

# **Teaching Chinese Culture Through Literature and Food**

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# Teaching Daoism Through Literature

## **Goals/Objectives:**

Students will collaboratively interpret an excerpt from the Dao De Jing.

Students will compare and contrast an ancient tale illustrating Daoist lifestyle with a modern version of the same story.

Students will develop appreciation of Daoism's influence on the arts through a folk tale and dramatic reading of Li Bo's poetry set to traditional Chinese music.

## **Activities:**

1. Introduce the Daoist concept of actionless action (Wuwei) using the story, "The Donkey of Kuei-Chow."
2. Collaboratively interpret Lao Tzu's #80 from Dao De Jing. Follow up with large group discussion.
3. Independently read of "The Well in the Peach-Blossom Forest" by Tao-Yuan Ming. Found Poem
4. Class read "Peach Blossom Spring" by Fergus Bordewich.
5. Use a Venn Diagram, collaboratively or in large groups, to compare the two versions of a Daoist ideal living situation.
6. Close with a dramatic reading of Li Bo's poem "The Cataract of Lu Shan" with traditional Chinese music.
7. Students visualize the poem by Li Bo and illustrate the poem.

## **Assessment:**

1. Discussion Questions
2. Found Poem
3. Venn Diagram
4. Student Illustration

Writing of an independent summary of what student thinks was important to Daoists.

## **Materials:**

1. Overhead transparencies
2. Copies of the literature
3. Discussion Questions
4. Venn Diagram
5. Blank paper for illustrations

### **Discussion Questions for "The Donkey of Kuei-Chow":**

How can displaying power cause one to lose power?

How can actively doing nothing be a source of power?

Wuwei is a Daoist concept that can be defined as "Actionless Action." Using the story as a source, explain the concept of Wuwei:

### **Discussion Questions for *Dao De Ching* #80"**

Â Why do you think Lao Tzu suggested countries with small populations?  
(lines 1-2)

Â What kind of "implements" do we have today that "multiply men's strength" ?  
(lines 3-4)

Â Can you think of any dangers that modern day "implements" create in our society?

Â How would your life change if you followed the advice in lines 5-10? How would it be more difficult? How would it be improved?

Â What great empire actually used rope-knotting for communication and did not have any writing system?

Â What would we have to do in our society to live without a writing system?

Â Consider the four suggestions in lines 13-16; do you experience these in your life today? If so, please explain with examples. If not, what would need to change to allow you to experience life in this way?

Â Consider lines 17-20:  
How large could countries be and still be within "eyesight" of each other?  
What is it that causes people to travel from country to country?  
Why does Lao Tzu make such a strong case for small countries in which people do not travel "hither and thither"?

\*Try to summarize the ideal country according to Lao Tzu:

\*\*What does Lao Tzu's ideal country illustrate about the philosophy of Daoism?

# Found Poetry

Adapted from CA Lit. Project

In "Found Poetry" the lines are found within the text. Found poems can be written by the whole class, in collaborative groups, in pairs or trios, or by individuals. A found poem is a collection of luminous words and phrases, quoted from a piece of text, that usually focus on the essence of the text. This strategy for writing poetry is far less threatening than dealing with content AND form at the same time. The "poet" is free to play with the words to make meaning out of the content rather than needing to create the content to show meaning.

**Teacher Directions** (It is often better to model the process the first time a new strategy is introduced.)

1. Select a piece of prose rich in detail and emotion, and distribute a copy to each student.
2. Read the selection to the students as they follow along.
3. Students then reread the passage and underline the words and phrases they feel are the strongest (not sentences or paragraphs), the words and phrases that express the feeling or meaning of the text and seem most significant.
4. Next, students star the ten best and select one or two favorites for a Quaker reading.
5. In a Quaker reading students at random read aloud their favorite words and phrases. Duplication is fine. (Each student taking a turn reading works well also.)
6. Now students play collaboratively with their starred words and phrases to find an order they like - - to create a poem that captures the essence of the piece.

## **Benefits:**

- Â Students revisit the text many times.
- Â Students negotiate meaning together.
- Â Both the right brain and left brain are working.
- Â Poetry is painless.

## Found Poem Presentation

Why?

- Capture the essence of the text.
- Create new meaning from learned content.

Who?

- Individuals
- Groups

How?

- Each person selects important words and phrases.

