

The AACCP Newsletter

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Asian American Curriculum Project, Inc.

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Winning Entries From Growing Up Asian in America 2007 A Program of the Asian Pacific Fund

AACP is happy to present our third year of cooperation with the *Asian Pacific Fund* in featuring some essays and art from their contest "Growing Up Asian in America." We first wrote about the Asian Pacific Fund and their contest back in our May 2004 newsletter (<http://asianamericanbooks.com/newslets/nl0504.htm>).

"Growing Up Asian in America" is a writing and art contest for students from around the San Francisco Bay Area. The contest is timed to work in conjunction with Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. Each year the Asian Pacific Fund chooses a different theme for the contest. This year's theme is entitled "Superheroes."

The theme's objective was to evoke the characteristics that students valued through their heroes' efforts to make the world a better place. Asian Pacific Fund states that this year's entries

demonstrated the participants understanding of courage and heroism, danger and suffering, risks and challenges. Judging from the winning entries it's hard to disagree.

To see the traveling exhibit of all of the winning entries, go to asianpacificfund.org/awards/guaa/library.php to find the date and locations of the exposition nearest you. To see an online version of the exhibit, go to asianpacificfund.org/awards/guaa/program.php.

To those of you that are interested in entering next year's contest, check back with the Asian Pacific Fund's website in January of 2008 to learn of the new theme, and to find the entry form and rules.

Without further ado, here are some of our favorites from 2007.

2007 Growing Up Asian in America Winners and Winning Entries

Provided courtesy of the Asian Pacific Fund and their Sponsors

K-5 Second Place

Blind Beauty

By S. L.

Age 10, Grade 5

Hands clammy, knees shaking from age, and forehead perspiring, the elderly Chinese artist sits pensively at his easel. His hands skim over the paper in front of him as his mind's eye draws out a vivid illustration of a sleek cat, its serene composure level a match to the artist's mood. Slowly the man lifts the ink pot and sprinkles some ink on to the paper. Then he picks up the thin brush and flicks his wrist quickly, dashing the ink all over the whiteness in gentle swoops. With a few more deft strokes, the man transforms the plain white paper into a snowy feline, its fur long and lustrous. Although the artwork still needs a background, the kitten itself is a stunning masterpiece, drawn with emotion. But what is even more amazing is that the artist is almost blind.

This man, Chang, is my great uncle and, to me, he is a superhero. He was known throughout Asia as one of the most magnificent artists in Chinese history. Never focusing exclusively on meticulous brushstroke techniques, Chang earned admiration because of all the thoughts and moods he somehow expressed in his paintings. Although old age eventually clouded his sight, he continued to labor with great diligence, and it is this kind of tenacity that makes him heroic. His efforts shone deeply through his remarkable animals, graceful plants, and impressive precipices. He showed fierce integrity, for when his old eyes sensed that a shape had gone awry, he would start again. His

paintings are so beautiful that they compel even ten-year-old Chinese Americans like me to look at the world from a more peaceful, bold, or logical perspective. Because of my great uncle's work, I'm inspired to experience these different viewpoints. This quality of making me open myself to special points of view can only come from a hero like Chang, whose passion created beauty.

In addition to Chang's admirable persistence, he also had a deep heart of gold. He cared about his community, especially about animals. Through stories from my relatives, I have realized how wonderfully thoughtful Chang must have been to his society. One story from my grandma appeals more to me than most others, for it illustrates that true heroes are extremely selfless. During World War II, Chang and his helpers escaped from Chinese communism. When asked what he was going to bring along, Chang ignored his sparkly jewels and gold. All he turned to were his painting supplies and two more objects. Fearing they might perish in the pernicious war, he insisted on bringing a young Pink-bottom monkey and a baby white tiger from the wilderness of Szechuan Province, both of which would later be pictured in many of his paintings. This tremendous care for other people and animals exemplifies true heroism.

Chang is a superhero, perhaps the greatest sort. I would create a hero similar to him, one who inspires us by striving to do more all the time, encouraging us to feel more deeply, and helping out in the community.

(Continued on Page 2)

Give Us Your Feedback

Please feel free to send us your reviews, comments, and book suggestions. You can contact us at -
aacpinc@asianamericanbooks.com

Up Coming Events

Here are some events that AACP will soon be attending. Invite us to your events.

