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## Taoism the adolescent way

Claire Christine Osburn

Kathryn Ramsey

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TAOISM THE ADOLESCENT WAY

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
Education

---

by  
Claire Christine Osburn  
Kathryn Ramsey  
March 1998

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3/30/98  
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## ABSTRACT

By studying ancient Chinese humanities, adolescents attain important personal insights as well as develop cultural tolerance in an expanding global society. During centuries of war and turmoil, the ancient Chinese constantly struggled to find meaning in life. Intertwining the themes of balance and harmony, Chinese artwork, literature, and philosophies offer multimodal opportunities for students to appreciate the Chinese way of life while generating positive methods of coping during a period of development characterized by chaotic emotions, dramatic physical changes, and confusing social interactions. Artwork and artistic techniques reflect the history and values of the society being studied. Ancient Chinese tales and poetry are rich in ethical lessons, human suffering, and personal triumph. Teaching about the religious philosophy of Taoism will encourage adolescents to believe that happiness can be found after conflict, and that contradictions and opposites are essential for a complete, full life. Chinese contributions yield enriching and enlightening lessons for middle grade students embarked on a volatile voyage through adolescence.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A study encompassing two such abstract concepts -- adolescence and Taoism -- would not have been possible without the generous "gifts" of our two teachers.

We would like to thank Dr. Irvin Howard for his profound guidance in our scholarly endeavor and for helping us to unravel the mysteries of adolescents, whose emotional need for understanding often supersedes the academic one. We appreciate the new vision we have acquired for middle school teaching and have already seen the astonishing benefits that a reformed program can produce.

Our sincerest thanks also extend to Dr. Tara Sethia, creator of the India-China Summer Institute that inspired us to attempt this project. Because our children live in a pluralistic society, the need exists to reach out for understanding of the Asian cultures in our midst. Dr. Sethia's conviction that Westerners must "steep" themselves in Eastern culture and philosophy for greater understanding encouraged us to translate that vital information into something fun, beneficial, and comprehensible for our students.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iv
CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION	
General Introductory Remarks .....	1
Significance of the Project .....	4
Statement of Needs	
Art is a Frill .....	6
Adolescence: A Chaotic Time .....	9
Teaching About Religion .....	12
Why Teach China? .....	14
Black Versus White .....	16
Program Plan .....	18
Limitations and Delimitations .....	26
Assumptions .....	29
Definition of Terms .....	39
CHAPTER TWO - REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....	43
CHAPTER THREE - PROJECT	
TAOISM THE ADOLESCENT WAY .....	61
Lesson One - Show Me the Tao .....	65
Lesson Two - Yin-Yang: Nature's Harmony .....	84
Lesson Three - Taoist Tales: Wait and See .....	92
Lesson Four - Go With the Flow .....	100
Lesson Five - Chinese Landscape Painting .....	112

Lesson Six - Shadow Puppet Show .....	120
Literature Packets .....	122
Lesson Two - Literature .....	123
Lesson Three - Literature .....	127
Lesson Four - Literature .....	151
CHAPTER FOUR - CONCLUSION	
Concluding Remarks .....	161
Calendar .....	163
Program Evaluation .....	164
Recommendations .....	166
APPENDIX 1 - Interview with Tara Sethia, Ph.D. ....	168
APPENDIX 2 - Unit Evaluation .....	177
REFERENCES .....	179

## CHAPTER ONE -- INTRODUCTION

### General Introductory Remarks

Although one of the world's oldest civilizations, China is now one of the newest world powers and is influencing our educational priorities. One of the more pressing educational needs in California is to effectively integrate Asian cultures in the school curricula. Through humanities based curricula, we can provide essential information to our middle school students so they can better understand a culture that continues to be considered mysterious.

By enriching classroom instruction with the ancient philosophies, literature, and fine arts of China, middle school children will develop cultural tolerance as well as a stronger sense of personal identity in our ever-increasing global society. Studying about China through literary and visual arts will provide an avenue for adolescents to better comprehend their own times of silence, confusion and insecurity. Lessons in Chinese brush art, poetry, and literature will foster balance and harmony in restless young lives. By engendering patience in a dangerous and chaotic world filled with too many



choices, too many temptations, and too much knowledge, the adolescent will cope better during the transescent years.

The History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools (1988) stipulates that middle school students explore China from prehistoric times through the Middle Ages. Because China was plunged into chaos during centuries of war, there was a great need for teaching traditional values, such as the philosophies of Confucius and Lao-tse, that helped make sense of a troubled world. By 206 BC when the Han Dynasty reunited China and made Confucian teachings official, art, literature, and learning flourished. The writings of the old masters promised *balance and harmony* in a world of ruin and loss.

Today, we see that the intertwined themes of balance and harmony pursued through various philosophies recur throughout Chinese literature and are repeatedly exemplified in their artwork. Study of the arts, therefore, provides the student of Chinese civilization ample multimodal opportunities to interface with and more fully understand the Chinese way of life. Immersing transescent students in the literature and art of China will foster cultural awareness through which they will generate positive self-awareness.

Since adolescents are in a developmental period characterized by physical, social, and emotional turmoil, they need some way of defining themselves. They perceive themselves as separate, unique individuals, totally unlike anyone else, yet they have a fierce desire to belong. As the student learns about the Chinese philosophy of Lao-tse (*Yin-Yang* and *Wu Wei*), individualism as well as peer acceptance will be embraced and used to create a clearer understanding of self during the middle years.

In order to imbue her middle school students with a better understanding and appreciation of Asian cultures, Christine Osburn immersed herself in an intensive Asian studies program during two four-week summer institutes at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (CalPoly Pomona). This intense program provided a multidisciplinary, humanities-oriented knowledge base that qualified Ms. Osburn to enhance her students', as well as other teachers', limited knowledge of Chinese and Indian culture.

As a teacher-leader, Ms. Osburn shared the program with Kathryn Ramsey, a fellow middle school teacher. Inspired to learn more about Chinese culture, Ms. Ramsey delved into Chinese literature and philosophy by reading literary titles suggested by Ms. Osburn and by visiting

Asian cultural centers. This project offered a unique opportunity to co-author an innovative, supplementary curriculum based on their research of Taoism and their experiences with early adolescents.

As part of their research, Ms. Osburn and Ms. Ramsey interviewed Dr. Tara Sethia, an expert on Asian cultures, at CalPoly Pomona. While both authors researched and wrote individually on occasion, the majority of the project was created shoulder-to-shoulder at the computer or kitchen table. Any text that was individually produced was discussed and edited together until both authors were satisfied with content and meaning. This project was truly collaborative; no part could be attributed solely to the efforts of one or the other author.

### Significance of the Project

A pressing need for education today is effective integration of Asian studies into the school curricula. "The global future has an Asian face," warns an article in the *Los Angeles Times* (Plate, 1996). Children need to recognize that face and understand its enigmatic smile. They must acknowledge the determination behind eyes shaped differently than their own. Recognition, understanding, and acknowledgment develop through education.

Our young people face a diverse global society in which prejudice and discrimination must be wiped out. They must appreciate diversity as an asset rather than as a liability. As educators, we can facilitate this change of attitude by teaching Asian history and cultures in our schools. If we do not make the study of China and other Asian cultures a priority in education, our children will be ill-prepared to meet the twenty-first century.

Beyond the aspect of global significance, the study of Asian history and culture may be personally rewarding for the adolescent. Teens often experience traumatic conflicts due to the desire to be loyal to peer groups, parents, church, and school. Many immigrant children also must cope with acculturation into American society. American born students find their environment infiltrated with foreigners. While struggling to define their place in life, adolescents walk a thin line between tolerance and rejection on several planes. The study of ancient Asian philosophies and arts may have an immediate, as well as far-reaching, impact on how teens view and comport themselves in a multicultural world. "Taoism the Adolescent Way" will provide tools with which middle school students may begin to develop lifelong values engendering harmonious living.

Educators need to make Asian studies an educational priority. We must find creative and new ways to interest our students enough that they will reach beyond their fears of a mysterious culture and begin to acquire cultural understanding and personal insight. Perhaps we may even foster a desire to further their scholarly endeavors upon an Eastern shore.

### Statement of Needs

#### Art is a "Frill"

The arts in general, and the visual arts more specifically, are often considered a "frill" of public education curriculum. "The arts have been taken for granted and not thought of as valuable. People viewed the arts as a frill or an accessory, like a belt or an earring. We didn't see the arts as indispensable until we started dispensing with them." (Posnick-Goodwin, 1997) When there is a crunching of educational finances, the arts is one of the first on the chopping block. Even though the California State Board of Education "supports art education for all students as a total and fundamental part of core curriculum in kindergarten through the twelfth grade" (History-Social Science Framework, 1996), the La Habra City

School District sadly has only four meager lines based on the state framework.

Dr. Leo Coleman, a futurist, encouraged the "P.I.T.S." (People, Information, Technology and Science) in his keynote speech at the Palm Springs CLMS conference in 1997. "We must educate our children, prepare them," he warns. "We should emphasize science and technology, at the expense of other disciplines. We Westerners as industrial leaders of the free world must keep pace." (Coleman, 1996) The facts of where we've been, where we are, and where we're headed were voiced faster than the changing technology. At no time did Dr. Coleman allude to the importance of the arts in education.

Technology in education seems to be where the money is headed. It is indeed an important field for the twenty-first century. In our district technology is being implemented quickly at high cost, and the arts program at the middle school level is being given minimal attention and funding. Very little art history is being taught in our district because few teachers have an art history background. The teaching of art is left to the core subject teachers who manage somehow to squeeze it into their curriculum.

In fact, teaching history through the arts will greatly enhance a student's education. Art is the language of past and present civilizations through which we express our fears, our desires, our hopes and our discoveries. By studying artworks from the past, students will "begin to understand how art reflects the values of society and how the arts have been influenced by social, political, and economic beliefs of a society. An art object reflects the historic time and cultural context of its origin. Indeed, much of what is known or surmised of ancient cultures comes from art and architectural evidence." (Manifold, 1996)

Evidence is mounting in favor of the arts being included as an integral and equitable part of a school's core curriculum. "Studies have shown that when schools provide nourishment in the form of the arts, children develop self-esteem, critical-thinking skills, and a love of learning." (Posnick-Goodwin, 1997) By exploring "regular" subjects through artwork, students are more actively involved in learning and cognitive, as well as affective, learning is expedited.

Limited English proficient students process content and language through artistic curricula such as drawing, poetry, song, drama, and creative movement. High risk students may have an artistic talent previously unknown

that, once tapped, could be a ticket to successful academics. Studying the arts also nurtures and hones skills needed in the job market, such as the ability to communicate, adapt, diagnose problems, and find creative solutions.

The consummate goal of education should be to allow for the possibility of children growing creatively. The decisions about what we teach in our schools are far-reaching and will actively influence the minds our children have the opportunity to create. Through the arts, the student is able to become part of the human tradition in the search for meaning. Through art history instruction, students may hear past civilizations speak and are, therefore, able to make connections between past, present, and future.

#### **Adolescence: A Chaotic Time**

Young adolescents must survive a chaotic period of maturation characterized by rapid physical, cognitive, emotional, and social change. Uneven growth spurts change body contours, and unpredictable energy surges cause alternating periods of alertness, fatigue, and lethargy. At this stage of development, young adolescents may perform at the concrete operational level in one subject, while



exercising abstract thinking or even formal operational thinking in another. This on-going cognitive growth is inconsistent and may not be spontaneous resulting in confusing mental activity. As they develop their personalized ideas in a search for self and a state of normalcy, emotional turmoil confuses the young adolescent as both positive and negative forces seek simultaneously to capture their attention. Now add to the mix the inner commotion caused by an egocentric adolescent who becomes increasingly aware of social expectations and responsibilities in a pluralistic, global society. This period of development is a truly turbulent trek.

The nature of young adolescents is both contradictory and complementary. They want to look inward and at the same time learn how to respond to the harsh, outer world. Like the "Orientalists" who created scholarly images of the Asian steeped in awe and contempt, transescent students feel a need to create their own myths in dealing with that world. "Human identity is not only not natural and stable, but constructed, and occasionally even invented outright." (Balfour, 1910)

The search for identity begins as adolescents crave both creative solitude and harmonious peer socialization. "Related to self-concept is an understanding of other

cultures." (Murfee, 1995) Middle grade students can learn much by studying Taoism. Exploring the values, morals, and ethics of this philosophy, students begin to create their own personal myths.

Just as adolescence is a chaotic time, so was and is the history of the Chinese people. "They struggled constantly to understand the world, to protect themselves from its ravages, [and] to organize it more effectively..." (Spence, 1990) in an effort to find meaning in their lives.

Taoism, based on the teaching of the ancient philosopher Lao-tse, offers insight to and solutions for the conflicting nature of young adolescents. Tao is complicated; it cannot be understood. Can adolescents identify with this? Isn't this what they often think of themselves? Taoism seeks wisdom in order to conserve it, rather than expend it on useless conflict. Young adolescence is a time of both personal and interpersonal conflicts. Receiving guidance in developing wisdom to cope with their volatile life is an essential need in adolescence. Taoism emphasizes the concept of *Wu Wei* as an approach to conflict resolution. The basic idea of *Wu Wei* is to defeat problems by non-action. "Never is force opposed with force; instead, it is overcome with yielding." (Hoff, 1982) That is not to say someone in conflict does

not act; only that one gives nature time to determine an outcome. One way to deflect conflict suggested by Taoists is meditation, which helps the mind to "center down," emptying out extraneous thoughts so one can fill with ideas. When children understand that meditation is not some sort of strange religious rite, they are curious to try it.

Taoism describes the forces of nature as being either Yin or Yang (dark or light, winter or summer, female or male, etc.) Although seeming to be bad versus good, the forces of Yin and Yang in Taoist thought represent a complementary whole and offer young adolescents an opportunity to appreciate the contradictions in their turbulent lives.

### Teaching About Religion

Although religion is a major force in human affairs, it is a controversial issue when included in public school curriculum. Some parents fear that personal values and beliefs, often considered private rather than public, will be undermined when educators teach about religion in the classroom. This is not the case, however, when religious philosophies are introduced into the curriculum as a method to understand a culture. It is difficult to understand

much about social history without exploring the religions that influenced people throughout history. When religion is not adequately included in the social studies curriculum, students are prevented from learning about the critical role of religion in human culture.

The keyword in this issue is "about." Public school educators do not teach the practice of a religion, but rather guide students through a study *about* that religion in an effort to emphasize historical significance. It would be difficult to study Ancient China, for example, without studying the influence of Taoist teachings on that society. One can certainly explain the various ideas and concepts that are germane to religious and philosophical systems without bringing in monks or priests to preach in the classroom. (Sethia, 1997)

As the contours of American demographics continue to change with an ever-growing segment of Asian cultures, knowledge about Asian religious philosophies is necessary. In a global society like that found in America, understanding diverse cultures is as important as understanding American culture. If students are to comprehend and interpret their world, they must learn *about* religion and its influence on civilizations of the past and present. By acquiring a perspective and an understanding

of different religious philosophies, students will be better prepared to understand and value cultural diversity.

### **Why Teach China?**

Most middle school students are grossly ignorant of the history, culture, philosophies, and art of China. These deficiencies in historical knowledge are linked to inadequacies in education and may stem from learned prejudices. Shallow, predictable lessons only serve to propagate the belief that Chinese history and culture are insignificant. One chapter in a history textbook cannot begin to impress upon students the treasures found in the Chinese "Way." Nor will a few days spent studying China's history provide a context in which students can interpret the abundant ideas and information pouring out of China today. Viewing one or two interesting Chinese paintings will not dispel the stereotyping that all Eastern Asians are mysterious and dangerous. Listening to a story about Confucius will not alter the 'fortune cookie' image of Chinese philosophy which abounds in America. A quick lesson in Chinese art will not shatter the shallow generalization that all Eastern Asians are the same. Overcoming this ignorance is critical for students who will

be living in the emerging global society in which China has and will continue to play a significant role.

Today, more than ever before, our students are exposed to news, products, and people from China. Hong Kong, a British colony for 150 years, reverted to the Chinese communist party's People's Republic of China in July, 1997. We can only imagine as yet what impact this transfer will have on American politics, economics, immigration, and education.

Our students must spend some time studying the past history and culture of a people who have in the past and will continue in the twenty-first century to heavily influence our American community. American students do not realize the substantial contributions made to American culture and society. Chinese laborers built the intercontinental railroad across America, mined for silver in the West, and rebuilt plantations in the South. The Chinese introduced paper-making to the world. The future promises an influx of Chinese products and people worldwide.

We must prepare our students to live and work in this diverse global community. By appreciating the bountiful lessons garnered from China's past and developing an understanding for China's ethical insights, our students

will begin to unlock the Chinese meaning of life. The Chinese "Way" will come alive by spending some time with the writings of the Chinese philosopher Lao-tse. The literature, poetry, and art of China speak volumes about traditions, superstitions, and ethics. In-depth, meaningful lessons will nurture tolerance and understanding for an historically enigmatic culture. Chinese history, culture, and contributions are not inconsequential. They yield enriching and enlightening lessons for middle school students.

### **Black Versus White**

One of our native illusions is that black is not beautiful, that guileless white is pure, innocent and, yes, more desirable. White means power and goodness, while black or the dark is sinister, mysterious like the dark side of the moon. Evidence of this attitude abounds in films, magazines and the daily lives of our students. At the recent passing of Jimmy Stewart, Gary Wills, a *Time Magazine* editorialist, questions how this symbol of American innocence could have had a dark side at all or even acted in all those "dark westerns" (Wills, 1997)

People of color are mud-weary from slogging down the road to racial tolerance. The media, magazines, and songs

preach tolerance, but until there is the inner awareness that Chinese philosophers teach, human nature will never change. Attitudes are acquired at a young age. As the Rogers and Hammerstein song enlightens, "You've got to be taught to hate and fear, you've got to be carefully taught." The differences begin magnifying, it seems, in middle school.

