

American Folklore Society Monthly News Bulletin

September 2009

[A monthly e-mail update from AFS to fill the gap between the *AFS News* and the new AFS web site.]

Chinese Folklore Forum Planned for Boise

At AFS 2009, there will be a forum on Folk Performance and Local Identity in Changing China, sponsored by the Eastern Asia Folklore Section. This is part of AFS's continuing effort to strengthen the Society's international dimension by interacting with Asian folklorists, and follows on the first official visit of a China Folklore Society (CFS) delegation to AFS (in October 2007 to the AFS/FSAC meeting in Québec); the first official visit to China later in 2007 by an AFS delegation, led by Bill Ivey; and a mid-2008 visit, and an official presence at the China Folklore Society meeting in October 2009, by AFS Executive Director Tim Lloyd.

The forum will be comprised of four folklorists from Sun Yat-sen (Zhongshan) University in Guangzhou, formerly known as Canton (Professors Mingzhi Jiang, Baocheng Kang, Xiaochun Liu, Junhua Song) and one folklorist from Beijing Normal University (Professor Mu Peng, PhD in folklore from the University of Pennsylvania), and chaired by Juwen Zhang of Willamette University.

This forum joins the discourse on the cultural place and local identity, and the dynamics of folklore performance and its relation with the social context, by presenting some distinctive case studies in China. It also provides a new perspective toward the idea and reality of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in both local and global interactions. The first presentation looks at the folksong performance of the Hakka people. While the traditional Hakka songs were all about love, they were seen as indecent prior to 1980s, but later were performed on national stage. This study tries to answer these questions: How could this process be understood? What is the social force for this cultural production? What internal changes are there in the Hakka songs? The second presentation examines the Chinese *nuo* (mask) drama costume in Guizhou. The *nuo* costume can not only help *nuo* drama to fulfill its ritual function of communication between human beings and gods, but also help itself to fulfill its theatrical function to perform a story. The *nuo* drama costume is a main part of China traditional theatrical costume as well as the symbolic characters in Chinese drama. This study also looks at the local identity seen through the custom. The third presentation focuses on the issue of cultural space by looking at the practice and idea of dragon mother belief popular in Southwest China. The

ethics of filial piety in the cultural space relating to the dragon mother is the origin for its vitality of long standing history. In the long history in China, the idea of filial piety in the belief of dragon mother has become the norm for people to act and do things in everyday life. In recent years, the culture of dragon mother has become an important way for the compatriots from Hong Kong and Macao to quest their root and identity, which is the modern transformation and amelioration of the traditional filial piety. The fourth presentation traces the history of the *chuantai* (boat stage) genre of folk performance, popular in South China from the 13th to 19th century. The development of the performing space from the boat over the centuries shows the changes and the society and the folklore performance itself. It is from this genre that many other modern genres of folk drama were created. The fifth presentation explores how different local agents shape villagers' worldviews and practices of funerals, and how the tension between diversity and uniformity is balanced at village and community levels.

A Brief Introduction: Institute of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Institute of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage of Sun Yat-Sen (Zhongshan) University in Guangzhou consists of three research centers for traditional opera, oral literature and art, and folklore and the protective strategies for intangible cultural heritage. There are fifteen full-time researchers, including nine professors, twelve part-time researchers including eleven professors. The Director of the institute is Professor Kang Baocheng.

In 1950s, traditional opera specialists Wang Jisi and Dong Meikan established the first of these research directions and cultivated the backbone of the institute, the first of its kind in China. Besides, the studies on folklore by Dr. Gu Jiegang and Dr. Zhong Jingwen have had great achievements through persistent efforts. Basing on these two academic traditions and absorbing the studies on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, the institute continues a research tradition, and has gained prominent accomplishments. Upon protecting the advantage of the traditional study, they have also achieved greatly in research of opera texts, forms of performance, oral literature and art and the protection of intangible cultural heritage, etc.

The Institute has a long list of publications, including *The Complete Plays of Yuan Dynasty* edited by Wang Jisi (winner of the First Prize of University Achievements of National Humanities and Social Sciences 2002); *A Series on Classic Collections of Chinese Folklore*, edited by Professor Ye Chunsheng (2004) which exerted an extensively positive influence in China; *Forms of Chinese Ancient Operas and Buddhism* by Kang Baocheng, a breakthrough in the field of studying the history of Chinese ancient operas; and *Study on Chinese Ancient Opera Raiment* by Song Junhua.

The Institute publishes a leading journal in folklore studies in China, *Cultural Heritage* (Wenhua Yichan), in which Bill Ivey's talk on the Three Sectors of Folklore Studies in the US (2007) and Tim Lloyd's talk on the Smithsonian Folklife Festival (2008), both delivered when they were in China, were published.

