiges of the Confucian norm requiring a woman to obey her father, husband, and son continue to shape roles for women in East Asia. This is especially true in Japan, and my mother was a perfect example. Given the degree to which my mother was expected to rely on and obey my father, it gave me much relief to see that my father gave priority to his relationship with my mother. In a sense, this seems natural, because their marriage began a new family consisting of just the two of them; they had children who grew up and left home; and eventually, it was just the two of them again.

Consistent with the paramount importance my father attached to his relationship with my mother, he told his three daughters as follows: “You are young and have plenty of time ahead of you. Do not ask what your aging parents can do for you.” He also told us, his three daughters, that it was of the utmost importance that we find good husbands to provide for us. Nevertheless, he made no mention of how important it might be for each of us women to become financially independent.

My childhood and adolescent experiences greatly motivated me, later on, to work on a doctoral dissertation study of the educational and occupational attainment process for women, with a focus on the role of adolescent status aspirations. Honestly, when I was a teen, I did not know *how* to aspire to higher social status. My dissertation study provided considerable evidence that experiences in high school have a major impact on the development and maintenance of educational ambitions and occupational aspirations for women, which in turn, exert a pronounced influence on the woman’s chances of occupational success in adult life.

If I had a daughter at the age of thirteen (ideally nine or ten), I would like to write her a letter, as below. I wished I had received this kind of letter from my mother (or my father) when I was at that age.

*My Dear Daughter:*

*To have a fulfilling life, you will need to work hard throughout that life. You are the one person you can always rely on, if you structure your life in the best way. By that I mean several things. First, you should begin by choosing lucrative work that you really like. Otherwise, you cannot put your energy into a career based on it. Second, once you know what you want to do in the future as your career, you will need to study hard to achieve that goal. And third, once you have won a place in the field you choose, you will need to continue to work hard, to maintain the position you have achieved, to build your financial independence, and to grow as a person. The latter is especially important for a fruitful life. All of these things depend on you, not on your husband or your family.*

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## A Letter to My Daughter Continued

*The decision of whether to get married or not, is yours. But consider maintaining a partnership with a good person, which does not require getting married. Everything you have achieved will be meaningless if a marriage takes away your freedom. For many reasons, you will find that it is impossible for you to be a housewife your entire life. Although many people will tell you otherwise, it is very unlikely that you will love the same man for your entire life. Life is too long for that. The fact that people change as time goes by becomes obvious when we look at the increasing rate of divorce. Focus on sharing quality time with the person you love, and also reserve time for your hobbies or volunteer work. The quality of your life depends primarily on the energy you bring to it, not on a husband.*

*If you would like to give birth to a child, that decision is yours, too. However, you can contribute to other lives, and to the future, in many ways: not only by having children. Unless you truly believe, after long consideration, that your ability to find satisfaction and fulfillment in life depends on being a mother, do not give up your freedom so easily. Keep in mind that the most important relationship in your life is your relationship with yourself. No one, including a husband who wants children, has the right to ask you to sacrifice what you love in life, or to give up your freedom. But women who have children are often forced to give up those precious things. You would greatly regret that. Life is too short for it.*

*Of all the people in the world, you are the only one who can understand yourself fully. By the same token, you are the only one who can make yourself happy. Other people cannot create your happiness, but they can do a lot to prevent it. If you do not have the ability to create your own happiness, you will become a barrier to your partner's happiness, too, and this is important. You are the person in charge of your life. You have the ability, and the responsibility, to develop and enhance yourself, because no one else can do it for you.*

When I was writing this letter to the daughter I never had (I don't regret not having children... in fact, it is one of the few things in my life that I have never regretted), I kept thinking about a well-known journalist named Atsuko Chiba. She died of an illness when she was 46 years old. She never married, but had a good partner throughout much of her adult life, sharing quality time with him, and visiting many places with him, as documented in her several books. She was an energetic and attractive career woman that I admire her most. She clearly stated that her occupation was the one she wanted to have since she was a child. She was my role model (my ideal, I would say) because she pursued her life course just I described in this letter. And if I had a son, my letter to him would be the same.



## CHECK OUT THE NAAPAE WEBSITE

<http://www.naapae.net>

On our website, you will find the following information about NAAPAE

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