The Chinese are a pragmatic people, and the ancient philosophies that have survived are the ones that worked. China's philosophy of Taoism teaches that thousands of years ago, Man lived in harmony with Nature. He became separated from this natural world that incorporates both the *light* and the *dark*, or the *Yin*, which is female like the rich brown earth. The balancing side is *Yang*, which is male, the sky, light, that which is warm. To have one without the other is incomplete, like a musical note without resonance, an object without its dimension-giving shadow. Opposites need not be antagonistic elements.

What an important insight for young people learning to get along with one another! Opposites are part of the same entity, "like the two-headed snake, opposites are part of the whole. They define one another, as black defines white." (Ming-Dao, 1992) How could we know great joy when sorrow has never been experienced? "When you are sorrowful



look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight."

(Gibran, 1951) These great lessons of the ancient masters provide coping skills for our young people who are just forming their own values.

Adolescents need reassurance in their struggle for identity. Those of color in a white-worshipping world long for that world to wear color blinders, to look beyond color and see the person. Many of our students come from fragmented homes and feel they have little going for them, especially their brown identity. Reading poetry and short stories based on Taoist principles will assist children in building positive attitudes and an appreciation for the balance and harmony of both the light and dark.

### Program Plan

Goal 1: To help students develop cultural tolerance of a Chinese way of life that influences our expanding global society

Objective 1: To introduce the Chinese philosophy of Taoism

Title: Tao Philosophy

Strategy: (1) Take notes about Lao-tse and Taoism  
(2) Translate notes into journal entries

Measure: Journal entries will be reviewed by the teacher for concept understanding on day 2.

Objective 2: To connect art and history as a means to understand a culture

Title: Chinese Big-Character Wall Posters

Strategy: Create Chinese big-character wall posters to profess an opinion

Measure: Wall posters will be evaluated for content and completeness on day 3.

Objective 3: To contrast Western ideas of strength, zeal and determination to Taoist ideas of harmony in nature

Title: "The Tigger Tendency"

Strategy: (1) Profess an opinion about some Western ideas  
(2) Read and respond to taxonomy questions  
(3) Describe in narrative form a personal "Tigger Tendency" and how employing Taoist ideas could prevent that behavior from recurring

Measure: Compositions will be evaluated for concept understanding and completeness on day 8.

Objective 4: To present the Taoist idea of *Yin-Yang*

Title: *Yin-Yang*

Strategy: (1) Take notes about the components of  
Yin-Yang: nature, harmony, one-ness,  
and change  
(2) Read selected Chinese poems and  
evaluate them for Yin-Yang components,  
symbolism, and mood  
(3) Create poetry employing Yin-Yang ideas

Measure: (1) Journal entries will be read and  
evaluated for concept understanding on  
day 12.  
(2) Group poem evaluation forms will be  
shared in class on day 14  
(3) Poems will be evaluated for concept  
understanding on day 15.

Objective 5: To present the Taoist concept of *Wu Wei*

Title: *Wu Wei*

Strategy: (1) Take notes about *Wu Wei*  
(2) Read and reflect on selected Chinese  
parables and poems regarding the  
importance of stillness

Measure: Student reflections on the selected stories  
will be evaluated for concept understanding  
on days 17.

Objective 6: To help students discover that balance and

harmony in nature is attained by opposites  
balancing each other, and that balance  
requires change

Title: The Nature of Opposites

Strategy: Analyze selected Chinese tales that  
exemplify the objective concept

Measure: Student response forms for selected tales  
will be evaluated for the objective concept  
on day 20.

Objective 7: To engender cultural understanding by  
teaching the Chinese style of landscape  
painting

Title: Chinese Landscape Painting

Strategy: Practice the discipline of the Chinese-  
style of brush painting rocks and trees

Measure: A final project of a rock and tree  
together will be created on day 31.

Objective 8: To learn about, create, and perform a  
Chinese shadow puppet show

Title: Chinese Shadow Puppet Show

Strategy: Create and perform a shadow puppet show  
of one of the tales or parables read in  
previous lessons

Measure: The puppet show presentation will be

evaluated based on translation of a tale into a drama, dialogue writing, puppet, set, and prop creation on days 41-43.

**Goal 2:** To help students learn to cope with the chaotic emotions and confusing social interactions characteristic of the adolescent stage of development by exploring Taoist ideas and discovering their implications in one's life

**Objective 1:** To express and listen to opinions without being judgmental or critical

**Title:** Opinions

**Strategy:** Consider some Western ideas about zeal, strength, and determination

**Measure:** Journal entries will be evaluated by the teacher for objective concept on day 2.

**Objective 2:** To compare and contrast a story situation with one's own life experience

**Title:** Personal "Tigger Tendency"

**Strategy:** Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast one's own zeal or impulsiveness with that of a character in selected literature

**Measure:** The Venn diagram will be evaluated by the teacher for concept understanding on day 10.

Objective 3: To practice critical-thinking decision making skills

Title: Decision Mountain

Strategy: Evaluate a personal "Tigger Tendency" in light of Taoist ideas learned to date and consider possible alternative behaviors

Measure: A student response form will be evaluated by the teacher on day 11.

Objective 4: To explore emotional responses to artistic shapes found in the natural world

Title: Shapes in Nature

Strategy: (1) Observe a still-life scene and analyze it for shapes, specifically circles, squares, wavy lines, and sharp, jagged lines

(2) Express emotional response to each of the shapes

Measure: Students will share their responses in class in class and write about them in their journals on day 11.

Objective 5: To create poetry based on Taoist ideas as a means of emotional expression

Title: Personal Poetry

Strategy: To employ diamante and "close-type" poems

to express the positive effects of nature  
on emotions

Measure: Student poetic products will be shared in  
class and evaluated by the teacher for  
concept understanding on day 16.

Objective 6: To understand that change is a natural,  
good, and necessary part of a balanced  
and harmonious life

Title: Change is Good

Strategy: (1) Read selected Chinese poetry and tales  
that exemplify the necessity of change  
in life  
(2) Analyze the selected literature as a  
means to validate the value of life's  
changes

Measure: Student essays describing a seemingly  
unjust or confusing personal change that  
later proved beneficial will be evaluated  
by the teacher on day 21.

Objective 7: To practice the Taoist concept of *Wu Wei* as  
a means to effect positive solutions to  
personal problems

Title: Go With the Flow

Strategy: (1) Explore the close connection between

- thoughts, feeling, and actions  
selected Chinese literature
- (2) Discover advice about stillness in  
selected Chinese literature
  - (3) Experience meditation as a positive way  
to manage personal problems
  - (4) Offer advice based on the *Wu Wei*  
principles and other Taoist ideas to  
someone with a problem

- Measure: (1) Journal entries will be evaluated by  
the teacher for concept understanding  
on day 22.
- (2) Student essays reflecting one's  
personal experience with meditation  
will be evaluated by the teacher for  
concept understanding on day 29.
  - (3) Student created right-to-left poetry  
will be shared and evaluated for Taoist  
ideas on day 27

Objective 8: To experience an avenue for nonverbal  
communication and emotional release while  
painting landscapes in the Chinese-style of  
watercolor painting

Title: Art and Emotions



Strategy: Practice the discipline required in the Chinese-style of brush painting

Measure: Student journal entries regarding their experiences and feelings about the objective concept will be evaluated for expression of emotional response to painting about nature and giving "life" to inanimate objects on day 32.

### Limitations and Delimitations

By studying the philosophical tenets of Taoism, one of the three major religions in ancient and contemporary China, it is hoped that students will attain personal insight and acquire self-esteem during the chaotic middle stage of development. They will become more aware of Nature's beauty and the role it plays in healing their teen-age angst. They will become more culturally attuned to China, a powerful influence in today's expanding, global economy.

There are problems. All three major religions - Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism - are equally important to effect a deeper understanding of China. It is dangerous to assume that Confucianism and Buddhism have already been covered, and now one may concentrate only on Taoism. Some

will question whether or not "religion" should be taught at all, either in the context of world history or language arts classes.

It is very ambitious to tackle art lessons in the Chinese mode with their inherent discipline. Teachers need training and practice to effect the correct sequence, the strokes of the masters, which when learned, will help to liberate a student's creative genius.

Shadow puppet shows require diligence and the luxury of time to develop and create scenery, to stage, to write play dialogue, all within a relatively short study cycle. Some critics might also cite the lack of teacher expertise when it comes to dealing with the group dynamics when translating short stories into puppet show presentations. Others might think the stories themselves too abstract for young, still-concrete thinkers.

Fine art is not a priority of most school districts these days. It hardly ever rates honorable mention in grade level expectancies. It is not a "core subject", and, therefore, can be eliminated because of necessary budgetary constraints. Art is considered to be a "frill". It is costly, requiring many expensive supplies and books for which there is little money budgeted. Art also needs trained teachers and few possess the necessary expertise.

Teachers who attempt these lessons will need to coordinate with other disciplines, principally history and art teachers, for more meaningful integration. Some schools do not have pure teams, or their teachers may lack adequate time to get together for planning.

On the other hand, since China is taught in sixth grade, most students have been presented with all three philosophies. In seventh grade, China is revisited, and this is a perfect time for supplemental lessons about China; for example, the study of an influential concept like Taoism. These are lessons that flow easily along with the oral tradition folklore presented in seventh grade anthologies. Focusing on one philosophy, Taoism, is particularly fitting for seventh graders. The "caught-in-the-middle of middle school" kids can focus on thinking that turns change into something positive and compromise into possible solutions.

No culture can be understood without studying its philosophies -- yes, its religions. For instance, in Hinduism, the religion is an entire way of life. One cannot separate the two. Taoism, taught indirectly through folklore and poetry, returns students to Nature, helping them cope with problems.

Districts throughout California are re-evaluating art as an essential part of the curriculum. With increasing awareness and more funding at the state and national levels, the monetary constraints will diminish. More teachers will be adequately trained in hands-on art, as well as those credentialed in art history.

Recent educational research states that middle school students need the time to study fewer subjects in greater depth. This narrower focus will provide a window of opportunity for meaningful, in-depth supplemental lessons such as poetry, folklore, art, and the shadow puppetry of Ancient China.

### Assumptions

#### Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade

California State Department of Education, Sacramento, 1996

"California public school system must provide a balanced curriculum, with the arts as part of the core for all students, kindergarten through twelfth grade, no matter what the students' abilities, language capacities, or special needs happen to be."

The arts inspire self-confidence and help develop critical skills for life and work.

"The arts reflect and influence culture."

"The arts expose kids to a range of cultures and points of view."

"All of the arts depend upon the human's most exquisite capacity-judgment.... They are fundamental resources through which the world is viewed, meaning is created, and the mind developed." -Elliot Eisner

Caught in the Middle: Educational Reform for Young  
Adolescents in California Public Schools

California State Department of Education, Sacramento, 1987

"The content of core curriculum subjects must be linked to the curiosity of young adolescents about themselves---who they are, how they fit into the world around them, how that world functions..."

"Young adolescents must learn to draw upon the vast reservoir of accumulated knowledge available to them and to see its meaning for the dynamic, rapidly changing world which they are about to inherit."

"Every middle grade student should be helped to personalize ideas and to develop the ability to make reasoned moral and ethical choices."

#### Grade Level Expectancies (Grade Level 6)

La Habra City School District, March 1994

"The student will understand the history, characteristics of life, and contributions to the development of civilization of ancient China...."

"The student will learn about the development of major religions and philosophies of India, China, Ancient Hebrews as well as Christianity."

"Teaching about China"

Jeffrey R. Johnston

ERIC Clearinghouse (ED327454), October, 1990

China studies have been neglected in American classrooms, and, consequently, China is too often the victim of stereotyping and specious generalization.

Teaching at the Middle Level: A Professional's Handbook

Shurr, Sandra L., Thomason, Julia, Thompson, Max  
D. C. Heath and Company, 1996

The nature of young adolescents is both contradictory and complementary causing a chaotic and turbulent stage of development.

Art History, Art Criticism, and Art Production

An Examination of Art Education in Selected School

Districts, Volume III: Executive Summary

McLaughlin, Milbrey W., Thomas, Margaret A., Peterson,  
Joyce

Published by The Rand Corporation

Arts advocates, many art educators, and some practitioners believe a person without art education is not fully educated. Nevertheless, that belief has not assured art the status accorded traditional "academic" subjects or translated into sequential, discipline-based art programs in the schools.

### Major Conclusions

To implement a discipline-based art program in schools, one that includes art history and art criticism as well as production requires more than a change in policies and practices -- it requires a shift in perspective.

Art programs will have to be conceived, developed and maintained as other basic programs are.

Art programs must have *politically adept advocates* to generate interest in change.

A major problem involved in changing the arts programs is the lack of a *knowledge base* and of *model programs*.

Art is not viewed as an educational discipline.



A critical factor in establishing new art programs is that art education has suffered from neglect, not resistance... The most important factor is the commitment to change that translates into resources and active support from all levels of the educational system.

"Because art education is a 'non-issue' in most school districts, strong, three-domain programs will not be considered without the influence of an articulate, politically- skilled arts advocate."

Three critical factors for implementation of an arts program are:

1. Concrete, ongoing training
2. Well-specified instructional goals;
3. Central coordination

### In Search of Modern China

Spence, Jonathan, W. Norton & Company, 1991

"No country, over the past few centuries, has been free of turmoil and tragedy. It is as if there were a restlessness and a capacity for violence at the center of the human

spirit that can never be contained, so that no society can achieve a perfect tranquility. Yet in every country, too, humans have shown a love of beauty, a passion for intellectual adventure, a gentleness, an exuberant sensuality, and a yearning for justice that have cut across the darkness and filled the world with light." China is such a country; its destiny is entwined with all others, its story is astonishing and from its four thousand year history there is much to be learned. To know where China is going in the future, we must study its past.

"...For a long time China was a completely unknown quantity to those living in the West, and even today seems set apart by differences of language, custom, and attitude."

### Eloquent Evidence: Arts at the Core of Learning

Elizabeth Murfee

Sponsored by The President's Committee on the Arts and  
Humanities and The National Endowment of the Arts 1995

"There is a growing consensus among policy makers and parents that the arts should be an integral part of education."

"During the past quarter century, literally thousands of school-based programs have demonstrated beyond question that the arts can not only bring coherence to our fragmented academic world, but through the arts, students' performance in other academic disciplines can be enhanced as well." -- Ernest L. Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

"Arts education requires students to draw upon their creative abilities and to deepen them, as well. The benefit is that creative thinking, once learned early, lasts for a lifetime and can be applied in other endeavors."

"Pyramids, cathedrals and rockets exist not because of geometry, theories of structures or thermodynamics, but because they were first a *picture* - literally a vision - in the minds of those who built them." -- Eugene Ferguson, historian

"There is a growing consensus among policy makers and parents that the arts should be an integral part of education."

"The open and exploratory nature of the arts lessons in New York City's "Arts Partners' Program allowed students to explore their "regular" subject areas more actively. Students drew upon their learning from the "core" disciplines for much of the content for their art works, thus reinforcing academic achievement."

High-risk students are helped by the arts. "Many students find that the arts help them master academic skills. Drawing helps writing. Song and poetry make facts memorable. Drama makes history more vivid and real. Creative movement makes processes understandable. This is doubly true for the high risk student, who often excels for the first time in an arts program.. Sometimes, the student who is not doing well in traditional academics might have an artistic talent that has not yet flowered."

"When I examine myself and my method of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of *fantasy* has meant more to me than my talent for absorbing knowledge." - Albert Einstein

"Projections about demographic composition of the United States in the next forty years show that the 'minority' population will soon be the majority population."

"The arts prepare students for jobs... The ability to communicate, adapt, diagnose problems and find creative solutions is more important than ever before. These attributes can be nurtured and honed through studying the arts."

"More than 100 national organizations from education, arts, corporate and private foundations, and government sectors have formed the 'Goals 2000 Arts Education' partnership to ensure that the arts become a vital component of every child's education. "

"Students' engagement and persistence improve with an arts-based curriculum. The arts teach *discipline* which is the value of sustained effort to achieve excellence, and the concrete rewards of hard work." With an arts-based curriculum, there is higher school attendance and fewer drop-outs.

History-Social Science Framework for California Public  
Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve

State Department of Education, Sacramento, 1988

"History must reflect the experiences of men and women of different racial, religious, and ethnic groups."

"The emphasis on people is especially appropriate in grades four through eight, because these are the years when students are especially open and receptive to the study of people who are different from themselves."

Students must become familiar with the basic ideas of the major religions and ethical traditions that shape a country's culture.

In linking past to present, students learn to appreciate the continuity of human experience and how changes across time have contributed to our way of life.

Definition of Terms

For this project, the following definitions apply...

1. **One-ness** is the concept of completeness in Taoism.  
Being in harmony with the Tao (the Way, the Absolute, the Ultimate principle) is the ultimate goal of believers.
2. **Wu Wei** is the Taoist concept of non-action or in-action by which one exemplifies non-volitional living and, therefore, obeying the Tao. It does not mean passivity, but rather a waiting to see how time and nature will solve problems.
3. **Taoism** (DAOISM per Pinyin translation) the the ancient religious philosophy of China that worships nature and believes that all nature is alive. Man, by being "at one" with nature and not seeking to manipulate nature, achieves the Chi (wisdom) of the Tao (Way). One Taoist idea is *Wu Wei*, or positive non-action. Taoism is considered the Way of the Dragon, the Dragon being the symbol of transformation.
4. **Yin-Yang** is another Taoist principle that describes the complimentary balance of opposites as forces of nature. Some **Yin** forces are female weak, earth, moon, night, dark, and cold. The **Yang** forces are male, strong, heaven, sun, day, light, and heat.
5. **Te** is the Chinese word meaning virtue.

