

CURRICULUM MATERIALS REVIEWS

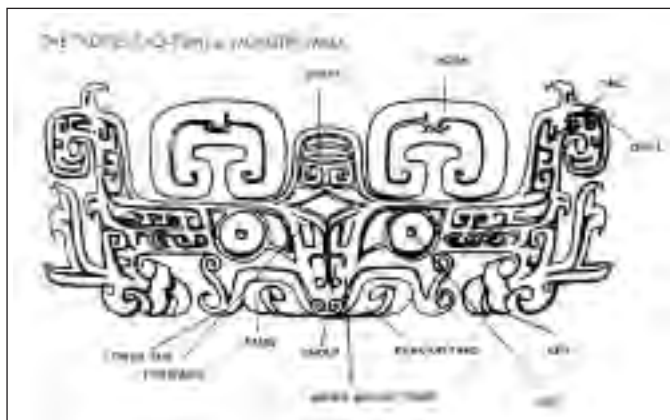


Typical workbook page. Used with permission from Alarion Press

as well as contextual slides, are used in conjunction with the voice-over. Details of artworks are often included in split-screen format.

One example of a complex subject masterfully handled in *Chinese Art and Architecture* is that of Shang bronze vessels. The illustrated discussion includes the technique of their manufacture, their function within the culture, and the interpretation of the *taotie* (*t'ao-t'ieh*) often associated with them. In the accompanying workbooks, written and illustrated by Ann Campbell, the subject is further enhanced by a diagram and related projects. Along with this topic are such classroom project suggestions as carving a *taotie* mask on a clay pot "as if you planned to cast it in bronze."

In *Japanese Art and Architecture* the program begins with early tomb art, moves on through various religious and secular works, and ends with contemporary Japan's continuing to honor ancient traditions. The portion on Zen Buddhism is particularly well done, including diagrams and class projects in the Japanese "dry garden" and ikebana.



Drawing by Ann Campbell
From Creative Workbook and Teacher's Manual for
The Art and Architecture of China Used with permission from Alarion Press

The elementary offering of *Chinese Art and Architecture* also includes a CD ROM for the Macintosh. The fact that a student can move about the material at his or her own pace is appealing. The background music further enhances the multimedia experience. This choice of such interactive technology is particularly commendable, and hopefully the entire set will have this additional format in the future.

The videos, creative workbooks, teaching manuals and wall posters of these two programs are well coordinated. The same basic information is covered in both the elementary and advanced examples, but with appropriate development in sophistication. Elementary students even earlier than grade 5 could benefit from the videos and "Look and Do" workbooks. The programs labeled "grade 9-adult" are well suited to any high school expanding its multicultural offerings, and could also be useful as an introductory reference complementing first-year college courses in Asian art and culture.

The Teaching Manual describes the goal of author Ronald Bernier as "above all to bring works of art to life as catalysts to understanding entire cultures." These programs offer a superb vehicle for developing awareness and understanding of East Asian civilizations. Now is the time for more schools to purchase such quality resources and for more educators to accept the challenge of conveying this exciting material to their students. ■

Ann W. Norton

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The Eyes of the Empress Women in China's Tang Dynasty

by Lyn Reese

WOMEN IN THE WORLD CURRICULUM RESOURCE PROJECT
1030 SPRUCE STREET
BERKELEY, CA, 94707
510-524-0304
1996. 58 PAGES, PAPERBACK

The *Eyes of the Empress* guides secondary students in examining the diverse roles of women during China's Tang Dynasty (618–906 C.E.). A wide variety of resources are provided which highlight women's significant contributions to the cultural and political life of the period. An analysis of the role of Confucian ideology in defining the status and role of women extends students' understanding of why Tang women are considered unique in Chinese history.

The primary teaching component of *The Eyes of the Empress* is a twenty-six page, original story based on true accounts of the lives of two Tang women: Yu Xuanji, a poet, and the Empress Wu Zetian. The fact that these women were not contemporaries compromises

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the historical accuracy of the account, but the Tang-period lifestyles and accomplishments of the women are effectively portrayed.

