



The Booklist Project



Focus: Culture-Specific Booklist

Chinese

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Booklist for Chinese Culture

Andersen, Hans. (1984). *The Nightingale*: New York: Scholastic. ISBN [0-590-44458-1]

- **Summary:**

This book is about a nightingale that sings in the emperor's garden. Millions of travelers write about the nightingale but the emperor himself has never heard him sing. The nightingale sung wonderful songs for the emperor that brought tears to his eyes. The nightingale was allowed to stay in the court and have its own cage. Then one day the emperor received a mechanical toy bird as a gift. The bird sings the same song over and over and the nightingale flies away. The mechanical bird broke down and had to be fixed and could only be played once a year which made the emperor sad. Then the emperor gets ill. On his death bed, he is deserted by all of his servants. They had already picked a new emperor. He wanted to hear the mechanical bird sing but could not wind him up. Suddenly he hears the real nightingale in his window singing beautiful songs to him. The nightingale heard he was ill and returned. This gives him life and brings blood back into his veins. When the nightingale returned to sing he pushed death away. In the end the servants return much to their surprise to a revived emperor who is healthy and on his feet. The emperor is so thankful to the beautiful nightingale.

- **Benefit for Chinese learners:**

This book is good for Chinese students who are almost proficient in English. It is a nicely written book and a good storytelling book. This book is a nice way for the learners to emerge themselves into good reading if they are not quite ready for a chapter book. They can use this book as a tool to increase their level of reading.

Bishop, Claire. (1938). *The Five Chinese Brothers*: New York: Scholastic. ISBN [0-590-40770-8]

- **Summary:**

There are five Chinese brothers who each have five different talents. These talents were very unique and fictional. For example, the first brother could swallow up the ocean. One day the first brother decided to go fishing. He swallowed up the entire ocean and a boy was in the dry ocean. The brother could not hold the ocean in his mouth any longer so he had to let the water back into the ocean. In doing so a boy drowned. He then was arrested and sentenced to death. The brothers all helped the first brother from death by using each one of their talents. At the end they saved their brother from death.

- **Benefit for Chinese learners:**

This is a Chinese fictional story that may help the students to relate to their Chinese fishing culture.

Chinn, Karen. (1995). *Sam and the Lucky Money*: New York: Lee &Low Books INC. ISBN [1-880000-13-X]

- **Summary:**

This is a story about a Chinese boy named Sam, who is celebrating Chinese New Year in China Town. His grandparents gave him "leises" for Chinese New Year. Sam was told he could spend his money on whatever he would like. As he was walking through the streets to find the best present, he encountered a homeless man with no shoes. Every time he went into a store he only could see the homeless man with no shoes. He opted not to get a present. At the end of the story he decided to give his "leises" to the homeless man.

- **Benefit for Chinese learners:**

Throughout this book there are random texts in the Chinese language. This is a nice way for the learner to help decode the text because they can use the Chinese language as a tool to decode the English text. Also, the illustrations and text give a delightful understanding of Chinese New Year in New York City.

Lee, Huy Voun. (1994). At the Beach: New York: Henry Holt and Company. ISBN [0-805098-2]

- **Summary**

Xiao Ming loves going to the beach. His mother teaches him to make Chinese characters by drawing different pictures in the sand. She explains how each symbol stands for something in Chinese and is very similar to the drawing of its English counterpart.

- **Benefit for Chinese learners:**

This is a good teaching tool to see and understand the different characters in the Chinese language. It also helps to teach what they mean. This would be a nice tool for the Chinese students to teach their friends about their language.

Lee- Kwong, Betty. (2004). I Speak English and Chinese: Illinois: Rigby. ISBN [0-7578-1440-9]

- **Summary:**

Jen and Yun went to Chinese school. Yun loved Chinese school. Jen did not want to go. Their parent's thought it would be good for them to go so they could speak Chinese to their grandparents. Jen was unhappy going to school but one day at school a Chinese child fell and her teacher needed help finding out what was wrong. She asked if anyone spoke Chinese and Jen went running to help and translated what was wrong for the teacher. She felt good that she was able to help someone who could not speak English.

- **Benefit for Chinese learners:**

This book shows the importance of speaking two languages, especially in the case where you can help a person in an emergency.

Lobel, Anorald. (1982). Ming Lo Moves the Mountain: New York: Scholastic. ISBN [0-590-42902-7]

- **Summary:**

Ming Lo and his wife love their house but it was right underneath the mountain that caused a lot of problems. Some of the problems were that there was no sun therefore no vegetation was growing. The roof was filled with holes from the rain drippings. His wife wanted him to move the mountain and therefore he visited the wise man in the village to see how to do this. After many crazy attempts, the wise man told him to take the house apart stick by stick and take his possessions with him and do a dance. Upon doing this they realized they were away from the mountain and they rebuilt the house away from the mountain and lived happily ever after.

- **Benefit for Chinese learners:**

It shows the students if they work hard at something long enough and hard enough they will achieve the results they are looking for. It teaches that if at first you don't succeed with diligent trying you will.

