



## **"Wednesday and Friends: Looking at the Chinese Family Through the Eyes of Women Authors"**

Curriculum Unit 99.01.09  
by Geraldine Martin

### **Introduction**

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Family values steeped in ancient traditions become the basis of analysis for enrichment and enlightenment as young children gather information about the Chinese family through literature written by women authors. Women play an important role in the family; children haven't always had a chance to hear their voices. When looking at the family, we will concentrate on these voices of women. Are children able to grasp their own family's traditions and their significance, holding them precious and passing them unto future generations? Are young children able to look beyond their own horizons, glean from and appreciate a culture different from their own?

With these questions in mind, I will explore ways in which children can use literature as a means for gathering information and appreciating a culture vastly different from their own, and at the same time enhance their own reading skills at the first grade level. A key component of my unit will be the active participation of children utilizing puppetry and literature in reading and analyzing family traditions in the Chinese culture. The stories will include fiction as well as nonfiction books.

China is a vast, complex country, home to one of the world's oldest civilizations. For a long time, China was closed to any outside connections. In my unit about the Chinese family, I cannot begin to do justice and cover all of the complexity that the Chinese culture holds. Traditions vary from the north to the south, from province to province, from the rich to the poor, from the city to the country and in many other manners. However, through the eyes of authors (particularly women authors in my unit) and their written works and pictures, we are able to get a glimpse of this beautiful country and its people, and learn from their roots and traditions. A good starting place will be Julia Waterlow's book, *Country Insights: China*, as well as *A Taste of China*, by Roz Denny. These books give a good overview of present day China. Waterlow's book gives an interesting perspective looking at the differences between the city of Lanzhou, located in the north, western part of China, and a southern village of Shidong. Examples of other books are *Two of Everything* by Lily Toy Hong, and Amy Tan's books, *The Moon Lady* and *The Chinese Siamese Cat*. I was surprised after reading Pearl Buck's book, *The Dragon Fish*, written in 1944, that the customs and traditions woven into the story did not seem to differ that much from the descriptions given by Julia Waterlow written in 1997.

More specifically, my unit will include activities suitable for children in kindergarten through third grades with

an emphasis on literacy for the first grade child. Along with reading and the language arts, the lesson plans will cover curriculum areas such as math, social studies, science, music and art.

I teach first grade in a self-contained classroom at L. W. Beecher School on Jewell Street in New Haven. My classroom contains approximately 26 children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds with varying abilities in the six-to eight-year-old age range. Along with a need for improved vocabulary, many children exhibit poor self-images and have difficulty conveying their thoughts and feelings. I want the children to be able to draw upon their inner strengths, enhance their academic skills and strengthen their overall social-emotional development.

### Objectives

My overall objectives for the course of my curriculum unit are:

(1) To provide an interactive experience through the use of puppetry and literature written by women authors in:

- a. small groups of two or four
- b. large group interaction

To help stimulate children's intellectual and cognitive development about the Chinese family in a classroom setting:

- a. through written works by women authors and illustrated art work
- b. with creative puppetry
- c. by a drama production

(3) To improve auditory reading and listening skills of participants through:

- a. written language
- b. spoken language

(4) To encourage confidence and a positive self-image while participating in class activities:

- a. as listeners
- b. as narrators

- c. as actors
- d. as members of an audience

(5) To connect the classroom unit with the school curriculum:

- a. reading, language arts and the music curriculum
- b. science and social studies curriculum
- c. socialization skills

## Strategies

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How will puppetry tie into my unit? The art of ventriloquism has been in my teaching repertoire for several years. For example, most popular of all is Willie Sunday, who is an encouragement to all and is compelling in bringing the best out in most of us. His main trait in the classroom is his expertise in phonics, or lack of it, as he misses letters and letter sounds to the delight of the children. He also takes our class on a delightful journey through the historical times of Pocahontas, describing how her people lived, and their interaction with early settlers of Jamestown. Then there is Tuesday's Cup of Sugar who always does her little act in helping to present our writing for reading curriculum in class. Wednesday Delight plays a very important role in helping children develop their own puppet characters and voice variations, and bringing various pieces of poetry to our class on a weekly basis. Did I forget Blue Monday? How could I? He has played a very important role in helping the children gather information based on Jewish holiday traditions. He certainly cannot be missed with his indigo face and hot pink hair! Each of these characters has played an important role in facilitating one of my previous Institute units.

