



**CLASS National Chinese Speech Contest Winners to Enter
The 13th "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign
Secondary School Students**

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On August 15, 2020, the Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools (CLASS), a national organization of K-12 Chinese language teachers in the US, organized an online speech contest for high school students in preparation of the 13th "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign Secondary School Students. This year, Seong-Min Jeong from McCallie School (TN) won the first prize, and Evan Gerritz from Hopkins School (CT) and Shunsuke Ogawa from Cupertino High School (CA) won the second prize. They will represent the US as a team to compete online with other high school contestants from across the world in the fall of 2020.

The theme for this year's speech competition is "Fly High with Chinese." The event started with an opening remark from Consul General Wang Donghua of the Consulate General of PRC in San Francisco. He reminded us that "...as COVID-19 is our common enemy that has no border or race, no country can handle this entirely on its own. The only way to defeat it is for us all to work together in the spirit of solidarity and cooperation." Distinguished scholar Dr. Duarte Silva, the Executive Director Emeritus of California World Language Project at Stanford University, sent in a welcome message to the contestants by saying that "...no matter what academic area or career goals you'd like to pursue, there is no question in my mind that you will fly higher than your monolingual peers by the mere fact that you are competent in the Chinese language and culture." Dr. Galal Walker, a professor and the Director of the National East Asian Languages Resource Center at the Ohio State University, also encouraged the contestants that "...being able to communicate with the Chinese people in the Chinese language, you will be able to understand your own culture and society better. I also want to recognize the support of your parents and teachers. They are providing a rich resource for your future. You should thank them. And I want to thank CLASS for hosting the event!"

Congratulatory remarks were also sent in by several former winners of the "Chinese Bridge" Chinese Proficiency Competition. Ben Hubley, LA District winner of 2013, Mihir Khanbete, Continent Champion of 2014, and Charlie Hoff and Kaylee Doty, World Champions of 2017. They encouraged this year's contestants to stay calm and be the best they can.

The competition requirements included a 4-5-minute speech, a timed question and answer session with a panel of judges, and a talent show. Contestants demonstrated their understanding and appreciation of the Chinese culture by sharing their talents in singing Chinese songs accompanying by guitar, playing a well-known Chinese folk music piece on violin, demonstrating Chinese martial arts, showing how to make Chinese noodle from scratch, reciting ancient and contemporary Chinese poems, and performing Chinese cross talk *Xiang Sheng*.

The Executive Director of CLASS, Baocai Jia, expressed a deep appreciation to the panel of judges, Matt Coss from George Washington University in Washington, D.C, Brenda Hsu from Wilmette Public Schools in Wilmette IL, Peggy Kao from Natomas Charter School in Sacramento CA, Luyi Lien from Yinghua Academy in Minneapolis MN, Yan Wang from Dixie Magnet Elementary School in Lexington KY, and ChinHui Yeh from Shrewsbury High School in Shrewsbury MA. Chief Judge and President of CLASS, ChinHuei Yeh, announced the results of the contest and congratulated the winners of the 2020 CLASS National Speech Contest with awards and certificates. She commented that the speech contest reflected the daily hard work of Chinese students and teachers, as well as

the confidence and resilience from each contestant. It was a product of years of preparation inside and outside the classroom. Viewing this over three-hour online contest, were more than 150 audience made up of family, friends and community members witnessing the fruits of their labor. They reflect the support students receive and will continue to receive in their pursuit of their studies of Chinese.

To see the video recording of this event, please click the link here: https://youtu.be/quQT_Cviz0