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## A WORD TO THE TEACHER

*The White Heron*

*That great flake of snow which has just floated  
over the lake was a white heron.*

*Motionless, at the end of a sand bank, the white heron  
watches the winter.*

—Li Po

Tang dynasty  
618 to 907 A.D.

The importance of multicultural education is evident when one studies a great culture like China's. Carole Fink in the *Public School Montessorian*, summer 1990, has an article called "Moving Beyond Ethnocentrism" that eloquently drives home the point of such a study: *"By studying spiritual and physical needs of humans in different cultures, children come to see humans and their relationships with each other as well as with their universe. It helps children to understand their place on earth and how great our role is in evolution . . . Humanity must be united to maintain itself and to progress. That unity must be built on an understanding that all cultures have the same physical and spiritual needs to satisfy. The differences lie in how each culture satisfies these needs."*

As the world becomes a global community rather than a group of individual fortresses, there is a great need to understand that which is not exclusively "Western." The East, with its romantic past and its ever-changing present, is a focal point that's certainly worth investigation by students in today's classrooms.

China is one of the world's oldest living civilizations. Its culture was highly sophisticated long before Europe's. Their poetry, calligraphy, and artwork are all markings of a civilization that has moved well beyond survival.

How China continues to survive notwithstanding overpopulation and limited natural resources is an important consideration, not just for the curious, but also for those who are interested in our own survival as a civilization.

We can learn a lot from China's rich history by observing the wisdom of this ancient civilization as it embraces past traditions and present trends.



# INTEREST DEVELOPMENT CENTER

## JADE GARDEN

The purpose of this interest center is to stimulate interest in the topic area. Students need time for browsing and investigating for maximum benefit. These are beginning ideas, you and your students will think of more. Let parents and other teachers know more about the center, and it will grow many times without effort.

Maps, globe, atlas  
Sayings of Confucius  
Chopsticks  
Chinese brushes  
Calligraphy pens  
Materials for Chinese paper cutting  
—various papers, scissors  
Travel brochures, postcards, photographs

Swatches of silk  
Examples of jade  
Chinese checkers  
Newspapers  
Tea  
Fortune cookies  
Rice paper



### **Books, Videos, Filmstrips, Filmloops, Posters About:**

|                                 |            |                 |
|---------------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| Marco Polo                      | Customs    | Acupuncture     |
| Kublai Khan                     | Furniture  | Games           |
| Buddhism                        | Inventions | Mao Tse-tung    |
| Tai Chi                         | Clothing   | Art             |
| The silk trade                  | Music      | Poetry          |
| People's Republic of China      | Food       | Emperors        |
| Taiwan                          | Holidays   | Haiku           |
| New Year                        | Taoism     | Chinese cooking |
| The Great Wall                  | Folk tales | Li Po           |
| Chinese language cassette tapes | Bookmaking | Papermaking     |
| Dynasties                       |            |                 |

Teachers: You are in for a real treat when you create a Chinese Interest Development Center! Your first student assignment: Ask students to bring in items from home that have "Made in China" labels. Your tables will be filled very quickly with all sorts of artifacts—from china cups to chopsticks, gym shoes, and toys—providing your class with a wonderful introduction to the culture.

## **Travel Experience**

Travel experiences are an exciting way to capture your students' imagination at the beginning of your studies on China. All you'll need are travel brochures from your local travel agency. Tell the children they have a specified amount of money to spend in China during their week's stay. From that amount they must choose the way in which they will travel there, the hotels they will stay in, the meals they will eat, and the sights they will see.

It is amazing how children, who may not even be responsible for selecting the clothes they wear that day, will dive into the opportunity to make major decisions like these. After that, it's simply a matter of writing about their adventures—individually or as a team. This affords students with many different talents a chance to shine. Your math stars will pick up on the monetary aspects of travel, while some creative students will write adventurous fiction.

## **Field Trips**

Depending on how much time you've allotted and where you live, field trips to museums could provide fine experiences for your students. A lapidary arts museum might offer a look at rocks and minerals in a new and unusual light. Or you might want to sample Chinese food in a nearby restaurant or as a feast prepared in class.



# 1. SETTING THE STAGE

China is located in Asia, which is the largest continent on Earth.



Find China on a map or globe and trace its borders with your finger.  
What shape does it remind you of?

Then:

List the countries that are China's neighbors.

Circle the neighbors that are smaller than China.

Put a box around the neighbor that is larger.