With all of these characters in mind, I will pull out Wednesday Delight and give her the opportunity to assist the children in gathering information about the values and traditions found in the Chinese family. Certainly with Wednesday's expertise in making puppets and creating character voices, the children will have no trouble in making their own colorful puppets. (The puppets will be made in the After School program, first term.) Wednesday will also give opportunities for writing our own poetry, modeled after a Chinese poem. All of the newly created puppets will recite the children's original poetry for a video taped session.

Literacy will play a very important role in every facet of my unit. Parents and older classmates will assist the children in reading our books about China. In addition to the parents who come into my classroom to assist the children in reading, third graders from our proposed team will be paired with first graders in reading the stories. Those teams of children will be asked to perform a short skit from a favorite part of their story. Of course, Wednesday's friends, the stories and books, contain many exciting activities for the children. Every

child will be given the opportunity to explore the art of eating with chopsticks. In fact, we will visit a local Chinese restaurant and enjoy a Chinese meal. Wednesday plans to visit China in person. She will send post cards and artifacts from her visit for us to enjoy. When does she come home? She arrives while we are at the Chinese restaurant, just in time for dinner.

Story mapping will also be used as the children describe the setting, characters, problems, and solutions of the stories. Story mapping is a standard form where the children fill in information from a story under headings such as: characters; setting/time; main ideas from the story that may involve a problem from the story such as "the wolf in the story wanted to eat the three little pigs"; and solution, which is actually the ending to the story.

A visit from a Chinese family will be a special treat whereby we hear first hand about the Chinese culture. We will have many questions to ask; however, I am sure that the answers that we may anticipate will vary because of the vastness of China and the varying traditions found in different parts of the country.

Art activities will also be included in the lessons. One example will be drawing and coloring a scene from a story using panels for the illustration and then washing it with water colors. We will also try our hand at writing a few Chinese characters.

The children's own family traditions will be integrated into the unit. Amy Tan reminisces about a grandmother's childhood memory. How much fiction is woven into the story? One can only surmise and draw their own conclusions. The children will interview their mothers or grandmothers and write a story based on a childhood memory. That piece of work will be read in our spring production, a school-wide assembly program, given by a group of teachers who will integrate their work from this seminar.

Another culminating activity will be a drama production based on the story *Two of Everything* by Lily Toy Hong. Rehearsals will take place in our After School program (i.e. second term), and the production will also be included in our spring production. These sessions will be open to first, second, and third grade students.

Culminating activities will be part of a team effort in which four teachers from L. W. Beecher School will help students become knowledgeable about families of different cultures through children's literature written by women authors. Not only will collaborative efforts involve first graders reading with third graders, but second and third graders will assist first graders in gathering information from our school's media center. There our Media Specialist will contribute resource information regarding our unit of study. Students, teachers and parents will all work together creating, reading, writing, painting, listening, but most important, uniting in stimulating the mind.

## **The Chinese Family Through Literature**

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*Country insights: China: City and Village Life*

Julia Waterlow takes the reader on a tour of China - the country that has the world's largest population. China is a vast land of mountains, deserts and plains. In Waterlow's book, we discover how the Chinese families live

their daily lives, at home, at work, at school and play. Then we get a closer glimpse at life in a city called Lanzhou (located in northwest China) and a small village called Shidong (located in southern China).

### Week One - First Day

As an introduction to our unit, Wednesday Delight (i.e., a classroom puppet) will introduce our China box. The China box will be an integral part of our project, bringing many items pertaining to our daily lessons. Today's China box contains an inflatable ball, which, we soon discover, turns into a globe. After helping the children find their home country and state, and the country of China, Wednesday tells the children to bounce the ball around the circle. Those catching the ball have to find, first the United States and Connecticut, and then the country of China. Classmates on either side of the "catcher" make sure their neighbor has identified the areas correctly.

As we read Julia Waterlow's book in class, we will note the sharp contrast between life in a city compared to life in the country. Even the climate is very different. Southern China experiences warm and wet all year round in contrast to the north where there is less rain, hot summers and freezing winters. Hence the south is greener in comparison to the deserts and plains of the north. Houses differ too: most people live in brick apartment buildings in the city, whereas those in the country live in one or two story houses built of mud-bricks. Inside, families have few possessions with hard earth or stone floors. It is interesting to note that few children go to school in the country, or at least not on a regular basis, because their parents do not feel the necessity of an education to work in the fields.

At this point the children will gather in small groups, record information comparing city life with that of a small village, and then report back to class. Wednesday will help close the lesson by showing the children some Chinese clothing from her China Box. She tells the children that the "box" will be placed in a corner of the room so that the children may try on the clothing during our center time.

