

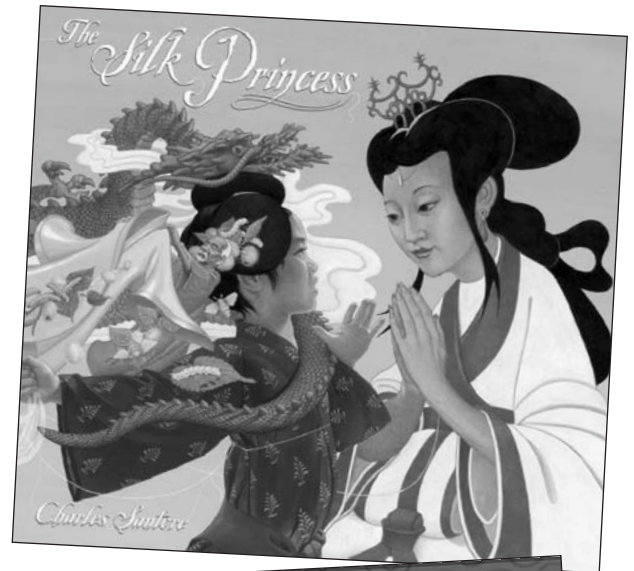
BOOKNOTES

EDUCATORS GUIDE

Celebrating Chinese Culture!

Legends & Myths
Chinese New Year
Customs & Traditions

Grades PreK–3



in the classroom

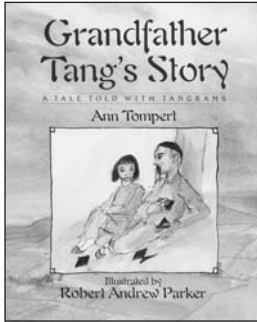
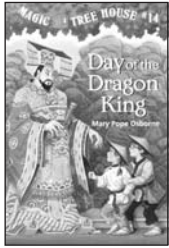
Reading literature inspired by other cultures gives children an opportunity to develop empathy, understanding, and an appreciation of the world and its many people. Children can make connections between the stories and celebrations of other cultures to that of their own. Building these connections helps bridge the distance between us all. Chinese culture and literature is full of talking animals, fire-breathing dragons and yummy foods all sure to inspire your students to keep reading. Here are a dozen titles to share with your students and study Chinese myths and legends, celebrate the Chinese New Year, and explore customs and traditions. Enjoy!

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Legends & Myths



questions for group discussion

On *The Silk Princess* by Charles Santore:

- What problem does the Great Emperor have as the story opens? What does he hope to someday find?
- What does Princess Hsi-Ling Chi notice in the garden? What happens to the cocoon?
- How does her adventure begin? Describe what she sees in the garden.
- What beast first scares the princess? Do all good stories have some danger in them?
- What mistake does the princess make on the bridge? What saves her from the dragon?
- How does she know that she's lost? Have you ever been lost before? How does it feel? What did you do?
- Who rescues the princess? What does he explain about the thread?

- Do you think the princess only dreamed her adventure or did she really have one? What clues in the story make you think so?
- How does the princess's discovery change things with her father?
- Read the author's note. What inspired this story? Have you ever been inspired to write a story of your own based on something you were reading?

On *Day of the Dragon King* by Mary Pope Osborne and *Grandfather Tang's Story* by Ann Tompert:

- What elements of myth or legend are included in these two stories?
- Create a list of things you learned while reading. Can you learn facts while reading fiction too?
- Which story is your favorite? Why? What makes a story interesting?

pre-reading activity

Myths and legends are traditional stories that have been handed down from previous generations. They may explain certain natural phenomenon, cultural practices, or rites from the culture they represent.

Brainstorm a list of stories that students have read or heard which would fall under the category of myth or legend.

Why do you think these kinds of stories exist? What myth or legend is your favorite?

Why?

classroom connections

Beware of Dragons!

Have students create simple clay using the following recipe and then sculpt a traditional-looking Chinese dragon inspired by the book *The Silk Princess*.

2 c. ordinary flour
1 c. salt
1 c. water

Notes on a Story

Fill out the following graphic organizer as you read a variety of myths and legends with your class. Discuss the results in small groups.

SAMPLE ORGANIZER

Title	Country of Origin	Magical Elements	Lesson Taught

Long, Long Ago . . .

Instruct students to write their own myth or legend that explains something that is common in your own region. For example, how the box turtle got his shell.



