

# Context:

## Southeast Asians in California

Volume 13, Number 101, January, 1993

Folsom Cordova Unified School District  
2460 Cordova Lane,  
Rancho Cordova CA 95670  
(916) 635-6815  
Judy Lewis, Editor

## Year of the Chicken



### Refugee Educators' Network meetings:

September 17  
November 19  
January 21  
**February 18**  
May 20

9:00 to 11:30  
Southeast Asia  
Community  
Resource Center,  
2460 Cordova Lane,  
Rancho Cordova  
635-6815

9th annual

**Southeast Asia  
Education Faire**

**March 20, 1993**

**\$40.00**

In Chinese and Vietnamese, it's "chicken", not "rooster". Other animals of the year are also selectively translated into English to put forth a strong and more colorful connotation: year of the *ram* (not sheep or goat); year of the *boar* (not pig); year of the *serpent* (not snake); year of the *hare* (not rabbit). Is it only coincidence that in English the preferred connotation is the male of the species?!

This issue contains various tales and tidbits from Southeast Asia linked by the theme of *chickens*.

**Were you born in 1909, 1921, 1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981?**

*Then this is your year. The Year of the Rooster (or chicken or cock, depending on the preferred translation) produces people who are devoted to work and eager to learn, but also somewhat selfish and eccentric. Rabbits make poor partners, but snakes and oxen are very compatible with chickens.*

### How to Raise Chickens

There was a farmer in the village of Hua who raised chickens. His name was Chang Chü-yi. He really understood the temperament of chickens, and the chickens he raised were better than other people's, so everyone called him "Chicken Fairy".

Chang Chü-yi's chickens were not any prettier than anyone else's. Their cockscombs flapped down, their feet were soft and weak, their feathers were not at all colorful, and they appeared listless, as if they did not even want to eat and drink. But whenever another rooster appeared and a fight started, they became fierce and were certain to win. Early every morning

*Tung Chung-ssu (1985). Chinese Fables (The Overseas Chinese Library No. 2004). Taipei: Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission. Illustration by Shian Ming.*

they would always be the first to crow, with a sound that was loud and clear. Chickens raised by the Chang family were called "Heaven's Chickens".

Chang Chü-yi taught his chicken-raising secret to his son, Chang Hsi-yang. After his father died, Chang Hsi-yang continued raising chickens. But Chang Hsi-yang thought his father's method for raising chickens was too old-fashioned, so he made some changes. The chickens that Chang Hsi-yang raised were extremely colorful, with magnificent feathers, sharp beaks and sharp claws. If a chicken was unattractive, he would not keep it. As a result, everyone liked his chickens.

But Chang Hsi-yang's chickens did not call out at the crack of dawn, nor was their call very resonant. When they saw enemy chickens they could not fight, but could only raise their cockscombs and strut around with their heads high, or mind their own business and eat.

恭 禧 發 財



Gung Hay  
Fat Choy

## The Annual Cycle

In the first month of the Chinese lunar year is the Chinese New Year. In the second month, the Chinese celebrate the birthday of the earth god. The third month is the time to put away heavy clothes and get out light ones, to welcome the coming of spring. In the fourth month, peaches and plums are harvested. The Dragon Boat Festival falls in the fifth month, and then in the sixth, farmers irrigate their fields with a watercart. In the seventh month, longans and persimmons are ripe, and in the eighth, beans are harvested. In the ninth month, kites are flown, and in the tenth, everyone eats white gourd candy. Winter Solstice falls in the eleventh month, and on this day, everyone eats "tang yuan", a kind of dumpling made from glutinous rice flour. And finally, in the twelfth month, everyone makes New Year's Cake, to prepare for another New Year.

## Rats, Cats and Chickens

In a farmer's granary, there were frequently as many as 100 rats stealing food to eat. So the farmer bought a cat in order to catch the rats. Naturally the cat knew how to catch rats, but occasionally it would eat some of the chickens the farmer was raising. The farmer's son wanted his daddy to get rid of this chicken-stealing cat. But the farmer said, "The amount of food that the rats are stealing will cause me a great loss. If the cat steals chickens, we best eat a little less chicken meat."

## A Riddle

A hibiscus blooms on its helmet.  
Its battle array was not cut with scissors.  
Although it is no hero or general,  
A thousand doors and ten thousand windows open when it sings.

