

ASIAN CULTURAL TRADITIONS INFLUENCE OBAMA

Chinese Brother-in-Law Explains

The World Journal

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[Chicago] Senator Obama, the Democratic candidate for President and Senator from Illinois, has very close relatives who are Chinese. His half-sister, Maya Soetoro-Ng, married Konrad Ng, a Malaysian-Chinese born in Canada.

Konrad Ng, who is a professor at the University of Hawaii, believes that the importance that Obama places on family, faith, education and security was influenced by the cultural traditions of Asia.

Maya Soetoro-Ng and Konrad Ng met each other at the East-West Center at the University of Hawaii when they were both doctoral students. Maya was studying education, and Konrad was studying political science. They came to know each other because they shared a "Southeast Asia connection". Because Maya was born in Jakarta and is half Indonesian, and Konrad's parents are overseas-Chinese from Malaysia, Maya and Konrad speak different Southeast Asian languages.

Several years ago when Obama was visiting a social services center in Chicago's Chinatown in South Side, he described how his family gatherings were like a "miniature United Nations". He also mentioned his Chinese brother-in-law, Konrad Ng.

Konrad told this reporter that, in his opinion, Obama is sincere and hard-working, and places great importance on human relations and the understanding of others. Many of the substantive policies proposed by Obama, such as emphasizing the reuniting of families in immigration policy, reducing the dependence of work-visa holders on their

employers and improving relations with Asian countries, are all important issues to Asian-Americans.

Konrad said that "Older Brother" Obama, who was born in Hawaii, has a very intimate relationship with Asia. During his childhood, Obama lived for several years in Indonesia with his mother, and so had the opportunity to be influenced by Chinese, Malaysian and Indian cultures. He later returned to Hawaii as a child, and was deeply affected by the pluralistic cultures of the Asia Pacific.

Konrad and Maya pointed out that, because Asia Pacific society included many different ethnic groups and cultures, and due to his family upbringing, Obama has a good understanding of Asian-Americans. They believe that once Asian-Americans gain a better understanding of Obama, they will strongly support him. Konrad, who has become a naturalized American citizen, was born in Canada near Toronto. He has studied the relationship between Chinese-language film and Chinese identity for many years. He said that like all other Asian-Americans, he hopes that there will be an American President who understands Asian culture.

Konrad and Maya now live in Hawaii and have one daughter.

In order that the Asian-American community can gain a better understanding of Obama, Konrad and Maya have posted their writings on Obama's Presidential election Website, at <http://my.barackobama.com/page/community/post/konrad/gGjFe>. One can also read about Obama's policy positions in Chinese at <http://aapi.barackobama.com>.

Reported by Chen Chia-ching

[Draft Translation by TKC]



吳加儒(左起)、瑪亞及女兒、歐巴馬夫婦和他們的兩個女兒
(圖由歐巴馬競選團隊提供)

華裔妹夫細說淵源

亞裔傳統文化 影響歐巴瑪

【本報記者陳嘉倩芝加哥報導】民主黨總統參選人、伊利諾州國會參議員歐巴瑪是華人的姻親，其同母異父的妹妹瑪亞(Maya Soetoro-Ng)嫁給了在加拿大出生的馬華吳加儒(Konrad Ng)。

任教於夏威夷大學的吳加儒強調，歐巴瑪重視家庭、信仰、教育、安全保障的政治理想，多少都受到亞裔傳統文化影響。

吳加儒和瑪亞是在夏威夷大學東西中心(East-West Center at University of Hawaii)結識，當時兩人都在修博士學位，瑪亞主修教育，而他則主修政治學，兩人因「東南亞」結緣，因為瑪亞出生於雅加達，有一半印尼血統，而吳加儒的父母是來自馬來西亞的華人，兩人有說不完的東南亞話題。

歐巴瑪幾年前訪問位於芝加哥

南華埠的社服機構華語處時，曾形容其家庭成員團聚時，好比是「聯合國的縮影」，當時曾順口提及有一位妹夫是華人，指的就是吳加儒。

吳加儒告訴本報，在他眼中，歐巴瑪是一個誠實、工作努力、重視倫理及善解人意的人，歐巴瑪提出的多項實質政策，包括移民政策首重家庭團聚、減少工作簽證持有者對雇主的依賴、調整和亞洲國家的關係等，都和亞裔有關。

吳加儒說，出生於夏威夷的「大哥」歐巴瑪，和亞洲有十分深刻的關係，歐巴瑪童年時和母親在印尼居住數年，有機會接觸到中國、馬來及印度文化的薰陶，少年時又回到夏威夷，深受亞太及其他多元文化的影響。

吳加儒和瑪亞指出，亞太裔社

區包括多種不同的種族及文化，由於成長及家庭背景，歐巴瑪對亞裔有相當程度的了解，他們深信一旦亞裔民衆對歐巴瑪有更進一步的了解，會更踴躍的支持他。已入籍美國的吳加儒出生於加拿大多倫多附近，多年來致力於華語電影和華人認同之間關係的研究。他說，他們和所有的亞裔一樣，希望能有一位了解亞裔文化的美國總統。

吳加儒和瑪亞現定居夏威夷，兩人育有一女。

爲了讓亞裔社區對歐巴瑪有更貼近的認識，吳加儒和瑪亞在歐巴瑪競選網站社區部落格發表文章，網址爲<http://my.barackobama.com/page/community/post/konrad/gGgjFe>，也可上aapi.barackobama.com瀏覽有關歐巴瑪亞裔政見的中文說明。(相關報導見焦點)