Ring In the Chinese New Year!



questions for group discussion

On *Bringing In the New Year* by Grace Lin:

- What is the narrator of the story looking forward to? What holiday do you look forward to most? Why?
- What does Jie-Jie do to help get ready? How do you help your mom and dad?
- Who is Ba-Ba? What do you call yours? What does he hang?
- What does Ma-Ma cook to celebrate? What special food does your mom make for holidays?
- Make a list of important times to get a fresh haircut and buy new clothes.
- When do you hear firecrackers? Do you like them?
- What do the dragons do? Have you ever been scared of anything? What did you do?

- Why do the children make and carry lanterns? Would you like to be in that parade?
- What is the last step before the New Year can come? Who helps the dragon?
- Which illustration is your favorite? Why? What was the most interesting fact you learned?

On *Demi's Happy, Happy Chinese New Year!* and *Happy New Year! Kung-Hsi Fa-Ts'ai!*

- How are the books similar? How are they different? Which one is your favorite? Why?
- Which illustration is your favorite? Why?
- What is the most interesting fact you learned while reading these books?

classroom connections

Lighting the Way to New Year!

First, have students look up their animal on the Chinese zodiac calendar. Next, they should design a lantern out of a paper bag, recycled two-liter bottle, or any other handy household object by cutting out part of the design (like the eyes) and “lighting” it with yellow tissue paper. Once students string their lanterns from a stick it’s time for them to march in a classroom New Year parade!

Out with the Old

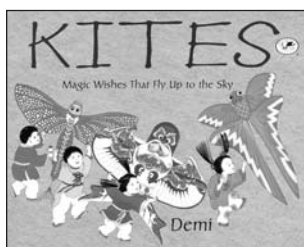
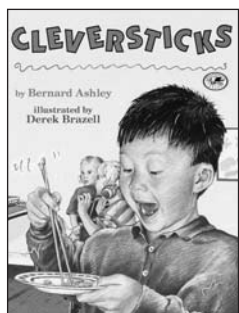
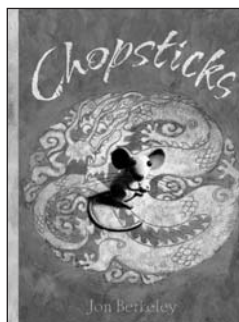
Remind the class that it is traditional to clean out old clutter for the Chinese New Year. Have students bring in clothing, books, or toys that they no longer want and make a classroom donation to a local charity.

Flower Messages

Have students study and sketch (or paint) the flora and fauna that are traditionally used to commemorate the New Year onto the front of small cards. Inside, they should offer wishes for the New Year and be sure to send to friends in a lovely red envelope!



Exploring Chinese Customs and Traditions



questions for group discussion

On *Chopsticks* by Jon Berkeley, *Cleversticks* by Bernard Ashley, and *Fortune Cookie Fortunes* and *Dim Sum for Everyone!* by Grace Lin:

- What foods are mentioned in the story? What is your favorite Chinese food?
- Have you ever tried to eat with chopsticks? What was it like?
- Dim sum is made up of small servings of a wide variety of foods. Would you like to try dim sum? Have you ever been to a buffet? How are the similar?
- Have you ever had a fortune cookie? Do you remember what it said? Do you believe they come true? Why or why not?



On *Tae Kwon Do!* by Terry Pierce, *Kites* by Demi, and *Kite Flying* by Grace Lin:

- People in China believe flying kites is more than just fun. Why?
- Have you ever flown a kite before? Is it easy?
- How can you make a kite? What design would you choose?
- Which book is your favorite? Why? Why do you think the illustrator used the palette of colors for that book?
- Different cultures have different sports and festivals. Compare the ones in the book to the ones your family celebrates. How are they alike? What is different?

classroom connections

A Class Feast

Locate a restaurant that serves dim sum. Plan a class trip to the restaurant and afterward have students write and share a brief journal about the experience. If there are no restaurants nearby that serve dim sum, then create a class feast of your own.

Kite Fight!

Have students research a variety of kite designs and then host a kite-flying festival on a windy day. Instead of kites fighting with the glass or porcelain strings (like the stories mention), have students compete on how long their kite flew. Other awards can be given for most colorful, most creative, best representation of an animal, best celebration of a season, etc.

