The Kindergarten unit for March/April was an in-depth exploration of China. China is a historic and cultural country. It is one of the world’s oldest civilizations that has 5000 years of history, a variety of cultures. Some of their inventions are still used daily and each of them provided a good experience for the children learn. However, in the past 20 years, China has changed faster than any other country in the world. It became a “modern” nation. Shanghai, the biggest city in China, is visited by billions of tourists from all over the world each year.

Ancient China was a land of inventions. The most famous four inventions were paper, the compass, gunpowder and printing. The kindergarten friends loved to learn about where the things we use were invented.

China is the third largest country in the world, and it has widely varying landscapes. From north to south and west to east, its territory includes mountains (Mt. Everest), high plateaus, plains, grasslands sandy deserts, and dense forests. The rivers are an important part of China. Because of varying landscapes, China has more than 100 unique wild animal species, such as the giant panda.

To begin our China journey, we started with an overview of China. In the first week, we learned some facts of China and the meaning of the Chinese flag, which is red with five yellow stars. We located China on the world map, along with the two important rivers, The Yangtze river and the Yellow river.

After making a map of China to represent the famous historic spots and beautiful views, each of us picked a favorite place we liked. We drew the place and learned two facts. After becoming a Historic Place “expert”, we presented this to our friends in circle time.
China has been the source of many innovations, the most famous four are paper-making, Chinese printer, compass and gunpowder. There are also many Chinese inventions that advanced math and science, plus ones that are helpful in daily life. The children enjoyed learning about all of these particular ones:

**Abacus** - we used the Rek-n-Rel (a type of abacus) to solve math problems;

**Paper-making** - we learned the process of how the ancient Chinese made the first paper;

**Hot air balloon** - the ancient Chinese used paper lanterns as a military signal;

**Moveable Print** - the Chinese were the first to use moveable print to mass produce documents;

**Tangram** - each set has seven pieces and can be manipulated to create many shapes;

**Blue and white porcelain** - traditional Chinese porcelain art;

**Kites** - were used by the army to pass messages in the war, and later on, it became a fun game and art for families.

Hong Kong is the city of skyscrapers. It has the most skyscrapers of any city in the world! We painted our own skyscrapers, using block printing to make the windows. The children extended the theme and built skyscrapers with the blocks.

Kindergarten friends built a Hong Kong skyscraper by using wood blocks.

Oliver and Emmy were practicing abacus to solve math problems.

Cecilia, Lucy, Tristan, Mariia and Ariana made recycled paper.

Ayumu used a printer to complete the missing alphabet. Oliver and Lucy were practicing tangram.
LET'S GO FLY KITES!

The kite is believed to have originated in China. Since its invention, there have been many adaptations to the kite by various cultures around the world. A Chinese kite in ancient times would have used simple materials such as wood and cloth and was designed to mimic a bird's natural flight. They were made to resemble the shapes of birds. Kites were invented as a way to measure distances, which was useful for moving large armies across difficult terrain, along with providing a unique form of communication similar to ship flags at sea.

Cecilia, Claes, Lucy and Emmy were designing and coloring their kites.

CHINESE BOOK

Chinese character writing uses symbols to make words. This writing system is one of the oldest continuously used writing systems, over 3000 years old! Each symbol is a type of logogram and represents whole words instead of sounds. We spent the month learning simple and meaningful Chinese characters. These characters were bound in a book for the children to take home.

Jayden, Neil and Maggie were practicing their Chinese character.
**BOAT MAKING**

In China, there are many rivers; the two very important and long rivers are The Yangtze river and the Yellow river. Besides that, there are still small rivers to support the country, so boats become vital transposition for Chinese to use in their daily life. All the kindergarten friends decided to make a boat using recycled materials and test if it would successfully float or sink to the bottom.

Claes, Maggie, Jayden and Mariia were making a boat and testing if the boat could float.

**HOT AIR BALLOON EXPERIMENT**

As the friends had already learned, people in Ancient China started to fly kites made of silk and bamboo by 800 BC. Perhaps the idea of flying kites helped give inventors the idea to try to get other things to fly too. After years of experimenting, history shows the discovery that hot air rises and using that concept, an object would be able to be lifted into the sky. By placing an oil lamp inside a large paper bag, the Chinese people found that the hot air became trapped inside the paper bag and lifted the bag so it floated in the air. This created a floating light to frighten and confuse military enemies. As their exploration continued, the hot air balloon was created and became an important element of fairs and festivals across China. The kindergarten friends were challenged to make their ‘hot air balloons’ hover at certain heights by exploring the amount of weight attached at the bottom.

Neal Raj, Claes, Kyan, Neil, Isaac, Oliver, Wilder and Holden were testing balloons by using Lego, cotton, buttons and other little things.
BLUE AND WHITE PORCELAIN

Wilder, Oliver and Neal Raj were making their porcelain model.

Lucy and Ellen were designing and coloring their blue and white porcelain.

The friends also discovered that Ancient China was known to be the first to explore with porcelain. Emperor Jingdezhen was first famous for the production of white porcelain, but with the addition of cobalt, a blue colored porcelain, a mixture of blue and white porcelain became highly prized. Since the invention of porcelain in imperial China around 2,000 years ago, it was accepted as the better alternative to pottery. The friends explored creating their own ‘porcelain’ using white clay and blue paint.

KINDERGARTEN INVENTIONS

Ariana, Neil, Maggie and Tristan were thinking and making their inventions.

Kyan’s animal rescue.

Ruthie’s flying Machine.

Jayden’s video game.

After learning about China’s many inventions, the friends were inspired to create their own using the prompt “Create an invention that solves a problem or creates good for the world.” Using recycled materials from around the school, friends brainstormed and created machines. Ideas included making a sonar to find the extinct pink dolphin or a machine that restarts your day.
TASTING TABLE
In the China unit, we tasted different traditional Chinese foods everyday, and they would choose if they liked it or not after they tasted. In the past month, we tasted at least 12 different types of food!

CHINESE SHADOW PUPPETS
Chinese shadow puppets originate from Han dynasty, 2000 years ago. It is helpful for children to perform themselves. All the kindergarten friends divide into five groups and they made up their own shows and performed for all the friends.

BEIJING OPERA
Beijing Opera is one of 360 different types of Chinese Opera. The color on the mask represents feelings, White: evil; Red: brave; Black: fierce; Green: violent; Yellow: ambitious.

FESTIVAL WEEK
Since China has many traditional festivals, we picked four to celebrate- Chinese New Year, the Chinese Lantern Festival, the Dragon Boat Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival.