A Pre-Halloween Professional Development for Chinese Language Teachers

Chinese Ghosts and Monsters

Looking for ideas for teaching Chinese around Halloween? Chinese monster storytelling, and opera mask making may be some great ideas. And how about teaching Chinese characters around the horror movie theme? More than 60 Chinese teachers gathered on the evening of Friday, October 22 for a Halloween themed workshop, exploring ideas to enrich their language teaching. The workshop, co-sponsored by Asian Languages BETAC, Chinese Language Teacher Association – Greater New York (CLTA-GNY) and NYU Project for Developing Chinese Language Teachers (DCLT), is part of the Chinese teacher monthly forum held at NYU.

The presentations on October 22 are all around the theme of Halloween and Chinese ghosts and monsters. Pat Lo, ALBETAC Director, and Robin Harvey, DCLT Coordinator, welcomed the participants and introduced the evening’s rich program strung together with literature, language, storytelling and art works by the horror theme. Diane Wolkstein, told the story of the Red Boy from Journey to the West. Her precise and dramatic performance with her music accompanist Jeff Green awed the audience. Her performance was followed by Teaching Chinese Characters: Horror Movie Theme. Presenter Hao Bo, Hunter College, directed teachers to think about various ways to teach Chinese characters. And finally, Professor Jingxiang Ying from Xiamen University talked about the origin of the Chinese ghost stories and compared them to the Western ghost stories. In her presentation, Ghosts and Spirits in the Chinese literature, Professor Ying depicted Chinese ghosts and spirits as living in an organized society that mimics the human world, have active interactions with humans, and often serve justice to compensate what cannot be accomplished in the human society.

Guoqing Zhang, Professional Performance Arts High School, also shared with the audience some student art projects of Chinese opera mask making and an instruction sheet showing step by step process of the art project. Teachers were given a few sample drawings of the masks and discussed how to use the masks for language and culture teaching and learning. Click here for sample masks and student project provided by Guoqing Zhang. Click here for more ideas of Chinese opera mask making project provided by Boer Chen, East-West School of International Studies.

Please click here to view activity pictures.