Mahy, Margaret. (1990). The Seven Chinese Brothers: New York: Scholastic .ISBN [0-590-42057-0]

- **Summary:**

In Ch'in Shih Huang's time when he was emperor of China, there were seven brothers. They all looked, talked and acted alike; however, they each had one amazing power all their own. The brothers combined their special powers to fool Huang the cruel first emperor of China to save each other's lives. One could see across millions of miles. One could hear a fly sneeze and one could lift mountains. One had bones of iron. One had legs that could grow tall like tree trunks. One could never get hot, and one wept tears large enough to drown a village. So when the cruel emperor tried to kill each one, the brother with that special power would go in to save that brother and sent him home safe. In the end the last brother wept an ocean of tears and flooded the army over the Great Wall of China, sweeping the emperor into the air so high he was still trying to return to the palace. The brother then went back home with his six brothers and they were reunited and lived happy together.

- **Benefit for Chinese learners:**

This book is good for history as it teaches about the construction of the Great Wall. It was a monumental undertaking at the time of the emperor. This book teaches how the wall was built to be a defense against the invaders coming from the north; it was a hard task that exacted a death toll of thousands of laborers. This book can teach them history and folklore through their native culture.

McCully, Emily. (1998). Beautiful Warrior; A Legend of the Nun's Kung Fu: New York: Scholastic. ISBN [0-43906366-3-*)

- **Summary:**

This story is about an Emperor in the reign of the last Chinese dynasty. He had a daughter. He saw quiet courage in her eyes. He named her Jinyong (quiet courage). He grew her up like the boys were grown up with tutors, music, medicine and martial arts. Girls who were born at this time were sent to ladies in waiting, bounding their feet and never leaving the palace walls. When the warriors ended the dynasty and separated her from her parents, she was sent off to a Buddhist monastery and practiced "Kung Fu". They named her "Wu Mei" (beautiful warrior). She shaved her head and became a Buddhist nun. She was able to teach a young girl Mingy Wang the principles of Kung Fu and inner strength so that the girl could defeat a gang member who wanted to take her as a wife. She taught the girl how to defeat the big bully and beat him in a martial arts match; therefore she would not have to marry him. The girl won and was free of the man. She then joined the Buddhist ministry to live a life of peace, calm and inner strength with "Wu Mei".

- **Benefit for Chinese learners:**

This book has Chinese history and legend in it. It teaches self discipline and inner strength. It also teaches the students about the importance of women and their capabilities given the right tools and education. It is a nice book for a Chinese girl to relate to and emulate.

Mosel, Arlene. (1968). Tikki Tikki Tempo: New York: Scholastic. ISBN [0-59041622-7]

- **Summary:**

This story takes place in China. There are two bothers in this story. The first bother received a very long name because it was said that the first born son is the most important and should receive a long name. The second brother received a short name. One day the brothers were playing near a well and the second born son fell into the well and was saved very quickly. Then, the first born son fell into the well. But because his name was so long the brother had problems getting help. It took so long to say the brother's name. It took a while for the first born son to recover because he was not saved quick enough. The moral of this story is that after this happened to the two brothers the Chinese believe that both sons should receive short names.

- **Benefit for Chinese learners:**

This is a Chinese folktale that the Chinese students might be familiar with. By having this prior knowledge about the story it will make it easier for them to read. It also makes it easier for them to relate to the book because they understand their culture.

Seltzer, Gay. (2004). Mon Hung and Mon Lung: Illinois: Rigby. ISBN [0-7578-1361-5]

- **Summary:**

There are two brothers in this story who seem to never agree on anything. They are always fighting about where to go, who to see and how to get there. One brother found a kitten. They argued about what to name the kitten. Their mother then said peace. The brothers needed to learn the word peace.

- **Benefit for Chinese learners:**

This book is a nice tool for the children to learn how important the words peace and understanding are in a family. It teaches children that being peaceful in their home is a great way to live, especially in today's society.

Young, Ed. (1989). Lon Po Po; A Red Riding Hood Story from China: New York: Scholastic. ISBN [0-590-44069-1]

- **Summary:**

This story is very similar to our Little Red Riding Hood. The three children were left home alone while their mother went to visit their grandmother. They were told to close the door tight and latch it well until she returned the next day. A wolf pretending to be a Po Po (their grandmother) came to their door. After much cajoling on the wolf's part, the children let him in but the children were very smart and outsmarted the wolf. They climbed up the tree outside to get ginkgo nuts that the wolf loved and tried to persuade the wolf to come up with them to eat the nuts. They devised a rope and basket to pull the wolf up each time letting him fall saying it was a mistake. The last time he fell so hard he died. They were then all safe inside the house till their mother returned.

- **Benefit for Chinese learners:**

This story helps the children to understand that they should not trust strangers because they may be out to harm them. It also teaches them to be observant and aware of their surroundings. It helps them to understand the story because it uses terminology from their native country China. It makes it easier for them to read because they can relate to the culture in the story.

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