Date/Time	Event	Location
May 29- June 2	National Conference on Race & Ethnicity in American Higher Education	SF Hilton 333 O'Farrel St. SF, CA
June 9 11am	Kamishibai Storycard Theater	SM Main Lib. San Mateo, CA
June 23 4-10pm	San Mateo Buddhist Temple Annual Bazaar	2 S. Claremont St. San Mateo, CA
July 14-15	San Jose Obon Festival	SJ Buddhist Temple San Jose, CA
July 21-22 Sa 1-10pm Su 11-8pm	Ginza Bazaar & Obon Odori	Buddhist Church of SF San Francisco, CA
Other Event of Interest that AACP May Not Attend		
May-June	San Mateo Library Asian Film Festival	San Mateo Main Lib. San Mateo, CA
June 2 10am	"Journey to Tanforan" Formal Program at Former Assembly Center Site and Reunion Luncheon	1150 El Camino Real San Bruno, CA
June 23 11am-6pm	Japanese Cultural Fair	Mission Plaza Park Santa Cruz, CA
June 23 4-10pm June 24 11-9pm	San Mateo Buddhist Temple Annual Bazaar	2 S. Claremont St. San Mateo, CA
June 28 - July 1	OCA National Convention	Sheraton Grand Hotel Sacramento, CA
June 29 - July 1	JACL National Youth Conference	Santa Clara University Santa Clara, CA

Editor's Message

Hello Everyone,

How was your Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (APAHM)? We in San Mateo had an enjoyable celebration on the 12th. We hope you had a chance to come to our event.

To all those that helped to put on our celebration and to those that came to enjoy the event, many many thanks! One last word for this event, if you came to our celebration, please give us your feedback. We hope to make the event an even better one next year.

For those of you that might be expecting me to continue my criticisms against having APAHM in May and my criticisms against the questionable programming on local television (see previous May articles at AsianAmericanBooks.com/newslets.htm), I'm taking a hiatus this year. All I have to say is that I don't think anything has changed. Maybe we need to join hands and start a movement for an April APAHM and better programming on television. Are you with me :) or am I tilting at windmills?

Thank you to all the participant of the *Growing Up Asian In America* contest. Thank you Benita Tsao of the Asian Pacific Fund for all your help with this newsletter. Thanks to the Asian Pacific Fund - I love your 2007 theme.

In a land where pursuing ones own happiness is enshrined into its founding document and where some people get so carried away with this value that they needlessly waste much wealth and time in selfish endeavors, it is wonderful to know that there are some in the next generation that value compassion, empathy, and service to others. You renew my hope for the future and make me believe that there are heroes among you.

Leonard Chan
Executive Editor

Growing Up Asian in America

K-5 Second Place (Continued from Page 1)

Blind Beauty

By S. L.

Age 10, Grade 5

I can picture him once again at his easel, delicately working magic on the paper. He is beginning a grassy hillside underneath the sleek cat when abruptly his finger slips. The brush escapes from his grip and drops to the floor. The glory of the piece

destroyed, Chang inhales sharply but calmly. After a few moments, he picks up the brush with his calloused hands and sets it on the easel. He tears out the ruined work and lays it down on the floor next to him. As he faces his easel once more, a new sheet awaits him.

Then picking up his paintbrush, Chang begins again.

6-8 Third Place

Dawn

By Sanjana T. Parikh
Age 14, Grade 8

Superheroes were supposed to be our muscular saviors, leaping into the indigo skies, their logo embossed upon their chest. They were supposed to be humble, yet confident, thoughtful and strong, and clever and quick-minded, outwitting their opponents at any personal cost.

Superheroes were supposed to be perfect.

No one can be, though. It is virtually impossible to balance everything - Asian values of family, and humility through work and Western values of living life for yourself and pride through accomplishment. Where is the time to be perfect?

So, we make choices. At every turning point, a fork appears. Your choice determines your heroism. Soldiers lay their lives on the line, not knowing what tomorrow will bring, but bearing this uncertainty to fight for basic principles they believe in. Doctors are not soldiers, but they struggle against disease, and we laud them for attempting this. And comedians? Them, as well. Sometimes we forget that amidst cancer, or the common cold that plagues us, a little laugh shows us the rays of light waiting patiently at the end of this tunnel.

In Indian culture, superheroes are Gods. They complete tasks we can only dream of attempting: slaying demons, fighting injustice, and exemplifying the perfect man. Marvel Comics, too, displays a disparity between the common man and Spiderman or Wonder Woman. How, as children, we would lose ourselves in the simple, surreal world of 'good versus evil' and happy endings, from Amar Chitra Kathas to Superman? How, so young, we fell into books and allowed our minds to recreate the scenes where the favorite character defeated the antagonist, and gained back what he had risked? How, that small and inexperienced, we believed in these fictional characters of fairytales, falling asleep dreaming and believing that one day, if Cinderella could live in such a world, reality would treat us the same way?