### *The Moon Lady*

Amy Tan's book captures the life of a wealthy Chinese family before the Cultural Revolution. In the story, on a rainy afternoon, grandmother Ying-ying tells a tale from long ago to three sisters who wish for the rain to stop. When Ying-ying was a little girl she encountered the Moon Lady after falling off a boat rented by her family to celebrate the Moon Festival. The Moon Lady grants the secret wishes of those who ask, but Grandmother discovers that the best wishes are those you make come true yourself.

## Week One - Day Two and Three

As the story is being read, the children will enjoy the beautiful illustrations painted by Gretchen Schields. The pictures depict lush, tropical vegetation, more like the island of Hainan. The clothing and hairstyles of the girls and ladies in the illustrations show bright colors and flowers of their surroundings. The servants who tend to the family's needs look very much like the village people in Julia Waterlow's book of the present day China.

Rickshaws are used by the family in the story. Wednesday's China box contains pictures of these and explains that before the Cultural Revolution, rickshaws were used by more affluent Chinese as a mode of travel. (A brief explanation about the Cultural Revolution will be given, citing examples from Jiang's book, *Red Scarf Girl*.)

In addition to the pictures, Wednesday's box contains chop sticks. To our delight, Wednesday has enough chop sticks for each member of the class. Now the fun begins - we all get an opportunity to use the chop sticks and try our best to pick up a few pieces of pasta. While we experiment with the chop sticks, we will listen to a cassette provided by Chinese Music Ensemble sent by the Chinese government to perform at Splendid China in Orlando, Florida. Wednesday explains that a few sets of chop sticks will be placed in the math center so that the children may continue to use them and build patterns with pasta of varying shapes and colors. We also note the various food dishes that the servants prepared for the family in the story and look forward to our visit to a local Chinese Restaurant where we can sample our own Chinese food. We will use Roz Denny's book, *A Taste of China*, as a reference book. Denny's book shows various pictures of the Chinese family preparing foods. One section talks about "How a Chinese Meal is put Together."

## Week One - Day Four

It's time to get into small groups and discuss roles expected of the Chinese girls compared to that of the boys. I think it only fitting that the children drink tea as the family members did throughout the story, *The Moon Lady*. The story is a girl's tale - a grandmother tells a tale from her own childhood days to three sisters. Very little is mentioned about boys in the story. However, we do meet the father and uncles once or twice. The men burped loudly after they had finished eating. (A Chinese custom still done today.) Also, there are many pictures of dragonflies in the book, beautiful dragonflies. We will discuss what the mother meant when she said, "A boy can run and chase dragonflies, because that is his nature. But a girl should stand still. If you are still for a very long time, a dragonfly will no longer see you. Then it will come and hide in the comfort of your shadow." Could a father have told this to his daughter? Or is this strictly coming from a mother's heart and her view of men? Would a male author put this statement in his book?

In the story, the mother and old ladies drank tea while they talked about their aches and pains and various herbs to soothe their swollen feet. On the other hand, the father and uncles recited poetry and looked at paintings on the walls. In Jiang's book, *Red Scarf Girl* before the Cultural Revolution many of the wealthy wives stayed home and were pampered by servants much like Tan's story; however, Jiang's mother was educated and held a professional job while a servant took care of the household needs of the family.

## Week One - Day Five

A poem from *The Clouds Should Know Me* by Now: Buddhist Poet Monks of China, will be read and discussed in class. The poem speaks about a boy who says that his master has gone to gather herbs on the mountain. However, he only knows that he is on the mountain because the clouds are too deep to know where he can be located. Using the poem as a model, we will write our own poems about what we see when we climb a

mountain. Do girls see the same things as boys? We will compare our poems to see if there is a difference between the writings of the girls and boys.

#### Week Two - Day One

Most paintings in China are placed on paper panels. We will use a small paper panel to illustrate our poem. The children will use crayon for their pictures and backgrounds. Then a wax resist wash will be used of diluted blue temper paint for painting over the entire picture. The paint fills up all of the spaces that were skipped by the children's crayons and gives a beautiful effect to the picture.

#### Week Two - Day Two

Grandmother had a tale to tell. I know that our families have beautiful tales to tell from their childhood days. This week's homework will allow the children to interview a family member (preferably a mother or grandmother since our story was told by a woman) and gather a tale from their childhood days. The children will bring the stories back to class, and not only read them in class but read them in our school-wide assembly, inviting the family member to stand with their child on stage.

