

Bibliography¹

For Fulbright-Hays Group Project Participants

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I. Books (With Reviews by Readers)

Confucius & Waley, A. (translator) (2001 reprint). *The Analects of Confucius*

Amazon Editorial Reviews

Confucius has become synonymous in the West with Eastern wisdom: profound and mysterious. He was, however, one of the most humane, lucid, and rational moral teachers of the ancient world, concerned not with arcane metaphysics or invisible gods but with the practical issues of life and conduct. How should the state be organized? What makes a good ruler? What is virtue? What is the proper relationship between man and nature? Above all, how should individuals behave with one another and toward their environment? Confucius addressed all these questions in dialogues, stories, and anecdotes gathered together as The Analects, which offers not lofty moral prescriptions but sensible advice based on principles of justice and moderation. So timeless was his thinking that even now, after two and a half thousand years, The Analects remains one of the most influential texts ever written.

About the translator: Arthur Waley (1889_1966) is highly regarded for his many translations of Chinese and Japanese literature.

Lao-Tzu & John Wu (Editor) (1990). *Tao Teh Ching*. (Rated 5 stars by Amazon)

Reviewer: Kyria Aurora (January, 2001)

The Tao Teh Ching is one of the best books ever written. It can be spiritual, or it can be secular. It can be philosophical, or it can be practical and earthy. As a Taoist, I can tell you that this is one of the best translations available.

Chang, Jung (1992). *Wild swans: Three daughters of China*. (Rated 5 stars by Amazon)

Amazon Editorial Review:

In Wild Swans Jung Chang recounts the evocative, unsettling, and insistently gripping story of how three generations of women in her family fared in the political maelstrom of China during the 20th century. Chang's grandmother was a warlord's concubine. Her gently raised mother struggled with hardships in the early days of Mao's revolution and rose, like her husband, to a prominent position in the Communist Party before being denounced during the Cultural Revolution. Chang herself marched, worked, and breathed for Mao until doubt crept in over the excesses of his policies and purges. Born just a few decades apart, their lives overlap with the end of the warlords' regime and overthrow of the Japanese occupation, violent struggles between the Kuomintang and the Communists to carve up China, and, most poignant for the author, the vicious cycle of purges orchestrated by Chairman Mao that discredited and crushed millions of people, including her parents.

¹ The book/video reviews have been adopted from Amazon.

² Please also share your favorite books and movies about China and Chinese culture with others!

Cheng, Nien (1988). *Life and death in Shanghai*. (Rated 5 stars by Amazon)

Reviewer: Orion from San Francisco, CA

I first read this novel when I was 16. I was mesmerized by it. TIME Magazine had printed an excerpt of the novel and after reading the excerpt, I bought the book. It's been almost 14 years later and I can still remember the content of this powerful novel. I think it is amazingly well written, very detailed, historically correct and extremely moving. The insights you gain about life during the Cultural Revolution give you a light into that dark age of chaos and pain. Today, when I watch movies, read books or hear about other people's stories, I still find myself reflecting back to Nien Cheng's novel.

Nien Cheng is extremely courageous and is built of the fiber of the "old" Chinese ways. There is a lot of sadness on her tale as well about how a nation tried to denounce itself and forget about its past. This book is a MUST READ if you have any ounce of interest in Chinese people, their history or their culture. It's also a MUST READ if you are a Chinese for it'd allow you an insight into yourself and your land of origin, China. Be prepared to realize that after you've read this book, you're going to be a different person.

Cheng, Pei-Kai (Editor) (1999) *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*. (No ratings.)

Book Description

This collection of primary source documents--many translated into English for the first time and available only in this book--gather proclamations, treaties, laws, and other public acts with pieces reflecting everyday life, family, social networks, and culture. Informative headnotes accompany the selections, helping readers with unfamiliar names, places, and events. With a chapter organization mirroring that of *The Search for Modern China*, this collection is the perfect supplement, providing a first-hand look at the modern Chinese society.

Cooper, Eleanor M. & Liu, William (1999). *Grace in China: An American Woman Beyond the Great Wall, 1934-1974*. (Rated 5 stars by Amazon readers)

Reviewer: Elinor D. Benedict from Naples, Florida

GRACE IN CHINA reveals both a fascinating true love story of a Chinese-American marriage and a unique personal insight into Chinese-American history during the tumultuous years of 1934-1974. These years of violent change still influence the future of China and the United States and indeed the world. If you've watched the presidential debates, you know that China policy is one of the top issues, an issue which demands better understanding by leaders and citizens alike. This book can help, and what's more, it's a great read!

Grace meets FuChi Liu--her beloved "F.C."--in New York City where she is training to become an opera singer and he is working as a hydraulic engineer. Their heart-tugging courtship and marriage is followed by Grace's exciting journey to China with her baby daughter to make a new life with her husband. For 40 eventful years she is an eyewitness to history in China.....

The authors of GRACE IN CHINA, who are her cousin and son, have skillfully created a vivid document that reads like a novel, using well-preserved letters, memoirs, interviews, articles, photographs and other primary resources blended seamlessly with excellent background narration. The editing is a triumph of weaving many voices into strong, intimate storytelling. Many scenes are so humorous, passionate, or dramatic that the reader can almost see the action on a movie screen compelling as one's own imagination. But it's all true--and it's a story that begs to be heard.

Evans, K. (2001). *The Lost Daughters of China: Abandoned Girls, Their Journey to America, and the Search for a Missing Past*. (Rated 4 & 1/2 stars by Amazon)

Reviewer: Kathi Inman Berens

The Lost Daughters of China is that rare book that can be many things to different people. Part memoir, part travelogue, part East-West cultural commentary, and part adoption how-to, Karin

Evans's book is greater than the sum of its parts. Evans weaves together her experience of adopting a Chinese infant with observations about Chinese women's history and that country's restrictive, if unevenly enforced, reproductive policies. She and her husband adopted Kelly Xiao Yu in 1997, and anyone curious about adopting from a Chinese orphanage--which houses girls and disabled boys--will learn about the mechanics and the emotional freight of the two-year process. Borrowing an image from Chinese folklore, Evans conveys herself, her husband, and their daughter as tethered by a red string that yoked them across an ocean and an equally awesome cultural divide.

The elegant prose is spiced with bits of ironic cultural dissonance. A discount shopper, Evans "felt more than a little strange buying China-made [baby] clothes with which to bundle up a tiny baby, one of China's own, and bring her home." On a bus tour through southern China, she is one of a "bunch of Americans with Chinese infants singing 'Que Sera Sera' in the middle of a sea of traffic. Will she be happy? Will she be rich?" To suddenly hear Doris Day over the horns of a Kowloon traffic jam is heady stuff indeed.

The Lost Daughters of China is at its best when describing Evans's tally of emotional loss and gain. At one point the bureaucratic adoption process is unaccountably delayed, but her father dies during that time and she's able to sit by his bedside. The most mysterious example of this emotional calculus is Kelly's birth mother. Evans invents many plausible scenarios that caused this unknown woman to abandon her three-month-old daughter at a market. These incomplete, necessarily provisional stories help give a face to the larger cultural processes that compel new parents to abandon 1.7 million girl babies annually. The stuff of headlines--human rights, infanticide, rural and urban poverty--is rendered personally relevant in Evans's compelling book.

Ha, Jin (2000). *Waiting*. (Rated 3 & 1/2 stars by Amazon)

Editorial Reviews

"Every summer Lin Kong returned to Goose Village to divorce his wife, Shuyu." Like a fairy tale, Ha Jin's masterful novel of love and politics begins with a formula--and like a fairy tale, *Waiting* uses its slight, deceptively simple framework to encompass a wide range of truths about the human heart. Lin Kong is a Chinese army doctor trapped in an arranged marriage that embarrasses and repels him. (Shuyu has country ways, a withered face, and most humiliating of all, bound feet.) Nevertheless, he's content with his tidy military life, at least until he falls in love with Manna, a nurse at his hospital. Regulations forbid an army officer to divorce without his wife's consent--until 18 years have passed, that is, after which he is free to marry again. So, year after year Lin asks his wife for his freedom, and year after year he returns from the provincial courthouse: still married, still unable to consummate his relationship with Manna. Nothing feeds love like obstacles placed in its way--right? But Jin's novel answers the question of what might have happened to Romeo and Juliet had their romance been stretched out for several decades. In the initial confusion of his chaste love affair, Lin longs for the peace and quiet of his "old rut." Then killing time becomes its own kind of rut, and in the end, he is forced to conclude that he "waited eighteen years just for the sake of waiting."