### Guidelines for the Participants

- Â -Organize the words and phrases for dramatic effect.
- Â -Prioritize words and phrases to be used
- Â -OK to repeat
- Â -OK to have one-word lines
- Â -OK to put lines in any order
- Â -10-15 lines long (this is only a guideline)
- Â -Use single lines for emphasis
- Â -Set off powerful single words on lines by themselves.
- Â -Indent lines that give details for other lines.
- Â -Do not change the order of the words in the original.
- Â -Do not add words not found in text.
- Â -You may leave words out.
- Â -Use color and illustrations to accent the meaning.

- Share the "Found" Poem with the class.

Dramatic reading by an individual

Quaker reading by whole class

Choral reading by a small group simultaneously

Creative presentation by a small group

# A Newspaper Project: Chinese Culture

## **Objectives:**

- Students will collaboratively explore a wide range of Chinese literature (folktales, poetry, and primary sources) to learn about Chinese culture and lifestyles.
- From these literary experiences students will create a believable newspaper or journal of Chinese Literature.

This is an in-depth project intended for core classes (SS/LA) or for team teachers working together (SS/LA). Exploring the Chinese literature should be done using the active reading approach as well a variety of strategies from the CA Literature project. One of these strategies, "Found Poem", is explained in this packet. Tableaux, role play, hot seat, discussions, and quick writes are excellent exploration strategies as well.

A list of literary resources from several periods of Chinese history is included as well as an outline/summary of a language arts unit on studying and making a newspaper.

## Chinese Literature by Dynasty

### **The Fall of Han and the Sui Dynasty**

- from *Sweet and Sour: Tales From China*:
  - "The Clever Wife", 14-16 (Han Dynasty)
  - "The Betrothal" 80-85 (Han Dynasty)
  - "Golden Life" 89-91 (Han Dynasty)
  - "From Bad to Good to Bad to Good" 39-40 (Han Dynasty)
  - "Kertong" 66-72
- from *Women Poets of The World*:
  - Ts'ai Yen (c.200)
- from "Eighteen Verses Sung to a Tatar Reed Whistle"
  - from *The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces*:
    - T'ao Ch'ien (365-427)"The Peach Blossom Spring"
- poet of the Six Dynasties

## **The Flowering of Chinese Culture: Tang (618-906) and Song**

from *Sweet and Sour: Tales From China*:  
"Clod's Comb", 86-88 (Tang Dynasty)  
from *Works of Li Po The Chinese Poet*:  
Li Bo (701-762?): "The Cataract of Lu Shan"  
"The North Wind"  
from *Documents in World History*:  
"Poetry and Society in Tang China"  
Tu Fu (712-770): "Recruiting Officer of Shih-hao"  
Po Chu Yi (772-846): "Watching the Wheat-reapers"  
"Bitter Cold, Living in the Village"  
Liu Tsung-Yuan (773-819) "Farmers"  
"On Covering the Bones of Chang Chin, the  
Hired Man"  
P'i Jih-Hsiu (833-883) "Lament of a Woman Acorn-gatherer"  
"An Uncommon Woman in Sung China"  
from *Women Poets of The World*:  
Li Ch'ing-chao (1084-1151) Poem to the tune of "Yi chian mei"

## **Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)**

from *Women Poets of The World*:  
Huang O (1498-1569)  
To the tune of "Soaring Clouds"  
To the tune of "Red Embroidered Shoes"  
To the tune of "The Fall of a Little Goose"  
from *Sweet and Sour: Tales From China*:  
"Bagged Wolf" 49-59 (Ming)  
"The Pointing Finger" 60-62 (Ming)  
"Stewed, Roasted, or Live?" 98-99 (Ming)  
"The Monk and the Drunk" (Ming)

## **Qing Dynasty (1644-1911)**

from *Women Poets of The World*:  
Sun Yun-feng (1754-1814) "On the Road through Chang-Te"  
Wu Tsao (19th century) "For the Courtesan Ch'ing Lin"  
Ping Hsin (Hsieh Wan-ying) [1902] "The Stars"  
from *Sweet and Sour: Tales From China*:  
"A Rare Bargain", 13 (Ch'ing)  
"The Wine Bibber", 42-44 (Ch'ing)  
"Old Fuddlement" 45-48 (Ch'ing)  
"Thievery" 78-79 (Ch'ing)

# Literature Study: The Newspaper

Why the newspaper?

The newspaper is one of the most common literary forms students will use. The reading difficulty is usually limited to make it accessible to more readers, yet there are informational and analytical articles on a diverse span of subjects. Thus, the newspaper offers an excellent source of comprehensible and challenging material for second language learners.

## **Overall Unit Outcomes:**

1. Students will use a newspaper for a variety of purposes, including personal enjoyment, personal needs for information, and personal voice in the world.
2. Students will appreciate the complexity of producing a newspaper, and as a result,
3. Students will recognize the need for collaborative skills and will develop such skills.
4. Students will demonstrate competence in three writing styles.
5. Students will demonstrate creativity in writing, art, and design.

