

The AACP Newsletter

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Asian American Curriculum Project, Inc.

January 2008

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AACP's January 2008 Poetry Selection

For the past few years AACP has started the year with a poetry theme newsletter and a local poetry reading in San Mateo. We began this tradition for the specific purpose of promoting Asian and Pacific Islander poets. January was chosen for the month because in many Asian cultures, poetry is traditionally the first writing done at the beginning of the year.

To start off the newsletter we have two poems written by our intern/volunteer Austin Djang. Austin is an amazing multi-talented student that goes to Hilldale High School in San Mateo. We hope you enjoy his poems and the other poems in this newsletter written by our staff and friends.

Thank you and we hope you have a wonderful new year!

Still Breathing

By Austin Djang

Why has she gone?
Into the shadows,
She hides unseen.

Where are you, my spring?
Your satin petals have withered,
And yet I know you're still there.

Why do you tease me so?
You whisper in my ear.
I can feel you walk beside me.

How do I live?
Without you I should not be here,
And yet,

In rolling hills of snow I lay,
Still breathing
The green springtime air.

He Had No Right to Glance It

By Austin Djang

He didn't respond,
As our voices raised,
All throughout the night.

And he didn't falter,
His gaze devout,
Staring at the ground.

And still he stared,
With hallowed rite,
At the gravel in the tent.

And the Captain roared,
That the dirt was ours now,
So he had no right to glance it.

But calmly still,
With complete intent,
He claimed the ground his own.

And the captain, perplexed,
Could only repeat,
He had no right to glance it.

And then, at sunrise,
In hushed springtime air,
We dragged him from the camp.

And then we ensured,
For we were told,
To drag him through the mud.

But then, what they did,
I will never forget,
And I couldn't tell you now;

For I closed my eyes,
Before his blood,
Leaked upon his ground.

Please Don't Remove the Butterflies

An editorial by Leonard D. Chan

*Long ago Chuang Tzu dreamed he was a butterfly.
He was very joyful as a butterfly,
well pleased with his lot, his aims fulfilled.
He knew nothing of Tzu the man.
But shortly he awoke and found himself again to be Chuang Tzu.
And he could not tell whether as Tzu he had dreamed he was a butterfly
Or whether as a butterfly he had dreamed he was Tzu.*

Poetic passage by Chuang Tzu, also spelled as Zhuangzi (ca 400 BC)
This translation is from the TV show *Kung Fu*.
Aired March 22, 1973 in the episode *Alethea*.

Recent news from the movie industry state that there is a new movie version of the 70s TV series *Kung Fu* in the works. For those of you that are unfamiliar with this TV show, the program was about the adventures of a Shaolin monk who traveled the American West during the 1800s.

For those of you who are casually familiar with the program, you may know it better for being the source for many of the bad caricature used to lampoon martial arts genre stories. Perhaps you
(Continued on Page 4)

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
Jan 12 2pm	4th Annual Poetry In San Mateo Day A Beginning of the Year Poetry Celebration Featuring poets Genny Lim, Oscar Peñaranda, and Hiroshi Kashiwagi	SM Main Library San Mateo, CA
Jan. 19 8:30am-12:30pm	The Association of Chinese Teachers Lunar New Year Event	Alice Fong Yu Elem. School San Francisco, CA
Jan 27 1-5pm	Families with Children from China - N. CA 13th Between Two New Years Celebration!	Golden Gate Club SF Presidio San Francisco, CA
Feb. 3 11am-2pm	Foster City Chinese New Year Celebration	Foster City, CA
Feb. 5	Library Materials Fair Exhibit/Sales	SC County Office of Educ. Santa Clara, CA
Feb. 17 5:30pm	The 28th Annual San Jose Day of Remembrance 2008	Betsuin Bud. Church 640 N 5th St. San Jose, CA
Feb. 23	Day of Remembrance 2008	Merced, CA
Mar. 2 11am-5:30pm	Chinese New Year's Celebration	Stockton Civic Aud. 525 N. Center St. Stockton, CA
Mar. 7-9	California Council for the Social Studies Conference	California Council for the Social Studies Conference
Other Event of Interest that AACP May Not Attend		
Jan. 26 2pm	Eddie Fung and Judy Yung presenting their new book <i>The Adventures of Eddie Fung</i>	SF Main Lib. San Francisco, CA
Feb. 2-24	Chinese New Year Celebration Events in SF	Chinatown San Francisco, CA
Feb. 10 10am-6pm	11th Vietnamese Spring Festival & Parade Parade 11am-6pm	Parkside Hall 180 Park Ave. San Jose, CA
Feb. 16-17	Reading the World X	USF 2350 Turk Blvd. San Francisco, CA
Feb. 23 5:30pm	Chinese New Year Parade	San Francisco, CA