Jiang, Ji-li (1998). *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution*.

(Rated 5 stars by Amazon readers)

Reviewer: A reader from New York City

This memoir of a woman's experience as an adolescent during China's infamous Cultural Revolution puts a touching, human face on one of humanity's most mindless social exercises. Describing the feelings of a young adult witnessing her family's, her nation's and her own defilement and humiliation, this frank and personal account of Chairman Mao's creation of China's "Lost Generation" teaches history vividly and intimately. This is an excellent book for teachers and students of world history, sociology or psychology, and anyone who has an interest in freedom of speech, thought and expression. Especially today, when censorship and what we feed our children's minds is the topic of so many PTA meetings and bills brought before Congress, this is an account of what actually happened when free thought and the right to find one's own beliefs and dreams were ripped from one nation's gut. And finally, it shows a rare picture of China

taken with a child's eyes, when even today China remains shrouded in mystery and colored by the uninformed journalism so often found in our own press. This two-day read is a treasure illuminating the fact that China is a land of Humans, not Communists, a land of hearts and minds, complex like our own, rather than simply ideologies and mysteries. This book would make a fantastic subject of a book report by junior high school students, and is powerful food for thought for thinking people of any age.

Reviewer: squeek3301 (see more about me) from Fairfield, Connecticut, USA

I have never read a book quite like this one. Ji-li Jiang, the author and main character brings you into this story with background information about Ji-li's lifestyle, and what is taking place in China at the time. Ji-li and her family are told to have a bad class status and are criticized by her friends and neighbors. Ji-li is stuck in a very hard position of whether to stay loyal to her embarrassing family, or to become part of the communist China, led by their leader Chairman Mao. This is an excellent book and very inspiring. I would recommend it to anyone between the ages of 11 and 16. While it is based on history, and I for one am not a fan of historical books, I could not put this book down once I reached a certain part of the novel. The author takes you into her story and lets you practically see and experience what is happening right by Ji-li's side. Not only does she detail these experiences, but also she backs up her details with wonderful sentences.

Kristof, Nicholas & Wudunn, Sheryl (1995). *China wakes: The struggle for the soul of a raising power*. (Rated 4 & 1/2 stars by Amazon)

Book Description

The definitive book on China's uneasy transformation into an economic and political superpower by two Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times reporters. An insightful and thought-provoking analysis of daily life in China, *China Wakes* is an exemplary work of reportage. 16 pages of photos.

Reviewer: A reader from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

This book is great because the two authors have totally different experiences when out on assignment. Kristof, a typical looking Caucasian American, is treated as a foreigner everywhere he goes. However, his wife, WuDunn, is by all outward appearances Chinese so until she tells people she is from overseas, she is often able to slip in and out of places unnoticed and usually out of bounds to foreign journalists. I took this book with me to China for some light reading on the plane and, while it really isn't light reading by any means, it is the kind of book that you cannot put down. It is a true page turner and an eye opener. I would recommend it to anyone interested in China and even those who are not.

Johnson, K. A. & Klatzkin, A. (2004). *Wanting a Daughter, Needing a Son: Abandonment, Adoption, and Orphanage Care in China*. (Rated 4 & 1/2 stars by Amazon with mixed reviews)

Book Description

Kay Johnson has done groundbreaking research on abandonment and adoption in China. In *Wanting a Daughter, Needing a Son*, Johnson untangles the complex interactions between these social practices and the government's population policies. She also documents the many unintended consequences, including the overcrowding of orphanages that led China to begin international adoptions.

Those touched by adoption from China want to know why so many healthy infant girls are in Chinese orphanages. This book provides the most thorough answer to date. Johnson's research overturns stereotypes and challenges the conventional wisdom on abandonment and adoption in modern China.