#### *The Chinese Mirror*

Mirra Ginsburg tells a funny tale about a family who lives in Korea. No one in the village has ever seen a mirror. One day a villager goes on a journey to far away China, purchases a mirror and brings it home. He thinks it is magic because whenever he looks at the mirror the man inside does everything as he does. One day his wife sees her husband laughing at a funny, shiny object. One morning when he goes out, she takes the mirror and looks at it, and to her dismay she sees a pretty young lady. She begins to wail to her mother-in-law that her husband has been unfaithful in bringing a pretty lady home from China. After the mother-in-law looks in the mirror she wonders why her son has brought home a wrinkled old crone. Finally the mirror ends up in the hands of a little boy holding a pebble who thinks that another child stole his pebble. A neighbor comes to his rescue, who bangs his fist into the bully's face only to have the mirror crash against a wall and scatter into many pieces.

## Week Two - Day Three

Wednesday Delight will bring a mirror to class encouraging the children to look into the mirror at the reflection of a classmate and tell something special about them. In addition, we will discuss the use of mirrors in our homes today. What do mirrors tell us? Anything? In the story, the mirror appears to deceive the young wife. Do mirrors always tell us the truth? In the story, the husband's perceptions were different than his wife's interpretation. Do girls see perceive differently when looking in a mirror than boys? Why?

The children will make a fan book, illustrating each character in the story and labeling their pictures.

### *The Empress and The Silkworm*

Lilly Toy Hong uses a tale from long ago, almost five thousand years, to tell her beautiful story about Ling-Chi, a Chinese empress. While she is having tea in the garden, suddenly something plops into her cup. It happens to be a cocoon from a mulberry tree in the garden. The hot tea begins to unravel the cocoon, and Ling-Chi finds that it is made of a fine, shimmering thread. Ling-Chi has a dream that the thread is woven into a fine silk garment for her husband, the Emperor. It takes a lot of hard work to convince her husband that the work should be undertaken. But with the persistence of the young empress the first silk cloth is woven.

## Week Two - Day Four

Today Wednesday Delight's China box contains a silk skirt that came from a city called Nanchong. Nanchong is located in mainland China in the province of Szechwan. There is very little western influence in the city. When the children look closer, they will find some cocoons in Wednesday's box. Will we be able to find any threads in our cocoons like the empress did of long ago? How is silk made? Teams of children will be sent to the library, research the process of making silk, and report back to class.

The clothing box will continue to be a part of our center time where children may continue to try on traditional Chinese clothing. Pictures will be taken of the children and displayed in our China corner in the classroom.

### *Grandfather Tang's Story: A Tale Told With Tangrams*



Ann Tompert tells a beautiful take about Grandfather Tang and Little Soo as they sit under a tree making various shapes from tangram puzzles. Grandfather makes a fox with Little Soo's seven pieces of tangram puzzle. Then Grandfather tells a tale about two foxes who are always trying to compete with each other. Each one tries to outdo the other by changing into various animals. During the story Grandfather makes the various animals with Little Soo's seven piece tangram puzzle. After changing into geese, the two foxes become tired of the game. However, before they can change back into foxes one of the foxes is shot down by a hunter. Instead of deserting his friend, he changes into a lion and frightens the hunter away. The two friends change back into foxes. Chou stays with his friend, Wu Ling the fox, who is hurt, until he is mended.

#### Week Two - Day Five

According to Tompert, "Tangrams are ancient Chinese puzzles that are still used today by adults as well as children." All tangrams are cut into seven standard pieces that begin with a square. Each of the seven pieces is called a tan. When creating a picture, each piece must touch another and all seven tans must be used. However, none of the pieces may overlap. When one tells a story involving many characters, the tans are rearranged each time a new character is introduced into the story. The fox fairies in Tompert's story stem back to folklore that originated eight hundred to a thousand years ago in China.

Grandparents play an important role in the lives of young children. Many grandmothers are rearing their grandchildren today. This book will be used to discuss the role of grandparents in the lives of the children. It is interesting to note that Tompert's tale involves a little girl's relationship with her grandfather about a story of competition. It is an endearing relationship of a grandfather and his little granddaughter sitting under a tree, enjoying the company of each other as grandfather tells a tale and they use the tangrams to illustrate the characters. We want to find out what experiences our girls have had with their grandfathers or older relatives. Are those experiences different than those of the boys in our class?

#### Week Three - Day One

Wednesday's China box contains a set of tangrams for each child in the classroom. Today we will integrate our math skills with our writing skills while we make various shapes and stories from our tangram puzzles. The children may use Tompert's book as a reference book or they may be creative and come up with their own animal creations.