Editor's Message

Hello Everyone,

Very Happy New Year to you all!

Lots to write about, but no time to write.

First of all, if you get this before our poetry event on January 12, 2008 at 2pm and are in the San Francisco/San Mateo area, please come to our event. It's at the San Mateo Main Library this year and we have three wonderful poets coming - Genny Lim, Oscar Peñaranda, and Hiroshi Kashiwagi. Plus as always, audience members are all welcome to participate.

Thank you very much to all of you that have submitted poems for this newsletter. These January poetry newsletter can't be done without you. As always, thank you Sophie for your help with the newsletter.

To Mingfong Ho, sorry for not getting your book *Maples in the Mist* in this newsletter. Hey everyone, this wonderful poetry picture book is back in print. We hope to have this book some time in the near future and at least in next year's poetry newsletter.

There were four other books that we could not get in time for this newsletter. They include *Gutted* by Justin Chin, *My American Kundiman* by Patrick Rosal, *Terrain Tracks* by Purvi Shah, and *The Narrow Road to the Interior* by Kimiko Hahn. All of these books were finalist for Asian American Writers Workshop (AAWW) Members' Choice Workshop Award.

If you visit this newsletter page on our website, I hope to have links to the Amazon pages for these books. If you click on these links and order through Amazon, you will still be helping AACP. So click away and enjoy :).

Oh, one last thing, AACP is trying out a new special contribution fund that will go back to educators at the California Council for the Social Studies (CCSS) conference in March 2008. For every ten dollars donated, we will give a visitor to our booth at the conference, one \$10 voucher towards the purchase of a book. We have from now until March 7 to raise as much money as possible for this fund. Please help make this campaign successful with your generous investment to our educational community.

Bye everyone.

Leonard Chan
Executive Editor

Poems by AACP and Friends

Our Annual Attempt at Writing Haiku and Tanka

Poems by Melissa Eng		
<p>Vision of Tomorrow <i>I close my brown eyes. Envisioning the future Fight for justice now!</i></p>	<p>Florence Hongo (AACP, Inc. President) <i>Strong, Caring, Honest Bright Activist Trailblazer So Respectable Reveals truth of internment Reinvents white history</i></p>	<p>Mei Gwok (Colloquial Translation: "America," Literal Translation: "Beautiful Country") <i>Embrace the U.S. Great cultural nourishment Joy sings in my heart. Doves soar freely in the air. Mei Gwok is my lovely home.</i></p>
Poems by Marc Brown		
<p>Scrambled Egg <i>They call me an egg. Asian inside, white outside I'm an omelet.</i></p>	<p>Traditional Chinese Medicine <i>T.C.M., my friend Good for body and for head And soul, too, I think.</i></p>	<p>White 'Ingenuity' (based on white ethnocentric history) <i>Help! I cannot dance! Will you teach me, pretty please? Like that? Wow! I'm good. Give credit where it is due. All for me and none for you.</i></p>
Poems by Philip Chin		
<p>Still Waiting <i>Grey hair in the mirror Cold, rain, dark, and winds above Time gone by once more</i></p>	<p>The Unknown <i>Who are you waiting for me? Love, death, sickness, gold? Fate of man unknown Drifting on the ocean blue Fame and fortune someday soon?</i></p>	<p>Dearest Lady <i>Laughing dancing eyes Shy quiet smile and many secrets Breath in clouds so soft Dreaming of summer hot beaches Far far away from cares and worries</i></p>
<p>Poem by Gary Poon</p> <p>Newsletter <i>Look a newsletter Early for a change I must be dreaming</i></p>	<p>Poem by Sophie Wong</p> <p>Mom's Advice <i>Listen! Who's to judge? Forget, forgive...for Karma And for peace of mind.</i></p>	
Poems by Leonard D. Chan		
<p>LC's Response to Newsletter <i>Gar's haiku Not quite poetry But me like</i></p>	<p>Where are You Going this New Year Day? <i>Contrails in the sky Etch A Sketch by travelers Taking me away</i></p>	<p>The Taste of Colors <i>Clear crisp azure sky Orange fuyu left behind A feast for the birds A grand delight for our eyes Can they savor the colors?</i></p>