## The Polecat and the Rooster

Once there was a hungry polecat who decided to leave the forest to find food in a nearby village. He soundlessly padded his slender body through the fields, carefully sniffing the air for food. Through the evening darkness, he soon caught a delicious whiff of some tasty bird. The polecat looked up and there, perched upon a limb of the tree, sat a rooster sleeping with his head tucked into his ruffled feathers.

Now, the polecat wanted to eat the rooster, but he could not climb the tree. So he decided to try to trick the rooster into coming down. The polecat crouched his body close to the tree trunk and gently called up to the rooster, "Hey, dear friend, wake up! I bring you a special message from our Supreme Lord. Our Lord says that from now on, all animals who have hated each other must become friends and never fight again. We must all live happily together in peace and harmony. So let us both begin our friendship now. Come down from your perch so that you and I can embrace each other just like peaceful, loving brothers."

When the rooster heard the polecat's voice, he woke up quickly. He looked sharply down upon his cunning old enemy whose slinky body crouched against the tree trunk. Now, the rooster had always been a sensible bird, and he just did not trust that old polecat. He thought a while and then he slowly replied, "My dear brother Polecat, your message from our Lord is very beautiful. Yes, we should love each other and live in peace and friendship. I want to come down and make peace with you. But could you wait a few minutes, please? My friend, the dog, lives together with me here. He went out to the forest to find some food. Let us wait for him to return. Then I will come down from the tree and the three of us can celebrate our new friendship together."

Then the rooster stretched his body and opened his wings. He turned to the north and called loudly, "Hello-o, dear Dog, hello-o! Come home now! Our friend the polecat is waiting for you here.!"

When there was no answer from the forest, the rooster called still more loudly, "Hello, hello-o-o, Dog! Can you hear me? Please come right now. Our friend the polecat is waiting."

The wary polecat though he heard the dog coming. He was fearful because the dog was his old enemy. So he began to slip his soft body away from the tree.

The rooster pouted. "Oh, dear Polecat, don't go," he said. "Please wait. Our friend the dog will be here soon."

But the polecat fidgeted and cringed. "No, I cannot wait any longer. I must bring the message of the Supreme Lord to all the other animals."

And with that, the polecat scurried back into the forest. The rooster watched him go and then, settling his feathers, went back to sleep again.

*Cambodians do not follow the Chinese calendar for New Year. They, along with the Lao and Thai, observe New Year in April.*

*Carrison, Muriel & The Venerable Kong Chhean (translator). Cambodian Folk Stories from the Gatiloke. Tokyo: Tuttle, 1987.*



## A rooster and wise wife cause the husband to become the chief of a village

By Lue Vang,  
Refugee/Immigrant Resource Assistant,  
Folsom Cordova USD

*Hmong celebrate their new year two "moons" earlier than the Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and Lu-Mien.*

*This is a story that is more about quick-thinking and resourceful wives than roosters.*

Once upon the time, there was a couple who lived in remote highland village. This couple, if compared to the rest of the village, was average in status. The husband was a person who liked to hunt wild roosters.

He bought a rooster to raise and he taught it how to call the wild roosters. Because the husband had this rooster to attract the wild ones, they had wild rooster meat for their breakfast, lunch, and dinner most of the time.

One day an important chief from the lowlands came to the uplands to visit highlander villages to appoint chiefs in different villages. He wanted to see the highlanders and the lowlanders to have better communication in the future, and to help the villagers understand about the government in the country where they lived.

All the village adults were not home when the chief arrived in the village—they had gone to work in the rice and corn fields. Only the wife of the rooster owner was home. He, the chief, went to their house and asked to rest for while.

The wife of the rooster owner did not know what to cook for the chief. She thought to herself, "This lowland chief is a very important official, and came from far away—a person like him usually has meat for his food. I need to treat him appropriately, so my family can have good face."

She considered back and forth, back and forth. She spotted her husband's rooster and thought that it could do the job.

She slaughtered the rooster and prepared lunch for the important chief. He was quite happy with the lunch and thought to himself that the highlanders

were also good people and behaved just like the lowlanders did.

It was time for the chief to go on to the next village, just as the husband arrived home. The official thanked him and his wife for the excellent lunch.

When the husband was inside the home, his wife told him, "There was nothing to prepare for lunch for the important chief, so I decided to slaughter the rooster for the official's lunch."

The husband was very angry at once, suddenly he slapped at her face. She cried out loudly inside the house, and ran outside.

The important chief heard the crying sound and came back to the house. He asked what was going on. "What makes your husband beat you like that?"

She replied to the chief, "My husband is angry at me." He said, "Here is an important chief who came to visit us and rest in our house! Why did you slaughter a poor rooster for his lunch? It is not worth much! Why didn't you honor the chief with a pig, not a rooster?!"