6. The phrase **center down** means to quiet down to the stillness so that one is able to listen to the quietness within.
7. A Chinese painter must learn exact brush strokes in a disciplined procedure to create their stylized watercolor artwork. **Wafts on** is one such curling, tapering stroke with pauses at the beginning and then lifts or "wafts" off at the end of the stroke.
8. **Orientalism** embodies a field of study based on a geographical, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic unit called "The Orient." In this "field," scholars as early as 1312 began to establish the thinking that Asia was that other world beyond the sea. Orientals were "given the feelings of emptiness, loss, and disaster that seemed thereafter to reward Oriental challenges to the West; and also, the lament that in some glorious past Asia fared better, was itself victorious over Europe."  
(Said, 1994) The Orient is experienced through the eyes of Westerner's experiences -- their journeys, fables and stereotype description of things Oriental. "Truth, in short, becomes a function of learned judgment, not of the material itself, which in time seems to owe even its existence to the Orientalist." (Said, 1994)
9. The **Orientalist** is the ruler of Orientals (Asians).



10. Pluralism is a political term used to explain the coexistence of distinct ethnic and cultural groups in the same society.
11. Transescent simply means adolescent.
12. A close-type poem is a poem frame that has words left out so student poets may fill-in the blanks with their own words to complete the poem.

## CHAPTER TWO -- REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Why is studying about China in middle school important? Studying about "people is especially appropriate in grades four through eight, because these are the years when students are especially open and receptive to the study of people who are different from themselves."

(Strazicich, 1988) In fact, the grade level expectancies for sixth grade in the La Habra City School District directed teachers to include China in the curriculum. The desired outcome was that the "student will understand the history, characteristics of life, and contributions to development of civilization of China." (La Habra City School District Expectancies, 1994)

Because on the immense amount of information available on China's history, textbook lessons only superficially explored Chinese culture. "Students must become familiar with the basic ideas of the major religions and ethical traditions that shape a country's culture." (Strazicich, 1998) However, delving beyond the "basic" history, philosophy and art of a people made the learning more real and vivid to children. Better understanding of the past helped students link other cultures to their own and elicited appreciation of "the continuity of human

experience and how changes across time have contributed to our way of life." (Strazicich, 1988)

No longer was China just a mysterious country across the ocean. Chinese immigrants continued to settle in America, bringing with them an extensive history and unique culture that seriously impacted American life. "China's geographical size, population and culture, and political influence are too vast to be ignored." (Johnson, 1990)

The People's Republic of China was a burgeoning power in a shrinking world. "The history of China is as rich and strange as that of any country on earth, and its destiny as a nation is now entwined with all others in the search for scarce resources, the exchange of goods, and the expansion of knowledge," wrote Jonathan Spence in *The Search for Modern China*. (Spence, 1990)

Once thought to be a sleeping giant, too vast and mysterious to comprehend, China opened its doors to President Nixon in 1971 and curiosity was reawakened. Still, the impact of the tragedy at Tiananmen Square in 1989 and the current Chinese cultural revolution have managed to exacerbate misunderstanding and deepen a sense of ambiguity when it comes to political China. "Although historians and journalists in the United States have long observed a 'special relationship' between the two

countries, which has included periods of optimistic friendship as well as tragic conflict, China studies have been neglected in American classrooms." (Johnson, 1990)

During an interview, Dr. Tara Sethia, a professor of Sociology at California Polytechnical University, Pomona, stated that one cure for this deficiency would be to train teachers to provide innovative, de-mystifying curriculum for students. "...One of the major problems in this country has been the lack of understanding diversity in a proper way. ...The study of Asia or any other culture provides us [with] a very valuable perspective in understanding different or diverse cultural groups in this country."

(Sethia, 1997) Refer to the complete interview transcript in the Appendix)

With this in mind, the India-China Summer Institute at that university was born under the directorship of Dr. Sethia, a native of India. She felt that by spending two or more years intensively studying primary and secondary sources of Asian literature, educator-participants would become teacher-leaders, or bridges to understanding the ever-important Asian influence in our global society.

Political and economic interests, as well as our own manifest destiny, shaped the modern Westerner's need to understand the Chinese. Who was in power at a particular

time and what was in vogue helped to create the stereotypical view of the Chinese. Orientalism, according to Edvard Said, was a creation of Western politicians.

"There are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated, which usually means having their land occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled, their blood and treasure put at the disposal of one or another Western power." (Said, 1994) Orientals were characterized as being gullible and devoid of energy and initiative. They were liars, lethargic, and suspicious. They "oppose the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race." (Said, 1994)

In the past, Westerners had different feelings toward China. In 1564, the Jesuits found China large, tough, and well-ordered. The dark and light sides of China blended well under the early Westerner's gaze, and many foreigners tried to dispel negative notions. Voltaire praised China's laws. "In other countries, the laws are used to punish crimes; in China they do more - they reward virtue."

(Voltaire, 1771) Confucius said, "If a man take no thought about what is distant, he will find sorrow near at hand."

Asian young people are near at hand and need to be understood. Because a rapidly growing segment of the population in the United States is Asian, especially in

California, we are at a critical crossroads. The time for pluralism has arrived with a need to focus on interdependence. A blending of ethnic traditions will lead to national unity. (England, 1992)

Magazine and newspaper articles continuously report on why we should study Asia, and China in particular. There seems to be no doubt that the Chinese are having a serious impact on today's global society. "If we are to flourish in the twentieth century - the Asian century - we need to readjust our priorities. We must pay much more sustained intellectual attention to China and the rest of Asia. (Holbrook, 1986)

"Teaching about China through the humanities offers insights into life's essential questions -- Who am I? What is my responsibility to other people? How does my life connect with a larger history and culture?" (Lankard, 1994) Middle school children are just beginning to ask questions about, and seek a deeper meaning in, their lives.

They "are almost universally dissatisfied with themselves at the very time they are forming their adult sense of self -the sense they will carry for life." (Shurr, Thomason, Thompson, 1996) They are wondering how they fit into the greater world and if who they are is enough.

While they are still concrete thinkers, adolescents now experience periods of abstract thinking that can confuse and frustrate them. "What is impossible today may suddenly become possible tomorrow. What is good and pleasing today may, tomorrow, become evil and odious. What seems right from one point of view may, when seen from a different aspect, manifest itself as completely wrong."

(Merton, 1965) Adolescent emotions fluctuate many times a day and are, therefore, volatile and fragile. Taoist ideas suggested that "instead of struggling to erase what are referred to as negative emotions, we can learn to use them in positive ways." (Hoff, 1982)

"It is important to realize that their expression of emotions or behaviors associated with particular emotions are strongly rooted in their various cultures." (Skills for Adolescents, 1988) Cultures differ in how these emotions may be expressed. Some adolescents favor being emotionally demonstrative, while others take caution to hold feelings inside. (Skills for Adolescents, 1988) In the interest of getting along with one another, adolescents need help to understand how different people react to stressful situations and times of happiness. "To understand why individuals and groups acted as they did, we must see what values and assumptions they held, what they honored, what

they sought, and what they reared." (Strazicich, 1988)

Learning how people of different cultures are taught to show respect and cope with their emotions will provide young people with useful, insightful skills, even if the lessons were generated thousands of years ago. The appeal of Taoist ideas is ageless, universal.

"The study of historical literature provides a rich array of possibilities for students as they examine the personal commitments of others to the ideals of hard work, responsibility and self-improvement." (Fenwick, 1987)

Connecting with adults in the context of historical perspective, folklore, and poetry, helps young people form their own values.

"By studying a people's...philosophy as well as their folkways and traditions, we gain an understanding of their ethical and moral commitments. By reading the texts that people revere, we gain important insights into their thinking." (Strazicich, 1988)

The ancient philosophy of Taoism was a natural choice when it came to narrowing the focus on China. Selected excerpts from fundamental Chinese philosophical texts and other works by ancient Chinese poets and storytellers offered students an opportunity to appraise different Chinese approaches taken to secure balance and harmony in life. These are recurring themes in



Chinese culture. They are also goals that adolescents unconsciously strive for as they struggle for self definition.

Change, so often looked upon as negative, was viewed as a positive challenge by Taoists. "The key to Chuang Tzu's thought is the complementarity of opposites... Life is a continual development. All beings are in a state of flux." (Merton, 1965) Are not adolescents steeped in change? Adolescence is a time when so many things in their life are changing that sometimes it seems hard for adolescents to keep track of everything. (Skills for Adolescence, 1988) The Taoist idea of non-action, or "wait and see," encourages patience rather than impulsive action.

By reading Chinese parables, such as those found in *Sweet and Sour, Tales from China* (Kendall & Li, 1978), students learn that fortunes may change if given time and that patience is a virtue. Developing and maintaining a patient demeanor is a skill that will benefit a young person throughout a lifetime.

When asked if the study of ancient literature could have some relevance to the lives of adolescents, Dr. Tara Sethia of California Polytechnic University at Pomona affirmed the idea. "Look at some of the values that the Indian and Chinese philosophies and cultures stand for,

like tolerance, which comes alive in both Confucianism and Hinduism. Understanding tolerance is a much needed value for our students." (Sethia, 1997)

The wisdom of Chuang Tzu, the authentic Taoist writer, came alive in parables that grasped reality, yet were humorous and direct. Its simplicity belied the profound nature of the messages he proffered for leading a moral life. In "The Need to Win," Chuang Tzu professed that trying too much and hoping for rewards "drains him [the archer] of power" as he fights the natural flow of nature. (Merton, 1965)

An entire plan for living unfolds in the story of "The Cook", another Chuang Tzu parable. "When I first began to dismember oxen, I saw before me an entire oxen. After three years of practice, I no longer saw the entire animal. And now I work with my spirit, not my eyes... I follow the openings and hollows which, according to the natural state of the animal, must be where they are." (Buber, 1991)

This and other lessons taught in primary source writings warn that over-reaction causes problems, but joy can be found if one goes with the flow of nature.

*The Te of Piglet* and *The Tao of Pooh*, two books by contemporary author Benjamin Hoff, yielded lessons in the Taoist philosophy with particular appeal for adolescents

because the teachings come via well-known characters from childhood -- Winnie the Pooh and his entourage. It is in these stories that impulse-driven, overzealous, often out-of-focus adolescents might be able to recognize themselves. "Tiggers are first rate at starting things, but are not very good at completing them. Life is always greener elsewhere to a Tigger once he has started something..." (Hoff, 1982) As they read these stories, students might laugh a little, chill out, or "center down" while gleaning at least a portion of the wisdom of the ancients.

Teachings generated from Western ideas encourage these "Tigger tendencies" toward impulsiveness, while ancient Chinese philosophy counters them with *Wu Wei*, a sort of non-doing that neither negates activity, nor is passive. *Wu Wei* "is not intent upon results and is not concerned with consciously laid plans or deliberately organized endeavors" because "the answer will make itself clear when the time comes to act." (Merton, 1965)

Lao-Tse, the author of the *Tao Te Ching* over 2,600 years ago, cautioned humans against acting without respect to the natural rhythm of things when he wrote:

High winds do not blow all morning;

Heavy rain does not fall all day.

Are not these made by heaven and earth?

If the power of heaven and earth  
Cannot make violent activity last,  
How can you?

(Hoff, 1992)

How can Taoism be taught in public schools? Isn't that teaching *religion*? Objections to the teaching of a religious philosophy were overcome for this project. The lessons in "Taoism The Adolescent Way" teach about a religious philosophy. "It is impossible to understand much of history without knowing about religion." (Risinger, 1988) Some educators have argued that "history is neglected and traditional values are missing" in modern curriculum. (Risinger, 1988) "Teaching about the impact of religion in history...is closely linked to multicultural and ethical education. Knowing about and understanding religious beliefs is a key element in developing tolerance and a comprehension of one the primary motivating factors in human affairs." (Risinger, 1992) Too few novels read in schools deal with authentic ethnic folklore passed down by oral tradition. Studies of history and culture are enriched when students have the opportunity to read the literature not only about the period, but of the period as well. "Such literature helps to reveal the way people saw themselves, their ideas and values, their fears and dreams,

and the way they interpreted their own times."

(Strazicich, 1988)

The study of history by way of fine arts and humanities was a challenge. It was difficult to attempt a project centered on the arts since even "a succinct definition of the humanities has been elusive, and this quality has contributed to the tenuous position of its study." (Holbrook, 1986) In a broad perspective, the humanities are history, literature, writing, language, philosophy, music, and the arts. What brings these fields together in the larger sense of interdisciplinary course work is the impact of *culture* upon them, and the ways in which the fields influence each other.

In 1984 Elliot Eisner examined the reasons for the decline of humanities in our schools' curriculum. Two important factors were "the educators' concern with time as a commodity reserved for sciences and other practical disciplines, and the notion that schooling is or should be an enterprise *free of values* designed to teach children to think, but not become critical of the status quo."

(Eisner, 1984)

The philosophical tenets embodied in various genres of literature from ancient China were profoundly relevant for subsequent generations, and, consequently, for today's

generation of adolescents. The materialism, the need for instant gratification, and the pressure to excel in the more exact disciplines of mathematics and science drive our young people. (Hoff, 1992) "...It is quite easy to be an impatient, inconsiderate, scatterbrained [person] in a society that admires, encourages, and rewards impulsive behavior." (Hoff, 1992) Westerners need to slow down. In *The Te of Piglet*, Benjamin Hoff quotes the *Tao Te Ching*, a primary source:

The five colors blind the eye.

The five tones deafen the ear.

The five flavors deaden the tongue.

Racing and hunting madden the mind.

The sensationalistic approach to life, has crippled the minds of American children who are so stressed and frenzied that they can't learn much of anything. (Hoff, 1992)

A study of the humanities explores the purpose of human existence. Learning about the characteristics and beliefs of others is valuable, because wise choices can be made for one's own life. "Arts education requires students to draw upon their creative abilities and to deepen them, as well. The benefit is that creative thinking, once

learned early, lasts a lifetime and can be applied to other endeavors." (Murfee, 1996)

The general public contention is that art is a frill of education and can, therefore, be slashed from the curriculum budget. Art is not viewed as an educational discipline. (Burton, 1996) However, "the California State Board of Education supports art education for all students as a total and fundamental part of core curriculum in kindergarten through grade twelve." (Burton, 1996) Elliot Eisner, Professor of Education and Art, School of Education, Stanford University, said that the decisions about what should be taught in California schools are far-reaching and "are, at base, decisions about the kinds of opportunities children will have to invent their own minds." (Burton, 1996)

Art has been proven as an important part of learning. "Many studies document the role of the arts in improving basic skills, the 3'Rs. Because of the mounting evidence linking the arts to basic learning, some researchers refer to the arts as 'The Fourth R'." (Murfee, 1995) Like a golden thread woven in a tapestry, art connects the disciplines of learning.

Varied perceptions of the world allow for varied solutions to problems. "The ability to communicate, adapt,

diagnose problems, and find creative solutions is more important than ever before. These attributes can be nurtured and honed through studying the arts." (Murfee, 1995) Through the arts, the student is able to become part of the human tradition in the search for meaning. Art serves as the central medium of human communication and understanding.

Art history, in particular, lends itself to a successful marriage between the arts and social science. "When words are no longer adequate, when our passion is greater than we are able to express in a usual manner, people turn to art." (Burton, 1996) Art history breaks down barriers and speaks a universal language of visual images that appeal to the senses. Through art and art history instruction, students may hear, touch, smell and view other civilizations and are, therefore, able to make connections between past, present and future.

Literal language is not enough. There is a world of meaning beyond the limits of linguistic form. Concepts become meaningful not by virtue of words alone, but by imagining what a word is referring to. It has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words, but never more surely than when that picture is from the fanciful mind of a child. Even the great Albert Einstein appreciated



artistic creativity. "When I examine myself and my method of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than my talent for absorbing knowledge." (Murfee, 1996) Without creativity, learning is meaningless. Reflection, analysis, and synthesis of artwork contributes to a greater understanding of the world.

The arts are serious and rigorous academic subjects. They are an essential aspect of human knowing. "Science will...produce the data...but never the full meaning. For perceiving real significance, we shall need...most all of the brains of poets, [and] also those of artists, musicians, philosophers, historians, writers in general." (Murfee, 1996)

The rich artist tradition in China further exemplifies the themes of balance and harmony through both subject and style. The exploration of nature in Chinese landscape painting was at the core of Taoist philosophy. Here was an example of the strict discipline of exacting steps freeing the artist's expression. "The artists, in their quest for creating scenes that were in their minds, could call upon their training to obtain just the right relationship of opposing forces. They could concentrate on achieving light and dark, advancing and retreating, near and far, sparse

and dense, empty and solid. It all added up to the principles of balance of opposites -- the Yin and Yang."

(Quigley, 1993)

Often artists painted classical allegories in frequently visited spots like shrines to remind visitors of sacred society values. These paintings often corresponded to folktales, exemplifying the interrelationship among the arts. Chinese calligraphers were also poets, and for centuries, the two crafts remained inseparable. (Quigley, 1993) With hands-on experience, students gain insight into disciplines of the ancient world, thus freeing their own creativity and bolstering self-esteem.

"The arts are one of mankind's most visual and essential forms of language, and if we do not educate our children in the symbol system called the arts, we will lose not only our culture and civility, but our humanity as well." (Burton, 1996) For many who lived through the cultural revolution in contemporary China, civility and humanity seemed to have disappeared. Who could make sense out of families split apart when they were sent to communal farms to work?

