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Storytelling

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FEATURED STORY:
The Son of Tunde



Nu Wa Storytellers Return to China

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This past fall, 41 storytellers from the United States traveled to the village of Gengcun, China, to continue a storytelling exchange begun by Jimmy Neil Smith in 1997 and continued by NSN in 2002. How appropriate for a vil-

lage with a 600-year tradition of storytelling dating back to the days of the old Silk Road.

According to Chinese mythology, the goddess Nu Wa created man and woman from clay, and later created peace in the heavens between the gods of fire and water.

In Nu Wa's honor, we fostered peace on earth through our stories.

From the moment our contingent—the people of the bus—arrived in Gengcun to the adoration of its 1,200 men, women and children, it was love at first story. During four days our tellers told, played music, led arts and crafts activities in the school, made presentations in their Hall of Stories, and took turns telling and listening to stories in homes of Gengcun's storytellers. Some of the local master tellers knew upwards of 100 stories. Planned and impromptu ceremonies at village shrines added a spiritual element to the exchange.

This year's diverse group was led by Eth-Noh-Tec's Robert Kikuchi-Yngojo and Nancy Wang, Linda Fang, and Linda Yemoto. It included tellers from across the States. Some were returning for the second or third time. Our youngest teller, Chloe Clunis, 14 (who told in Jonesborough in 2005), was especially popular.

Despite two levels of interpretation (English - Mandarin - Pinyin dialect, or its reverse) universal themes abounded. We heard stories of turtles, dragons, scheming dogs, three little pigs, evil step-mothers, overbearing fathers-in-law, simple sons, love unrequited, and more, and told the same.

Donations of school supplies, books, monetary contributions, and proceeds from various fundraising projects still underway, made a difference to this impoverished village.

The 17-day trip included visits to the Great Wall, Chengde, Beijing (where tellers told at a venerable Toastmasters club), and a third week in the Yunnan province.

For more information on this trip or the next, contact Robert Kikuchi-Yngojo at robert@ethnohtec.org or 415-282-8705.



TOP: Leeny Del Seamonds joins some of the 'movers and shakers' on arrival in Gengcun.

ABOVE: This year's trip organizers (left to right) Robert Kikuchi-Yngojo and Nancy Wang of Eth-Noh-Tec, Linda Fang, and Linda Yemoto.



ABOVE: Elly Reidy, Linda Yemoto, and Lorraine Calbow team tell to third and fourth graders while interpreter Angela (Li Jiao Mi) watches.



RIGHT: Stories, songs, and dance unite Nu Wa tellers with their Chinese hosts.

BELOW: The ladies lead a ceremony to celebrate our shared love of stories.

