

## The China Box

BOULDER RUN ENTERPRISES  
5001 WHITEHORSE ROAD  
HILLSBOROUGH, NC 27278

### China Talk

#### *A Handbook for Teachers, Librarians, and Parents*

By STEVEN I. LEVINE. 1998

Teachers who travel often wonder what they can bring back to benefit their students that will not cost much and be easy to carry—the China Box seems at first glance like just such a collection acquired on some lucky teacher's travels. Here are maps and books and small toys—and slides, of course, and chopsticks, and more. Oh, that we all should be so lucky! Tucked in the bottom of the box is *China Talk: A Handbook for Teachers, Librarians, and Parents* by Steven I. Levine. The handbook turns this assortment of inexpensive, everyday items from contemporary China into a true treasure.

The handbook provides translations of the children's books and suggestions for related activities; also, translations of the how-to books on Chinese painting and paper cutting so that the illustrations and information become accessible to American readers. The slides (about two dozen) come with a narrative that includes a descriptive

paragraph about each, and include common scenes of everyday life, including several of children going to school, playing games, and with their families.

*China Talk* contains brief but engaging explanations of the Great Wall, animals in China, Chinese dynasties, the Three Gorges project, Confucius, and almost any other topic you might think of related to China, plus suggested books and Web sites to extend your learning. There are songs, recipes, jokes, and poems. As one who walked the Great Wall at Badaling to the end of the restored walkway and wished I could have continued along the ruins, I particularly enjoyed Levine's account of the night he spent camped out with his students sheltered by an ancient, crumbling beacon tower of the wall.

There are a few sour notes—the building of a model of the Great Wall out of sugar wafers and peanut butter reminds me of the sugar cube models of igloos that used to be popular in units on "Eskimos"; and a word search puzzle (p. 69) to me has limited learning value; but I know some teachers are very fond of these activities.

*The China Box* is not an outline for a unit. It is not organized into discrete topics with specific objectives. It is "an enrichment resource designed to make teaching and learning about China easier, more fun, and more productive" (p. 2). It would lend itself especially well to holistic teaching strategies, with lessons that immerse stu-

dents in a subject, then let them choose directions for further study. The materials could be used for inductive teaching, analyzing artifacts for clues to the identity of the culture they represent. The contents of the box would also be appropriate for centers and project-based learning.

Nancy Doss, a fifth-grade teacher in Dalton, Georgia, used the kit during a unit designed to "Celebrate the Century," to help her students understand the exhilaration experienced by Westerners by the "opening of China" during the 1970s. Students were particularly interested in the books, the maps, and, of course, the toys. The materials appeal to a wide range of age levels and would be a helpful resource for an elementary or middle school.

According to the Introduction, this box is ". . . the first in a series of Country Starter Kits designed to help teach world cultures to elementary and middle school children . . ." I hope the others can match the quality of *China Talk*!

Nancy Bibler

**NANCY BIBLER** is an Assistant Professor in the College of Education at the State University of West Georgia. She teaches in the External Degree Program in Dalton, Georgia. She was an elementary teacher at the 21st Century Preparatory School in Chattanooga, Tennessee and has studied and traveled in China, Japan, and Indonesia.

# 中国 the China box<sup>®</sup>

*The China Box* is a new, easy-to-use enrichment resource, using a hands-on learning approach to social studies and Chinese culture for elementary and middle school students. It contains thirty different authentic items from China used by Chinese children at school and at home, including; maps, books, puzzles, board games, toys, stamps, etc.

*ChinaTalk*, a 200 page handbook, provides a wealth of basic information about China as well as many ideas for projects and activities.

*An innovative educational package to enrich the study of China... a highly effective vehicle for engaging young learners.*

— the Association of Asian Studies  
1999 Buchanan Prize for best new  
teaching material on Asia

**Boulder Run Enterprises  
Educational Products Division**  
556 Reality Drive  
Florence, MT 59833  
phone/fax (406) 273-7840  
e-mail: chinabox@bigsky.net

Visit our website at [www.thechinabox.com](http://www.thechinabox.com)

*The China Box* is available from Boulder Run Enterprises for \$119.95\* plus \$11.95 shipping and handling per unit. Contact Boulder Run Enterprises for further ordering information.

\* The special introductory price of \$119.95, which is 20% off the regular price of \$149.95, is good only on orders postmarked by November 15, 1999.



Dimensions:  
20 x 15 x 12"