Poetry Links

Haiku Links

- Haiku for People
<http://www.toyomasu.com/haiku/>
- Jane Reichhold
<http://www.ahapoetry.com/haiku.htm>
- Keiko Imaoka
<http://www.ahapoetry.com/keirule.htm>
- Gerald England
<http://www.nhi.clara.net/gepm002.htm>

Tanka Links

- Jane Reichhold on Tanka
<http://www.ahapoetry.com/tanka.htm>
- American Tanka, Inc.
<http://www.americantanka.com/>

General Link

- Scholastic Inc. Poetry Writing Page for Kids (grades 1-8)
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/poetry/>

Please Don't Remove the Butterflies

(Continued from page 1)

may also be familiar with the program's controversy in having a Caucasian David Carradine perform in the lead role of the monk Kwai Chang Caine.

On hearing of the search to find a new actor to play Caine, our media watcher Philip Chin even quipped in an email to me that it would "probably [be] another white man in the role since Hollywood probably can't find any talented Asian male actors as usual."

To me the most alarming tidbit from the movie's news flash was the quote from director Max Makowski that stated that he hopes the remake will be "edgier, faster-paced, less Zen contemplation and more action. We want to take advantage of the fact that our hero is a Shaolin monk stuck in the lawless tough world of the Wild West." Director Makowski seems to want to remake *Kung Fu* into a standard high action wall to wall martial arts film.

For many of the people that enjoyed the original series, including me, the best part about the program was the "Zen contemplation" segments. The martial arts fight segments were more or less just the cap to well written stories that introduced the audience to Asian philosophies on life and the general Asian American experience. Although it's never great to rely on TV programs to dish out knowledge on whole philosophical belief systems and cultural history, the 70s *Kung Fu* series was a real eye opener for many of us.

Living in white bread America, western philosophers and religious figures are widely known. Ask someone in America about Socrates, Plato, or Moses and you're likely to get an informed answer. Ask someone about Chuang Tzu (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhuangzi>) and you're likely to get blank stares. For me the *Kung Fu* series was my first introduction to Chuang Tzu, Taoism, and other Eastern Philosophy. It also piqued my interest in learning more about the real Asian American experience.

Although the *Kung Fu* series delved mainly in historical fiction, the program was a good reminder that Asians were a part of American history. The series humanized the Asian characters and showed that we were more than just the lowly subordinates portrayed in other TV series and movies. We were here then and we were more than just backdrops on history.

Besides for its lead character, *Kung Fu* gave much airtime to Asian actors. No TV program before and since has given Asian and Pacific Islander Americans as many juicy acting roles as had

Kung Fu (<http://www.imdb.com/>). For Philip Ahn and Keye Luke, two main actors that play Shaolin masters, *Kung Fu* showcased their wonderful acting abilities that had largely gone unnoticed for many years in film and television.

What was most remarkable was that Ahn's character of Master Kan never needed to demonstrate his mastery of *Kung Fu*. No physical act was needed for him to prove that he was a true master. His words and ways of life were enough. Keye Luke's character of Master Po was so masterful in *Kung Fu* that he seldom seemed to work up a sweat whenever he needed to use it. The masters' wise philosophical and often poetic teachings frequently reminded Caine to seek other ways to resolving problems instead of resorting to aggressive action. Fighting was only to be used as a last resort.