The chief heard this. He was very surprised and thought this couple deserved to be appointed to be the village chief. He, therefore, told the couple to arrange a big feast for the next day and to call all the villagers to join in. The official appointed the rooster owner to be the chief of the village, because he felt quite sure about the couple's ability to handle the village's affairs.

## Tus lauqaib dib thiab tus pojniam muaj tswvyim ua rau tus txiv tau ua nomtswv

Thaum ub muaj ib nkawm niamtxiv nyob rau hauv ib lub zos yajsab. Yim neeg no kuj ua neej xws lub teb lub chaws. Tus txiv mas nws nyiam nyiam mus dib qaibqus heev.

Nws thiaj mus yuav tau ib tug lauqaib coj los xyaum ua qaib dib. Thaum nkawd muaj tus qaibdib no mas yog tias tus txiv xyeej caij kiag nws yeej coj mus dib qaibqus ces yeej tau nqaijqaib los ua hmo ua tshais.

Nyob-nyob muaj ib hnuv txawm muaj ib tug nomtswv nram moos loj tuaj mus xyuas haiv neeg tojsiab thiab yuav tuaj mus tsa tus puav nomtswv rau pem tej yajsab es xwv cov neeg chawqis thiab tojsiab thiaj muaj caijnyoog los ua haujlwm ua ke es thiaj li yuav sib nkag siab thiab yoojyim rau lub neej koomtes lawm yav tom ntej.

Thaum tus nomtswv nws mus txog ntawm lub zos no neeg zej zos sawvdaws mus ua teb tag lawm ces tsuas tshuav tus poj niam uas tus txiv muaj tus lauqaib dib no nyob tsev xwb. Tus nomtswv txawm mus thov so rau hauv nws tsev. Nws (tus pojniam) tsis pom qab yuav nrhiav dabtsis los ua zaub rau tus yawg nomtswv ntawd noj li. Nws, tus pojniam, xav hauv lub siab tias luag kam yog ib tug nomtswv tuaj chaw qis deb deb tuaj, thiab luag ib txwm muaj zoo noj (noj nqaij) xwb; ntshais kuv yuav tau npaj ib puas mov kom tsim nyog thiaj yuav raug ntsejmuag.

Nws xav xav ces nws thiaj ua ib siab mus muab nws tus txiv tus lauqaib dib los tua ua zaub rau tus yawg nomtswv ntawd noj.

Tus yawg nomtswv kuj noj zoo siab thiab qhuas tias haiv neeg tojsiab los yeej

yog haiv neeg muaj siab ntsws ib yam li tej tib neeg.

Txog thaum tus nomtswv nws twb yuav sawv kev mus tsev, tawm txog nraumzoov, ntsib tus txiv, thiab hais ua tsaug zaub mov.

Thaum tus txiv los txog ntua hauv tsev ces tus niam txawm piav qhia tus txiv hais tias "Nomtswv tuaj txog hauv wb tsev, kuv nrhiav tsis muaj dabtsis yuav zoo ua zaub rau nomtswv noj li, ces kuv muab koj tus lauqaib dib los tua ua zaub rau nomtswv noj lawm."

Tus txiv hnov dheev thiab npua taws nceev, tos nwm xwb, twb xa tib tawg ncuavpias rau tus niam ib sab phlu ces tus niam txawm quaj ntso lev hauv tsev tawm rau nraumzoov.

Tus yawg nomtswv hnov dheev, nws txawm tig hlo rov qab los nug tias "Yog vim li cas koj tus txiv yuav ntaus koj li no?"

Tus poj niam txawm teb tias "Kuv tus txiv cem thiab ntaus kuv tias cas koj twb yog nomtswv kam tuaj xyuas txog hauv wb tsev ib zaug diam ua cas nyuam qhuav tua tus nyuag qaib noj xwb es cas tsis tua tus npua thiaj li tsimnyog no."

Tus yawg nomtswv mas ras thiab nceeb siab heev tias "Cas tus txiv no yuav muaj kev xav zoo ua luaj!" Nws thiaj hais rau nkawd tias "Tagkis nawb neb npaj ib roojqav thiaj hu neeg zej zos tuaj koom, kuv yuav tsa koj tus txiv ua ib tug nomtswv kav nej lub zos no, vim neb tau muaj pluaj siab ntsws phim yuav ua tau ib tug hauv teb chaws lawm."