And at least six or more years later, who can say we gave up on those fairytales, opening our eyes to the actual world around us? Superheroes gave us a hope. So as teenagers, when we realize that all of the walls we try erecting around ourselves aren't protecting us from the true nature of this world, we lose those dreams and those hopes and forget where to turn to.

But slowly, as we mature, we hope we can begin to understand where dreams end and where reality begins, where the fine line between sanity and lunacy lies. We hope we begin to notice where responsibilities enter the picture, and how each road we choose at the intersection affects the rest of the day. We hope we begin to perceive how the smallest of actions can lend a smile to a face, and how the seemingly insignificant build up to become noticeable.

We hope we can begin to recognize that a few rays are all that make up a droplet of sunshine, and we learn to group together those droplets, and create our own suns of happiness. Most

importantly, we hope we can start realizing that this life is really a journey to develop, shape, perfect and then use our own inner superheroes.

9-12 Third Place

The Banners of Liberty

By Faisal Hamid
Age 15, Grade 10

The Bay Area is perhaps the most diverse and most tolerant place on Earth. People from all communities work together, play together, study together, and laugh together. We live in a picturesque world of prosperity and tolerance. But on October 19 of 2006, this picture was shattered. Alia Ansari was murdered in front of her children. Mrs. Ansari had died for her choice to follow her faith. To me, superheroes are those individuals who do not shy away from wearing hijabs, or turbans, or the cross, or any other sign of who they are because of a fear of ignorant people. These people are superheroes because they are brave enough to exercise their right to liberty, even in the face of the bullet.

To any immigrant, Asian or not, America is very different. For some, this country offers a very different level of freedom, unprecedented in their motherlands. For others, this country offers a very different level of economic opportunities, unheard of in their fatherlands. For many more, America offers a level of security only dreamed of in their native countries. For Alia Ansari and other Afghani immigrants, America offered all of the above and more. But just as these immigrants come to America for freedom, jobs, and security, they give back to America.

Immigrants bring with them rich cultures, new ideas, and immeasurable hope. The immigrants who first came to this country made it beautiful by bringing these things to their adopted nation. More recent immigrants continue this tradition by hoping to improve their own lives and their communities. Alia Ansari and other immigrants, such as my own parents, know that in order to make America more beautiful, they must not lose what they came with.

The modern philosopher B.J. Gupta states, "Man is a social animal." For immigrants, especially Asian immigrants, this fact is very important. Immigrants come from a society where everything is natural but in America everything is unnatural. While once surrounded by brothers and sisters, now they are surrounded by strangers. Looked upon by others as strange and alien, immigrants are often shunned. But man is a social animal! Man needs to be accepted by society in order to be happy. For some immigrants, this means letting go of all the beautiful aspects of their own society in order to be accepted by this society. But Alia Ansari and many other immigrants disagree. A specific language or a religion does not define this country. America is unique amongst almost all other nations because American society is defined by a dream, not a culture. The founding fathers of this country dreamt of a land with freedom, not a land painted white. The builders of this nation dreamt of a land with liberty, not a land written in English. The men and women who died for this country dreamt of a land of peace for all people, not just one people. Those immigrants who understood this knew that they did not have to give up their beautiful culture to be accepted in society. All they

had to do is believe in freedom and liberty and all the other ideals that attracted them to America in the first place.

Heroes have tremendous courage and it takes extraordinary courage to continue wearing a symbol of your faith knowing that such an article may cause your death. For Ali Ansari, her hijab did cause her death but such an atrocious crime did not dissuade Muslim women to continue this noble practice. If a freedom is attacked, the only way to defend it is to practice it. It is quite ironic that the task of defending and protecting the freedoms of this country fall into the hands of individuals who often weren't even born in this country. But these strong individuals are the banner-bearers of liberty and their religious symbols are their banners. These people are true heroes.

9-12 Second Place

Just Like Her

By Vivian Ling

Age 15, Grade 9

At times, I feel like maybe I didn't appreciate my childhood enough. Take for instance when my younger cousin David came from China for a visit. Upon taking my spot in front of the TV and discovering the joys of Nickelodeon, he immediately decided that Spongebob Squarepants was his favorite superhero. While David's eyes traveled around the screen, I, like most teenagers do when they start to feel like they're missing out on something that younger children find fascinating, became a bit nostalgic. Who had been my favorite superhero? Did I even have one? Frantic that I might have slept through a basic class in Toddler 101, I combed the dusty cupboards of my childhood memories, searching for my superhero.