Good Fortune

On small slips of paper have students write fortunes that have to do with learning and school. Find an easy fortune cookie recipe to slip the school fortunes inside of or place them in small treat bags or Chinese take-out containers (available at most craft stores). Let students select a cookie and read their fortune aloud to the class.



book list



Illustration © 2008 by Grace Lin



Legends & Myths

Day of the Dragon King
Magic Tree House #14

Mary Pope Osborne
Illustrated by **Sal Murdocca**

Jack and Annie set off to find an original copy of an ancient Chinese myth. Armed only with their magic library cards, they must take on a book-burning emperor. But with the help of a scholar and a silk weaver, they triumph again.

Grades K-3
PB: 978-0-679-89051-5 (0-679-89051-3)
GLB: 978-0-679-99051-2 (0-679-99051-8)

Grandfather Tang's Story

Ann Tompert
Illustrated by
Robert Andrew Parker

"Drawing on a Chinese form of storytelling with seven shapes cut from a square of paper, Tompert recounts the tale of two fox fairies. Parker's pen-and-watercolor art adds drama, while the tangram insets will motivate children to try their own versions. Ingenious!"—*The Bulletin*

Grades K-3
HC: 978-0-517-57487-4 (0-517-57487-X)
GLB: 978-0-517-57272-6 (0-517-57272-9)

The Silk Princess
Charles Santore

Princess Hsi-Ling Chi emerges from the gates for the first time with her magical thread unraveled from a tiny cocoon that dropped into the Empress's teacup, and she knows it will lead her back to the palace garden. But she is very far from home when she notices that the thread has broken, and that she is lost. How will she find her way back? And will the secret of silk be lost forever?

Grades PreK-2
HC: 978-0-375-83664-0 (0-375-83664-0)
GLB: 978-0-375-93664-7 (0-375-93664-5)



Ring In the Chinese New Year!

Bringing In the New Year
Grace Lin

This exuberant story follows a Chinese American family as they prepare for the Lunar New Year. Each member of the family lends a hand as they sweep out the dust of the old year, hang decorations, and make dumplings. Then it's time to celebrate.

Grades PreK-1
HC: 978-0-375-83745-6 (0-375-83745-0)
GLB: 978-0-375-93745-3 (0-375-93745-5)

By Demi:

Happy, Happy Chinese New Year!

"In a book that is itself a celebration, Demi explains the rituals and ideas behind the Chinese New Year festival."

—*Booklist*

Grades PreK-3
HC: 978-0-375-82642-9 (0-375-82642-4)

Happy New Year! Kung-Hsi Fa-Ts'ai!

"With delightful charm and simplicity, Demi offers a lovely look at the Chinese New Year. Primary-grade assignments will be enriched by this jewel-toned picture book presentation."

—*School Library Journal*

Grades K-3
PB: 978-0-517-88592-5 (0-517-88592-1)



Exploring Chinese Customs and Traditions

Chopsticks
Jon Berkeley

In a busy harbor, in the faraway island of Hong Kong, there is a floating restaurant. This restaurant is home to Chopsticks, a tiny gray mouse. Chopsticks befriends a wooden dragon who wants to fly. On the night of the full moon, during Chinese New Year, they share a high-flying adventure with the help of Old Fu, the dragon's creator.

Grades PreK-3
HC: 978-0-375-83309-0 (0-375-83309-9)

Kites
Demi

"A celebratory book that is going to inspire some serious kite-making/kite-flying activities."

—*The Bulletin*

Grades K-3
PB: 978-0-375-81008-4 (0-375-81008-0)

Tae Kwon Do!
Step into Reading—Step 1

Terry Pierce
Illustrated by **Todd Bonita**

We're off to Tae Kwon Do class, where we'll learn to kick, spin, box, jump, and even break a board! We'll also have fun in this simple Step 1 book. Perfect for kids who are both learning to read and learning Tae Kwon Do or another martial art.

Grades PreK-1
PB: 978-0-375-83448-6 (0-375-83448-6)
GLB: 978-0-375-93448-3 (0-375-93448-0)

By Grace Lin:

Dim Sum for Everyone!

Just right for young children, *Dim Sum for Everyone!* celebrates a cultural custom and a universal favorite activity—eating!

Grades K-3
PB: 978-0-440-41770-5 (0-440-41770-8)
HC: 978-0-375-81082-4 (0-375-81082-X)

Fortune Cookie Fortunes

This exuberantly illustrated story about every kid's favorite part of a Chinese meal also includes a brief history of the fortune cookie.