## New Year Pictures

During the Qin and Han dynasties in China some 2,000 years ago, people pasted pictures of gods and tigers on their doors on the New Year's Eve. During the Song dynasty (960-1279), New Year's pictures usually showed bountiful harvests, festivals, happy children, beautiful women, and characters from Chinese operas. During the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), New Year pictures flourished with the development of woodcut printing. The outline is printed first, then the colors are superimposed one at a time (each color requires a different woodcut). Ten cities became centers for this folk art. Over time, each center developed its own characteristic style. Because the pictures draw upon daily life, social customs, folklore and opera, the pictures are valuable for understanding important aspects in Chinese life. Pictures are hung with the hope that they will bring good fortune and happiness.



# Proverbs

There are many ways for students to learn that our differences are surface features of underlying commonalities. Proverbs provide non-threatening material for classroom activities—ones that involve divergent answers, group work, translation from other languages into English, verbalizing “hidden rules” of culture... These are taken from Charles Berlitz’s *Native Tongues* (Wideview / Perigree, 1982), and are drawn largely from European cultures. Within our classes are natural resources for equivalents from Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, China, Korea, Somalia, Ethiopia, Belarus, Ukraine, Armenia, Latvia, Estonia, Georgia, the Philippines, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador...

<p>When the cat’s away, the mice will play. (English)                  When the cat is absent, the mice will dance. (French)                  When the cat is out, the mice are dancing. (Italian)                  When the cat is out of the house, the mice have a feast day. (German)                  Cat gone, old rat comes out. (Chinese)                  When the master goes out there is a holiday in the shop. (Portuguese)                  When the boss is not around we know a lot of songs. (Greek)</p>	<p>Speak of the devil.... (English)                  When you speak of the wolf, you see his tail. (French)                  Thinking of the cat, it came leaping. (Arabic)                  When you speak of the donkey, he comes running. (German)                  Speaking of the King of Rome, suddenly he appears. (Spanish)</p>		<p>Look before you leap. (English)                  Turn the tongue seven times, then speak. (French)                  Have an umbrella before getting wet. (Japanese)                  Before you drink the soup, blow on it. (Arabic)                  First weigh (the consequences), then dare. (German)                  If you don’t know the ford, don’t cross the stream. (Russian)</p>
	<p>Too many cooks spoil the broth. (English)                  Too many cooks ruin the sauce. (French)                  A ship directed by many pilots soon sinks. (Spanish)                  With too many rowers the ship will crash into a mountain. (Japanese)                  When there are five nurses, the child loses an eye. With seven nurses, the child is finally found to lack a head. (Russian)                  Seven hands, eight feet. (Chinese)</p>	<p>Everyone to his own. (English)                  Each to his own taste. (French)                  Concerning tastes, there can be no disputing. (Latin)                  Ten men, ten colors. (Japanese)                  Every person is free in his opinions. (Arabic)                  Every baron has his own special fantasy. (Russian)</p>	
<p>Something is rotten in the state of Denmark. (English)                  There is something rotten in the state of Denmark. (German)                  There is an eel under the rock. (French)                  There is a cat shut up inside. (Spanish)                  There is a worm in the lion’s body. (Japanese)                  There is a snake under the hay. (Arabic)                  There is a needle in the bag. (Russian)                  I don’t know what kind of medicine is inside this melon. (Chinese)                  Just because the river is quiet, don’t think the crocodiles have left. (Malay)</p>	<p>Carrying coals to Newcastle... (English)                  Taking owls to Athens... (German, Greek)                  Taking jars to Samos... (Italians)                  He’s going to Tula, taking his on samovar. (Russian)</p>		
	<p>Much ado about nothing. (English)                  A great vineyard and few grapes. (Portuguese)                  Much smoke but a small roast. (Italian)                  Much noise, few nuts. (Spanish)                  Much bleating, little wool. (German)</p>		<p>Don’t count your chickens before they’re hatched. (English)                  You can’t hang people before you’ve caught them. (German)                  Don’t sell the bearskin before you kill the bear. (French, Italian)                  Don’t eat the sausages before you kill the pig. (Spanish)                  Don’t count the badger skins before you kill the badger. (Japanese)                  You can’t count chickens before the autumn comes. (Russian)                  Don’t curse the crocodile before you have crossed the river. (Swahili)                  If you meet a bear while crossing a bridge, address him as “my uncle” until you have reached the other side. (Turkish)</p>
<p>You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear. (English)                  If you’re born to crawl, you can’t fly. (Russian)                  There’s no way to turn a buzzard into a hawk. (French)                  You can’t find pears on an elm tree. (Spanish)                  From an ox you can only get beef. (German)</p>		<p>A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. (English)                  A bird in the hand is worth a hundred flying. (Spanish)                  Better an egg today than a chicken tomorrow. (Italian)                  A sparrow in the hand is better than a pigeon on the roof. (German)                  Don’t promise a pigeon in the sky but give a tomtit in the hand. (Russian)</p>	