Shortly after David sang the Spongebob theme song for the third time (marking the countdown of two hours until the marathon ended), I struck memory gold. How could I have forgotten four Halloweens in a row of dressing up as the Yellow Power Ranger? The nostalgia took over and the images overloaded my brain like too much soy sauce on my potstickers. Me frantically mimicking Yellow Ranger and recklessly throwing myself across all corners of the living room. Me using a fat green pillow as a substitute for the bad guy when my sister refused to accept the part. Me begging my mom for gymnastics lessons so that I could do awesome backflip kick-spins just like Yellow Ranger. Me being sad when she refused, but ecstatic when she bought me the costume, which I wore to sleep in hopes that I could dream that I was the Yellow Ranger.

After the barrage of memories stopped, I chuckled to myself. How much of a coincidence was it that both Spongebob Squarepants and the Yellow Ranger are, well, yellow? I've always thought that the connection with Asians (more specifically, the skin of the Chinese) to the color yellow is a bit absurd, seeing that my skin has more hints of pink and tan than it does of yellow. Nevertheless, that very perception was the source of my amusement and now, my wonder. Did we pick our superheroes because they looked like us? While the resemblance between David and Spongebob Squarepants is stretched at the very least, I know that my childhood self consciously chose the Yellow Ranger as my favorite because Yellow Ranger's human alter ego was an Asian girl. Like many young children, my five-year-old

self felt a need to be attached to people who were similar to myself because I was just developing and establishing my unsure existence in the world. Though my delight with things that were different from myself was obvious, especially at preschool when I freely led all of my friends on various childish adventures involving stealing cookies, in times of trouble and uncertainty, I definitely felt safest with my family and superheroes of my own kind.

However, in addition to our similarities, I liked Yellow Ranger because she was more talented than I was. She was strong, clever, resourceful, and could defeat the forces of evil at lightning speed. I wanted to be just like her and from this wishing came my insistence in not going to bed until every evil spirit (in the form of pillows) was vanquished by means of high-power jumping, shrieking, and other attempts at replicating anything else I had seen Yellow Ranger do on TV. Our similarity was the connection between the two of us that gave me hope that I could one day be like her. She must have been the same as small, weak, and unsure as my childhood self at one point and now she was big and strong. If she could do it, what was there to stop me from doing it?

Alas, childhood faded and the days of wishing I could kick bad guy butt washed away and more complex problems arose. I started to figure out who I was and what my ideals, goals, and values were. Sometimes I came across these thoughts even when I wasn't expecting them. While I was talking to cousin David over the phone one night, he suddenly remarked, "Your Chinese sucks."

Seeing as now he was a bit older and could tolerate insults without bursting into hysterical tears, I retorted, "Well, your English sucks."

"Yeah," he said, "so what? I'm not American. But you are Chinese."

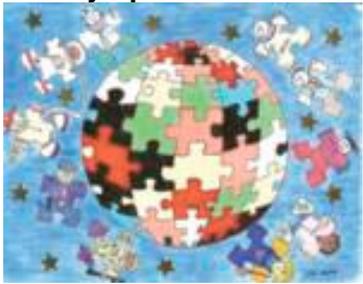
Though I didn't openly admit it, he had a point. As an Asian American, I constantly feel the responsibility to learn about and preserve my family's culture in order to prevent myself from becoming completely dissolved into the typical American image. Though I can speak and read both Cantonese and Mandarin pretty well, which is a lot better than some of my friends who speak no Chinese at all, there were still moments like that one with David where I felt completely worthless. My childhood problems of smallness and uncertainty had come back to haunt me. How could I amount to anything as a person if I couldn't even uphold my family values and be loyal to my own culture? With this thought in mind, I resolved to work hard at continuing my Chinese studies and to dedicate as much time as I could to learning more about my background, culture, and personal history.

As I grew and changed, my perception of superheroes grew and changed with me. I realized that Yellow Ranger's quest to defeat evil through a series of complicated impressive martial arts moves was based on one universal rule: to solve the problems of others. In Yellow Ranger's case, she helped others by ridding the world of evil. However, in the real world, the definition of a superhero expands so that everyone can be one, because the process of helping others is so simple. Superheroes in real life help others and solve their problems just like the Power Rangers do on TV,

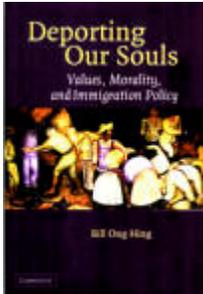
only on a much less robotic scale. For Asian teenagers in America, one of the major problems that our superheroes can solve is to maintain our background and to continue to be proud of and informed about our heritage. But we don't need laser vision or a really cool yellow helmet to accomplish this. We are completely capable of doing it ourselves. Just as every superhero

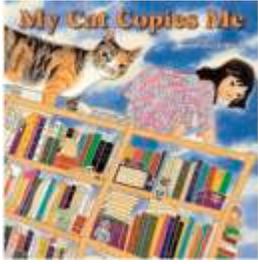
in the media has a duty to protect their world from evil, it is our duty to preserve our culture. And by doing that, in a way, I fulfill my childhood dream of becoming just like Yellow Ranger. I have become a superhero too.