## **Specific Unit Objectives:**

1. Students will read and analyze the subject matter, purpose, and bias of various articles.
2. Students will use a newspaper to obtain specific kinds of information.
3. Students will identify the various parts of a newspaper.
4. Students will write two or more reports of information intended for use in a newspaper.
5. Students will write an evaluative essay in a letter to the editor.
6. Students will write a problem-solution essay in a letter to the editor.
7. Students may choose to write a full length editorial for extra credit.



8. Students will create interest features, information sections, and advertisements.
9. Students will design a sample front page for an imaginary newspaper.
10. Students will publish a collaborative newspaper on a student-chosen theme.

**Materials Needed:**

(projected for 32 students)

Xerox overhead transparencies (15+), heavy construction paper for newspaper backing, scissors(15), white construction paper for layout of each newspaper page (60 sheets), glue sticks (32), crayola markers-black (10), full sets of colored markers (10), samples of student newspapers from previous years, daily commercial newspapers (32), all handouts (32), and folders for collecting student work to be used in the newspaper (32).

**Newspaper Project Sequence:**

1. Learn about the newspaper as a form of media.
2. Form a group of five. List the names of your group members below:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Choose a theme. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Read all requirements for the newspaper.
5. Learn about and write all required pieces for the newspaper.
6. Put the newspaper together- "Simultaneous Working"

**Preparation:**

Each person in the group will create or write each of the following:

Two Reports  
 Two Opinion articles  
 Information section  
 Advertisements- two classifieds, one commercial  
 Interest feature  
 Visual

**Length:**

The newspaper will be exactly FOUR pages.  
 Paper will be provided. The paper is large size and can be filled creatively.  
 Articles and other features will vary in length according to the requirements.  
 The editor will help writers to shorten articles when necessary.

**Organization:**

The front page must include three top stories and 2 visuals. The front page must also include cost, title, date, vol., no., and index. Beyond the front page students determine organization of the newspaper.

Suggestions: Use a real newspaper as an example.

-Mix in visuals, advertisements, and interest features.

-Have a specific place for classified ads and put them together.

-Use extra visuals if you can.

**Participation:**

Your group will be graded on cooperation during the class work time.

Each article or feature must include the name of the author or creator.

Your group will be graded on a balance of contributions from all members.

**Contents and Grading:**

The newspaper will contain the following:

[200 points]

25 points = 5 Reports: 3 Front page stories, 2 from other areas.

25 points = 5 Interest features: Use a variety of features from the list.

25 points = 5 Information Sections: Use a variety.

20 points = 20 Advertisements: Use a variety from the list.

25 points = 5 Opinion articles: Use a variety; only one editorial.

30+ points = 6+ Visuals: At least one photo and one drawing.

25 points Organization- Front page and layout of pages 2-4.

25 points = Group participation- Did all members contribute?

# Chinese Food

## **Yin and Yang in Chinese Food**

The ancient Chinese believed that there was yin and yang in everything. They believed that, if you were sick, it was because you had too much of one kind of food. Sickness was solved by giving herbs and/or foods that contained what the sick person needed. It is not surprising that herbal medicine was and is a highly developed field. The use of herbs in healing and preventing sickness has spread to the U.S. as well. Health food stores sell many of the spices that the Chinese have used for thousands of years. One example is garlic.

Many people still believe in the idea of Yin and Yang. Every person has yin and yang. The key to health is the right balance. Every food is considered either yin or yang. Yang foods include meats, fried foods, bright red, ginseng. Yin foods include green leafy vegetables and grains like wheat and rice. For a dinner meal to be excellent, there must be a balance between yin foods and yang foods.

## **Brief History**

The Chinese have been farming for 7,000 years. Archeologists found farming tools and pots with grains of rice that date back to 5000 B.C.E. Farming continues to be a major occupation for millions of Chinese people. In fact, today about 80% of the Chinese people are farmers compared to 6% of the people in the U.S.

## **Geographical Problems and Chinese Solutions**

The land area of China and the U.S. is about the same, but the population of China is over four times that of the U.S. Consider the following data:

Population of China = 1,200,000,000

Population of U.S. = 240,000,000

How many more people do the Chinese have to feed, compared to the U.S.?

Remember, China is the SAME size country in terms of land. Or is it?

Even though China has the same area,

much of the country is covered with mountains. Only 13% of China's land is arable (usable for growing crops). So now you have a country with much less land for farming than the U.S. does, but with millions more people to feed. How can this food problem be solved?

