

# Chinese Voice 10 September 1998 issue

Contributed by Lachlan  
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- Aotearoa Chinese Artists's Symposium '99
- Yangtze tribes re-united.

Aotearoa Chinese Artists's Symposium '99

Eric Ngan

A 3-day Chinese Artists's Symposium is being planned for Wellington in May 1999. It is intended to promote networking and the sharing of skills and knowledge of the arts scene in NZ as well as help students, who perhaps having decided on a career in arts, feel isolated or uncertain about their choices. It will also cater for the young up-and-comers and the practicing artists who want to extend their skills.

Most families, particularly Chinese families, want their children to get a "real" job: a life spent diligently working in a respectable occupation is deemed preferable to a life on stage or in front of a canvas. Parents will point out that no artist "makes it" until they die and I'm not going to let you ruin your life etc&hellip;Such is family pressure that by school leaving age, many children have given up any notion of attempting anything artistic. Although the times they are a-changing&hellip; Parents who have worked hard for a better life for their children have succeeded. Second, third and fourth generation NZ Chinese children do not have the same economic constraints and obstacles as their forebears. They have many more choices of lifestyles and careers.

Increasingly, NZ Chinese students are studying the arts. Be it in performance, literary or visual field, but with a real conviction that this is the thing for them. The question is now being asked in the arts industry and the community is how do we nurture this healthy turn of events? How do we make sure those who do engage in the arts are given every opportunity to fulfil their dreams?

A lack of role models can be an obstacle for young Chinese artists: people who have "been there, done that" and who can offer knowledgeable advice. Also every artist needs peers with whom they can talk to, interact with, seek support from and to bounce ideas about with.

The symposium, currently being planned, aims to address these needs for those in the Chinese arts community. The programme will include speeches and lectures followed by discussions and a series of introductory workshops in a variety of media. Intended to give attendees a direct insight into being an artist in NZ, the activities will be led by professional Chinese artists in a variety of media, including Guy Ngan (painter), Lynda Chanwai Earle (actor/writer), Yuk King Tan (painter), Helene Wong (writer), Denise Kum (sculptor) and Stan Chan (painter/calligrapher). Leaders in the performance arts (music and dance) are being sought.

The symposium is being organised by Siva Lava Productions (Eric Ngan) assisted by Claudia Wong. Claudia and Eric recently presented a joint discussion paper on Chinese art and culture in NZ at the Pansy Wong/Chinese Community Forum at Parliament in the presence of the Minister of Cultural Affairs and the Chief Executive of Creative NZ. Eric is a contemporary visual artist, specialising in drawing, painting and installation. He is also a producer of shows for the NZ International Festival of the Arts and a freelance event organiser for exhibitions, theatre, concert and craft demonstrations. Unusually, he manages the Tu Fa's atasi Outrigger Club in his spare time. Contact Eric Ngan 473 0149 x 270, mobile 025 418 734.

Yangtze tribes re-united

Steven Young

Recent DNA research proving that Maori come from Taiwan and the Yangtze river valley in China, together with a High Court ruling on the meaning of "iwi" could be excellent news for the Chinese in New Zealand, particularly those who like to eat paua (a corruption of the Chinese bao yu.) They will henceforth be allowed to gather kai moana (a corruption of hai xian xia) such as crayfish and trout for family consumption under customary fishing rights.

It could be even better news for Taiwanese trawlers who could fish their own (newly re-allocated) fishing quota so

long as the crew included at least one member of the Taiwanese aborigine people.

Mandarin language nests will now be supported by Government funding.. Government Departments will soon answer the telephone with "Ni hao!" and would be required to transcribe their Maori names in their correct original Chinese characters instead of Roman script.

Following a national hui (the same word in Chinese) the reconstituted Waitangi (Yangtze) Tribunal could start work redressing all grievances again. With new-found speed the Tribunal could work towards another full and final settlements before the year 2000. Who knows, the new Tribunal could grant fishing rights 200km each side of the Yangtze to the new Taiwanese Maori.