

COOL MOUNTAIN EDUCATION FUND

凉山教育促进会

Newsletter, November 2006

Educational Enrichment off to a Great Start with Teacher Training

The Cool Mountain Education Fund organized a Teacher Training Workshop at the Yangjuan Primary School in March 2006. Facilitated by Fu Chunmin, an expert on teaching from the Sichuan Normal University, and Tami Blumenfield, CMEF Secretary, workshop participants (all primary school teachers) explored ways to include local knowledge in their teaching. The facilitators also modeled student-centered teaching methods. For example, participants spent an afternoon looking for local medicinal herbs, asking villagers to explain traditional ways of making tools, and recording folk songs. The next day, participants designed similar activities for their students and accompanied them through the village.

After the workshop, participants said:

- "This activity promotes independence, cooperation, language expression, and increases [students'] drawing abilities."
- "This is a good way to develop their skills in scientific methods."

With this practical training completed, teachers developed new ways to help their students learn, and identified areas where their students needed further assistance.



(Above) This student showed off the medicinal herb his group collected during the Teacher Training Workshop. Students reported back to the workshop participants after helping their teachers practice new teaching methods.

(Below) A student shares a Nuosu folk tale that her group learned during the morning activity



Resource Center Established at Yangjuan Primary School

Projects that the students conducted are now housed in a new resource room at the school. Contents include plant and insect specimens from the local ecosystem, and drawings of wildlife. We collected books about the Yi culture and donated them to the school. Folk tales and other stories gathered during the teacher training also enriched the collection.

Scholarship Award Ceremony

President Stevan Harrell and CMEF Board Member Li Xingxing returned to the Cool Mountains at the end of August with scholarships for the second graduating class of the Yangjuan Primary School. The students are now halfway through their first semester of middle school. Scholarships awarded to students from Yangjuan Primary School's first graduating class (YPS '05) were also renewed.



Above: The scholarship ceremony, Aug. 30, 2006



Above: Some of the 2006 graduates with their mothers and aunts following the scholarship ceremony. Also pictured are members of the Seattle contingent and Sha Kaiyuan, principal of the Yangjuan Primary School.

HOW TO HELP MAKE GOOD THINGS HAPPEN

With your support, the Cool Mountain Education Fund can continue its mission of improving education in southwest China. Here's how you can make a tax-deductible donation:

Buy or reserve one or more calendars. Our 2007 Yangjuan Primary School calendar, featuring student photography, will be ready in time for holiday gifts. Calendars are \$20 each, plus \$2.50 shipping and handling. Order yours today!

New! Make an in-kind donation. We would appreciate donations of the following items to support our work: digital cameras, digital voice recorders, memory cards, external hard drives, laptop computers, and donated brochure printing.

Make an unrestricted contribution. A one-time gift in any amount will be very useful to this year's graduates.

The gold standard! Endow a three-year scholarship for a graduate of Yangjuan Primary School to attend the Prefectural Middle School in Xichang, or for two graduates to attend good middle schools in Yanyuan County. Pledge \$150 per year for the next three years, and receive a beautiful landscape or nature painting by artist Li Jinyuan.

To discuss a possible in-kind donation, please contact Tami Blumenfield, CMEF Secretary, at tamiblu@u.washington.edu or by phone (206-200-8157).

**All orders and contributions should be sent to:
Cool Mountain Education Fund, 5038 16th Avenue N.E., Seattle, WA 98105.**

Dedicated to the education of the Nuosu people and their neighbors
Working for the preservation and improvement of Liangshan's environment