The Chinese valued food, used everything possible, and wasted very little food. They subscribed to the minimax principle: use a minimum of resources to get a maximum output of food. They kept carp (a type of fish) in their ponds and

used them for food. Carp eat silkworm droppings and cost nothing to keep. Pigs and ducks eat leftover food-- this way leftovers are never thrown away, and the result is larger pigs and ducks for eating. The most expensive meat was chicken because they had to feed the chickens grain, which took away from the crop raised. Another aspect of Chinese frugality is that, not only were all parts of the animal were used for food, but people were expected to eat only until 70% full. People were never supposed to stuff themselves.

Geography influenced Chinese cooking techniques as well. There was very little wood, so the Chinese could not cook for very long. They developed a new style of cooking that allowed them to deal with having little wood. What do you think this style of cooking was?

The stir fry method of cooking solved their problems. Preparing food took a long time, because all of the ingredients were cut into small pieces. Since the pieces were small, they cooked much faster; cooking time was often only a few minutes.

### **Chinese Meal:**

There are two parts to a Chinese meal: Fan-Cai. Every meal must have both fan and cai.

**Fan =** Grain. You get an individual serving.

In the north of China wheat is used to make buns, noodles, and bread. In the south of China rice is the basic food.

**Cai =** Vegetables and/or meats. People add this to their rice or noodle. It is a group food. There are four main styles: Mandarin, Cantonese, Szechuan, and Shanghai

### **A Regular or Traditional Meal:**

Poor and lower middle class families will have large portions of fan to fill up on and small portions of cai for flavor. Rice or noodles are a basic part of every meal and a cheap way to fill empty stomachs. Meat is a luxury. It is cut into small pieces, and small portions are used. Vegetables are added to meat to make the portions larger and to add flavors.

Respect for age is expected from everyone. The older serves the younger and makes sure that everyone gets some of each dish. Respect for others at the meal is also important. Those allowed to serve themselves do not take so much that someone else may not get some. Finally, one should never take the last piece of food on a platter.

In rich families and government banquets, normal eating is reversed. Cai is emphasized. Many delicious foods are placed at the table. Delicacies like shark fin soup, birds' nest, and abalone are offered. Fan is given in small portions and is more of a side dish. The same rules of respect are observed at a banquet; people wait to be served and do not take the last part of any dish. At a banquet alcohol is usually consumed.

### **Regions of China and the Styles of Food**

Canton (Hong Kong) and Southern China: Cantonese style cooking  
Examples: Sweet and sour pork, fresh seafood, won ton soup, steamed rice. Many Chinese immigrants were from Canton so this type of food became popular in the U.S. before other types of Chinese food.

Peking (Beijing) and Northern China: Mandarin style cooking  
Examples: Peking duck, noodles, steamed bread, dumplings. Rice could not grow in the north, but wheat could. So the noodles were made from wheat.

Eastern coast: Shanghai style cooking  
Examples: strongly flavored foods with soy sauce and sugar, rich and tangy sauces. Freshwater fish, crab, and shrimp were common ingredients.

Inland China: Szhechuan style cooking  
Examples: Kung pao chicken, hot and spicy dishes, uses hot peppers, garlic, onions, and leeks.

### **Setting A Chinese Table**

Historically, farming families ate together around large round tables. Today eating around a table with family and friends is still enjoyed in China and the U.S. In the center of the table in rich homes or in nice restaurants, food is placed on a round platform. This platform rotates so that food is accessible to everyone.

Three Simple Place Settings :Rice Bowl, Soup Bowl, Chopsticks

When a family has a visitor, a bowl and chopsticks are added. Unanticipated company is not considered a problem.

A menu for a class meal can be created, using many different Chinese cookbooks. Students have been successfully involved in the preparation of the following meal:

Egg-Flower Chicken Soup, Steamed white rice, Pork with Green Pepper and Pineapple, Other efforts are likely to be successful.

## "The Donkey in Kuei-chow"

There are no donkeys in Kuei-chou. Once a man brought one up the river on a cargo boat; but on his arrival, he saw that it could not be used in the high mountains, and so he set it loose. A tiger saw it and was terrified by the enormous beast, which he thought must be a god. He hid in a wood to observe it. After a while he approached a little nearer, but the donkey pretended not to notice anything.

The next day the donkey brayed, and the tiger ran away in a terrible fright, thinking that the donkey was going to bite him. He was still afraid when he went up and looked at it again, but it did not seem to have many tricks.

