

China Lesson 3

Meng's Bitter Weeping

The Basics

Objective: To introduce to the participants the idea that monumental building projects must be completed by everyday people.

Performance of Skill Expectations/Enduring Understandings: The participants will sit quietly while watching the video and be able to discuss the story afterward.

Prerequisite Lessons: none from *An Artifact Speaks*, but it is suggested that this be used in conjunction with a lesson on the Great Wall of China.

Estimated Materials Preparation Time: 5 minutes.

Duration: Approximately 20 minutes.

Materials Provided: The video can be shown from the CD in the box or brought up online on the *An Artifact Speaks* website: <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/artifact/videos/china>.

Materials to be Provided by the Instructor: A means of projecting the video for the participants.

Other Notes: none

Concepts/Vocabulary

none

Procedure

Preparation:

- This website gives a nice background to the evolution of this folktale. You may wish to read this before showing the story. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Meng_Jiang
- Prep the video for quick, easy starting.

Introduction/Instruction: It is suggested that this be the conclusion of a discussion of the Great Wall of China, where it can serve as a reminder that great building projects require great numbers of people to complete. There is a short introduction to the story on the CD and with the online resources that can serve as an introduction to this part of the lesson.

Development:

1. Together, make a list of things the participants learned by hearing about and listening to this story. What does this primary source tell us? Here are a few suggestions for the list:

- At this time, a wife lived with her husband's family.
- Traditionally, women didn't travel very much.
- Cold-weather clothing could be quilted to make it warm.
- A certain number of days was set for the mourning of the dead.
- There are mountains in China.
- The leader of the Chinese during the time of the story was the emperor.
- People who died working on the Great Wall of China might be buried inside the wall.

2. Large building projects require more than builders. Brainstorm a list of other types of people, or people with certain occupations, who would be found at the building site. This list might include the following:

- Cooks
- Bakers
- Toolmakers
- Ropemakers
- Waterbearers
- Farmers
- Animal handlers for working animals

Reflection: Generate short discussions with these questions:

- What was your favorite part of the story?
- Have you heard a story from another time or another part of the world that was like this story, a story about a person who was very brave? Tell us about the story.
- Would you have been brave enough to take the clothes to Wan?

Assessment: How many and what kinds of things did the participants come up with for the lists? Did they ask questions after the story that indicated they were thinking about what they had heard?