Juwen Zhang, Willamette University

University of Missouri Position Available

The Women's and Gender Studies Department at the University of Missouri seeks a scholar whose primary research and teaching interests focus on African American and gender topics, pending final approval. This is a tenure-track position beginning in August, 2010. Requirements include an advanced ABD or PhD, evidence of ability to conduct a program of research on African American gender issues, and commitment to teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Applicants should have research and teaching interests in one or more of the various intersections of race, ethnicity, region, culture, class, gender, age, sexuality, disabilities. The teaching load in the department is four courses per year. The department provides excellent research support, mentoring and offers an exciting intellectual environment.

The University of Missouri is committed to increasing the diversity of the college community and curriculum. In relation to this, candidates who support those goals are encouraged to apply and to identify their relevant strengths and experiences, indicating these in the cover letter. We are interested in candidates who work in the intersections of African American Studies and Women's & Gender Studies.

To apply, submit a cover letter that includes a statement of your research, future research program and teaching interests or experience, a curriculum vitae, three letters of recommendation, and publication(s) or writing sample(s). Please submit your application to: Search Committee, Women's and Gender Studies Department, 325 Strickland Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri. 65211 USA. This search has been reopened after being suspended last year; previous applicants need only update previously submitted materials.

The review of applicants will begin on October 1, 2009 and continue until the position is filled. Please direct questions to Dr. Tola Pearce (pearcei@missouri.edu), Chair of the Search Committee, Dr. Jacquelyn Litt (Littj@missouri.edu), Chair of the Department, or Administrative Assistant Shelda Eggers at 573/882-2703 or EggersS@missouri.edu.

You can also contact Prof. Elaine Lawless at lawlesse@missouri.edu you're your questions.

Further information about the WGST program can be found on the website <http://wgst.missouri.edu>. The University of Missouri is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action/ADA employer.

International Perspectives on the Art and Tradition of Storytelling Conference

Storytellers of Canada/Conteurs du Canada National Conference and Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, July 28, to Sunday, August 1, 2010

St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada

Join the Storytellers of Canada/Conteurs du Canada for a 5-day conference as part of the 400th anniversary of English settlement on the much-storied island of Newfoundland, with workshops, professional development, concerts, tours, story slam, and international symposium.

The 2010 Conference Planning Committee invites you to submit proposals for consideration in the following two categories:

1. Professional Development Workshops
2. Panel Discussion Participants

1. Professional Development Workshops (90 minutes)

Attendees at the 2009 SCCC conference listed workshops on Collecting Oral History, Newfoundland and Labrador Ballads, Stories behind the Storyteller (life stories and practical experiences of storytellers), Vocal Warmups, Storytelling and the Internet, and Storytelling in Education as their top choices for workshops for 2010. Other topics identified included Mask and/or Clown, Storytelling Techniques, Grant Writing, Press Release Writing, Stories with Music, Critiquing, Researching Stories, and Body/Movement workshops. The committee will be looking for innovative approaches, hands-on practical workshops for storytellers at different levels of their careers and workshops that will help tellers with the business of storytelling: addressing marketing, technology, and other tools for working storytellers.

Who May Apply:

We welcome proposal submissions from anyone. Presenters do not need to be members of Storytellers of Canada/Conteurs du Canada(SC-CC). Non-members

are strongly encouraged to join SC/CC if their proposal is accepted. Workshops will be funded to a total of \$300 per workshop, and presenters are responsible for their own travel, accommodation, and conference registration costs.

2. Panel participants - International Perspectives on the Art and Tradition of Storytelling

As part of the 2010 Conference, one day will be devoted to panel presentations on international perspectives on the art and tradition of storytelling. The morning will focus on the oral tradition of storytelling, while the afternoon will focus on contemporary performance, art and use. We are seeking representatives of national, regional, state, or provincial storytelling organizations and academic programs who would be willing to address issues of current focus or concern to their organizations or areas.

Who May Apply:

We welcome proposal submissions from anyone, though official representatives of established groups are preferred. Presenters do not need to be members of Storytellers of Canada/Conteurs du Canada(SC/CC). Non-members are strongly encouraged to join SC/CC if their proposal is accepted. Panel participants will be given an honorarium of \$50, and participants are responsible for their own travel, accommodation, and conference registration costs.

Please include:

- a one-two paragraph description of your proposal
- a copy of your recent CV or artists profile
- complete mail, telephone and email contact information

Send to:

SCCC2010proposals@gmail.com

The deadline for submissions is September 30, 2009. Only successful applicants will be contacted, by mid-November.