### *The Treasure Chest: A Chinese Tale*

Rosalind Wang tells a story that takes place in southern China. Laiful is a poor boy who is in love with a beautiful orphan girl named Pearl. They plan to get married; however, the evil ruler Funtong is taken by Pearl's beauty and is determined to win her from Laiful. The evil ruler challenges Laiful to three impossible contests. Laiful triumphs over the wicked ruler with the help of his Pearl and a magical-colored fish.

### Week Three - Day Two

As we discuss this book, we will talk about beauty and what it means to the children. What is beauty? Is it only found on the outside? What does the tale mean when it says that Laiful fell in love with a beautiful orphan girl? Was she beautiful on the outside or was the tale referring to inner beauty? If the tale is referring to beauty on the outside only, how would you change the tale to include inner beauty or someone who is found pleasing for their character? Since the tale is talking about an orphan girl we will think mostly of girls; however, boys in first grade need to know that inner character is more important than outside appearance too.

Wednesday's China box will be opened and there we will discover pictures from southern China, showing the huge stone mountains that are found in this part of China. Wang illustrates these throughout her story.

Each child will have the opportunity of making their own magical-colored fish, using water color on white construction paper. We will make two sides, cut them out and stuff them with newspaper. We couldn't pass up the opportunity of writing our own tales to go with the magical-colored fish.

### *The Chinese Siamese Cat*

Amy Tan tells an amusing tale about Sagwa, a naughty little kitten, who lives in the house of the Foolish Magistrate. He is a greedy man who makes up rules that are only a benefit to himself. One day while Sagwa is napping in the Foolish Magistrate's study, she overhears the newest rule that does not allow anyone to sing until the sun goes down. Sagwa decides the rule is terrible. After the Foolish Magistrate leaves the study, Sagwa jumps down from a bookshelf and lands in an ink pot.

Sagwa is covered with ink, and before she knows what she is doing, she blots out the word not with her nose. Now the new rule says that the people have to sing all day until the sun goes down. As the people sing they praise their ruler. This warms the Foolish Magistrate's heart and he becomes a wise magistrate. Of course, Sagwa becomes the greatest of all the cats.

### Week Three - Day Three

Tan's book is a nice sequel to Wang's book, *The Treasure Chest*. We will pay special attention to the illustrations as we read the book in class. It will be interesting to look at the brightly colored clothing worn by the ruler and the people in the illustrations and contrast them to the clothing worn by the people after the Cultural Revolution. The communists insisted that the people wear garments mostly of dark colors, gray in particular. Wednesday's box contains a shirt typically worn during this era. During the 1960's some Chinese people no longer wore Chinese clothing and adopted more western styles. We will especially think about the ladies and young girls who had to replace their brightly colored clothing with plain colored shirts and skirts. Could we put ourselves in their place? Would it have been easy? Why or why not? Do clothes have anything to do with the way we feel inside? Should they?

### *Two of Everything*

Lily Toy Hong tells a funny tale about a Mr. Haktak who digs up a brass pot in his garden. He has no idea what he will do with the pot. On his way home, he carries his coin purse inside the pot. Mrs. Haktak's hairpin accidentally falls into the pot. As she retrieves the hairpin, she discovers that not only are there two hairpins but also two coin purses inside the pot. Mr. and Mrs. Haktak soon discover that they have two of everything and will no longer be poor. However, the magic brings trouble when Mrs. Haktak falls into the pot and out comes another Mrs. Haktak. The story ends on a happy note when Mr. Haktak falls into the pot. Now there are two Haktak families. The Haktaks become good friends and

decide to have two of everything.

#### Week Three – Day Four

This delightful book shows a typical peasant farm family living in a little village. Communists made drastic changes during the 1950's by breaking up the large farms operated by landlords and giving the land to individual farmers. Rice and wheat are two main crops grown in China. Rice grows best in paddies (i.e. water covered fields) found in the southern part of China where it is warm and wet. Wheat is generally grown in the northern plains of China. Chinese farmers lack modern equipment for cultivating and harvesting their crops. Water buffaloes and other animals are used extensively for plowing valley fields and muddy plots where rice grows.

After reading *Two of Everything*, we will send teams of children to the library where they will look for information about China's main crop, rice, and how it is grown. The teams will report back to the class, reading their reports and showing pictures from the internet, encyclopedias and other informational books.