Ironically, the original *Kung Fu* series demonstrated that Asians were much more faceted than just the stereotypical martial arts action figure or one dimensional bad guys and wimps.

Director Makowski's quote seems to indicate a lack of understanding of this and of what made the original series great. It appears that he wants to drive the project into the standard stereotypic and showy ruts of other martial arts fantasy films that have been done to death.

The creators of the new *Kung Fu* movie can do what they want with the project. It's their money and their creative endeavor and besides, some of you may actually want to see another chop happy, high-flying martial arts film.

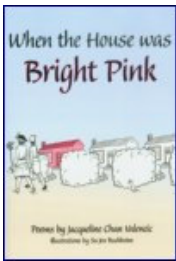

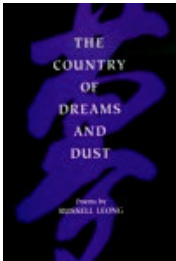
However, if you're like me and liked the original series, perhaps you can lobby the creators to keep some of the good elements of the old show. Back in the early 1970s, during the height of the Asian power movement, Asian American actors and activists were able to persuade the original creators of the *Kung Fu* series into making the show more authentic and about more than just the fight sequences. It's your chance now-take action and write to Warner Bros. Studio and the director of the new film. Tell them what you think. Let them know that you won't watch the new film if they fail to make the film you'd like to see.

Warner Brothers
4000 Warner Blvd.
Burbank, CA 91522
<http://movies.warnerbros.com/>

If that fails, then there's always the old series on DVD. Enjoy the show with butterflies and all, everyone!

ADDITIONS TO OUR WEBSITE

The following books are discounted for subscribers to our newsletter. The discounts on these books end February 2, 2008.

	<p>When the House was Bright Pink By Jacqueline Chan Valencic 2007, 120 pages, Paperback.</p> <p><i>When the House was Bright Pink</i> is an accessible, often humorous and poignant at the same time, coming-of-age account of a Chinese American girl growing up in 1950s and 60s America. The illustrations add to the verse making this book an enjoyable read for all ages.</p> <p>Item #3488, Normally \$11.95 ... for newsletter subscribers \$9.56</p>
	<p>Between Islands By Lee Kuei-shien Translated by Simon Patton</p> <p>A powerful poetry book currently available only through AACP!</p> <p><i>Between Islands</i> contains 28 poems written by Lee Kuei-shien (2002 Nobel Prize Literature nominee) in traditional Chinese and translated to English by Simon Patton. This bilingual collection will touch souls...old and new, far and near!</p> <p>Item #3491, Normally \$17.95 ... for newsletter subscribers \$14.36</p>
	<p>The Country of Dreams and Dust By Russell Leong 1993, 69 pages, Paperback.</p> <p>Author Russell Leong, renown UCLA professor and editor of the Amerasia Journal, was awarded the PEN Josephine Miles Award in Literature for this fine collection of poems. <i>The Country of Dreams and Dust</i> was Leong's first award winning book and helped establish him as one of the distinguished poets featured on the PBS series, <i>The United States of Poetry</i>.</p> <p>Item #2253, Normally \$8.95 ... for newsletter subscribers \$7.16</p>
	<p>Heaven is Just Another Country By Jaime Jacinto 1996, 63 pages, Paperback.</p> <p>Author Jessica Hagedorn says, "<i>Heaven Is Just Another Country</i> is a strong collection of poems by one of our most gifted poets." Get this gem, which was nominated for the BABRA awards, while we still have copies in stock.</p> <p>Item #2978, Normally \$10.00 ... for newsletter subscribers \$8.00</p>
	<p>Haiku Picturebook for Children By Keisuke Nishimoto Illustrations by Kozo Shimizu 1998, 32 pages, hardback.</p> <p>Haiku Picturebook for Children is a wonderful introduction for kids to the art of haiku poetry. Keisuke Nishimoto has chosen poems from some of Japan's most famous masters of haiku and matched it with well known artist Kozo Shimizu's beautiful work to create a truly magnificent book.</p> <p>Item #2871, Normally \$13.95 ... for newsletter subscribers \$11.16</p>

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