9th annual

# Southeast Asia Education Faire '93

Organized by the Refugee Educators' Network—the Bilingual Education Office of the California Department of Education, Elk Grove USD, Folsom Cordova USD, Grant Joint Union SD; Lincoln USD, Rio Linda Elementary SD, Sacramento USD, San Juan USD, Stockton USD, UC Berkeley Teacher Ed Dept, Washington USD.

- Sam Ang Sam and Chan Moly** (Cambodian music and dance)
- Manh Phongboupha** (Khmu background & culture)
- KaYing Yang** (counseling SEAsian teens)
- Teeda Butt Mam** (a Cambodian family's adjustment to America)
- Ellen Yin** (essentials of parenting, for teachers advising newcomer parents)
- Annie Jaisser** (a Thai Hmong village)
- Mory Ouk** (Cambodian proverbs)
- Kaota Saepharn** (Mien proverbs)
- Nguyen Dinh Hoa** (Vietnamese proverbs)
- Jennie Cerullo** (cross-cultural communication)
- Rosalie Giacchino-Baker** (Lao & northern Thai folktales for teachers)
- Karen Retford** (Foxfire project)
- Alice Lucas** (curriculum for cross-cultural conflict resolution)
- To Thi Dien** (Folk Medicine, Nutrition, and Superstitions)
- Mary Etta Hamzawi** (Middle Eastern experiences & cultural conflict)
- Duong, Meksavanh & Mam** (refugee women from urban backgrounds)
- Panel: update on newcomers from the former Soviet Union**
- Hung Le, Trang To, Randy Yin, Darrell Fong** (Asian youth crime)
- Ann Goldman & Meuy Sio Fong** (Mien Women and their Embroidery)
- Chung Hoang Chuong** (current refugee situation)
- Mory Ouk** (raising successful children in America—in Cambodian)
- Kaota Saepharn** (raising successful children in America—in Mien)
- Tou Meksavanh** (raising successful children in America—in Lao)
- It's Elementary**—impact on LEP programs
- Second to None**—impact on LEP programs
- CLAD/BCLAD credentials
- more •more •more •more

- Continental breakfast**
- Vietnamese box lunch**
- Packet of handouts**
- New publication**
- Displays •Doorprizes**