Artistic expression was put on hold while, "throughout China, everyone was working to build the great new society and students had to help." (Nan Zhang, 1993) Student's

classes were interrupted while they were sent off for weeks to work on farms, separated from their loved ones. Yet, for Song Nan Zhang, art still flourished, as he was chosen to paint a mural with a dragon representing China, carrying its people forward to communism. When it came time for him to express his thoughts, good and bad, about his life in China, he chose art. "I decided to tell and paint the story of my life, to help me understand it... Perhaps it will give others some insight into the human dimension of China over the past century." (Nan Zhang, 1993)

Although the wisdom of the ancients was born over two thousand years ago, it is as relevant today as it ever was. "Reading the *Tao Te Ching's* descriptions of the society of its time, one gets the strangest feeling that they were written the day before yesterday. So once again, Taoism -- for all its great age -- seems very up-to-the-minute. And once again, perhaps I has something to offer." (Hoff, 1992) When asked how the People's Republic of China was doing as it makes its way into the twenty-first century, Professor Zee Ding, California Polytechnic University, Pomona, replied, "Crossing the river by feeling the stones." This ancient Chinese proverb might also apply to the middle school children upon which "Taoism The Adolescent Way" was based.

### CHAPTER THREE -- PROJECT

## **TAOISM THE ADOLESCENT WAY**

### **Supplemental Language Arts Unit**

This supplemental language arts unit will allow middle grades students the opportunity to delve deeper into the culture of China as it offers them some useful personal skills. Each of the six unit lessons offers insight about Taoism, an ancient Chinese philosophy, written by Lao-tse at a time when life in China was turbulent due to constant warring. Lao-tse's ideas offered the Chinese people a way to cope with the confusion, low self-esteem, change, and hopelessness caused by the turmoil.

These chaotic feelings also characterize much of early adolescence. Middle grade students need guidance through the physical, emotional, and social ups and downs they experience on a daily basis. As they encounter some of Lao-tse's basic principles embedded in various literary selections and fine art activities, adolescents will garner some valuable personal skills and practical ideas about life that will last a lifetime. They'll have fun, too.

Whether they are choral reading, creating a shadow puppet show, generating their own poetry, reading "backwards" poems, meditating, or painting with water colors, students will be constantly engaged in activities that encourage cultural tolerance and self-esteem. There is an abundance of activities to choose from in the unit -- probably more than a busy, packed curriculum will allow. However, the time and money necessary to implement and present this unit is well worth the effort. Both students' and teachers' lives will be enriched because this unit offers not only academic growth, but insightful personal growth as well.

### KEY OBJECTIVES

#### Cultural

- To introduce the Taoist philosophical ideas about balance and harmony, Yin-Yang, change, one-ness, and *Wu Wei*
- To read and explore Chinese literature (poetry, tales, and parables)
- To learn the meaning and usefulness of meditation in daily life
- To connect art and history for cultural perspective

### Adolescent Skills

- To express and listen to opinions without judgment
- To practice critical thinking decision-making skills
- To understand how art can evoke emotional response
- To understand that change is good and a necessary part of life
- To explore the close connection between thoughts, feelings, and actions
- To experience meditation as a natural way to manage emotions and problems

### KEY VOCABULARY

change, harmony, meditation, one-ness, opinion, parable, philosophy, tranquility, *Wu Wei*, *Yin-Yang*

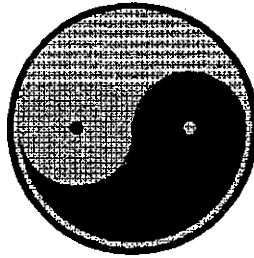
### MATERIALS

- *The Tao of Pooh*, by Benjamin Hoff (a class set)
- Student Journals
- Overhead transparencies
- Copier access
- *Chinese Landscape Painting for Beginners*, by Audrey Quigley.
- Construction paper (black, white)
- Poster-size paper

- Art paper for watercolor painting
- Multicolored markers
- Black tempera paint
- Brushes (soft with pointy tip)
- Examples of Chinese landscape painting for display in classroom (art stores, museum shops, book stores)

#### LESSON SUMMARY AND SUGGESTED TIMELINE

Lesson One	Show Me the Tao	(10 Days)
Lesson Two	Yin-Yang: Nature's Harmony	( 5 Days)
Lesson Three	Taoist Tales: Wait and See	( 6 Days)
Lesson Four	Go With the Flow	( 6 Days)
Lesson Five	Chinese Landscape Painting	( 4 Days)
Lesson Six	Chinese Shadow Puppet Show	(12 Days)



## Lesson One

### SHOW ME THE TAO

#### OBJECTIVES

- To introduce students to the Tao philosophy of Lao-tse.
- To define philosophy.
- To practice note-taking skills.
- To express and listen to opinions without being judgmental or critical of other's ideas.
- To compare and contrast a situation in a story with an actual experience in a student's life.
- To practice using critical-thinking decision making skills.
- To connect art and history as a means of understanding a culture.

#### MATERIALS

- Student Journal
- Student Reflection Page
- Overhead transparency of "Background" text



- *The Te of Piglet*, by Benjamin Hoff
- Overhead transparency and class copies of Decision Mountain worksheet
- White poster paper (10 x 12)
- Colorful markers

VOCABULARY    philosophy, harmony

ANTICIPATION

Instruct students to take out their journals and set up a page to begin Lesson One. Then have them preview the questions about Tao philosophy on the Student Reflection page. Instruct students to take notes on the Student Reflection page as the background information is read from an overhead projection of the text. Then they write the answers in their journals as homework tonight.

"Today we are going to begin our study about a Chinese philosophy called Taoism, pronounced and often spelled "Daoism" according to the Pinyin system of pronouncing Chinese in Western languages. [Write both on the board and practice pronouncing the name.] Ideas about the nature of the universe and how life should be lived were written by Lao-tse (LAOdsuh) during the sixth century B.C. in China. He titled the book *Tao Te Ching* (DAO DEH JEENG), meaning The Taoist Book of Virtues. Lao-tse wrote his advice at a time when life in China was in turmoil because the people

were constantly at war with different invaders. The Chinese people sought meaning for lives characterized by change, confusion, and hopelessness.

"Lao-tse believed that earth was a harmonious reflection of heaven, both ruled by the same laws of the universe called the Tao, or "Way." This natural harmony between heaven and earth could only be *felt*, not defined in words. Therefore, heaven and earth could not be governed by the rules of man, specifically the rules of Confucianists. If a person understood and obeyed these laws of the universe, a natural balance in life occurred that ensured happiness and harmony.

"How would you define "harmony"? [pleasing agreement in action, ideas, colors, tones, et cetera]

"Lao-tse taught that people should live simply and not interfere with the natural balance produced and governed by the universal laws. If a person did interfere, the balance and harmony would be violated and struggles would be inevitable. For example, Lao-tse encouraged people to sit by a stream, feel a breeze, or watch a drifting cloud. The river, breeze, and stream all move without effort because they follow the Tao, or Way, of nature that guides all things.

"Taoists believe that things and people in their simplicity contain their own natural power, power easily spoiled when that simplicity is changed. Simplicity, however, does not mean stupidity. Simplicity means still and calm, reflecting the balance and harmony of nature. If one forces activity that interrupts the rhythm of nature, mistakes are made. Cleverness and egotism are examples of forces that will interfere with the Tao and disrupt harmony.

"Chinese teachers taught their philosophy by telling stories. In a moment we will read a Chinese tale, "The Foolhardy Tiger", about a tiger that meddles with the natural order in his enthusiasm to prove what he can do.

But before we read, let's think about some opinions that Westerners hold as truth. What is an *opinion*?"

Instruct students to complete the "Opinions" activity on the Student Reflections page. Give them about ten minutes to think and write. Then ask them to share their ideas with their group.

#### READING AND REFLECTING

In *The Te of Piglet*, begin reading "The Tigger Tendency" on page 83. After reading "The Foolhardy Tiger", lead a discussion based on the first three questions in the

Reading and Reflecting section of the Student Reflections page.

Continue reading the selection. After reading the Taoist excerpts on pages 89-90, lead a discussion based on the fourth question.

Continue reading the selection. As you read, elicit student comments regarding the characterization of Tigger as an overzealous, impulsive enthusiast who challenges the Tao, upsets the natural order, and will, therefore, never know harmony and happiness. Write his character traits on the board or butcher paper and have students note them in their journals. Ask students to respond to the fifth question.

After completing the selection, ask the students to respond to the last activities. These activities are preparing the students for the journal writing assignment. Students will use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast their experience to the tiger's or one of Tigger's escapades. Then, using the overhead transparency, guide the students through the Decision Mountain worksheet as it applies to Tigger's discovery of what Tiggers like best on pages 99-105.

#### WRITING CONNECTION - Journal

Have students respond to the prompt on the Student Reflection page as homework or a classroom assignment.

**ART CONNECTION: Wall Posters**

Big-character wall posters provided a means of communication and personal expression in China for many years. People used the posters to express their opinions. They hung them on walls in parks and other public areas. When the people began to use the posters to speak out against the political system in the 1970s, the Chinese government outlawed the posters.

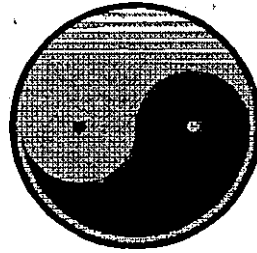
**Project:**

Make a big-character wall poster that expresses one or more of your personal opinions.

**Directions:**

1. Review the meaning of *opinion*.
2. Students choose one or more opinions to express in poster form. Encourage consideration of ideas brought forth in "The Tiger Tendency". On a poster, write the opinion(s) in large letters that can be seen from a distance.
3. Decorate the poster's edge with Chinese designs
4. Hang the posters on the classroom wall. Use the opinions expressed on the posters as springboards to classroom discussion and debate. Provide a non-

threatening environment where students are not afraid their opinions will be judged or criticized. Discuss the phrase "freedom of expression".



## STUDENT REFLECTIONS

### LESSON ONE

## SHOW ME THE TAO

### ANTICIPATION

Note-taking: Tao Philosophy. Take notes on this page to answer the following questions as you learn about the Tao philosophy of Lao-tse. As homework tonight, write answers to these questions in your journal.

- What is philosophy?
- Who was Lao-tse?
- What did Lao-tse write?
- What was his philosophy?
- What significance does Taoism have for humans?
- Write a paragraph expressing your thoughts and feelings about Taoism.
- What is an opinion?

Opinions. Copy the following statements in your Journal. Take a few minutes to write down your thoughts about each

statement. Then share your opinions with your group. Show respect for other's opinions. You have a right to your opinion, and others have a right to theirs. Arguing runs against the Tao, so listen without judging or criticizing others.

- Bigger and stronger is better.
- If I think I can, and I tell everyone I can, I can do it!
- Enthusiasm is all that's needed to get the job done.

READING AND REFLECTING: "The Tigger Tendency" As the class discusses these questions, take notes on this paper. Write answers to the questions in your journal tonight as homework.

1. In the tale "The Foolhardy Tiger", was the tiger better off because he was stronger and bigger than any of the other animals he met? Why or why not?
2. How did being a good talker get the tiger into trouble?
3. Why is this tale a good example for teaching about Taoism?
4. Which excerpt from the *Tao Te Ching* on pages 89-90 in *The Te of Piglet* do you think best describes the foolhardy tiger? Why did you choose that one?

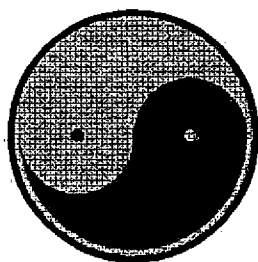


5. What are Tigger's character traits? How do his traits relate to the Tao?
6. Think of a time when you were overzealous or impulsive about something. Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast your experience to the tiger's in "The Foolhardy Tiger" or to one of Tigger's tendencies.
7. Which excerpt from the *Tao Te Ching* on pages 89-90 in *The Te of Piglet* do you think best describes your "Tigger Tendency"?
8. Complete the Decision Mountain activity to consider what you might do differently the next time you catch yourself experiencing a "Tigger Tendency".

WRITING CONNECTION: Journal

You have begun to explore Taoism and its implications for your life. Plunging into action without adequate preparation or consideration of consequences is something most people do at one time or another.

In your journal, write in narrative form about a time you experienced a "Tigger Tendency". In a second paragraph, discuss how you could consider the ideas of the Tao to make your behavior less impulsive (chaotic, zealous, unplanned, sensational, et cetera).



## Lesson Two

### **YIN-YANG: NATURE'S HARMONY**

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- To understand the Taoist concept of Yin-Yang.
- To reflect upon the meaning of poetry.
- To identify elements of Taoism in selected poetry.
- To evoke opposing emotional responses to artistic shapes of nature.
- To create a diamonte poem to express opposites in nature.
- To employ a "cloze-type" poem form to express how emotions can be affected by nature.

#### **MATERIALS**

- Overhead transparency of "Background" text
- Student Journal
- Literature Packet - Tu Fu Selected Poems
- Student Reflections page

- Overhead transparency of a nature scene
- Overhead transparency of "Finding the Tao in Poems"
- Poetry Connection Worksheets
- White, black construction paper (12 x 18)
- Colored markers (including black)
- Several 6-inch circle guides and "loose-S" guides
- Glue
- Scissors

VOCABULARY    Yin-Yang, change, one-ness

ANTICIPATION

Instruct students to take out their journals and set up a page to begin Lesson Two. Then preview the questions about Yin-Yang on the Student Reflections page. They can take notes on the Reflections page as the lesson proceeds. Then write answers to the questions in their journals for homework.

"A few days ago we began our study of Taoism. What is Taoism? [an ancient Chinese philosophy created by Lao-tse in the sixth century B.C.] Why did Lao-tse propose his ideas of Taoism to the Chinese people? [to provide ways for Chinese people to cope with the chaos of war and to give meaning to their life.] What was Lao-tse's central idea? [a universal force governs earth and heaven; left

alone that force provides a natural balance in life that ensures harmony and happiness in life.] What are some examples of how people can interfere with the balance and harmony of life? [overzealous behavior, impulsive behavior, need for instant gratification, sensationalism, bragging, et cetera.]

"Today we are going to delve deeper into the Taoist idea of "Yin-Yang", or harmony. Lao-tse believed that peace and happiness in life could be achieved by contemplating (thinking about) nature and leading a balanced life in tune with nature. Rules of society - rules created by humans - could not provide a balanced, harmonious life. Why do you suppose that could be true? [human rules reflect specific interests at specific times in history that will change over time; the rules of nature, however, will remain constant.] Taoism teaches that harmony is achieved by balancing opposite forces in nature, call Yin and Yang. Some Yin forces: female, weak, earth, moon, night, dark, and cold. Some Yang forces: male, strong, heaven, sun, day, light, and heat. Remember, these forces are equal but opposite, one balancing out the other.

"The Chinese look upon nature as a living, breathing organism. They see a golden chain of spiritual life running through every form of existence. This chain binds

together, in one body, everything that exists in heaven above and on earth below. Therefore, they believe rocks breathe, the moon winks, and the wind whispers. Taoists propose that people should strive to achieve a "one-ness" with the universal forces of heaven and earth.

"Before we begin reading, let's talk for a moment about shapes found in the natural world. As we discuss this concept, copy the shapes in your journal and leave some room for responding. Look at the picture on the overhead screen. What are some shapes found in nature?"

As students respond, draw the shapes on the board. Be sure to elicit a circle, square or rectangle, wavy line, and sharp, jagged line (or rows of triangles) among the shapes. Then point to the circle.

"What emotions do you feel as you look at the circle? Write them next to the circle in your journal. What emotions do you feel as you look at the square? Write them next to the square in your journal."

Continue evoking emotional responses to the wavy line and sharp, jagged line. Lead the students through a discussion about how the shapes in nature can evoke opposite emotions: circle vs. square, wavy line vs. sharp, jagged line. Now draw a large closed circle and erase a small arc somewhere along the circle. Ask the students to

draw this opened circle in their journals and reflect on their feelings for this incomplete shape. Ask students to share their feelings with the class. After discussion of the emotions evoked by the open circle, lead the students to the idea that a closed circle represents "one-ness," or completeness and balance, with nature. Then, divide the closed circle with a "loose-S" line and shade one side to show the balanced, harmonious opposites of Yin and Yang. Leave the shapes on the board for the duration of the lesson.

"Now, think about a full moon. What do you see when you look at a full moon? The Chinese see a rabbit! What might lurk on the dark side of the moon? How does the moon change? What happens to the part of the moon we can't see? Do the phases of the moon effect humans? How? Why do you think the Chinese would write about a full moon?"

#### READING AND REFLECTING

"As we read the first poem by Tu Fu, remember that a poet uses words the way a painter uses a brush. To make a picture life-like, a painter uses color, shading, and texture. A poet will use personification, similes, and metaphors to breathe "life" into objects, thus projecting the Taoist ideas of one-ness and balance.

"In your Literature Packet find the page titled 'Tu Fu Selected Poems'. Quietly read the poem "Full Moon" to yourself. As you read, keep in mind that the Taoist poet may use personification, similes, metaphors, and symbolism to express ideas about harmony with nature. Also, think about the contrasts of Yin and Yang in nature: female/male, weak/strong, earth/heaven, moon/sun, night/day, dark/light, and cold/heat."

Give students about two minutes to read silently before you read "Full Moon" aloud to the class. Then ask 4 to 6 students to read it aloud. Guide the students through a discussion of the "Full Moon" questions on the Student Reflection page. Have students write answers to these questions in their journals as homework.

"Now let's look for examples of Taoist principles in the "Full Moon" poem."

Using the 'Finding the Tao in Poems' overhead transparency and student worksheet, guide the students through the "Full Moon" row. Students then read each of the other five poems using the Poetry Appreciation Read-Along (PAR) procedure as described on the Student Reflections page and complete the chart.

#### WRITING CONNECTION - Line-by-Line Reflections

Have the students reflect upon one of the six poems by writing a line-by-line reflection of the poem in their journals. Demonstrate the process using a line of poetry from a different poem.