#### Week Three – Day Five

The children will watch parts of a video made by a China Education Exchange teacher during her teaching assignment in China. The video shows a typical rural Chinese family whose father is a minister in a local church. Under Communist rule, churches must be registered by the government in order to be considered legal. China lacks enough pastors for all of its churches. Therefore, one of the young ministers in the video has to pedal his bicycle many miles each Sunday to preach in several churches. Women assume pastor roles in the church. In addition to preaching, they clean the church before and after services, lead the congregation in singing, and help to provide meals after the services. The video takes us inside the local church, as well as inside the family's home and outside courtyard kitchen.

In addition, the children in the After School Program will rehearse for a play modeled after the book, *Two of Everything*. The play can be found in the appendix section.

## Sample Lesson Plans

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### Lesson One

Book: The Moon Lady

Objectives: Students will...

- listen to a tale told by a Chinese grandmother.
- interact in a group by telling stories of their families.

Procedures:

1. Wednesday Delight will lead a discussion by asking students to tell stories told to them by their parents or grandparents.
2. Wednesday Delight will assist in reading Moon Lady.
3. Questions from the story: What did the mother expect from the little girl? Was she expected to keep her clothes clean? What was expected of the boys? Was it the same as for the girls? Was the girl afraid after her clothes got soiled?
4. The students will drink tea while the discussion takes place.
5. Homework assignment: The students will interview their parents or grandparents, writing a tale told to them about their past.

## Lesson Two

Book: The Chinese Mirror

Objective: Students will...

- listen to a tale read to them by Wednesday Delight.
- interact in a group by giving compliments of classmates.
- give a written response by sequencing events from the story.

Procedures:

1. Puppet Wednesday Delight, will assist in reading the story, The Chinese Mirror.

2. The students will hold a mirror so they can see the reflection of their classmate

while giving kind remarks about their classmate.

3. A follow-up activity will involve students making a fan book and sequencing events of the story.

## Lesson Three

Book: Grandfather Tang's Story: A Tale Told With Tangrams

Objective: Students will...

- listen to a story told by Grandfather Tang.
- interact in a group by telling experiences of grandfathers or an older relative.
- improve their math skills through tangram puzzles.

Procedures:

1. Wednesday Delight will assist in reading the story, Grandfather Tang's Story: A Tale Told With Tangrams.

The students will discuss experiences with their grandfathers. Do girls have different experiences than boys? The children will compare to see if they are different or the same.

Each student will receive a tangram puzzle, experiment, and make animal shapes.

## Appendix

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### After School Program

The After School Program meets for approximately six to eight weeks, two days a week for an hour session. Children may sign up for this program on a voluntary basis with their parent's permission. They are chosen on a first come basis until enrollment reaches approximately fifteen children.

First term's children will study the art of puppetry. They will make their own puppet creations, study three falsetto voices suitable for puppets, write their poems, (one modeled after our Chinese Buddhist poem), and recite their poetry with their puppets.

Second term's children will study the art of acting on stage, and rehearse a play suitable for production on stage.

*Script - Adapted from Two of Everything*

(Chinese music plays softly in the background.)

#### Scene I

Narrator: Mr. and Mrs. Haktak live outside a small village in the countryside of China. They are peasants, old and very poor. Their garden provides the only food that they eat. Sometimes when the harvest is plentiful, Mr. Haktak trades turnips, potatoes, and other vegetables for clothing, lamp oil and fresh seeds.

This scene opens with Mr. Haktak digging in his garden. Suddenly his shovel hits something hard.

Mr. Haktak: This is very strange. (Picks up a large pot.) I have been digging for many years, yet I've never seen this pot before. I'll take it home to my wife; maybe she'll know what to do with it.

(Mr. Haktak strains as he walks back and forth on stage with the big pot. Then his purse falls to the ground.)

#### Scene II

Narrator: The pot was very heavy for Mr. Haktak. He stumbled and fell. His last five coins fell to the ground. Quickly Mr. Haktak picked up the purse with coins and tossed them into his pot.

This scene opens with Mr. Haktak giving the pot to his wife.

Mrs. Haktak: What a strange looking pot. Where did you find it?

Mr. Haktak: I found the pot while digging in the fields.

Mrs. Haktak: What am I going to do with it? It is too big to cook in and too small to bathe in.

Mr. Haktak: (Shrugs his shoulders and leaves.)

Mrs. Haktak: (Leans over the pot.) Oh my, now my hairpin fell into the pot and it is the only one I have. What is this? (She pulls up two hairpins and two purses. She runs to the edge of the stage and shouts...) Mr. Haktak, Mr. Haktak...

Mr. Haktak: What is it? What happened?

Mrs. Haktak: Look, I found two hairpins and two purses in the pot. The pot is magic.