## Sacramento City College

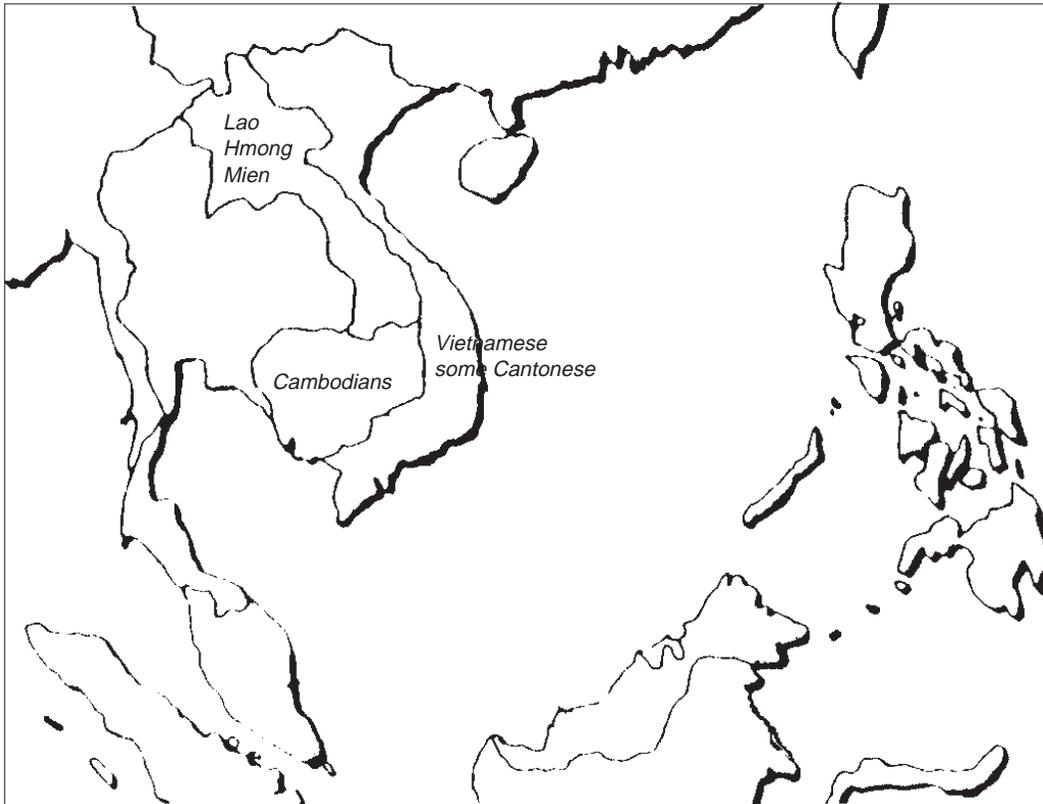
### 8:00 to 4:00

### \$40

Deadline for ordering tickets is March 13. Make checks/purchase orders payable to Refugee Educators' Network and mail to 2460 Cordova Lane, Rancho Cordova Ca 95670. Call Nguyet Tham for ordering information, (916) 635-6815, fax (916) 635-0174.

# How many Indochinese students in California schools?

Dr. VanLE of the Bilingual Education Office of the California Department of Education extracted these numbers from the March 1992 Language Census. With the demise of the TPRC (Transition Program for Refugee Children) census, this represents the best guess for the total numbers of students from the various groups. ["LEP" means "limited English proficient"; "FEP" means "fluent English proficient".]



*Note: Cantonese (one of the Chinese languages) students may come from Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Hong Kong, or any number of other countries.*

Language Groups	1990 LEP	1990 FEP	1990 Total	1991 LEP	1991 FEP	1991 Total	1992 LEP	1992 FEP	1992 Total
Cambodian	19,234	5,243	24,477	20,055	5,452	25,507	<b>20,752</b>	<b>5,903</b>	<b>26,655</b>
Cantonese	21,153	23,112	44,265	21,498	23,084	44,582	<b>22,262</b>	<b>23,317</b>	<b>45,579</b>
Hmong	18,091	3,824	21,915	21,060	4,216	25,276	<b>23,522</b>	<b>4,230</b>	<b>27,752</b>
Lao	12,177	4,275	16,452	12,430	4,375	16,805	<b>12,332</b>	<b>4,431</b>	<b>16,763</b>
Mien	2,834	508	3,342	3,577	663	4,240	<b>4,255</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>4,897</b>
Vietnam'se	34,934	27,681	62,615	40,477	28,646	69,123	<b>45,155</b>	<b>28,406</b>	<b>73,561</b>
Totals	108,423	64,643	173,066	119,097	66,436	185,533	128,278	66,929	195,207

*The Asian Art Museum  
of San Francisco*

**In My Country...  
Changes in Mien Embroidery**

Lecture by Ann Goldman and Muey Sio Fong, Laotian Handcraft Center, Berkeley. Followed by an embroidery demonstration by Meuy Sio Fong.

**February 3, 1993, 10:15 a.m.**

**Trustees' Auditorium**

**Folk Performing Arts of the Mien  
and Kmhmu Peoples of Laos**

Storytelling by Mien and Kmhmu artists, with English translations by Nancy Lenz.

**March 3, 199, 3:00 and 7:00 p.m.**

**Adrian Gruhn Court**

*For information, call Outreach/Public Programs at  
(415) 668-6404*

*Pittsburgh Public School District*

**Prospect Multicultural Center**

Six strands to the curriculum:

- Matching cognitive learning and teaching styles, particularly culturally determined styles.
- Conflict resolution strand—mastery of skills and student mediation center.
- Cooperative learning strand.
- Cultural awareness strand—adult role models who relate real-life experiences (hiring to diversify staff).
- Curriculum infusion strand—similarities and differences between cultural groups, integrated across subject areas; broadening of history viewpoint.
- Parental and community involvement—volunteering in non-traditinoal school activities.

