

# The AACCP Newsletter

Since 1970

Asian American Curriculum Project, Inc.

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## *Good Luck Life*

*The Essential Guide to Chinese American Celebrations and Culture*

A review by Philip Chin

Chinese traditions and customs may sometimes be as inscrutable and mysterious to those of us who are second or more generations raised in America as it is to those wide-eyes commenting about how exotic we are. Sometimes you (either as a child or as an adult) simply don't want to ask the questions that come to mind, either because you're embarrassed to be so ignorant, or you're afraid your mother might hit you for asking. So it was very refreshing to get the chance to review the new book, "Good Luck Life: The Essential Guide to Chinese American Celebrations and Culture" by Rosemary Gong, published by Harper Resources (\$14.95).

This book can be read by adults or children with equal satisfaction. Every child and many adults have questions about Chinese celebrations such as the symbolism of red egg parties to celebrate the birth of a child (why red?) or why all the gold jewelry is given by the two families to the bride and groom to celebrate a wedding. Traditions such as fireworks at celebrations and especially during Chinese New Year (this February 2005) are explained. The cultural significance and identity of the guardian god seen in

Chinese restaurants across America (and some American police stations too), with offerings of incense and fruit in front of it, is explained. For those surprisingly simple but actually quite complicated questions that kids ask about celebrations and traditions there are very good answers in this book.

For adults, this book also answers more serious questions as to how one should conduct a traditional Chinese funeral and all the objects and symbolism involved. Silk blankets layered over the dead are in different colors to symbolize different things and are supposed to be laid in a fixed order. This was a surprise to me especially when I discovered that even Chinese people coming from Hong Kong or China generally don't know the symbolism or order of this tradition. This isn't very surprising because Chinese generally have a great reluctance to talk about death. That is one of the strengths of this book, to delve into matters of tradition that Chinese families don't usually cover.

So whatever questions you have about Chinese traditions and culture, "Good Luck Life" is a great place to start.

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## **And Justice for All**

An editorial by Leonard Chan

On February 19, 1942, sixty three years ago this month, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 which effectively sanctioned the forced removal of Japanese Americans from the western states and eventually lead to their internment in concentration camps.

In preparations for this newsletter I began a search for books that I could feature in remembrance of this dark anniversary. One of the books that I decided to use, *Executive Order 9066*, has a wonderful introduction written by Edison Uno. For those of you that are unfamiliar with Edison Uno, he was a renowned educator and Japanese American activist during the

60s and 70s (he passed away in the late 70s). For us at AACCP, we are proud to say that he was one of our founders too.

Edison Uno fought for many causes. One of his objectives was to make sure that people never forgot about the injustices done to Japanese Americans during World War II. Upon reading Edison's introduction, I began to imagine what he might have thought of President Bush's recent inaugural speech.

Like a mantra, President Bush drove the words freedom and liberty into our thoughts. In a speech that

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## Give Us Your Feedback

Please feel free to send us your reviews, comments, and book suggestions. You can contact us at - [aacpinc@asianamericanbooks.com](mailto: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
Feb. 19 11:30am	Sacramento Day of Remembrance Hiroshi Kashiwagi Book Signing	Sacramento, CA
Feb. 19 12-1:30pm	San Mateo Day of Remembrance	San Mateo County History Museum Redwood City, CA
Feb. 20 5:30pm	San Jose Day of Remembrance	SJ Buddhist Church San Jose, CA
Mar. 4-6	California Council for the Social Studies Conference	Hyatt SF Airport Burlingame, CA
Mar. 6 11am-5:30pm	Chinese New Year's Celebration	Stockton Civic Aud. 525 N. Center St. Stockton, CA
Mar. 12	Academic Success Day Exhibit/Sales	SC County Office of Educ. Santa Clara, CA
Mar. 12-13	Reading the World VII	USF 2350 Turk Blvd. San Francisco, CA
April 9 10-1:30pm	Hiroshi Kashiwagi Book Signing	JCCNC San Francisco, CA
<b>Other Event of Interest that AACP May Not Attend</b>		
Jan. 8 1pm	Chinese New Year Celebration Events in SF	Chinatown San Francisco, CA
Feb. 12-13 10-Mid. 10-6pm	Tet Festival	Santa Clara Co. Fairgrounds San Jose, CA
Jan. 8 1pm	Chinese New Year Parade	San Francisco, CA
Feb. 20 2pm	Day of Remembrance Exhibit/Sales	Kabuki Theatre 1881 Post St. San Francisco, CA
Mar. 12-13	Marysville Bok Kai Festival	3rd & D St. Marysville, CA
Mar. 10-20	22st San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival	San Francisco, Berkeley, San Jose, CA
April 20-24	Association for Asian American Studies National Conference	Marriott Los Angeles Downtown Los Angeles, CA

## Editor's Message

Hello Everyone.

Happy New Year again. This time it's happy Lunar New Year! The Lunar New Year observed by many Asian cultures is on February 9th this year, and according to the Chinese zodiac, is the year of the Rooster.

