

## Stories for Middle and High School Students:

"So what are you going to tell us" sneered a tough looking kid at the juvenile detention facility in Taunton, Mass. "The Three Pigs?"

"Yeah," I responded "Just like the three that brought you in here! Sit down and give me a break. If you don't like this stuff after 10 minutes, then I'm out of here. Deal?"

But it took less than half that time to hook these kids living in a residential facility for young men deemed too dangerous to walk the streets. There were no tricks up my sleeve, just a story, one that spoke to them, but whose characters and time frame was removed enough so that it did not threaten. By the end of this telling of *Hell For a Picnic* it was painfully clear how thin that tough veneer was as they sat weeping over the life of orphan boy searching for his father during the war of 1812.

Stories for adolescents have the power to open their hearts and teach valuable human lessons while simultaneously instilling facts, offering under observed vantage points on our history, and introducing them to important characters that traditional history texts too often ignore.

History repertoire for this audience can be found at [this link](#). Of particular interest at this link is *Meet Lucy Stone*, a story developed under the auspices of the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities with the objective of teaching about the abolitionist and Woman Rights movements of the mid 19th century. Folklore appropriate for this age group highlights many of their social and developmental issues. Following is a partial list of the possibilities.

### Folklore for Middle and High School Students

**Yen Lee's Feet** is an original story with it's roots firmly planted in ancient folklore. As you listen to this tale you'll hear echoes of *Clever Manka*, *One Grain of Rice* and numerous other tales reflecting similar motifs (themes). What I have added is a new frame and broader theme in the hopes that all girls who use their heads, as Yen Lee did, will know their great worth. 23 minutes

**The Three Strong Women of Japan** is a folktale recorded in many sources. This version, though I doubt it any longer reflects its cultural of origins, speaks its theme as loud and clear as thunder in the mountains. 15 minutes

I first heard **Katorah: Lord of the Wind** from storyteller Guy Peartree when we

appeared together on Living on Earth, an NPR radio show about the environment. It originated from the Nenets of northwestern Siberia. These are a people with many words for the wind which dominates their world. How does one tame the most ferocious elements of their world? It is not wit or intelligence or beauty that insures the safety of the people, but that one characteristic that we all have the capacity to embrace. Indeed, a good heart, is the best thing any of us can hope to possess and live by. (This version of the story is liberal adaptation of the story Guy told.)

15 minutes

**Feteganya** is a traditional Italian tale in which a king bemoans the fact that his wife has produced only daughters, and thus his kingdom has no protectors. His third child Feteganya teaches the old man that there are many attributes besides military prowess that can keep his kingdom safe.

15 minutes