*Resources:*

*Robert Pipkin, principal, Prospect Multicultural Center, Pittsburgh Public Schools.*

*Denise Yates, Resource Teacher on Conflict Resolution, Office of Multicultural Education, Pittsburgh Public Schools.*

*Center for Social Organization for Schools (Johns Hopkins University).*

*Gottfredson, G., S. Nettles, and B. McHugh (July 1992). Multicultural Education Can Succeed. Baltimore MD: CDS, The Johns Hopkins University.*

---

---

**China Boy**

A novel by Gus Lee

*1991 NAL Dutton, 1992 Signet (Penguin Books USA)*

The life and times of Kai Ting, a Shanghai boy, growing up in a black neighborhood in San Francisco in the 1950s. The author, not surprisingly a Shanghai boy, attended West Point and UC Davis law school. He is currently the Senior Executive for Legal Education Competence for the State Bar of California, and has promised to be a presenter for next year's Southeast Asia Education Faire.

This is a book to read. The wry humor and bittersweet truths compel better understanding. And, ay-ya, the metaphors!

Opening the book at random, you'll find:

A rail-thin nine-year-old named Toussaint LaRue looked on during these beatings and only hit me once. I therefore assumed that he occupied some lower social niche than mine. Like a snail's.

He took no pleasure in in the China Boy rituals. He instead talked to me. I suspected that he had devised a new method of pain infliction.

"Toussaint," he said, offering his hand. "Ya'lls supposed ta shake it." He grinned when I put my hand out with the same enthusiasm with which I would pet Mr. Carter's bulldog. Toussaint, like Eviil, had a big gap between his front teeth.

Toussaint would become my guide to American boyhood.

My primary bond to him was for the things he did not do. He did not pound or trap me. He never cut me down. Or laughed with knives in his eyes. Then he opened his heart by explaining things to me, giving me his learning, and taking me into his home.

"China. Don be cryin no mo'. Don work on dis here block, no sir, Cap'n! Give 'er up. When ya'll cry, hold' it insida yo'self. Shif' yo' feet an air-out, go parkside. Preten ya'll gone fishin. Don run now. Ain't cool.

"Fish in park?" I asked.

"Cheez! Ya'll don colly nothin! Ferget da fish, China. Dry yo' tears.

He told me about the theory of fights. That kids did it because it was how you became a

---

---

man later on.

"Momma tole me," he said, "in the ole days, no Negro man kin hit or fight. We belongs to the da whites, like hosses.

"Man fight 'notha man, be damagin white man goods. So he get whipped. An I mean *whipped*." He shook his head and rubbed the top of it, easing the pain of the thought.

"Now, ain't no mo' dat," he said, smiling. "We kin fights, like men." We was speaking very seriously. Fighting was a measure of citizenship. Of civilization. I didn't think so.

"China, stan up."

"Why?" I whined.

"Putchur fists up. Make a fist! Right. Bof han's.

"Dis one—," he said, holding my left. "It fo' guardin yo' face. Dis here one—dat's fo' poundin da fool who call ya out. Here come a punch, and ya'll block it. China—you listenin ta me?"

"No fight, no reason!" I said hotly.

"No reason!?" he yelled. "You can fight wif no *reason*? Boy! Whatchu *talkin* about?"

Uh-oh, I thought. Toussaint's hands were on his hips.

"Evera kid on dis here block like ta knock you upside da head and make you bleed and ya'll got no *reason*? China. Ain't no dude in da Handle got mo' cause fo' fightin *evera* day den *you*!"

"Too many boy fight," I said, drawing back from his heat.

"Uh-uh! No sir, Cap'n. Big-time nossir! Lissen. Some kids, dey fight *hard*. But anin't never gonna be no gangin up on one kid. *Dat* ain't cool." He shook his head. "Kid stan on his feet. No one else feet. Ain't *nobody* gonna stan inaway a dat. An youse best colly dat."

"Hittin' long," I tried.

"Say what?" he said.

"Long. Not light!"

"Wrong? Ya'll sayin fightin's *wrong*?"

"Light," I said.

"Howzat?"

"Bad yuing chi," I explained.

"Say *what*?"

"Bad, uh, karma!" I said, finding the East Indian word often used by my sisters.

"Well, China, ya'll thinks awful funny. Don have nothin ta do wif no *caramels*. No matta Big Willie take yo' candies. Ain't *candies*. It not bein *chicken*. Not bein yella. Ya'll don havta like it. Sakes, China, no one like ta Fist City. Well, maybe Big Willie, he like it. But like it or don like it, no matter none. Ya'll jus *do* it."