There are a lot of events happening in the coming two months. Have a look at our event schedule. Please note that I have been getting your event notices, but unfortunately, I am deluged we so many that it's hard for me to keep track of all the things going on. In the near future, I hope to have a form on our website that will let us know of your events and will make the posting and announcing of these events much easier.

We are experimenting with having a printable version of our newsletter available to you and the general public. The link in our side bar above, right below the *Newsletter Home Page Link*, will allow you to download a PDF (Adobe Acrobat) version of the newsletter. We will monitor the number of downloads and if there is enough interest in this feature, we will continue to make printable versions of the newsletter available to you.

Also, I will be making other upgrades to our website. I hope to be telling you all about them in the next newsletter.

Thank you to all the people that came to our New Year's poetry day event. Thank you **Takahashi Market** for supplying us with some of the food for the event. Thank you Mas (Hongo) for being so generous in giving out the free copies of *Petals of the Vanda* (for those that didn't come, see what you missed :). For those of you that got a free copy, we hope you spread the word about our great book. Thank you to Margo King Lenson, Hirose Kashiwagi, and all the other unnamed attendees that shared your works with us. It was great to have you all. I hope very much that we can do it again next year and that you'll all be able to attend again.

Thank you Sophie for your help and efforts to sell our surplus books. We'll have more chances, so don't feel bad about the results - it's the effort that counts.

If you're not sure what I was just saying to Sophie about surplus books, come to our store and check them out. AACP has a large number of Chinese cookbooks that we are selling at 50% or more below the retail cost. These are real bargains, so please come and take advantage of them before the supply is all gone.

That's it for now.

Leonard Chan  
**Executive Editor**

took less than 30 minutes, he used these words over 40 times. For me, I couldn't remember much else, so I had to find the speech online to read it. I must say, that it really reads quite well. Nothing in it was really objectionable and most everyone from all parts of the political spectrum could probably shake their head in agreement with much of the speech.

So what was wrong with the speech was not what it contained, but what it lacked. The inaugural address was probably not the right time for President Bush to be talking about America's historical and current struggles with freedom and liberty, but by not mentioning our imperfections, his eloquent speech came off as hypocritical and unfoundedly self-righteous.

The key word that was under used is "justice." Buried among all the uses of freedom and liberty, President Bush managed to use the word justice only a half dozen times. So why is this word so important that it was placed near the beginning of the Preamble of the United State Constitution? And let's not forget the pledge that I happily led my junior high homeroom class in saying everyday - "...liberty and justice for all."

The framers of the Constitution knew that in order to have a functioning national government, they had to have a functioning judicial system. Like the game "rock, paper, scissors," our government's various branches were designed to prevent any one branch from imposing tyrannical powers over the others. Even in a democracy, you can have tyranny imposed by the majority over minorities.

James Madison, one of the authors of the US Constitution said, *"The biggest danger to our rights today, is not from governments acting against the will of the majority, but from government which has become the mere instrument of this majority. Think about it. That's where the abuse of power comes from. Not the tyranny of the king, but the tyranny of the majority. Wrong will be done as much by an all powerful people as by an all powerful prince."*

Part of our court system's duties is to evaluate the justness or fairness of laws and actions enacted by the legislative and executive branches of government. The bedrock by which the courts measure fairness is our constitution and the Bill of Rights contained within it. Armed with this foundation, our judicial system can keep in check the powers of the other branches. Keep this in mind the next time you hear someone complaining about the courts thwarting the will of the people (through the legislature or by referendum) or the executive branch. That's part of the courts' duty -

making sure that there is "justice for all."

Sadly, even in our great country, there have been many many times when our governmental system failed to be just. The Japanese American internment during World War II is one example when even the judicial system failed to protect against tyranny. We must all constantly be aware, study, and remember this and other injustices so that we can prevent them from ever happening again.

*In remembering, it is important to come to grips with the past. No nation can fully understand itself or find its place in the world if it does not look with clear eyes at all the glories and disgraces of its past. We in the United States acknowledge such an injustice in our history. The internment of Americans of Japanese ancestry was a great injustice, and will never be repeated.*

**President George H. W. Bush**

December 7, 1991

It may not have been appropriate for our current President Bush to talk about this in his inaugural speech. Inaugural speeches are usually meant to encourage and uplift. So it is left to us, those in education and the media, to pour the cold water on the idealist and to remind everyone that America is not perfect and that we must learn from our past.

Part of what makes our system great is that it can correct itself. We and governments of the world can only get better through the continued nourishment and support of the institutions that allow for this self-correction. And above even our governments, we must create a space within our own hearts and minds for justice, fairness, love, and compassion.

*Those who cherish liberty may learn much, now that the racial hatred and fear of conquest of thirty years have passed. Let us determine to abide by the lessons that EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066 (the book) teaches us - first, that the mere existence of a legal right is no more protection to individual liberty than the parchment upon which it is written, and second, that the mutual love, respect, and understanding of one another are stronger bonds than constitutions.*

**Tom C. Clark**

Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Retired  
From the epilogue of *Executive Order 9066* - written in 1971 for 1st Ed.