Changan, the setting for much of the story, comes alive through rich descriptions of its sounds, architecture, geographic layout, and the varied activities of its cosmopolitan population. When the characters travel beyond Changan, vivid details enable students to visualize rural life along the Huang He (Yellow River). Students can also picture themselves as members of Wu Zetian's court, based on descriptions of court fashions, entertainment, foreign envoys and Buddhist ceremonial beliefs and practices. Throughout the story, the rich cultural and historical details of the Tang period provide the context in which the characters interact as they try to resolve the dilemmas posed by their individual dreams and circumstances.

Discussion questions, activity ideas, four in-depth essays (on the poet Yu Xuanji, Empress Wu Zetian, additional Tang real and legendary heroines, and a general historical overview of women in the Tang dynasty), a glossary, background information on Confucian ideology, and a selected bibliography supplement the story.

Suggested activities require students to process important content. Students create an Effects Wheel by charting the potential impact of a specific Confucian belief on women's lives, write biopems using a provided format and model, and create dramatic scenes based on Tang heroines. Research options, with pertinent sources cited, encourage students to compare Tang and Han dynasty women.

The Eyes of the Empress concludes with two short plays which highlight the economic and cultural pressures on women today and modern Chinese women's responses to those forces. The first play, "The Sawblade Shop Strike," is based on a 1982 protest over factory working conditions in the village of Long Bow. The second play, "A Boy is Good," explores the basis for China's one-child policy and its impact on women. Discussion questions, supplemental information and suggested activities follow each play. They are springboards for a more in-depth study of the role of women in the post-Deng Xiaoping period.


The Eyes of the Empress is self-contained, research-based, content-rich, pedagogically versatile, clearly written, and easily reproducible. Historical prints or black-line graphics enhance each page. The case study's multiple perspectives assist students in developing an understanding of women's diverse roles during the Tang dynasty. The plays and story foster student involvement; the content challenges students to examine and evaluate the political, cultural/philosophical, economic and social influences on Tang women's lives.

The unit materials and activities can accommodate the needs of students with diverse learning styles in secondary world history or geography courses. Student progress can be assessed on the basis of the level of understanding students demonstrate through the unit assignments. *The Eyes of the Empress* allows for flexible implementation: it can support a one-to-two-day overview or a week-long instructional unit.

Students are intrinsically motivated to study and discuss the status and role of men and women. *The Eyes of the Empress* is an effective instructional resource for teaching about this topic. It enables students to explore the status and role of women during the Tang period and to analyze why Tang women had uniquely diverse roles. By examining the enduring impact of cultural beliefs and practices in China, students will be better prepared to analyze the development of status and role patterns in other historical and contemporary settings. ■

Helen Finken

HELEN FINKEN is a Social Studies Coordinator/Instructor for the Iowa City Community School District in Iowa City, Iowa. In addition, she is the author of *China Today*, a Newsweek Education Program *NewsSource Unit*, 1996, and was a participant in the Fulbright Summer Seminar in China in 1993.

Summer Workshop		Teaching East Asian Literature in the High School July 11 - 16, 1999 Indiana University
	The East Asian Studies Center and the National Council of Teachers of English are co-sponsoring a free, week-long workshop for 11th- and 12th-grade English teachers who are interested in incorporating Chinese and Japanese literature into their curriculum.	
Participation includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ set of literary works covered in workshop ◆ lectures and discussions on Chinese and Japanese literature, history, and culture ◆ curriculum development sessions ◆ free housing and 2 meals a day provided ◆ Continuing Renewal Units for Indiana teachers ◆ option to purchase 3 graduate credits ◆ book grant upon completion of all requirements 		Participant's responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ \$30 registration fee, travel expenses to and from Bloomington, 1 meal a day ◆ read all works to be covered at workshop prior to arrival ◆ submit teaching portfolio on selected work(s) 3 weeks after workshop
For more information or an application contact Margaret Key at: East Asian Studies Center Phone: (800) 441-EASC Memorial Hall West 207 (812) 855-3765 Indiana University Fax: (812) 855-7762 Bloomington, IN 47405 E-mail: mskey@indiana.edu		