Mr. Haktak: (Jumps up and down.) We are lucky; let's put my coat into the pot. (Pulls up two coats.) Quick, quick let's put more things into the pot. (Cups, teapots, etc. are put into the pot and two of each are pulled out.) If only we had some meat to put into the pot.

Mrs. Haktak: Don't worry, my dear husband. I know how we can get anything we want.

(Mrs. and Mrs. Haktak begin to put purses into the pot and pull out others, emptying them on the floor.)

### **Scene III**

Narrator: Mr. Haktak leaves for town with a long list of things to buy in the village. Now instead of a basket full of vegetables he carries a basket of coins. Mrs. Haktak finishes all of her chores and sits down to enjoy a nice cup of hot tea. Mrs. Haktak loves her magic pot, stoops over to look inside just as Mr. Haktak comes in the door with his arms full of purchases. Mrs. Haktak is startled and falls into the pot. (Actors pantomime actions while narrator speaks.)

Mr. Haktak: (Places packages on the floor and goes to retrieve his wife. When his wife comes out of the pot another pair of legs protrudes from the pot.) Two more legs, oh my. What is this? (Another Mrs. Haktak comes out of the pot, looking confused.)

Mrs. Haktak: (Screams.) I will not have another wife. Put her back into the pot now.

Mr. Haktak: No, then I will have three wives instead of two. (Mr. Haktak walks backwards as he speaks and falls into the pot.)

Two Mrs. Haktaks: (The two Mrs. Haktaks goes to retrieve the husband. They pull him out, and now there are another pair of legs protruding from the pot.) Two more legs. Oh my, what is this?

(Another Mr. Haktak comes out of the pot looking very confused.)



First Mr. Haktak: What good is another Mr. Haktak? This is not a good pot after all. Now all of our troubles are going to double.

First Mrs. Haktak: Calm down, my good husband. I am sure we will all become good friends.

Second Mrs. Haktak: That is true, and with our pot we can make two of every kind so that there will be enough to go around.

Narrator: (Actors Freeze.) With all of their good fortune, the Haktaks built two fine new homes. Each new home had identical teapots, rice bowls, silks and bamboo furniture. (Two students carry posters with new houses and stand behind the Haktaks.) The houses looked exactly alike except in one house was hidden a big pot. Now you can be sure the Haktaks were very careful not to fall into the pot ever again.

## Children's Bibliography

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Buck, Pearl S. *The Dragon Fish*. New York: The John Day Co., 1944. A great book for children about two little girls, one Chinese and one American, who became friends after finding an ornament in the sea. They decide to run away to the big city where their families became friends after finding the girls.

Burckhardt, Ann L. *The People of China and Their Food*. Markato: Capstone Press, A beautifully illustrated book presenting simple recipes for making Chinese dishes. The author includes information about traditions within the family surrounding certain foods, also, included are holiday foods.

Denny, Roz. *A Taste of China*. New York: Thomas Learning, 1994. Denny presents a beautiful book with brightly colored pictures, giving a good oversight of present day China. The book also includes a glossary and several recipes for making Chinese food.

Ginsburg, Mirra. *The Chinese Mirror*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1988. A delightful Chinese tale and good insight into family life in a country village.

Hillman, Elizabeth. *Min-Yo And The Moon Dragon*. New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1992. A Chinese tale with beautiful illustrations depicting landscapes in China,

along with the costumes and customs of the emperors.

Hong, Lily Toy. *The Empress And The Silkworm*. Morton Grove: Albert Whitman And Co., 1995. A delightful book about a Chinese legend where almost five thousand years ago, a young empress was having tea and suddenly a cocoon from a mulberry tree fell into her cup. The empress discovered that the shining strands spun by tiny worms could be woven into fabric.

Hong, Lily Toy. *Two of Everything*. Morton Grove: Albert Whitman and Co., 1993. An amusing tale about a Chinese couple who duplicate everything from an old pot found by Mr. Haktak in his garden. The beautiful illustrations depict old Chinese traditions in clothing and household furnishings still found in some families today.

Tan, Amy. *The Chinese Siamese Cat*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1994. A great story about a naughty little kitten, Sagwa, who lives with her mother and four siblings in the home of a Foolish Magistrate. The kitten became a hero when she accidentally blotted out the word not in a new rule ordering the people not to sing all day. Tan, Amy. *The Moon Lady*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1992.

A grandmother shares a childhood experience with her two granddaughters. Great insight into a wealthy family's life before the Cultural Revolution. The illustrations are beautiful and depict a lot about the lush tropical environment of southern China.