## Tragic Mountains

### The Hmong, the Americans, and the Secret Wars for Laos, 1942–1992

Jane Hamilton-Merritt  
1993, Indiana University Press

For those of you who don't understand the reasons behind the political splits in the Hmong community, and the vehemence of the Neo Hom (resistance), this is the book to read. Based on hundreds of interviews and her personal experiences, Jane Hamilton-Merritt narrates the history of the Hmong, from the time of the French to the present. She refutes each of the tales told about General Vang Pao, and puts his actions into context. She tells about the Americans who worked closely with the Hmong, particularly Jerry Daniels who stuck by the Hmong, and the others who forgot about them when the times turned. Particularly interesting are the accounts of the military actions, the fighting between the communist Lao and the Hmong resistance after 1975, the use of poison gasses, accounts of the concentration ("seminar") camps, and the horrific escapes from Laos.

Her case is weakened by overuse of "some" when documentation is lacking, and the settling of personal grudges against Yang Dao, among others. Overall, the factual material and personal histories are interesting and valuable, but the conclusions are too often slanted by opinion. As with works on Cambodia, historical premises can be argued from the left or the right; for the Hmong, there has been plenty of material on the left, but little on the right, until now.

### Hmmm?

Most students take 12 years—from grades 1 to 12—to acquire basic reading and mathematical skills that can be achieved in about three years of intensive training between ages 15 and 18. *White, Sheldon H. 1977. "The Paradox of American Education." National Elementary Principal, 56 (May/June): 9-10.*

# RESOURCES



2460 Cordova Lane,  
 Rancho Cordova CA 95670,  
 916 635-6815  
 Fax 916 635-0174

# Order form

## Make payable to Folsom Cordova USD/SEACRC—

- #9201 *Minority Cultures of Laos: Kammu, Lua', Lahu, Hmong, and Mien.* Lewis; Kam Raw, Vang, Elliott, Matisoff, Yang, Crystal, Saepharn. 1992. 402 pages. \$15.00 (carton discount \$12.00, 16 per carton)
- #S8801 *Handbook for Teaching Hmong-Speaking Students* Bliatout, Downing, Lewis, Yang, 1988. \$4.50 (carton discount for lots of 58: \$3.50)
- #S8802 *Handbook for Teaching Khmer-Speaking Students* Ouk, Huffman, Lewis, 1988. \$5.50 (carton discount for lots of 40: \$4.50)
- #S8903 *Handbook for Teaching Lao-Speaking Students* Luangpraseut, Lewis 1989. \$5.50 (carton discount for lots of 42: \$4.50)
- #S8904 *Introduction to the Indochinese and their Cultures* Chhim, Luangpraseut, Te, 1989. \$9.00 (carton discount for lots of 32: \$8.00)
- #S8805 *English-Hmong Bilingual Dictionary of School Terminology* *Cov Lus Mis Kuj Txhais ua Lus Hmoob* Huynh D Te, translated by Lue Vang, 1988. \$2.00 (no carton price)
- #S9006 *Vietnamese Language Materials Sourcebook* Huynh Dinh Te, 1990 \$2.00 (no carton discount)

Add California tax if applicable. For orders under \$30.00 add \$2.00 per copy shipping and handling. For orders over \$30.00, add 10% shipping/handling. If you wish UPS for quantity orders, please request it.

- #S9999 *CONTEXT: Southeast Asians in California*, annual subscription \$10.00.

## Make payable to Refugee Educators' Network—

- \_\_\_ #R001 Lao Alphabet Poster \$3.50
- \_\_\_ #R002 Lao Primer \$4.00
- \_\_\_ #R003 Lao 1st Grade Reader \$5.00
- \_\_\_ #R004 Lao 2nd Grade Reader \$5.50
- \_\_\_ #R005 Lao 3rd Grade Reader \$6.50
- \_\_\_ #R006 Hmong Primer \$4.00
- \_\_\_ #R007 Hmong dict. (Xiong) \$25.00
- \_\_\_ #R008 1992 Faire poster \$8.00

Includes tax; \$1.00 per item shipping/handling up to \$30.00. Over \$30.00, 10% s/h.



**Make payable to Lue Vang,**  
 PO Box 423, Rancho Cordova  
 CA 95741-0423.

*Grandmother's Path,*  
*Grandfather's Way* (Vang &  
 Lewis, revised printing 1990)  
**\$14.95**, plus \$2.00 shipping/  
 handling and applicable CA  
 tax. Wholesale price avail-  
 able; call 916 635-6815 for  
 information.

**Context:**  
**Southeast Asians in California**  
 c/o Folsom Cordova USD  
 Transitional English Programs Office  
 125 East Bidwell St  
 Folsom CA 95630

Non-profit  
 Bulk Rate  
 U.S. Postage Paid  
 Permit No. 140  
 Folsom, CA