"Choose one of the six poems and write the first line in your journal. On the line immediately below it, write your thoughts or feelings about that line in parentheses (or in a different color ink). Continue with each line of the poem until the end. For example, take these lines from "Regretful Thoughts" by Yu-Hsuan Chi:

Fallen leaves are scattered by evening rain.

(It must be autumn if the leaves fall so easily.)

Unmoved by heartless friends

(No matter what they say, they can't hurt me.)"

#### POETRY CONNECTION - Diamonte and "Cloze-type" Poem

Have students use the "Poetry Connection" worksheets to create their own poetry that will express how opposites in nature are complimentary and balance each other (diamonte) and how emotions can be balanced by nature ("cloze-type" poem frame).

#### ART CONNECTION - Poetry Visual and Paper Project

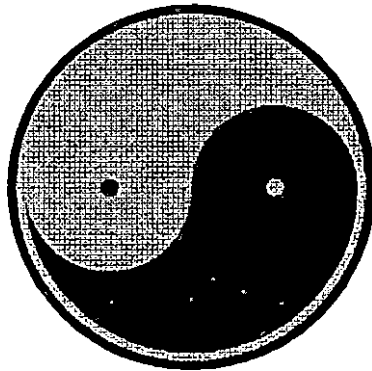
Poetry Visual (Poster). Give each group a piece of white construction paper and a set of colored markers. Instruct



students to create a poetry visual (poster) for one of the seven poems read in the lesson. Each poster must include:

- A symbol for the poem.
- A one-inch artistic border to represent the theme of the poem.
- One line from the poem in black ink.
- A sentence or two explaining what the group thinks the poem means.

Paper Project: Yin-Yang Symbol.



The forces of Yin and Yang are symbolized by a closed circle cut through with a wavy "loose-S" line (one side shaded black, the other white) that exemplifies the balanced nature of the two forces. Students will make a paper project that shows the balance of the Yin and Yang forces. For this project, have students cut out two 6-inch circles, one black and one white, from construction paper. You may want to have cutting forms prepared for them as well as one section of the symbol that will guide the

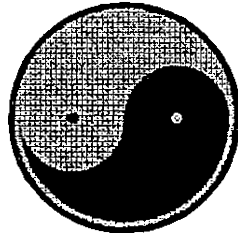
drawing of the "loose S" line. The "loose-S" line must be evenly curved.

"Why do you suppose the central line is curved instead of straight?" [to show the equal but opposite nature of the two forces while both are entwined in oneness]

You may want to write these directions on the board or make an overhead transparency for easy access by students.

#### Directions for Yin-Yang Symbol

1. Use the circle template to cut a 6-inch circle out of both the black and white construction paper.
2. Use the "loose-S" line template to draw a "loose-S" line across the center of the white circle. Cut along the "loose-S" line.
3. Place the white shapes on top of the black (front and back).
4. Glue the white pieces in place.



## STUDENT REFLECTIONS

### LESSON TWO

## YIN-YANG: NATURE'S HARMONY

### ANTICIPATION

Note-Taking: *Yin-Yang.* Take notes on this page as you listen. Write complete answers in your journal as homework tonight.

1. According to Lao-tse, how does one achieve peace and happiness?
2. How is harmony in nature achieved?
3. What are some *Yin* forces?
4. What are some *Yang* forces?
5. In your own words, explain why Taoists believe a tree sings.
6. What is "one-ness"?
7. Write a paragraph expressing your thoughts and feelings about *Yin-Yang*.

## READING AND REFLECTING

"Full Moon". Take notes during discussion. Write complete answers in your journal as homework tonight.

1. What do you think the moon is symbolizing?
2. What is the significance of the shape of the moon?
3. Do you think the moon is hot, cold, or both? Why?
4. How does the moon change? How do you know?
5. What are some positive effects of the changes of the moon?
6. Would you say that the moon is lucky? Why or why not?
7. How can the moon stay in one place and be everywhere at once?

Other Literature Selections. Read each of the other six poetry selections by following the Poetry Appreciation Read-Along (PAR) procedure:

- Preview - Each group member reads silently alone.
- Read Aloud - Each group member reads the selection aloud.
- Choral Reading - Everyone in group reads aloud together.
- After each selection is read aloud as a choral reading, complete "Finding the Tao in Poems" (worksheet) in cooperative groups.

Nature Scene (for Overhead)



*Hiroshige, Travellers at Shono in Heavy Rain,  
Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.*

## FINDING THE TAO IN POEMS

Poem	Nature/ Yin-Yang	Symbols	One-ness	Changes	Mood
------	---------------------	---------	----------	---------	------

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Full

Moon

Morning

Rain

Day's

End

Rain

Restless

Nights

Gazing

at the

Sacred

Peak

## POETRY CONNECTION

### (Diamonte Poem)

The **diamonte** is a 7-lined, diamond-shaped poem. This style of poetry begins with a subject and ends with the opposite of the subject. There is a special pattern that must be followed. A one-word statement of the subject is followed by seven words that describe the subject. The last seven words describe the opposite of the subject. The final line is a statement of the opposite word. The lines do not rhyme.

Look at how the pattern works in this poem:

Sun

Bright, shiny

Glistening, twinkling, warming

Gases, flares, craters, mountains

Glowing, romancing, forbidding

Mysterious, faraway

Moon

- Why is this type of poem perfect for Taoists?
- Write your own **diamonte** about something in nature.

## POETRY CONNECTION

### ("Cloze-Type" Frame Poem)

We all have felt sad and sorrowful at one time or another. A friend or relation may try to cheer us up. In this poem, the author's sorrow is balanced when her maid gives her an object from nature. How is this an example of Yin-Yang?

Read the following poem using the PAR procedure. Then use the frame poem to express how something in nature might bring you happiness and harmony during a time of sadness.

#### Morning Sorrow

I get up. I am sick of  
Rouging my cheeks. My face in  
The mirror disgusts me. My  
Thin shoulders are bowed with  
Hopelessness. Tears of loneliness  
Well up in my eyes. Wearily  
I open my vanity table.  
I arch and paint my eyebrows  
And steam my heavy braid.  
My maid is so kind that she  
Offers me plum blossoms for my hair.

Chu Shu-chen (ca. 1200)

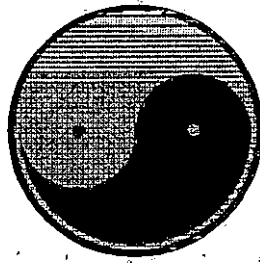


### Morning Sorrow

I get up. I am \_\_\_\_\_ of  
\_\_\_\_\_. My face in  
The mirror disgusts me. My  
\_\_\_\_\_ is/are \_\_\_\_\_ with  
Hopelessness. Tears of loneliness  
Well up in my eyes. Wearily  
I \_\_\_\_\_ my \_\_\_\_\_.  
I \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ my \_\_\_\_\_  
And \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_.  
My \_\_\_\_\_ is so kind that he/she  
Offers me \_\_\_\_\_ for my \_\_\_\_\_.  
By: \_\_\_\_\_

Once you have completed your poem, write it neatly in your journal.





### Lesson Three

## TAOIST TALES: WAIT AND SEE

### OBJECTIVES

- To discover how opposites depend on each other for definition
- To examine characters and events in a story as they relate to the Taoist idea about opposites balancing each other
- To retell a story in one's own words
- To understand that change is a necessary occurrence in life
- To transfer the idea that "change is good" to one's own life experiences

### MATERIALS

- Overhead transparency of the Taoist lesson "When people find one thing beautiful..."
- Student Journal
- Literature Packet - Short Stories

- Student Reflection page
- Overhead transparency and student copies of the "Wait and See" Story Review

### ANTICIPATION

Instruct students to prepare a page for Lesson Three. The page should look like this:

#### Opposites Depend on Each Other.

(Without one, the other can't exist.)

Positive

Negative

"Taoists believe that patience is a virtue. If one waits, even a hopeless situation can come right. In fact, you would not know and experience was bad unless you had some good experience to which to compare it. You would not understand light unless you understood dark. One Taoist lesson puts it this way..."

Show the overhead of "When people find one thing beautiful..." After reading the poem, guide the students through an analysis of the poem that describes the nature of opposites - one is needed to give definition to the other. Have students enter these ideas on the prepared page in their journals.

### READING AND REFLECTING

Tell students that they will be reading six short stories from a book called *Sweet and Sour*, a collection of tales from China as retold by Carol Kendall and Yao-wen Li. Ask why "sweet and sour" is a good description for Taoist stories. [opposite concepts that balance each other and will eventually bring harmony] Let them know that in each story a change in circumstance equates opposite situations to bring forth peace and happiness.

Instruct students to find the tale "From Bad to Good to Bad to Good" in their literature packet. Proceed with reading the tale aloud as a whole class. Ask questions regarding the Taoist nature of the situation as the story is being read to help the students understand that, while the father waited for things to change, the son counted on things always staying wonderful. Finally, the son accepts the need for opposites and values them. Also, elicit responses regarding the value of patience and change. Emphasize that the bad defines and balances the good, and that change is important in life.

Once the tale has been read and discussed, model how students should complete a "Wait and See" page. Student groups will complete one of these forms for each of the other five stories.

Now, instruct students to read the other five tales: "The Pointing Finger," "Golden Life," "The Clever Wife," "The Peach Thief," and "The Magic Pear Tree." As each story is read, one member completes the "Wait and See" Story Review form to analyze each tale for the Taoist concept that change brings balance to life.

Explain the following cooperative process for this activity to the class.

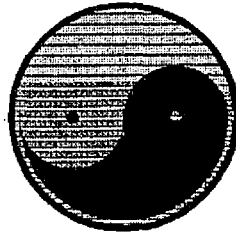
- One person reads.
- One person takes notes.
- The rest of the group members listen carefully in order to retell the story in their own words.

Each group member will perform each duty at least once during the shared reading.

#### WRITING CONNECTION - Journal

This activity should be completed as a culminating activity for Lesson Three. Write the following prompt on the board or overhead.

"Describe a time when your life changed from good to bad. Help the reader feel your emotions about the change. Then explain how "change for the worse" was actually a blessing and necessary."



## STUDENT REFLECTIONS

### Lesson Three

## TAOIST TALES: WAIT AND SEE

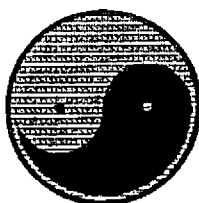
### ANTICIPATION

Complete the Lesson Three journal page as instructed by the teacher.

### READING AND REFLECTING

Follow the cooperative reading process as described by your teacher. After reading all six tales and completing the cooperative activities, respond to the following questions in your journal.

- What did you learn from these tales about opposites balancing each other?
- What did you learn about the value of change?
- Explain five changes that are occurring in your life.
- Are these changes necessary? Why?
- After having read the tales about opposites and change, do you look at your personal changes differently? Why?



## WAIT AND SEE

Story Review for

\_\_\_\_\_

Main Characters: \_\_\_\_\_

Setting: \_\_\_\_\_

### OPPOSITES DEPEND ON EACH OTHER

Event

Opposite

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

1. Choose one event listed above and explain how it depends on its opposite for meaning. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Choose two characters in the tale and explain how one "balanced" the other. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



1. How was "change" important in this tale? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What lesson do you think this tale was trying to teach?

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5. Write a short summary of this tale. \_\_\_\_\_

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When people find one thing beautiful,  
another consequently becomes ugly.

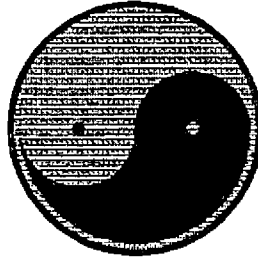
When one man is held up as good,  
another is judged deficient.

Similarly, being and nonbeing balance each other;  
difficult and easy define each other;  
long and short illustrate each other;  
high and low rest upon another;  
voice and song meld into harmony;  
what is to come follows upon what has been.

The wise person acts without effort  
and teaches by quiet example.

He accepts things as they come,  
creates without possessing,  
nourishes without demanding,  
accomplishes without taking credit.

Because he constantly forgets himself,  
he is never forgotten.



## Lesson Four

### GO WITH THE FLOW

#### OBJECTIVES

- To explore how thoughts, feelings, and action are closely connected
- To understand the Taoist idea of *Wu Wei* (non-action is action)
- To define meditation
- To explore the idea that stillness, or simple meditation, is a natural way to solve problems
- To use parables and poetry as a means to impart advice about stillness and meditation
- To review Taoist ideas studied to date
- To experience meditation as a positive way to manage problems

#### MATERIALS

- Student Journals
- Student Reflections page - Lesson Four

- Lesson Four Literature
- Poster paper
- Markers

VOCABULARY      parable, Wu Wei, meditation, tranquility

ANTICIPATION

Instruct the students to set up a page for Lesson Four in this manner:

<u>Thought</u>	<u>Feelings</u>	<u>Action</u>
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Then have them preview the "Anticipation" questions on the Student Reflections page. Now, to set the affective tone of the lesson, have students take their journals and pencils and sit in a circle outside, perhaps under a tree, weather permitting.

"Today, we're going to talk about thoughts, feelings and action and one way to deal with them. Think about this problem: you think no one likes you. Has this ever happened to you? Write this problem under the "Thought" column in your journal. Write your feelings about not being liked. Then, write down what you did about that. Here's another thought: you're not invited to a party. Write down your feelings and actions. One more: Someone laughs at you. What are your feelings and actions?

"Look at your column of feelings. Do they seem negative, painful? What were some of your feelings?

Actions? Did your actions or solution satisfy you or make you feel better?

"Now, think about a problem you are having right now.

Close your eyes, relax, be still, no talking. Clear your mind and concentrate on the color of your mind's eye. Tune out sounds. Try to let your stillness generate a new solution to the problem -- a solution that will make you feel better. [Give students a few minutes to meditate.]

Were you able to find a new solution; perhaps, one that made you feel better?

"Thoughts and feelings are closely connected and will affect your behavior, your actions. Lao-tse believed that if we gave ourselves time to ponder a problem, or even not ponder it at all for awhile, an answer would naturally present itself. This happens, he believed, because life has a natural order. When we act by not-acting, nature has an opportunity to get done what needs to be done.

"Taoists believe that harmony in life can be achieved by not forcing answers, to "go with the flow" and let nature take its course. If nature is forced by impulsive, overzealous, or sensational actions -- action without thought, driven by emotions -- then confusion and turmoil would result.

"What do you think about this idea? Write down some of your thoughts and feelings in your journal now."

You may want to return to the classroom now.

### READING AND REFLECTING

#### "Flight from the Shadow"

Read "Flight from the Shadow" by Chuang Tzu aloud in the classroom.

"Does anyone know what kind of story this is? It's called a "parable". A parable is a short story that teaches a moral lesson. Authors use this kind of story to express their ideas about the way they think people should behave. Taoists frequently use parables.

"What lesson or lessons do you think are in this story? [impulsive behavior offers poor solutions; thought should have been given to opposite choices -- stillness/running, in shade/in sun] This parable shows how the man forced an answer to his discontent and, therefore, went against nature.

"Chuang Tsu, a Taoist, told this story to express what Lao-tse called "Wu Wei", which means non-action or not going against the nature of things. How did the man go against nature?" [discontent with his own nature because he was unhappy with his shadow and footsteps; didn't calm himself to see if nature would present a solution]

### "The Old Man in the Churning Waters"

Read "The Old Man in the Churning Waters" by Chuang Tzu aloud in the classroom.

"What did this man do differently than the man in the first parable? [didn't fight the water; let the nature of the churning carry him until he could get out] Remember, the Chinese use a lot of the symbolism. What do you think the symbolism in this story is? [churning waters symbolizes troubles in life] What lesson do you think is being offered here?" [let nature provide a solution, don't force nature, go with the flow]

"That's right. Basically, the idea of *Wu Wei* is that you shouldn't react quickly without thought. By not acting impulsively, that is, by being still for awhile, you allow the answer to make itself clear when the time comes.

"Write down some thoughts and feelings you have about *Wu Wei* (non-action) and going with the flow to find natural answers to problems.

"Now, let's talk about this idea of being still. When we were in our circle outside, you were asked to be still or tranquil. How did you feel about not moving, not talking, just sitting tranquilly and being?

"Lao-tse called this kind of stillness *meditation*, a way to conserve or save energy. Many people do not

understand meditation. They think it is a sort of odd religious activity. But, in fact, it's quite common in our daily lives. Meditation is something like what happens when we sleep, or daydream, or become absorbed in a good book. Meditation is a natural stillness in a naturally turbulent world; a non-action with an active purpose."

Write these Yin-Yang ideas on the board for students to grasp the Taoist idea of balance and harmony achieved with meditation. Have them write these ideas in their journals (Meditation -- Yin-Yang at Work) and discuss these ideas. Be sure to elicit what the "active purpose" is? [giving nature time to take its course]

### "Stillness"

Have students read "Stillness", a Taoist message, on their Student Reflection page. Then, read it aloud.

"Why do you think stillness, or meditation, is important? [If we are still, our minds can "go with the flow" of nature.] Being still relaxes us, because we empty our minds and a sense of tranquility comes upon us. Then, when we need to get back to our busy, chaotic lives, we have space in our minds for "filling up" with other things.

"Do you think you could use meditation in your life? How?" [a good way to get away from problems, even for a few minutes; to allow nature into one's life]



Homework: Students will copy the "Stillness" message into their journals and answer the questions and reflections. Also, they will write a definition in their own words for *meditation* and *tranquility*.

### "Reflection"

Instruct the students to find "Reflection" in the literature packet and the Student Reflections page for Lesson Four. They will need both pages (and a clipboard or notebook) when they sit in small circle groups, inside or outside. Ask them to relax, close their eyes, and try to empty their minds as one member of the group reads the message. Then, have at least one other group member read while the rest listen tranquilly. Students will discuss and then respond to the questions on their Student Reflections page.