Gradually he became used to the braying. He went nearer and nearer, now in front, and now behind, but did not yet touch it. Day by day he became braver, until at last he gave it a push. At this the donkey could no longer contain its anger and lashed out with its leg, much to the delight of the tiger, who now knew that the donkey had no other means of defense. He leaped onto its back, tore open its neck, and ate it.

A donkey looks so big that one thinks that it must be very strong; it brays so loud that it must be very powerful. As long as it did not display its powers, the savage tiger did not dare attack it and eat it; but when it displayed them, its doom was sealed.

## Dao De Ching , #80

written by Lao Tzu

A country shall be small  
and its populace small in number.  
Implements that multiply men's strength  
shall not be used.

People are to take death seriously                    5  
and shall not travel far away.

Even though there be ships and carriages  
no one shall travel in them.

Even though there be armour and weapons  
no one shall employ them.                                10

Let the people tie knots in ropes\*  
and use them instead of script.

Make their food sweet  
and their garments beautiful,  
their dwellings peaceful                                    15  
and their customs joyful.

Neighboring countries may be within eyesight  
so that one can hear the cocks crow and the dogs bark on either side.

And yet shall people die at great age  
without having travelled hither and thither.        20

\*In ancient China and in Peru (Incas) rope-knotting served as a substitute for writing.

## **Use a fairy tale and found poetry to enhance student's understanding of Daoism.**

A fairy tale by Tao-Yuan Ming, one of China's greatest poets, creates one vision of a Golden Age when man returns to Nature. As you read, underline descriptive words and phrases that show connections between this fairy tale and Laozi's teaching in #80.

### **"The Well in the Peach-Blossom Forest"**

In the time of Tai Yuan, there lived a fisherman in Wuling. One day he travelled upstream along a river. He had forgotten whether he had gone near or far when a great forest, hundreds of yards deep and aglow with peach blossoms, appeared on either side of the river. There were no other trees in the forest, only beautiful fresh, scented grass, into which the peach petals fell. The fisherman was amazed and travelled onward, for he wanted to know where the forest would end.

At the edge of the forest stood the mountain from which the river flowed. A narrow entrance led into the mountain itself, which looked as though it was surrounded by light. The fisherman walked into this entrance, following a straight path; but after a few steps it became light and wide, and a broad, spreading land lay before his eyes.

Neat huts and tidy houses stood among good fields and beautiful shallow waters. Paths crossed one another; there were all kinds of bamboo, and many mulberry trees; chickens and dogs answered one another from village to village. Men and women sowed the fields -- just as it is with us. Children and old folk were peaceful and serene in what they were doing.

The people were astonished when they saw our fisherman, and questioned him eagerly. As he talked, they gave him wine to drink and slaughtered chickens for a meal. The villagers heard about it all, and everyone gathered to ask him questions. They told their own tale of how, long ago in the turbulent times of Qin Shi Huang, their ancestors had left and come to this place -- women, children, and all the people. Since that time no one had ever gone back, and so they knew nothing of people outside. They asked who was king. They did not know the dynasty of Han, much less the Wei and the Jin. But the fisherman brought them tidings of all he knew, and they listened to him. He passed many a day in this manner, feasted and entertained with food and wine. When the time came for them to part, the villagers thought it would not be worthwhile to tell the people outside about it all.

Finally the fisherman left this land, returned to the river, and stepped into his boat. He remembered the place and its surroundings well. Back in the district capital, he reported to the official, who sent out messengers on the strength of the fisherman's report. However, they lost their way . . .

It is true that later Liu Ji Qi, 'the Wise Man of the South', went boldly forth to search for the place. But before getting there, he fell ill and died. Since then no one has asked the way.

## The Cataract of Lushan - I

Westward I ascend the Peak of Incense Burner;  
Southward I see the mighty waterfall.  
It plunges three hundred *chang* down the mountain,  
And froths for miles in the rapids below.  
As wind-driven snow speed the waters,  
Like a white rainbow spanning the dark,  
I wonder if Heaven's River had fallen from above  
To course through the mid-sky of clouds.  
Long I lift my gaze - Oh, prodigious force!  
How majestic the creation of Gods!  
Unwavering before the ocean winds that blow,  
Glaring at the faint moon from over the river,  
Profusely it sprays the sky  
And drenches the green mountain walls.  
The swift torrents boil over giant rocks;  
The flying water scatters a mist of ethereal gems.

O mountains of renown that I adore,  
You fill my heart with deep repose.  
No longer need I take the potion of precious stones,  
You can wash away the earth stains from my face.  
Let me be with the things I love,  
And leave the world of man forever.