Certainly, as Johnson shows, many Chinese parents feel a great need for a son to carry on the family name and to care for them in their old age. At the same time, the government's strict

population policy puts great pressure on parents to limit births. As a result, some parents are able to obtain a son only by resorting to illegal behavior, such as "overquota" births and female infant abandonment.

Yet the Chinese today value daughters more highly than ever before. As many of Johnson's respondents put it, "A son and a daughter make a family complete." How can these seemingly contradictory trends--the widespread desire for a daughter as well as a son, and the revival of female infant abandonment--be happening in the same place at the same time? Johnson looks at abandonment together with two other practices: population planning and adoption. In doing so, she reveals all three in a new light.

Johnson shows us that a rapidly changing culture in late twentieth-century China hastened a positive reevaluation of daughters, while new policies limiting births undercut girls' improving status in the family. Those policies also revived and exacerbated one of the worst aspects of traditional patriarchal practices: the abandonment of female infants.

Yet Chinese parents are not literally forced to abandon female infants in order to have a son. While birth-planning enforcement can be coercive, parents who abandon are rarely prosecuted. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of Chinese parents informally adopt female foundlings and raise them as their own. Ironically, as Johnson shows, in some places adoptive parents are more likely than abandoning parents to incur fines and discrimination.

In addressing all these issues, Johnson brings the skills of a China specialist who has spent over a decade researching her subject. She also brings the concerns of an adoptive parent who hopes that this book might help others find answers to the question, What can we tell our children about why they were abandoned and why they were available for international adoption?

Every adoptive parent should take the opportunity this book provides to understand more fully the lives of their children before those children belonged to an adoptive family. A lot of this book is surprising and unsettling, but a thorough reading will help adoptive parents make sense of the miracle that occurred when they traveled to China for a first look at a small person they would love for the rest of their lives.

Ma, Liping (1999). *Knowing and teaching elementary mathematics: Teachers' understanding of fundamental mathematics in China and the United States*. (Rated 5 stars by Amazon) The publisher, Larence Erlbaum Associates (Alan H. Schoenfeld, Series Editor), June 11, 1999

This is a very unusual book, in which Ma examines the mathematical content and pedagogical knowledge of Chinese and U.S. teachers of elementary mathematics. It is the only book I know that has won high praise from people on both sides of the "math wars." Ma explains in detail the basis of teachers' mathematical competency, a "profound understanding of fundamental mathematics." Many world-class mathematicians are delighted with the book, for it makes the case that teachers' mathematical knowledge is essential. But reformers love it as well, because the book shows that it's not just *more* knowledge that matters: what matters is having a deeply connected understanding of what elementary mathematics really is. If you want to understand the kind of knowledge it takes to teach elementary mathematics really well, you need to read this book.

Min, Anchee (1995). *Red Azalea*. (Rated 4 & 1/2 stars by Amazon)

Reviewer: A reader from Seattle, WA

Red Azalea is the most poetically accurate account of life, love, and sexuality in Chinese culture to date. From western sensibilities, the relationship between the narrator and Yan seems a little strange until one realizes that there is a fundamental difference in Chinese and western views on sex, sensuality, and physical/emotional fulfillment. To a westerner, the relationship seems to have

not been entirely satisfying for the two people involved. However, in the cultural framework in which it occurred it must have been deliciously satisfying for the two participants. The book shows the results of the Chinese (both Mainland and Nationalist) tendency to marry much later than westerners. Few women marry before 25 and few men before 30. For women, sexual relationships before marriage are devastating if future husbands are aware of them. As a result, many women turn to each other for physical intimacy (as opposed to men visiting prostitutes for the same purpose). This book places this cultural tendency in the context of another cultural disaster in China: The Cultural Revolution.

I cannot recommend this book too highly, especially for people who have a vested interest in understanding sexual aspects of Chinese culture that most Chinese are unwilling to discuss openly. One must also understand that sensual expression between two people of the same sex is not viewed as negatively in Chinese culture as it is in the west. It is common to see two women waling hand in hand or see two women dancing in the clubs (often quite sensually).