Yes, let freedom and "justice" march on.

## Website Links of Interest

Bush Inaugural Speech

NPR State of the Union articles

NPR discussion on the meaning of freedom

U.S. Constitution

Bill of Rights

A short biography on James Madison

James Madison Quote

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/inaugural/index.html>

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4476024>

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4475369>

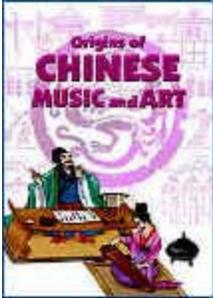
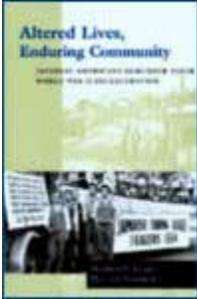
<http://www.house.gov/Constitution/Constitution.html>

<http://www.house.gov/Constitution/Amend.html>

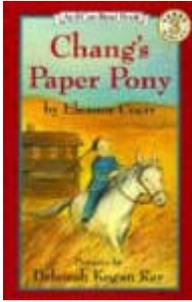
<http://www.wealth4freedom.com/truth/1/JamesMadison.htm>

[http://pbsvideodb.pbs.org/resources/liberty/sr\\_06.html](http://pbsvideodb.pbs.org/resources/liberty/sr_06.html)

The following books are discounted an additional 20% from the listed price for subscribers to our newsletter. The discounts on these books end March 5, 2005.

	<p><b>Good Luck Life</b>  <b>The Essential Guide to Chinese American Celebrations and Culture</b>          By Rosemary Gong          2005, 288 pages, paperback.</p> <p>For any one interested in learning more about Chinese American culture and celebrations, this books is one of the most comprehensive works on the subject.</p> <p>If you haven't already read the above review check it out.</p> <p>Item #3276, Price \$14.95 - for newsletter subscribers <b>\$11.96</b></p>
	<p><b>Origins of Chinese Music and Art</b>          Compiled by Li Xiaoxiang          Illustrated by Fu Chunjiang          Translated by Y N Han          2002, 148 pages, paperback.</p> <p>Origins of Chinese Music and Art is an engaging introductory book to Chinese written language, calligraphy, music, games, and art. Told in comic book fashion and in regular text, this book will give readers a taste of the Chinese arts, feed their curiosity, and make them want for more.</p> <p>Item #3274, Price \$14.95 - for newsletter subscribers <b>\$11.96</b></p>
	<p><b>Altered Lives, Enduring Community</b>  <b>Japanese Americans Remember Their World War II Incarceration</b>          By Stephen S. Fugita and Marilyn Fernandez          2004, 253 pages, paperback.</p> <p>Altered Lives, Enduring Community examines the long-term effects on Japanese Americans of their World War II experiences: forced removal from their Pacific Coast homes, incarceration in desolate government camps, and ultimate resettlement. The authors use data from the first-ever, representative survey of a community of Japanese Americans who were imprisoned during World War II, conducted as part of Seattle's Densho: Japanese American Legacy Project. Their often poignant account presents the contemporary, post-redress perspectives of former incarcerated and reveals the incarceration's consequences for their lives.</p> <p>Item #3275, Price \$24.95 - for newsletter subscribers <b>\$19.96</b></p>

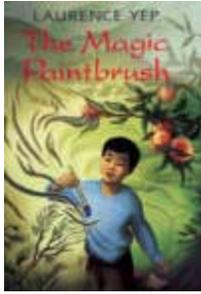
## Chang's Paper Pony and The Magic Paintbrush Bundle



### Chang's Paper Pony

By Eleanor Coerr  
Illustrated by Deborah Kogan Ray  
1988, 64 pages, paperback.  
An old favorite that's back in stock.

Eleanor Coerr, author of *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, tells the story of Chang, a Chinese immigrant boy living in 1850's California. Chang wants a pony, but cannot afford one until his friend Big Pete finds a solution.



### The Magic Paintbrush

By Laurence Yep  
Illustrated by Suling Wang  
2000, 89 pages, paperback.

In this fanciful tale, Laurence Yep, author of *Dragonwings*, tells the story of Steve and his magic paintbrush. Reminiscent of Aladdin and his magic lamp, Steve is given a magic paintbrush, which turns almost anything he paints into reality. Find out what Steve does with his brush as he turns his grandfather's dreary Chinatown apartment into a portal to imaginary worlds.

Item #3278, Price For the Two Books Combined \$8.98 - for newsletter subscribers **\$7.18**



### Executive Order 9066

#### The Internment of 110,000 Japanese Americans

By Maisie & Richard Conrat  
1992, 120 pages, paperback.

They say that a picture is worth a thousand words. With over 50 pictures, this classic photo essay, that was originally printed in the early 1970s, is a must have book for all those interested in knowing more about the Japanese American Internment during World War II. The book includes an introduction written by Edison Uno and many photos by renowned photographer Dorothea Lange.

Item #1990, Price \$14.95 - for newsletter subscribers **\$11.96**