Tompert, Ann. *Grandfather Tang's Story*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1990. Ann Tompert uses tangrams to tell a legend about two fox fairies. The fox fairies are used in Chinese folklore. They are believed to have supernatural powers of transformation. Tangrams are ancient Chinese puzzles that begin with a square cut into seven pieces. When creating a picture all seven pieces must be used and not may overlap.

Treffinger, Carolyn. *Li Lun Lad of Courage*. New York: Walker and Co., 1975. This beautiful story gives a lot of insight into the Chinese family living by the sea and

depending upon fishing for a livelihood. At the age of ten, Li Lun was expected to follow tradition and be initiated into the fishing business. However, he defies tradition and is sent to the mountains to grow rice from a few seeds. He encounters many difficulties but becomes a lad of courage in the end.

Wang, Rosalind C. *The Treasure Chest*. New York: Holiday House, Inc., 1995.

Wang retells a Chinese tale from southern China where a boy named Laifu planned to marry an orphan girl named Pearl. But the evil ruler Funtong wanted Pearl for himself because of her stunning beauty and challenged him to three impossible contests. With the help of a magical rainbow-colored fish, Laifu becomes triumphant and marries his beautiful Pearl.

Waterlow, Julia. *Country Insights: China*. Austin: Raintree Steck-Vaughn Publishers,

The book displays beautiful colored pictures of China, particularly the city of

Lanzhou found in northern China and village of Chidong found in southern China.

Great information about the culture of a northern city in contrast to the southern village.

## **Teacher Bibliography**

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Barme', Geremie and Jaivin, Linda. *New Ghosts, Old Dreams*. New York: Random

House, Inc., 1992. Barme' and Jaivin trace the dissent for democracy in China

that led to the Tiananmen Square rebellion. The book speaks to the fact that even

after the mass protest was crushed, there remains a spirit of rebellion. The authors

contend that the book's diverse voices are rarely heard in the West.

Dodwell, Christina. *A Traveller In China*. New York: Beaufort Books Publisher,

Dodwell travels to the remoter parts of China's vast territory, visiting many

ethnic minority groups, inhabiting these areas and still exhibiting a distinctive

lifestyle.

Fritz, Jean. *China Homecoming*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1985. Jean Fritz was a young girl who was born and lived in China till the age of thirteen. As a grown woman, Fritz had a passionate desire to return to China. History had drastically changed her hometown of Wuhan. As she revisited her childhood home, she was greeted by several Chinese families who occupied her old home. She heard firsthand how a surgeon's hands were cursed by Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution. A very moving story.

Jiang, Ji-li. *Red Scarf Girl*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997. Although written for older children, the book gives teachers great insight into the Cultural Revolution when one became a criminal for having intelligence and a wealthy family invited persecution. The book gives a child's eye view of this terrifying time in twentieth-century history.

McLenighan. *Enchantment of the World: China*. Chicago: Children's Press, 1983. The history of China to 1949. The book contains beautiful colored photographs of paintings, artifacts, people and buildings of China. A great reference book.

Pan, Lynn. *Tracing It Home*. New York: Kodansha International, 1993.

Lynn Pan tells a story of a family caught up in the turmoil of China during the years of Japanese occupation and the cultural revolution.

Pine, Red and Mike O'Connor, Eds., *The Clouds Should Know Me By Now: Buddhist Poet Monks of China*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1998. The poem written by a Buddhist Poet Monk, "Seeking But Not Finding the Recluse," can be found on page 24. (Recluse will be translated Old Man so that the first graders are able to get a clearer picture of the meaning recluse or hermit.)

Wong, Jade Snow. *No Chinese Stranger*. New York: Harper and Row, 1975.

Wong relates stories of growing up in San Francisco's Chinatown, and her travels throughout China with her husband, Woody.

Wong, Jan. Red China Blues: My Long March From Mao to Now. New York: Doubleday/Anchor Books, 1996. Wong tells her story when she was a believer of the Cultural Revolution. Born in Canada, Wong enrolls in the Beijing University in 1972 and works at the Number One Machine Tool Factory. However, after six years she became aware of the harsh realities of Chinese Communism and returned to the West.

## Teacher Resources

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"Big Celebration: A Rural Chinese Evangelist" - Video by China Educational Exchange, Mennonite Board of Missions, 1996.  
Contact: China Education Exchange

1251 Virginia Avenue  
Harrisonburg, VA 22802-2497

"Fun With Character Voices" - Video by Liz Von Seggen, One Way Street, 1992.

Contact:

One Way Street, Inc.

P. O. Box 2398

Littleton, CO 80161

(303) 790-1188

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