Grades K-3
PB: 978-0-440-42192-4 (0-440-42192-6)
HC: 978-0-375-81521-8 (0-375-81521-X)
GLB: 978-0-375-91521-5 (0-375-91521-4)

Kite Flying

Kite Flying celebrates the Chinese tradition of kite making and kite flying and lovingly depicts a family bonded by this ancient and modern pleasure.

Grades PreK-3
PB: 978-0-553-11254-2 (0-553-11254-6)
HC: 978-0-375-81520-1 (0-375-81520-1)

Cleversticks
Bernard Ashley

Ling Sung dreads going to school. There are too many things the other kids can do that he can't. When he discovers everyone admires his ability to use chopsticks, Ling Sung is empowered.

Grades K-3
PB: 978-0-517-88332-7 (0-517-88332-5)

books for older readers

Middle Grade

THE FIVE ANCESTORS

Jeff Stone

Filled with action and adventure and steeped in Chinese culture, this series is perfect for engaging reluctant readers!

Grades 5 up

Tiger

PB: 978-0-375-83072-3 (0-375-83072-3)
GLB: 978-0-375-93071-3 (0-375-93071-X)

Monkey

PB: 978-0-375-83074-7 (0-375-83074-X)
HC: 978-0-375-83073-0 (0-375-83073-1)
GLB: 978-0-375-93073-7 (0-375-93073-6)

Snake

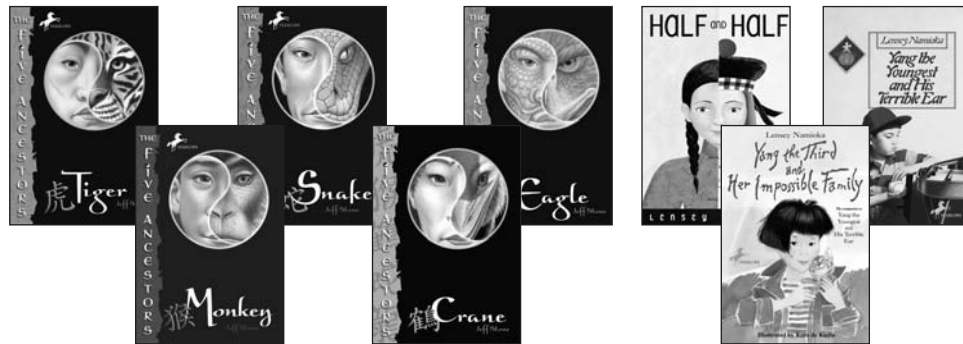
PB: 978-0-375-83076-1 (0-375-83076-6)
HC: 978-0-375-83075-4 (0-375-83075-8)
GLB: 978-0-375-93075-1 (0-375-93075-2)

Crane

HC: 978-0-375-83077-8 (0-375-83077-4)
GLB: 978-0-375-93077-5 (0-375-93077-9)

Eagle

HC: 978-0-375-83083-9 (0-375-83083-9)
GLB: 978-0-375-93083-6 (0-375-93083-3)



By Lensey Namioka:

Half and Half

Grades 3-7
PB: 978-0-440-41890-0 (0-440-41890-9)

Yang the Third and Her Impossible Family

Grades 4-7
PB: 978-0-440-41231-1 (0-440-41231-5)

Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear

Grades 4-7
PB: 978-0-440-40917-5 (0-440-40917-9)



Coming Summer 2008 . . .

Lang Lang: Playing with Flying Keys

Grades 4 up
HC: 978-0-385-73578-0 (0-385-73578-2)
GLB: 978-0-385-90564-0 (0-385-90564-5)



Young Adult

Chinese Cinderella

Adeline Yen Mah

Grades 7 up
PB: 978-0-440-22865-3 (0-440-22865-4)

Hot, Sour, Salty, Sweet

Sherri L. Smith

Grades 7 up
HC: 978-0-385-73417-2 (0-385-73417-4)
GLB: 978-0-385-90431-5 (0-385-90431-2)

Wandering Warrior

Da Chen

Grades 5 up
PB: 978-0-440-23771-6 (0-440-23771-8)

By Lensey Namioka:

Ties That Bind, Ties That Break

Grades 7 up
PB: 978-0-440-41599-2 (0-440-41599-3)

An Ocean Apart, a World Away

Grades 7 up
PB: 978-0-440-22973-5 (0-440-22973-1)

Mismatch

Grades 5-9
PB: 978-0-440-23879-9 (0-440-23879-X)
HC: 978-0-385-73183-6 (0-385-73183-3)



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