Min, Anchee (1995). *Katherine*. (Rated 4 & 1/2 stars by Amazon)

Reviewer: Brian Pressman from Boston, MA USA

As a current student of Asian Studies in College, I decided to read Katherine after enjoying Anchee Min's memoir: Red Azalea. I started reading Katherine on a Saturday afternoon and finished it Sunday night. The book was simply amazing. Having taught English in China myself, the head on collision of Western ideas and post Cultural Revolution Chinese life in Katherine not only stirred up memories from my Beijing classroom but also produced a powerful and fascinating novel. Min artfully balances the personal rebirth of a Chinese woman with the struggles of a civilization still healing from the scars of the Cultural Revolution. Anyone interested in China and its interaction with western ideas and culture will most certainly love this book as much as I did. Although I read Katherine on my own and neglected to complete my assigned coursework to do so, my only wish after finishing the book was that the story didn't have to end.

Pearl, Buck (1993). *East wind: West wind* (8th ed.). (Rated 5 stars by Amazon)

Reviewer: Eric Lewis Lu Yijia from Shanghai China

East Wind: West Wind Why is there a colon in between? The story is presented like a monologue. The wife in the story, who is a traditional Chinese woman, speaks out her innermost feelings. She is betrothed before her birth to a Chinese man who has gone abroad to study. The woman, representing old Chinese ideas and the man representing Western ideas thus have come together to solve their conflicts. The woman's brother also goes abroad and he intends to marry a western woman, which is strictly forbidden in ancient Chinese culture... After much this ado, it is a battle of East Idea and West Idea. The book ends with the well-mingled culture -- a combination of good East and West culture.

The book is printed in very big fonts and are easy to read. It does not take a long time to read, but it tells a wonderful story. In some way, I value this higher than Pearl's most famous work The Good Earth. A book suitable for people who are curious about ancient Chinese culture. (Note, nowadays we Chinese no longer do such things as binding feet or kneeling down before elders and so on). Enjoy your reading!

Schell, Orville (1995). *Mandate of heaven: The legacy of Tiananmen Square and the next generation of China's leaders*. (Rated 3 stars by Amazon)

Editorial Reviews

The China of the 1990s is a country of profound contradictions: Maoist ideology coexists with an entrepreneurial spirit that has made China one of the world's economic powerhouses; a rebellious, irreverent popular culture thrives in the shadow of a totalitarian political system; a nihilistic subculture coexists alongside ancient traditions of obedience, conformity, and respect for tradition. In *Mandate of Heaven* Orville Schell, one of America's foremost China specialists, interprets these conflicting developments and brilliantly documents the new power structures, economic initiatives, and cultural changes that have transformed China since the Tiananmen Square demonstrations of 1989. Schell takes readers on a series of journeys inside this latter-day

People's Republic and introduces us to a broad spectrum of people, from students and workers to entrepreneurs, pop stars, and party officials, who, although they acted out the drama of the Square, are now playing the prominent roles in China's high-speed economic rush into the future. As China's role on the world stage grows, it becomes increasingly important that the West acquaint itself with the people who will be leading it into the twenty-first century. *Mandate of Heaven* is the authoritative and definitive account of this generation as it moves into a capitalist economic future while still clinging to the structures of its communist past.

Snow, Edgar (1973). *Red Star Over China*. (Average rating: 4 stars by readers)

(This is a classic—very popular in China.)

Reviewer: Steve Hann from Toronto, Canada

In this book, *Red Star over China*, Edgar Snow told everything the way it was, good and bad. Here is someone who has seen and been up close with Mao; witnessed Mao's personal life; traveled with the Red Army and discovered those "Red Bandits" really were good guys. All the myths, lies, propaganda on Mao, Red Army, and Chinese communists invented by the west and Chiang Kai-shek were shattered and exposed by Edgar Snow's truthful reporting. This is the very book that brought Nixon together with Mao, and started the China/USA diplomatic relationship. Edgar Snow was the American who peacefully helped the world's two superpowers in a peaceful solution. Edgar Snow should have been given the Nobel Peace Prize.

Reviewer: Nick Zarter from Hong Kong, China

With most Americans sadly ignorant of China and its past, this book provides an incredible inside look at the Chinese revolution and the beginning of communism. Snow's trip through rural provinces and villages during the country's civil war is an adventure in itself. The interviews he does with China's up and coming rulers are purely fascinating, allowing the western public its first chance to get to know such giants as Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai on a more personal level.