Art Winners

K-5 First Place	6-8 Second Place	9-12 First Place
<p data-bbox="201 426 444 457">My Special World</p>  <p data-bbox="237 741 412 800">Lexi Yan Wong Age 6, Grade 1</p>	<p data-bbox="591 411 1029 478">You Don't Have to be a Superman to Change the World</p>  <p data-bbox="721 747 899 806">Paula Jung Age 14, Grade 8</p>	<p data-bbox="1117 411 1479 443">My Grandma is Invincible</p>  <p data-bbox="1203 800 1393 858">Jasmin Lai Age 16, Grade 11</p>

following books are discounted an additional 20% from the listed price for subscribers to our newsletter. The discounts on these books end June 17, 2007.

	<p data-bbox="496 1062 760 1094">Today and Today</p> <p data-bbox="496 1104 805 1194">Haiku by Issa Illustrated by G. Brian Karas 2007, 31 pages, Hardback.</p> <p data-bbox="496 1205 1511 1325">G. Brian Karas is really much more than the illustrator of this wonderful book. Karas is a skillful craftsman that uses some of haiku master Issa Kobayashi's works with some of his own engaging art to show the passing of one year's time of a family. Through good times and sad, the resilience of the children in the story shines through.</p> <p data-bbox="496 1335 1198 1367">Item #3454, Normally \$16.99 ... for newsletter subscribers \$13.59</p>
	<p data-bbox="496 1423 1081 1497">Deporting Our Souls Values, Morality, and Immigration Policy</p> <p data-bbox="496 1507 794 1566">By Bill Ong Hing 2006, 220 pages, Hardback.</p> <p data-bbox="496 1577 1500 1696">Bill Hing's book <i>Deporting Our Souls</i> is an opportune publication to read at this crucial time during Congress' debate over immigration policy. <i>Deporting Our Souls</i> discusses all the critical areas in the immigration debate including historical to present day immigration policy, and new policies proposed by others and the author.</p> <p data-bbox="496 1707 1198 1738">Item #3455. Normally \$35.00 ... for newsletter subscribers \$28.00</p>



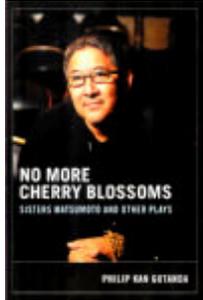
My Cat Copies Me

By Yoon-duck Kwon

First American Edition 2007, 32 pages, Hardback.

"Monkey see, monkey do" or in this case it's "cat see, cat do." Author Yoon-duck Kwon's cute story of a little girl and her cat, playfully copying each other, will make you smile.

Item #3456, Normally \$15.95 ... for newsletter subscribers **\$12.76**



No More Cherry Blossoms Sisters Matsumoto and Other Plays

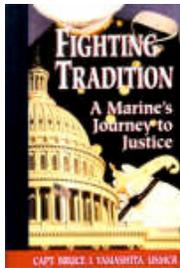
By Philip Kan Gotanda

Foreword by Stephen Sumida

2005, 272 pages, Paperback.

No More Cherry Blossoms is distinguished playwright Philip Kan Gotanda's collection of four of his recent works on Japanese Women in the 20th century. Each of the plays takes place during a different time period. Ballad of Yachiyo is set in 1919 Hawaii. Sisters Matsumoto takes place after a Japanese American family is released from a WWII internment camp and follows their adjustment to their turned upside-down life back home on their California farm. The Wind Cries Mary is a drama about life in 1968 San Francisco at the beginning of the Asian American political movement. Under the Rainbow is two one act plays that take place in current day America.

Item #3457. Normally \$20.00 ... for newsletter subscribers **\$16.00**



Fighting Tradition A Marine's Journey to Justice

By Capt. Bruce I. Yamashita, USMCR

2003, 244 pages, Paperback.

Fighting Tradition is author Bruce Yamashita's real life 1980s and 90s account of how he fought institutional racism at one Marine Corps officer candidate school to eventually gain his long sought after commission as an officer. Yamashita not only fought for himself, but also fought to change the system. His struggle helped to prove that racism has no place in the basic training of any military personal. Through his long fight, Yamashita also proved that he did have the right stuff.

Item #3458, Normally \$21.95 ... for newsletter subscribers **\$17.56**