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## Poetry

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development of mathematics in Egypt, Babylonia, China, India, and the Arab world.

In each of these cultures, Joseph explores mathematical development chronologically yet within the social, historical, and religious context of the particular culture. Further, he makes numerous connections among the various cultures so that the reader easily perceives the interactions that occurred between cultures and the process by which mathematical knowledge was transmitted and grew. Using available primary sources, Joseph examines each culture's counting system, including bases and numerals, as well as the algebraic, geometric, and trigonometric pursuits of each. In addition, he includes the significant or unique contributions of the culture. Frequently Joseph poses questions that challenge familiar and commonly held opinions that stem from a narrow Euro-centric bias.

Numerous maps, charts, tables, photos, and sketches contribute important detail to the text. Throughout the book, Joseph copiously sprinkles in examples taken from the original sources to illustrate important mathematical ideas. Although many scholars of the history of mathematics tend to label all mathematics before the Greeks merely as utilitarian and pre-scientific, Joseph dispels this view often in his exposition where numerous contributions by non-Hellenistic ancients around the globe are shown to be quite remarkable; what we today might call "awesome."

Because Joseph so competently incorporates a great variety of convincing evidence from a number of historical sources, the reader easily sees the unity of what we call mathematics. The strong historical profile that Joseph provides for each culture allows the reader to more fully understand why a specific culture focused its efforts on particular mathematical pursuits.

This superb book is a clearly written treatise that is an outstanding contribution to a true and more complete understanding of what comprises mathematics and the process by which mathematical knowledge came to be. It is a pioneering book that celebrates the magnificent heritage of non-Western mathematics and challenges the reader to cast off limiting European bias and see mathematics and its development as the product of civilizations from every corner of the globe. This literary work of art offers the reader both truth and beauty. Don't miss out on reading it!

## Poetry

*Sascha Cohen, sixth grade*

*Hale Middle School, Los Angeles, CA*

*Submitted by Margaret Schaffer, teacher*

Red and blue  
bumpy grass  
sharp  
an angle  
measuring a wide 140 degrees  
is close up by two thin acute corners  
they make up the pointed yellow  
obtuse triangles  
that look like Swiss cheese  
scattered in this design  
and there is  
a little green hexagon.

Framing each of the polygon's  
six sides  
are  
deep purple  
rectangles  
all with  
four straight parallel  
lines  
that form  
90 degree angles.  
Their lines are side  
by side  
connected  
only to shape  
a glorious  
decagon  
and around that  
is an outer ring of  
diamonds and  
rhombuses.  
And then the squares!  
Each congruent square  
was more beautiful than the last.  
It grew more confusing  
and less symmetrical  
with each set  
of patterns  
and geometric figures  
little green hexagon in the middle  
sitting still  
my mind now twisted  
my eyes stretched as I  
stand back and look at this  
immense stained glass window.