Reviewer: Andrew C. LING from Canada

As the first Western book to report on Chinese Communism and its leaders, this is no doubt a valuable masterpiece. But the reader must bear in mind that the Chinese people (even today) are experts in putting up a good face to impress people from the West. There was definitely some bias on the part of the author to paint Mao and his comrades as great and infallible. So a sensible reader should read this book with these in mind, observe what has happened in China since 1949 and reach his/her conclusions.

Solomon, Richard (1975). *Revolution is Not A Dinner Party: A Feast of Images of the Maoist Transformation of China*. (Rated 4 star by reader)

Reviewer: A reader from USA

This ingenious attempt to explain the mysteries of Chinese politics to Western readers has two unusual features...a kaleidoscope of photographic images for which [the author's] lucid text serves as a kind of continuous caption. ...It provides as vivid a sense of the complexities of Maoist China as any book yet published....should help to clarify the traditional image of China in the American mind, an image that has often swung capriciously from sentimental enthusiasm to angry disappointment and back again.

Spence, Jonathan (2000). *The Search for Modern China* (2nd ed.). (Rated 5 stars by Amazon)

Reviewer: Robert J. Crawford from Evanston, Il. United States

For anyone interested in contemporary China, this book provides the necessary historical backdrop in great and well reasoned detail. In my reading, Spence explains better than anyone why the Chinese currently prefer stability over democracy and why the country has made a slow and halting entry into the modern world. While making no excuses for the excesses of the Party's leadership, Spence chronicles the immense change that Mao and his successors initiated, not from the standpoint of solely the 20th Century, but over the last 300 years. If you are looking for a single book that provides a 360-degree view of the evolution of this ancient and complex

civilization, this is the book for you. Spence is also a master of eloquent and concise prose, refreshingly un-academic in tone and yet a brilliant synthesis of contemporary research.

Starr, John B. (1997). *Understanding China: A Guide to China's Economy, History, and Political Structure*. (No rating available.)

Book Description

In this succinct, modest, and refreshingly clearheaded book, John Bryan Starr introduces the uninitiated reader to the background, basic data, and issues at stake in China's crisis-ridden present and past situation. The complexities of the Chinese government since the death of Deng Xiaoping in February 1997, revelations about China's influence in our election campaigns, and China's eagerness to acquire advanced American technology are only some of the issues that show how urgently we need to know and understand China better than we do. Since *Understanding China* was first published in 1997, there have been still more important developments in China, and in this revised edition Starr focuses his shrewd attention on them all. Additional material has been added on matters such as China's relations with Taiwan and with Tibet, the Hong Kong transfer, China's nuclear weapons program, and the nation's environmental and human-rights record.

About the Author

John Bryan Starr, who served as president of both the Yale China Association and the China Institute in New York City, is managing director of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform in Providence, Rhode Island. He lives in New Canaan, Connecticut.

Williams, Suzanne & Fong, Andrea (1997) *Made in China: Ideas and Inventions from Ancient China*. (Rated 5 stars by Amazon)

Editorial Reviews

From Booklist: Gr. 4-6. Rather than giving a narrative survey of Chinese history, this colorfully illustrated book focuses on specific topics related to ancient Chinese culture, history, tradition, and invention. These topics, presented succinctly in one or two pages, include papermaking, agriculture, medicine, and astronomy. Sometimes related topics are discussed, such as the Silk Road and the making of silk or the Ming dynasty and the making of porcelain. Illustrations include watercolors, drawings, and diagrams created to support the text as well as many excellent photos of artifacts and reproductions of period artwork. Students may not find enough information here for a report on a specific topic, but this book is an attractive starting point for learning about ancient China. (Carolyn Phelan)

Midwest Book Review: Breaking down ethnic and cultural barriers by informing young readers about Chinese scientific thought and inventions, *Made In China: Ideas And Inventions From Ancient China* provides a view of science and history from a vantage point seldom mentioned in books or classrooms. Suzanne Williams helps young readers better understand the mind set that discovery necessitates. From the special Chinese method of casting bronze, the improvement of irrigation systems, the standardization of roads, measurements and writing, to astronomical research on comets and eclipses, Williams places Chinese scientific ideas and discovery within the political, social, religious, and cultural context of the times. Impressive illustrations (including photographs, woodblock prints, drawings, and Andrea Fong's beautiful watercolor paintings) enhance this well-researched book. *Made In China* is a highly recommended selection choice for all school and community libraries.