### Other Reading Selections

Students will now work in groups to use parables and poetry to explore the idea that meditation is a natural way to solve problems. These activities will also review the Taoist ideas studied to date. Each group will be assigned one poem or parable to evaluate. Use "The Need to Win" (poem), "The Cook" (parable), and "The Stand for Chimes" (parable).

The group should read their selection several times, evaluate it for the lesson taught, any symbolism, and any Taoist ideas used. The Taoist ideas covered so far are: use of nature; Yin-Yang (harmony); one-ness; change; the nature of opposites (balance); *Wu Wei* (non-action); and stillness (meditation).

The group will then make a presentation, including reading the selection to the class and explaining the lesson, symbolism, and Taoist ideas. The class may follow along as the poem or tale is read if the teacher chooses to copy the selections for all students.

#### Untitled Right-to-Left Poem

This poem by Li Ch'ing-chao is written in the right-to-left format of Chinese writing. Read it to the class as they follow along. Then engage them in a whole group choral reading, twice if there is time. Students should take notes on the Student Reflection page as the poem is discussed. Since this poem is filled with symbolism, lead the students through a discussion to establish how the author expresses her loneliness. [compares feelings to cold jade and cold water; her sweet music is borne of sadness and despair, yet startles nature; twig symbolizes desire to find harmony and one-ness] Then discuss the Taoist ideas brought forth in this poem. Ask the students

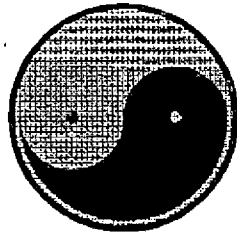
what advice they might give to the writer. Students may want to try their hand at writing this style of poem.

#### WRITING CONNECTION

Give the students an opportunity to experience meditation privately as a positive way to manage thoughts and feelings. Have them refer to the Writing Connection on the Student Reflection page.

#### POETRY CONNECTION

Students may enjoy writing their own right-to-left poem that includes references to nature, and employs personification, simile, and metaphor. Let the student choose the subject, but encourage the inclusion of one or more other Taoist ideas that they have learned.



## STUDENT REFLECTIONS

### Lesson Four

## GO WITH THE FLOW

### ANTICIPATION

Set up a Lesson Four page in your journal with these column headings:

Thought

Feelings

Action

### READING AND REFLECTING

#### Parables

1. Define parable.
2. In "Flight from the Shadow," how was Yin-Yang represented?
3. How did the man go against nature?
4. What is *Wu Wei*?
5. How was *Wu Wei* important in "The Old Man and the Churning Waters?"
6. What do the "churning waters" symbolize?

"Flight from the Shadow?"

Stillness

Wind stirs the bamboo  
But once the wind passes,  
The bamboo is silent.  
Geese land in the chill pond,  
But once the geese fly away,  
There are no reflections.  
In the same way,  
Once the swirling dust passes,  
The mind is still.

1. What does "swirling dust" symbolize?
2. How could being still, or meditating, help you in your life?
3. What other thoughts and feelings do you have about meditation.

Meditation

1. Yin-Yang at Work:
2. *In your own words*, define meditation.
3. *In your own words*, define tranquility.

Untitled Right-to-Left Poem

1. Author's meaning:
2. Symbolism:
3. Taoist Ideas:

#### 4. Advice to Li Ch'ing-chao:

##### WRITING CONNECTION

During the next few days, try meditation as a way to work through a problem rather than hurrying to find a solution. Find a quiet place to be alone and still. Meditate on the problem and go with the flow of your thoughts. Then write about your experience. You may want to use these prompts as guidelines for your writing:

- Explain the problem and how you felt.
- Describe how you felt meditating and any ideas that occurred to you while meditating.
- What was your action after meditating to solve your problem?
- In a final paragraph, tell the reader why you would or would not meditate again.



## Lesson Five

### CHINESE LANDSCAPE PAINTING

#### OBJECTIVES

- To engender cultural understanding by teaching Taoist concepts through Chinese landscape painting
- To create an avenue for non-verbal communication and emotional release
- To internalize the rules and methods of Chinese painting so that painting is spontaneous and instinctive
- To achieve control and concentration by practicing brush strokes in painting

#### MATERIALS

- *Chinese Landscape Painting for Beginners*, Audrey Quigley, Sterling Publishing Co.
- Several examples of Chinese landscape painting for display in the classroom
- Overhead transparency of winter tree on page 37 of *Chinese Landscape Painting for Beginners*
- Black tempera paint

- Brush for each student (preferably soft white brush with pointy tip)
- Cellophane or laminated paper cut into large squares to use as paint pallets to hold one glob of paint
- Water jars
- Newspapers for desks
- Art paper (8½ x 11 or 12 x 18)
- Paper towel for each student

#### ANTICIPATION

"Today we're going to learn about Chinese painting, which was established as an art form in the 300s B.C., a few centuries after Lao-tse died. Chinese painting developed, however, because of Taoists ideas. So, what do you think Taoist artists paint? [trees, plants, birds, or anything in nature] Why do you think they paint these things? [Taoist devotion to nature] Today, the Chinese still do their painting on silk and absorbent paper, just like they did over 20 centuries ago!

"To the Chinese, the better the artist, the more magical would the artist's power be. Everything they created came alive beneath their artist's brush: rocks, trees, lakes, flowers. All objects had human qualities, too. For example, rocks had veins just as human beings



have blood veins. What do we call this type of figurative language? [personification]

"This beautiful painting style began with a great Chinese artist and poet, Ku K'ai-chih who lived between AD 345 and 406. Ku K'ai-chih painted a dragon on the wall of his house, except he did not paint its eyes. After much practice, he became a better artist and felt more confident. What do you think happened when he reached what he considered to be a high enough level of expertise? [Elicit responses.] He added the eyes to his original dragon. The dragon then magically came alive, jumped off the wall, and flew away!"

## ART PRODUCTION

### General Notes to the Teacher

Each technique lesson will take about one period due to the demonstration time and practice time required for students to internalize the steps.

To lighten black to grey, use more water, less paint. Flatten brush for thicker lines; twirl and lift to pointy tip for skinny lines. Use paper towel to absorb unwanted water. You may want to practice each technique many times before demonstrating.

Prior to a technique lesson, provide each student with the following materials:

- Newspaper to cover desks or tables
- A 6-inch square of cellophane or laminated paper to use as a pallet.
- Glob of black tempura paint
- Brush
- Paper towel
- Water jar
- Art paper (8½ x 11 or 12 x 18)

Instruct students to fold their art paper so there are 8 sections (lengthwise once, then twice the other way). This will deter students from beginning in the middle of their paper and then not having enough room to practice sufficiently.

"Just like the artist Ku K'ai-chih, we must learn to paint, step-by-step, so our own magic will one day earn its "eyes". We'll begin by learning the basic brush strokes for this very specialized style of painting. It's important that you listen, follow directions carefully, and practice...practice...practice."

### Brush Strokes

Refer to the instructions on page 10 in *Chinese Landscape Painting for Beginners*. Then demonstrate these steps **exactly** several times while students watch and concentrate on your motions. Explain and demonstrate

"wafts off" (tapering stroke before coming off the paper) and "wafts on" (begins with a light tapering on, then more pressure before coming off the paper). Then have the students pick up and practice holding their brushes before they start. Now "talk" them through the steps several times. Then, as they refer to their instruction sheet, let them practice on their own until they have filled their paper.

### Rocks

Provide each student with all materials before commencing.

"Now we are ready for painting rocks, some so old they have what the Chinese artists call *wrinkles* or *veins*. What is this called when inanimate objects are given human characteristics? [personification]

"Close your eyes. In your mind, picture how a rock looks. Painting things in nature from a "mind's eye" perspective is how Taoist artists created their artwork. They never went outside to paint. They put brush to paper inside after walking miles and miles contemplating nature or reading about nature for hours and hours. In fact, there's an old Chinese saying about this: "How can one be the father of painting without reading ten thousand books and traveling ten thousand miles?" [You may want to have

an overhead transparency or poster of this saying to exhibit in your room during this lesson.] Still, the Chinese are very accurate in their pictures of rocks. Let's begin."

For each rock technique begin with demonstrations, guided practice, and then individual practice. Lessons to cover in *Chinese Landscape Painting for Beginners* are:

- Rocks in Hemp Fibre, Simple Style, pages 12 and 13
- Long Hanging-Thread Veins, page 16
- Axe-Cut Veins, page 18
- Bent-Ribbon Veins, page 19

Reminder: Allow students plenty of guided and individual practice to enable them to internalize the discipline.

"Remember...practice makes perfect. So, although watercolor can't be erased, you can always start again. Jump right in and *risk* a mistake or two. It's okay! Sometimes mistakes become the real "gems" in art."

### Trees

Provide students with art materials.

"Trees will come alive today! Painting trees in a landscape is not just getting a likeness down on paper. The Chinese do not want a tree to show stillness. For example, trees in groves can protect a house. Trees must

exemplify the harmony of heaven and earth. Now, look at this tree. [Show the overhead of a winter tree from art book.] What is "Yin-Yang" about this tree's branches? [some push forward, others recede; some are elaborate, others very simple; some go right, others left; et cetera] Very Tao!"

"Unlike for painting rocks, there are no strict rules on exactly how to paint trees Chinese-style. There are, however, two things to remember. First, there should be four main branches in the tree. [Identify the four main branches on the overhead picture.] Second, trees stand alone or in groups of three -- never in groups of four, which is unlucky and means death!

"The roots on Chinese trees are close together, like this..."

Refer back to the overhead picture of a tree. Use a black overhead pen to demonstrate the root samples found on page 35. You may want to prepare the root example beforehand.

Now demonstrate tree painting by using the following lessons from the landscape book:

- Trunks and Branches, page 26
- Trunks and Roots, pages 27 and 29
- Foliage with Mi Dots, page 28

As you guide the students through the practice lessons, remember to repeat aloud the steps each time you do them. Then guide the students through the lesson on page 35.

### FINAL PRODUCT

Distribute art supplies, but warn students NOT to fold their paper.

"Today, the last day of our Chinese painting project, you will paint a tree and rock together in the same picture. This will be your own creation. Before putting brush to paper, however, close your eyes and "see" your trees and rocks on the paper. Remember: there is no right or wrong with trees, except for what?" [must have four main branches and stand in groups of three]

## Lesson Six

### Shadow Puppet Show

#### OBJECTIVES

- To translate a story into a drama
- To practice dialogue writing
- To create and perform a dramatic presentation
- To appreciate a Chinese cultural fine art

#### MATERIALS

- *The Shadow Puppet Book*, by Janet Lynch-Watson
- Large cardboard box or folding screen
- Light for back-lighting
- White cloth or white butcher paper to stretch over frame
- Poster board or cardboard for puppets and scenery
- Access to laminating machine
- Colored tissue paper
- Bamboo or chopsticks for puppet sticks

#### PREPARATION

Follow the instructions in *The Shadow Puppet Book*.  
Let the students know that this art form has been practiced in China for over one thousand years. Originally, the shadow puppet shows illustrated Buddhist stories.

### Student Groups

Size will depend on the teacher, time, and organizational abilities of the students. Recommendation is a group of five: two people write the dialogue, three people create the puppets, sets, and props.

### Literature

Many of the stories that were read in the previous lessons will be used for this project. The student groups will choose from or be assigned one of the following stories:

- The Foolhardy Tiger
- From Bad to Good to Bad to Good
- The Pointing Finger
- Golden Life
- The Clever Wife
- The Peach Thief
- The Magic Pear Tree



**LITERATURE**

**PACKETS**

## **Lesson Two**

### **LITERATURE**

## Tu Fu (AD 712-770)

Selected Poems  
Translated by David Hinton

### Full Moon

Above the tower - a lone, twice-sized moon.  
On the cold river passing night-filled homes,  
It scatters restless gold across the waves.  
On mats, it shines richer than silken gauze.

Empty peaks, silence: among sparse stars,  
Not yet flawed, it drifts. Pine and cinnamon  
Spreading in my old garden...All light,  
All ten thousand miles at once in its light!

### Morning Rain

A slight rain comes, bathed in dawn light.  
I hear it among treetop leaves before mist  
Arrives. Soon it sprinkles the soil and,  
Windblown, follows clouds away. Deepened

Colors grace thatch homes for a moment.  
Flocks and herds of things wild glisten

Faintly. Then the scent of musk opens across  
Half a mountain - and lingers on past noon.

#### **Day's End**

Oxen and sheep were brought back down  
Long Ago, and bramble gates closed. Over  
Mountains and rivers, far from my old garden,  
A windswept moon rises into clear night.

Springs trickle down dark cliffs, and autumn  
Dew fills ridgeline grasses. My hair seems  
Whiter in lamplight. The flame flickers  
Good fortune over and over - and for what?

#### **Rain**

Roads not yet glistening, rain slight,  
Broken clouds darken after thinning away.  
Where they drift, purple cliffs blacken.  
And beyond - white birds blaze in flight.

Sounds of cold-river rain grown familiar,  
Autumn sun casts moist shadows. Below  
Our brushwood gate, out to dry at the village  
Mill: hulled rice, half-wet and fragrant.

### Restless Night

As bamboo chill drifts into the bedroom,  
Moonlight fills every corner of our  
Garden. Heavy dew beads and trickles.  
Stars suddenly there, sparse, next aren't.

The autumn chrysanthemums alone in their beauty.  
I alone sing while fastening my garments.  
A feeling of melancholy stirs deep within me.  
It's true that there is much amusement in living,  
But in idling is there no accomplishment?

### Gazing at the Sacred Peak

For all this, what is the mountain god like?  
An unending green of lands north and south:  
From ethereal beauty Creation distills  
There, yin and yang split dusk and dawn.

Swelling clouds sweep by. Returning birds  
Ruin my eyes vanishing. One day soon,  
At the summit, the other mountains will be  
Small enough to hold, all in a single glance.

## **Lesson Three**

### **LITERATURE**

## From Bad to Good to Bad to Good

In ancient times there lived in the northern steppes of China a young farmer who was a fancier of horses. It was a great blow to him when, one day, his favorite mare ran away and crossed the frontier into the land of the barbarians. All of his neighbors and friends came to sympathize with him in his sorrow - and indeed he was inconsolable - but they found the young man's father perversely cheerful.

"Sorrow?" he said. "Ah yes, it is sad to lose one's horse, but then who is to know what blessing might not come from this bad fortune? We shall just have to wait and see."

Several months later the horse came back home, bringing a handsome Mongolian stallion running alongside. Now the neighbors and friends gathered to admire the stallion and rejoice in the young farmer's great good fortune, but this time they found the father shaking his head in the other direction.

"Ah yes," he said darkly, "this seems like good fortune well enough, but who is to know what bad thing might not come of it?" He continued to shake his head with gloomy foreboding. "We must wait and see."

With his favorite mare back in the stable and the magnificent stallion in the next stall, the young man began to enjoy a life of luxury and spent more and more time riding and less and less time farming. Then one day while riding hard, he was thrown from the stallion's back and broke his hip-bone. Again his relatives and friends and neighbors came to sigh over this misfortune, but there was the farmer's father belying their grief once more.

"Hoh!" he cried. "Let us not mourn just yet, for who is to know what blessing is even now on its way because of this accident? Wait and see! Wait and see!"

They didn't have to wait long. Before the month was out barbarians attacked the northern frontier and all the able-bodied men were called to arms to repel them. So fierce was the fighting that nine out of ten men perished in the invaders' onslaught, and many a young man's bed was forever after empty.

Not so the young farmer's.

His unfortunate fall from the horse left him unfit for battle. When everybody else went off to be slaughtered by the barbarians, he was forced to remain at home with his father, safe.

In later years - he lived to a ripe old age - when winter chills sent an ache through his mended bone, he was



only grateful for the twinges of pain. They reminded him  
of his great good fortune to be alive.

*Han Dynasty (202 BC - AD 220)*

## The Pointing Finger

Even P'eng-lai has its tedious days, and when time hung heavy over that fairy mountain isle in the Eastern Sea, the Eight Immortals that dwelt there remembered and talked of their previous existence as mortals on earth. Upon occasion they took disguise and transported themselves from P'eng-lai to their old world to nose about in human affairs in hope of discovering improvements in human nature. On the whole, however, they found the mortals of today to have the same shortcomings and the same longcomings as those of yesterday.

It came about that one of the Immortals, on such a nosing-about expedition, was seeking an unselfish man. He vowed that when he found a man without the taint of greed in his heart, he would make of him an Immortal on the spot and transport him to P'eng-lai Mountain. Forthwith.

His test for avarice was simple. Upon meeting a foot-traveller in lane or road, he would turn a pebble into gold by pointing his finger at it. He would then offer the golden pebble to the traveler.

The first person he met accepted the pebble eagerly, but then, turning it over and over between his fingers, his eyes beginning to gleam and glint, he said, "Can you do the

same thing again? To those?" and he pointed at a small heap of stones at their feet.

The Immortal shook his head sadly and went on.

The second person looked at the proffered golden pebble long and thoughtfully. "Ah," he finally said, his eyes narrowed in calculation, "but this is a fine thing you would give me. It will feed my family for a year, and feed them well, but what then? Back to rice water and elm bark? That would be a cruelty. How could I face their tears and laments? Kind Sir, as it is such an effortless task for you, perhaps you could turn your finger towards something a little larger, like, for example—" and he pointed at a bolder as big as himself beside the road "—that bit of stone?"

All along the way the story was the same, until the Immortal despaired of finding a human being whose cupidity did not outweigh his gratitude. After many a weary mile's walking, he came upon a man of middle years stumping along the lane, and, greeting him, said, "I should like to make you a present." He pointed his finger at a stone and it turned into gold before their eyes.

The man studied the gleaming chunk of stone, his head canted to one side. "What sort of trick is that?" he asked with a frown.

"No trick," said the Immortal. "Pick it up. Or would you prefer a larger stone?" He pointed his finger at a small rock and it instantly blossomed gold. "Take it, brother. It is yours. I give it to you."

The man thought a while, then slowly shook his head. "No-o-o. Not that it's not a very clever trick, and a pretty sight to see."

With growing excitement the Immortal pointed at a larger rock and a larger, until their eyes were dazzled by the glint of gold all around them, but each time the man shook his head, and each time the shake became more decisive. Had he found his unselfish man at last? Should he transform him this instant into an Immortal and carry him back to P'eng-lai?

"But every human being desires *something*," the Immortal said, all but convinced that his was untrue. "Tell me what it is you want!"

"Your finger," said the man.

*Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)*

## Golden Life

Long, long ago, when emperors were in fashion, there lived such a one who had everything there was to be had.

1. A beautiful and virtuous wife.
2. Many beautiful and good-tempered concubines.
3. Two dozen children, healthy and intelligent.
4. A country so rich and strong that neighboring countries had to pay tribute to him.
5. Gifts so numerous that it took half of each day to carry them into the palace for presentation.
6. Fourteen storerooms stuffed with such items as:
  - 15 marble bins full of gold, silver, and jewels of rare beauty
  - 50,000 catties of rice
  - 75,000 sharks' fins (for soup)
  - 90,000 birds' nests (for soup when tired of shark's fins)
  - Rare fruits (pineapple-mangoes, grape-bananas, orange-lychees)
  - Rare animals (cats with elephant trunks and elephants with cat whiskers)

He was envied by the highest counsellor of the chamber down to the lowest guard of the place, for none of them knew what it was to have every longing satisfied.

Nor did the Emperor, come to that. Having cleared his mind of wanting everything there was to be had, he found a further longing. He desired immortality - to live forever and forever. "What a pity," he said to his councillors, "to waste such power and glory on one puny lifetime. I must become immortal. See to it!"

The councillors wasted no time in sending out messengers all over the world to find the secret of immortality, for the Emperor must not be denied.

After many a day of anxious unrest in the palace, for the Emperor had lost heart even in playing with the water clock and the astrolabe, there came to the palace gate a Taoist, dressed in the simple robe of his belief.

He announced that he had brought the golden grain of immortality. It was, he said, the result of years of alchemy, the extracting and distilling of a myriad magic herbs, and there was but the one minuscule tablet in all existence. It would make of the Emperor an Immortal.

When the message was delivered to the Emperor, he ordered the Taoist to the throne room without delay.

With the precious golden grain of elixir on a bejeweled velvet cushion, the Taoist bore it in outstretched hands and, his head respectfully lowered, advanced towards the throne room. Through gate after gate, along corridor after corridor he went, and his every footstep was watched over by the palace guards. At last he came to the inner gate with his precious burden and started to move past the guard posted there.

At that instant, the guard snatched the golden grain from the cushion, popped it into his mouth and swallowed it.

The Emperor's veins swelled like blue snakes, and his face turned red as a fresh-boiled lobster. He wrung his hands and ground his teeth. When he could find speech, he swore that he would have the thief beheaded for his unpardonable crime.

The guard was brought in and thrown to his knees.

"What have you to say for yourself?" the Emperor thundered. "You ungrateful pig! I condemn you to death! Speak your last words."

The assembled guards and councillors trembled before his rage, but the guard of the inner gate remained calm. When he spoke, his voice was clear.

"Your Highness, the Taoist said that whoever ate his golden grain would live forever. I ate it; therefore I shall live forever. That being the case, it will be impossible to kill me, no matter how many times you remove my head."

The Emperor started to speak, but the guard held up his hand. "On the other hand, your Highness, if I should actually die of the beheading, then it would be known that the grain is not genuine." The guard smiled gently up at the Emperor. "That being the case, your Highness, a noble Emperor like you would never stoop to kill so lowly a person as I over a sugar pill."

The Emperor pardoned him.

*Han Dynasty (202 BC - AD 220)*



## The Clever Wife

A very long time ago there lived in a far corner of China, in Sinkiang, a good and simple man named Fu-hsing, who had an unusually clever wife. All the day long he would run to her with questions about thus-and-such, or about such-and-thus, as the case might fall out and no matter how difficult the problem he took to her, she always thought of a solution. Thanks to her wondrous acumen, the house of Fu-hsing prospered mightily.

Fu-hsing was remarkably proud of his wife and often spoke of her as his "Incomparable Wisdom," his "Matchless Wit," or his "Dearest Capability." He only wished that all who passed his house could know it was her cleverness had brought him such great prosperity. For months he puzzled his head over a suitable way of declaring his gratitude, and his last conceived of a couplet that delicately conveyed his feeling. He inscribed the lines on twin scrolls and posted them on the gate before his house:

"A Matchless Wit like Fu-hsing's

Does with ease a million things."

All who passed the house saw the scrolls, and those who knew Fu-hsing thought what a scrupulous and honest husband he was to thus praise his wife.

One day, however, the district magistrate happened to pass that way. On reading the scrolls, he drew his mouth down and his eyebrows together in a terrible frown.

"What a boastful, conceited fellow lives there!", he thought. "What appalling arrogance! Such windbagery should not go unpunished!" When he returned to his quarters, he sent a clerk with a stern summons for Fu-hsing to appear before him forthwith.

The summons so frightened Fu-hsing that he could scarce speak enough words to tell his wife of it. "...can't understand...I'm law-abiding...good citizen...pay taxes and tariffs without cheating..." He pulled frantically at his hair, sprinkling strings of it on the floor. "My dear Capability, what can I have done to bring upon me this summons?"

His wife laid a calming hand on his before he could tear out the last of his sparse hair. "It must be," she said after a moment's thought, "that the scrolls on the gate have given offense. Really, it is not worth worrying about! Go with the clerk to see the magistrate and have no fear. If you run into difficulty, we can talk it over when you return."

Much relieved, Fu-hsing went off with the clerk and soon was standing before the magistrate, whose eyebrows by

now had nudged so close together that they were quite entangled with each other. He sat glowering behind an immense table, his arms folded magisterially into his sleeves.

"So!" he exclaimed. "This is the braggart who posts scrolls on his gate to boast of his extraordinary cleverness!" He leant forward to glare into Fu-hsing's face, the terrible eyebrows bristling like angry hedgehogs. "You would have the world believe you can do anything at all, would you! No matter how difficult? Very well!" Loosing his arms from his sleeves, he struck an angry fist on the table. "I have three small tasks for you to perform. At once! For a fellow of your prodigious talents, they should provide no difficulty. No difficulty whatsoever.

"First, then," and pound went his fist, "you shall weave a cloth as long as a road.

"Second," pound, pound, "you shall make as much wine as there is water in the ocean.

"Third," pound, pound, pound, you shall raise a pig as big as a mountain."

With an awful smile, the magistrate uncurled his fist to waggle a long finger under poor Fu-hsing's nose. "Of course, if you do not accomplish these tasks for me one-

two-three, you will soon learn how this court deals with swollen heads!"

Wretched and anxious, Fu-hsing hastened home to his wife and stammered out the three impossible demands made by the magistrate.

His wife threw back her head and laughed. "Foolish husband!" she said. "The hardest problems are those with the simplest answers!"

Fu-hsing continued to wring his hands. "But what shall I do? I know that you can accomplish anything, but this is beyond all reason..."

Madame Fu-hsing's smile stopped him. "It is really quite simple. Rest well tonight. Tomorrow you must go back to the magistrate and present to him three quite ordinary implements which I shall make ready for you. I will give you certain words to take along with these devices, and you must say them to the magistrate just as I tell them to you."

Fu-hsing attended well to his wife's instructions, and the next morning, carrying a ruler, a large measuring bowl and a balancing scale, he presented himself to the magistrate once again. When he started speaking, the eyebrows were as tightly knotted at before, but as Fu-hsing continued, and laid in turn the three measuring devices

before the magistrate, the brows gradually lifted up and away from his eyes until they became flying birds of astonishment.

"This morning, as I was setting out to do the tasks you gave me," Fu-hsing began, "I realized that I needed further instruction from you before I could finish. Therefore, your Honour, I have taken the liberty of bringing these three measures to facilitate your task. I must respectfully ask you, first, to measure the road with this ruler that I may know the length of the cloth I must weave; second, measure the ocean's water with this bowl that I may know how much wine I must make; and third, weigh the mountain with this balance I may know how big a pig I must raise."

Fu-hsing made a deferential bow. "Just as soon as you have set the standards, your Honour, I shall be pleased to finish the tasks."

So confounded was the magistrate at the cunning solution to his three problems that he allowed Fu-hsing to go without punishment, and never ventured to bother him again. Truly, the magistrate believed Fu-hsing's Matchless Wit could do a million things.

*Han Dynasty (202 BC - AD 220)*

## The Peach Thief

Once when I was young, I went to the regional capital during the official examinations. It happened to be the time for the festival to celebrate the beginning of spring. The day before the festival, according to custom, all the merchants and tradesmen paraded to the governor's mansion in a grand show complete with drummers, pipers, and decorated floats.

I went with a friend to watch the parade, which is known as the Presentation of Spring. The masses of tourists and onlookers seemed to form a great wall. Four officials who sat in a hall were dressed in red, the color of celebration, and faced one another east to west. (I was too young then to recognize their ranks.) The hubbub of the crowd and the musicians' din rang in my ears.

From nowhere a man who carried a load on his shoulders approached the hall leading a boy with unbound hair. The man was talking to couriers from the officials. In the clamor of myriad voices I could not hear what he said, though I could make out sounds of laughter from the hall. Soon an attendant dressed in black appeared and loudly ordered a performance. The man climbed the steps of the hall and asked what he should perform. The dignitaries conferred briefly among themselves and spoke to an

attendant, who turned to the man and asked what his specialty was.

"We can produce anything out of season!" came the reply. The attendant went to inform the officials, and in a short while came down again to say that the pair should produce a peach.

The man consented, removed his outer clothes, and placed them atop a bamboo box. Then, pretending to talk to the boy who was with him, he said loudly, "Their excellencies don't quite comprehend. How can we procure peaches before the thaw has arrived? But I fear their wrath if we fail. What can we do?"

"Father," the boy replied equally loudly, "you have given your word. There is no way to get out of it."

The performer pondered his problem with an air of dejection. Then he said, "Here's what I think. It is early spring, and the snow is thick. In the world of men there are no peaches to be found. But in the gardens of the Western Queen Mother, the land of perpetual bloom, where the peaches ripen once every three thousand years, nothing fades or falls. So we may find peaches there. We shall have to steal them from the very heavens!"

"How can we climb to heaven?" cried the boy.

"The technique exists," said the father, opening his bamboo box. He took out a coil of rope several hundred feet long, freed one end, and threw it up in the air, where it remained suspended as if hanging from something in the sky. The further he threw it, the further it rose, until it vanished among the clouds. When the rope was fully played out, the man called his son, "Come here. I'm old and tired - too heavy and clumsy to go. You'll have to make the climb." Handing the rope to his son, the man said, "If you hold onto this, you can manage it."

The son looked reluctant and complained, "My dear father, this is absurd. Do you expect such a slender line to support me thousands of feet in the air? What will keep my bones together if it should break midway?"

But the father pressed him, "I've already made the mistake of agreeing to fetch the peaches. It's too late for regret. I must trouble you to take the trip. Don't complain, and if we can get away with the fruit, we are sure of a reward of a hundred silver pieces - enough to find you a lovely wife."

And so the boy took the rope and began to squirm up it. As he shifted his hands, his feet followed, the way a spider moves along its web, until he had slowly made his



way into the emptiness of cloudy space and could be seen no more.

After a long while, a peach the size of a bowl dropped to earth. Delighted, the performer took it and presented it to the officials. They took their time passing it around for inspection; they seemed uncertain whether it was a real fruit or a fake one.

Suddenly the rope fell to the ground. Alarmed, the performer said, "We're ruined! Someone up there has cut the rope. Where will my son find safety?"

Moments later, something landed on the ground. He looked: it was the boy's head! In tears the man held it up in both hands and cried out, "The theft of the peach must have been discovered by the watchmen! My son is done for!" A moment later a foot dropped from the skies. In another instant the limbs fell down this way and that, until all the pieces were scattered on the ground. In great sorrow the performer picked up each piece and put it into his bamboo box. When he was done he closed the lid.

"I am an old man who had only this one son, and he traveled by my side all my days. Little did I dream, when he took my order, that such a bizarre fate would befall me. Now I must carry him to his resting place." Having spoken thus, the performer ascended the steps of the hall and

kneeled. "For the sake of a peach," he said, "I have lost my son. If you would pity this humble soul and contribute something to the funeral expenses, I will be ever vigilant to repay you - even from the beyond."

The awed officials each gave some money, which the performer took and tied to his waist. Then he knocked on the bamboo box and shouted, "You can come out, sonny boy, and thank the donors." A tumbleweed head lifted the cover as a lad emerged and kowtowed to the officials. It was the same boy!

I learned later that the White Lotus Sect could perform this strange trick, and it would not surprise me if the two performers were descended from them.

P'u Sung-ling

## The Magic Pear Tree

A farmer came from the country to sell his pears in the market. The were juicy and fragrant, and his sales were booming, when a Taoist priest wearing tattered scarves and coarse cotton clothes appeared at the wagon and begged for some fruit. The farmer shooed him away, but he refused to leave. The farmer's voice rose until he was screaming and cursing.

"Your wagon holds hundreds of pears," said the priest, "and I ask for only one. That's no great loss, sir; why get so angry?"

The crowd tried to persuade the farmer to part with a bruised pear and be rid of the man, but the farmer indignantly refused. At last a market guard saw that the uproar was getting out of hand and put up a few coins for a piece of fruit to throw to the priest.

Hands clasped above his head, the priest thanked the guard. Then he turned to the crowd and said, "We who have left the world find man's greed hard to understand. Let me offer some choice pears to all you good customers."

"Now that you have your pear," someone said, "why don't you eat it yourself?"

"All I needed was a seed for planting," replied the priest. And holding the fruit in both hands, he gobbled it

up. Then he took the little shovel that he carried on his back and dug several inches into the ground. He placed the seed in the hole and covered it with earth.

The priest called for hot water, and a bystander with a taste for mischief fetched some from a nearby shop. The priest poured the water over the seed he had planted. Every eye was now on him.

Behold! A tiny shoot appeared. Steadily it increased in size until it became a full-grown tree, with twigs and leaves in unruly profusion. In a flash it burst into bloom and then into fruit. Masses of large, luscious pears filled its branches.

The priest turned to the tree, plucked the pears, and began presenting them to the onlookers. In a short while the fruit was gone. Then with his shovel the priest started to chop the tree. "Teng! Teng!" the blows rang out in the air until finally the tree fell. Taking the upper part of the tree onto his shoulders, the priest departed with a relaxed gait and untroubled air.

During all this the farmer had been part of the crowd, gaping with outstretched neck and forgetting his business.

But when the priest departed the farmer noticed that his wagon was empty. And then the suspicion came to him that it was his own pears which had been presented to the crowd.

Looking more carefully, he saw that a handle had been chopped off the wagon. In vexation he searched until he found it lying discarded at the foot of a wall. And now he realized that the pear tree he had seen cut down was the handle of his wagon.

Of the priest there was no sign at all, but the marketplace was in an uproar of laughter.

*P'u Sung-ling*

## **Lesson Four**

### **LITERATURE**

## Flight from the Shadow

There was a man so disturbed by the sight of his own shadow and so displeased with his own footsteps that he determined to get rid of both. The method he hit upon was to run away from them.

So he got up and ran. But every time he put his foot down there was another step, while his shadow kept up without the slightest difficulty.

He attributed his failure to the fact that he was not running fast enough. So he ran faster and faster without stopping, until he finally dropped dead.

He failed to realize that if he merely stepped into the shade, his shadow would vanish, and if he sat down and stayed still, there would be no more footsteps.

Chuang Tsu

## The Old Man and the Churning Waters

At the Gorge of Lu, the great waterfall plunges for thousands of feet, its spray visible for miles. In the churning waters below, no living creature can be seen.

One day, K'ung Fu-tse was standing at a distance from the pool's edge, when he saw an old man being tossed about in the turbulent water. He called to his disciples, and together they ran to rescue the victim. But by the time they reached the water, the old man climbed out onto the bank and was walking along, singing to himself.

K'ung Fu-tse hurried up to him. "You would have to be a ghost to survive that," he said, "but you seem to be a man, instead. What secret power do you have?"

"Nothing special," the old man replied. "I began to learn while very young, and grew up practicing it. Now I am certain of success. I go down with the water and come up with the water. I follow it and forget myself. I survive because I don't struggle against the water's superior power. That's all."

Chuang Tsu



## Reflection

Moon above water.

Sit in solitude.

If waters are placid, the moon will be mirrored perfectly. If we still ourselves, we can mirror the divine perfectly. But if we engage solely in the frenetic activities of our daily involvement's, if we seek to impose our own schemes on the natural order, and if we allow ourselves to become absorbed in self-centered views, the surface of our waters becomes turbulent. Then we cannot be receptive to nature's harmony.

There is no effort that we can make to still ourselves. True stillness comes naturally from moments of solitude where we allow our minds to settle. Just as water seeks its own level, the mind will gravitate toward peace and harmony. Muddy water will become clear if allowed to stand undisturbed, and so too will the mind become clear if it is allowed to be still.

Neither the water nor the moon make any effort to achieve a reflection. In the same way, meditation will be natural and immediate.

*Adapted from 365 Tao Daily Meditations*

## The Need to Win

When an archer is shooting for nothing

He has all his skill.

