

Dave House, THE BATTALION

Wan Shu Ping, a visiting professor from China, educated himself by visiting a library after work and reading about what the world has to offer.

WORLDLY WISDOM

Self-taught history professor shares his global perspective with Texas A&M students

BY SHEA WIGGINS
 THE BATTALION

Wan Shu Ping worked as a carpenter in Shanghai, China, for 10 years. Every evening after work, he went to the library to teach himself English, Japanese and Russian. He read books with titles ranging from A to Z, scanning topics from astronomy to zoology.

His self-education brought him to America and to Texas A&M to teach American students.

Ping, a visiting lecturer at A&M, is teaching traditional East Asia and Modern Chinese courses this semester.

Ping said he came to America in 1989 to pursue his graduate studies.

"I taught at Northwestern University in Chicago last year, and I am completing my dissertation right now under Arif Dirak," Ping said. "I had several offers to teach, but I choose A&M, because the history department has a good reputation."

Ping said he never expected his education to be useful.

"I studied to make my life more meaningful," Ping said. "After the cultural revolution in China, there was a lack of faculty. I took an examination and was able to teach at the university."

Ping said A&M students are polite.

"They are good, friendly students, but they are very shy," Ping said. "They have more extracurricular activities than Chinese students. Their semesters are shorter, as Chinese students have 20 weeks of school and one (week) for exams."

Wan said he heard of A&M's football team from other student newspapers.

"I knew A&M was famous for its football team," Ping said. "Football is not very popular in China, because we do not have a football team. We call soccer football."

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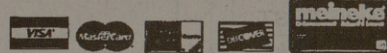
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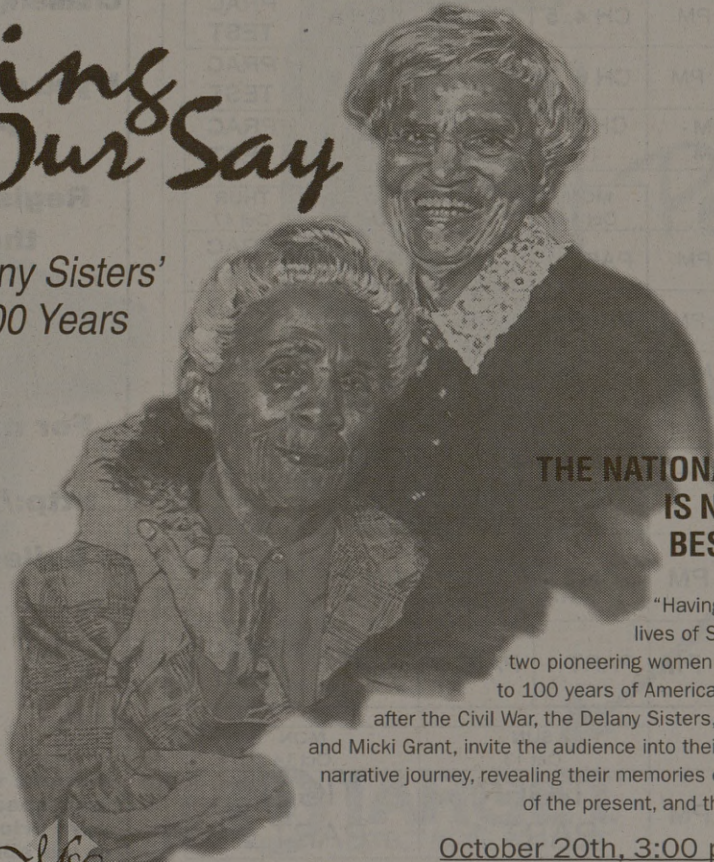
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