If he shoots for a brass buckle

He is already nervous.

If he shoots for a prize of gold

He goes blind

Or he sees two targets -

He is out of his mind!

His skill has not changed. But the prize

Divides him. He cares.

He thinks more of winning

Than of shooting -

And the need to win

Drains him of power.

## The Cook

Count Wenhui's cook was busy dismembering an ox. Every stroke of his hand, every lift of his shoulders, every kick of his foot, every thrust with his knee, every hiss of cleaving meat, every whiz of the cleaver, everything was in utter harmony - formally structured like a dance in the mulberry grove, euphonious like the tones of Jingshou.

"Well done!" exclaimed the count. "This is craftsmanship indeed."

"Your servant," replied the cook, "has devoted himself to Dao. This is better than craftsmanship. When I first began to dismember oxen, I saw before me entire oxen. After three years' practice, I no longer saw the entire animal. And now I work with my spirit, not my eyes. When my senses caution me to stop, but my spirit urges me on, I find my support in the eternal principles. I follow the openings and hollows which, according to the natural state of the animal, must be where they are. I do not try to cut through the bones of the joints, let alone the large bones.

"A good cook exchanges his cleaver for a new one once a year, because he uses it to cut. An ordinary cook exchanges it for a new one every month, because he uses it to hack. But I have been handling this cleaver for

nineteen years, and even though I have dismembered many thousands of oxen, its edge is as keen as though it came fresh from the whetstone. There are always spaces between the joints, and since the edge of the cleaver is very thin, it is only necessary to insert it in such a space. Thus the gap is enlarged, and the blade finds enough places to do its work. That is how I have kept my cleaver for nineteen years as though it came fresh from the whetstone.

"Nevertheless, when I come across a tough part, where the blade encounters an obstacle, I proceed with caution. First, I fix my eye on it. I hold back my hand. Gently I apply the blade until that part yields with a muffled sound like lumps of earth singing to the ground. Then I withdraw my cleaver, rise, look around, and stand still, until I finally dry my cleaver with satisfaction and lay it carefully aside."

"Well spoken!" cried the count. "By the words of this cook I have learned how I must look after my life."

## The Stand for Chimes

Qing, the master carpenter, was carving a wooden stand for a set of chimes. When he was done, everyone who saw it thought it had been fashioned by supernatural beings. The prince of Lu asked the master, "What is the secret of your art?"

"Your subject is only an artisan," replied Qing. "What secrets could he have? Yet there is something. When starting out to make the stand, I guarded myself against every loss of vital energy. I collected myself in order to subdue my spirit to an absolute calm. After three days I became oblivious to whatever reward I might receive. After five days I became oblivious to whatever fame I might be accorded. After seven days I forgot my limbs and the rest of my physical self. Even the thought of your court, for which I was supposed to work, was gone. Then I got down to my art, undisturbed by anything outside. I went to the forest and looked at the shapes of trees. When I caught sight of one that had the right shape, the stand for the set of chimes appeared to me, and I went to work. If I had not found this tree, I would have had to cancel the job. My divinely inspired capability and the divinely inspired shape of the tree coincided. What is credited to

the supernatural in my work is due entirely to this coincidence."

(Untitled Right-To-Left Poem)

My chest is broken. On whom can I lean?	Slender wind and thin rain, tapping tapping.	a companion to my feelings, which are water.	Rattan bed, paper netting. I wake from sleep.
I break off a twig. On the earth and in heaven,	Down come a thousand lines of tears.	I play three times with the flute, astonishing a plum's heart.	I can't reach the end of saying: I've no happy thoughts.
there's no one person to send it to.	The pipe playing jade man is gone. Empty tower.	How I feel spring's ache!	Incense flickers on, off. The jade burner is cold,

Li Ch'ing-chao

## CHAPTER FOUR -- CONCLUSION

### Concluding Remarks

In today's rapidly changing global society, adolescents, by their very nature, seek new ways of relating to the world. They need guidance coping with the social and emotional fluctuations in their daily lives. By engaging in a curriculum based on history and art, students explore classic values and perspectives still relevant in their frenzied life-style. Delving into the culture of China allows adolescents to garner some valuable personal skills and practical ideas about life that will last them a lifetime.

Through exploring history, students will make connections with past civilizations. Instruction in some principles of Taoism, Lao-tse's philosophy for coping during a turbulent period in China, provides historical perspective as well as guidance as they begin to define their own moral values. Children learn about the Taoist concepts of *Wu Wei* and *Yin-Yang* by reading selected ancient Chinese literature.

Teaching about Taoism is to go beyond the boundaries of mere religion, for Taoism encompasses a way of life. The tenets of this religious philosophy, often considered



too enigmatic to comprehend, unfold naturally as students read and dramatize folklore and examine and create their own poetry.

The benefits of art woven into curriculum are many. Art not only reflects culture and history, it enriches literal language and provides an avenue of silent expression. Participating in fine art activities appeals to all ability levels. In fact, many at risk students succeed for the first time while creating artwork. Self-confidence is enhanced when a student proudly exhibits a finished product. By experiencing Chinese landscape painting, students learn the process of brush painting that has been passed down from Chinese master artists for at least a thousand years. The theme of nature is at the very center of Taoist art and philosophy. While the Taoist philosophy advises us to go with the flow and be in harmony with the natural world, Chinese art frees the spirit to embrace the beauty of nature.

The rich lessons presented in this project have been carefully scripted for teachers and students. They are clear and help to demystify China. The unit lessons are meant to be supplemental, but may be used in their entirety. It is hoped that, along with the cultural tolerance and self-understanding gleaned by adolescents,

teacher-leaders will experience personal growth as well. In this way, teachers encourage students to become life-long learners.

Children are born with the physical capacity to learn, but it is through culture, education, and art that our children's humanity and civility are cultivated.

### Calendar

The entire unit spans approximately eight weeks if all activities in all lessons are implemented. However, as a supplemental language arts unit, selected parts may be omitted if time is a heavy consideration.

#### Lesson One - Show Me the Tao

Day 1	Tao Philosophy
Day 2	Opinions
Day 3	Chinese Big-Character Wall Poster
Days 4-8	"The Tigger Tendency"
Day 9	Personal "Tigger Tendency"
Day 10	Decision Mountain

#### Lesson Two - Yin-Yang: Nature's Harmony

Days 11-14	Yin-Yang
Day 13	Shapes in Nature

Day 15                      Personal Poetry

Lesson Three - Taoist Tales: Wait and See

Days 16-17              Wu Wei

Days 18-20              The Nature of Opposites

Day 21                      Change is Good

Lesson Four - Go With the Flow

Days 22-27              Go With the Flow

Lesson Five - Chinese Landscape Painting

Days 28-31              Chinese Landscape Painting

Lesson Six - Chinese Shadow Puppet Show

Days 32-43              Chinese Shadow Puppet Show

Program Evaluation

Both sixth and seventh grade social studies curricula deal with turbulent periods of Asian history, from the Han Dynasty to the conquering Mongols. Classroom teachers who implement this supplementary arts unit will need to ascertain whether or not this history has been covered prior to offering instruction about a major Chinese philosophy. Interdisciplinary teaching and block scheduling, along with frequent and open communication

among staff members would be especially beneficial in assuring that planned goals are met.

Those who will determine the success of this arts unit are the classroom teachers, because they are the ones who measure student comprehension. After presenting this unit, teachers will complete an evaluability assessment questionnaire. Evaluability assessments are important feedback and should be obtained from the classroom teachers who will function at the "grassroots" of the daily lessons. More closely connected to the process of learning than supervisors or administrators, teachers are at the heart of adolescent problems and their possible solutions.

Additionally, Chinese experts from local universities or those who teach newcomer classes for Chinese immigrants, will be consulted. These experts will provide a more formal evaluation centering on the authenticity of the Taoist philosophy.

This unit is intended to be "teacher friendly." In an attempt to illuminate (at least partially) the complex subject of Taoism, the lessons are fully scripted for teachers. This is especially helpful for those instructors who have not studied this Chinese philosophy in depth.

### Recommendations

Taoism, along with the other major philosophies of Buddhism and Confucianism, permeates the diverse cultural life of China. The scope of this supplemental arts lesson, although rather lengthy, does not include several of the fine arts:

1. Poetry writing was an important avenue of expression for Chinese women and would highlight the relevant changes in women's social status from antiquity until now.
2. The Taoist influence extends to cuisine, even to how a table is set, hot and cold, Yin and Yang. Children found this anomaly fascinating in some lessons already piloted. These lessons compared their American eating habits with those of the Chinese.
3. Taoist philosophical tenets are interwoven into film. Today, a vital new film movement has surfaced in China. Film documentaries, such as "Small Happiness" and "The Girl from Hunan," chronicle strident customs regarding women in China.
4. Music in China differentiates from Western music because it uses a five-note scale rather than the seven-note scale used in the West. Exposure to the art of Chinese music would be insightful as well as enjoyable.

5. Trips to museums, such as the Pacific Asian Museum in Pasadena, California, would extend knowledge of culture, history, landscape painting, and other artistic endeavors. Master calligraphers could be invited to demonstrate their authentic techniques.

## APPENDIX 1

Interview with Tara Sethia, Ph.D. (Sociology)

California Polytechnic University, Pomona

By C. Christine Osburn and Kathryn Ramsey

July 2, 1997

Background information: Dr. Sethia was born in India and received a Masters of Arts in History. She came to the United States in 1975 to acquire a doctorate in Sociology from University of California, Los Angeles. Her main activity in academia is worldwide archival research in women's history, and she currently has a manuscript in progress. In 1995, she coordinated the India-China Institute at CalPoly. Teachers from intermediate and high school grade levels were immersed for two summer sessions.

These intense Asian studies encompassed: the study of primary and secondary sources, history texts, documentaries, films, fine art, and field trips to museums, temples, and traditional cuisine restaurants.

### Interview

Q: Why do you feel the study of Asian cultures in important for today's world?

A: In terms of population, nearly one-half of the world is combined in the Asian countries—probably more than that. And if you look at the nature of the United States, there's a growing segment of population that is Asian, especially in California. So it is important because of the changing contours of the demographics in our times.

Secondly, we live in a global society where the understanding of other world cultures is equally important as it is to the understanding of our culture. And what is our own culture to do when we live in such a mixed society? So like any other cultures, I think it is important to study other world areas to get a perspective and understanding of other cultures.

Another practical reason is that one of the major problems in this country has been the lack of understanding diversity in a proper way. The way to do that is to really academically try to understand the diverse cultural roots from which this diversity has actually taken shape. So the study of Asia or any other cultures provide us a very valuable perspective in understanding different or diverse cultural groups in this country.

Q: How did the immersion of the Institute's teacher participants directly benefit students?



A: When we began this program, our hope was to create teacher-leaders for the twenty-first century, and we hope we have succeeded in that. That's why we preferred to stick with twenty-five teachers for a period of three years rather than have a fresh group of teachers each year, which is more conventional. We've done this to provide a sustained training and exposure to the content of the Institute. We want teachers to have enough time to understand the subject matter well enough that it becomes an integral part of their lives so when they go into the classroom, it is going to automatically come and be transmitted to their students. That's our hope...to reach students of all ages through our teacher-leaders. The ultimate beneficiaries of this program will be the students.

Q: How can the various Asian philosophies be taught without seeming as though religion is being advocated?

A: It's the same thing. How could you talk about Christianity or Judaism in the context of world religions and not propagate that religion? By talking about it in an academic sense. I've been teaching about India and China and many other Southeast Asian cultures for many years and never had any problems.

What we are really talking about is not religion, but religious systems. If you take a look at Hinduism, for example, it's not religion but a complete system, a way of life. And what does it mean to be a Hindu from the point of view of a Hindu? Is there a certain formula? It's easier to define religions of the book; but religions *not* of the book do not have a given structure that is easily understandable by students. Then it becomes a very complex thing.

How, then, do you explain it? You do not have to be a Hindu to explain Hinduism. Nor do other people have to be Hindus to understand it. But you can certainly explain the various philosophies and ideas and concepts that are germane to those religious and philosophical systems. You're certainly not going to bring in monks or nuns to preach in your classroom. That would certainly have a religious connotation. But you, as an academic person, can talk about Hinduism and Buddhism in the same manner you talk about Christianity or Judaism in the classroom. I do not think there will be any problem.

**Q:** If a parent complained that you were advocating Hinduism or Daoism, how would you handle it?

**A:** I would first ask the parent what part of my lesson was objectionable and in which part he or she thought that

I was advocating something or infringing on something. I cannot foresee any kinds of dangers or problems arising out of teaching about a religion. I would explain that I was not teaching religion, only informing about it.

Asian religion, especially Hinduism, does not believe in converting people. There are no missionaries at all. Buddhism, of course, yes, has spread far and wide. But still it is not because the Buddhist missionaries did that. Rather, it was the royalty who sponsored such missions, or people from China who invited such missions or from Japan, which in turn invited the Chinese monks and missionaries to their country. This is how these religions have spread. So you don't have the same type of proselytizing tendencies in these religions as you have in Christianity and Judaism. So they are much more accommodating and encompassing systems.

Q: Do you feel the study of ancient history (particularly Chinese and Indian) can have some relevance to the lives of adolescents? If so, how?

A: I cannot say that it has a particular relevance to teenagers, but for all ages. Look at some of the values that the Indian and Chinese philosophies and cultures stand for, like tolerance, which comes alive in both Confucianism and Hinduism. Understanding tolerance is a much needed

value for our students. Compassion...you know, because they don't care what happens to the other kid sometimes, but they need to have a compassion.

If one looks at these cultures in terms of the values they project, they have a sort of meaningful purpose to serve for any age group depending on who wants to learn what.

**Q:** How can children become more tolerant and knowledgeable about Asian people and their cultures assuming direct travel is not possible?

**A:** Any experience a child can have directly with someone of another culture is the best way. Experience is an addition to reading. Of course, reading in all forms, whether primary sources, secondary writings, novels, biographies, or other forms of literature. Visuals such as documentary films and artwork. Museums. Field trips are an excellent way, too. Go to Cerritos. They will see Indian food, dress, and shops. Also, China Town, Buddhist temples in Hacienda Heights or Calabasas. Music is important. Sharing cultures. You know, students need to discover their own culture as well.

**Q:** How does the Asian mind typically deal with adversity?

**A:** This is a very difficult question, because I don't think one could speak in terms of an "Asian mind." Just as

people in any culture, even in present day American culture (if there is such a thing as an American culture), deal with adversity in different manners . Dealing with adversity is a situation that individuals do in their own personal way. I think it is hard for me to talk about the "Asian way" of dealing with adversity, because I have come across people who would deal with adversity in a very violent manner in Asian, as well as those who would deal with it in a very non-violent manner.

Take for example the classic confrontation between the Indians and the British and how the Indian nationalists dealt with the British. You can find right there several different ways the Indians were dealing with the British. Ghandi only represented one model of non-violence. Others would go fight and engage in a greater degree of violence. So there is not really only one way of looking at the Asian way of dealing with it.

It's been pointed out to me when some do show a sense of resilience, tolerance, and patience, people tend to say, "Oh, you can do that because you're from Asia". That really ticks me off , because it's not. Anybody can practice those kinds of reactions, and not every Asian has that. It depends on you personality and how mature you are. These are matters of maturity rather than of

ethnicity or of cultural origin. I think these are matters of how mature an individual is. I think Martin Luther King dealt with things differently than many other people of his culture would. So it's strictly a question of individuals, how one is raised, and how you want to express your temper.

**Q:** Are there any character traits that you would assign particularly to the people of the Asian cultures?

**A:** In the ancient times, yes, it was more discernible than it is now, and that has to do with the structure of the family. It used to be in ancient times and even in the early part of this century, you would see people of several generations living together. This doesn't happen in today's urban Asia. The rural sector is continuing to change. As we move into the twenty-first century, those old traits do not depict current societies. If you look at the joined families in Asia, they did have to live together where they showed tolerance for each other and a sensitivity to other person's needs. Those were the kinds of families they inculcated among themselves to be able to get by rather than to get into confrontations every day. It was based more on the conditions and environment in which they lived at a particular point of time. I don't think that it's a given fact for all Asians today.

**Q:** What about the gangs here and how they came about?

A: The Asian cultures here are very different than the Asian cultures of the homelands. The American Asian culture is very, very different. Many of the people of Asian culture here have never gone back to their homeland. They were born here, brought up here. And even people born there, who have come here have never gone back so they are distant from their own culture. The influence that they actually have is the influence from the culture they actually live in and grow. This gives rise to a distinct cultural make-up which is not exactly as what is happening in their homeland.

There's a more materialistic effect. For example, drugs. You do not have the drug related problems so much in the Asian countries which we have, because drugs have become part and parcel of life in this country. This is a very twentieth-century phenomena. But drugs are not culture specific. You'll find them in every culture everywhere.

## APPENDIX 2

# TAOISM THE ADOLESCENT WAY

## Unit Evaluation

Please take a few minutes to respond to the following questions to help with an evaluation process.

### Goals

#### Cultural Tolerance

1. Do you feel students acquired a better understanding of Chinese culture? If so, which lessons do you feel promoted this? If not, explain.
2. Do you think that students have become more empathetic toward Asians in our midst? Explain.

#### Adolescent Skills

3. Do you feel your students garnered useful, insightful skills for navigating their adolescent years? Explain.
4. Which activities did not appeal to the students?



## Lesson Plans

5. Do you feel the lessons were "user friendly" enough for teachers not familiar with Taoism? Explain.
6. Were the concepts concrete enough, or too abstract, for early adolescent students? Explain.
7. Were the scripted teacher instructions helpful or overzealous? Explain.
8. Was the anticipated time frame for the lessons adequate?
9. How could these lessons be improved or enhanced?
10. Would you recommend this unit to other middle school teachers? Why, or why not?

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