Williams, Suzanne (1998). *A Teacher's Guide to Accompany Made in China: Ideas and Inventions from Ancient China*. (No reviews).

II. Videos (Some with reviews)

Not One Less (1999). (Drama; Director: Yimou Zhang) English subtitles.

Reviewer: Karen Krull from San Antonio, TX United States I am a first year teacher who was inspired by the tenacity of the young substitute teacher in "Not One Less." I teach hard to reach kids so much like the feisty youth in this rural Chinese school. Every time I handle a piece of chalk I think of the powerful message of this story -- each child is like that piece of chalk that if not handled with care and gentleness, will fall to pieces. The state of education around the world is at issue. The reality is that teachers first choose the profession because they need to earn money, but those who stay in the profession are there because they care about their charges, refusing to accept that one less will learn.

Reviewer: Raymond Popkin from Boca Raton, Fl. USA

Zhang Yimou lifts the veil and provides a wondrous glimpse into life in rural China. The movie tells the story of a young girl who must take over a small rural school while the regular teacher goes away to take care of family matters. If upon the return of the teacher there is "Not One Less" student, she will be paid, but if she loses any of her pupils, the money she so desperately needs will be forfeit. She is soon tested as she finds students are torn between going to school and obligations to help their families tend the land. The young girl, Wei Minzhi, who has no previous acting experience is stunningly sweet, incredibly determined, and savvy. It is hard to imagine why she was not nominated for Best Actress. The Director did much more than expose life in China to the outsider's view, he showed the universality of human traits such as indifference, bureaucratic thinking and finally compassion. Ultimately one realizes that this movie could have just as easily been filmed in West Virginia, Maine or the farmlands of California.

Precious Children (1998). (Documentary; PBS, 56 minutes) .

No reviews available. The video records a teacher delegation's trip to China led by the first lady of Washington State. In China, the delegates visited kindergartens, elementary schools, after-school programs, even an orphanage. They met with teachers, administrators, and ordinary people; they interacted with Chinese children; and they integrated their experience in China into their own classroom activities.

The Chinese Americans (Documentary; PBS, 90 minutes)

No reviews available.

The following quote is from the cover of the videotape:

"The Chinese Americans, the first program of its kind, visits generations of Chinese families who came to the United States from the mainland, Taiwan or Hong Kong and forged an American dynasty.

With patience and perseverance we balanced the duality of East and West and translated the American Dream into an entirely new alphabet. The program explores how the traditions and customs of generations, wrapped like our mothers' *dim sum* in the warmth of a close-bound community, have been secured for the next generation.

The Chinese Americans examines the roles Chinese schools, family associations, and religious organizations played in transforming Chinese immigrants into Chinese Americans while maintaining the traditions of the culture and celebrates our achievements in American arts, sciences, and education.

Architect I.M. Pei, broadcast journalist Connie Chung, AIDS researcher and 1996 *Time* Man of the Year Dr. David Ho, playwright David Henry Hwang, educators, artists, business and community leaders and others from a wide variety of backgrounds, experience, and generations explore what it means to be Chinese in America, whether your family has been in the United States for 2 or 200 years."

From Mao to Mozart: - Isaac Stern in China (Documentary; Director: Murray Lerner)

Editorial Reviews

Murray Lerner's Oscar-winning film *From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China* chronicles with affection and intelligence the great violinist's 1979 visit to China. Stern had accepted the government's invitation to attend a rehearsal and give one recital but instead wound up playing a formal concert, touring two cities, and teaching many master classes due to his overwhelming love for music and even more so for the musicians he met, some as young as 10. Communicating his instructions less through the translator than his energetically gleeful gestures and plusive vocalizations, Stern offers a wealth of technical tips, bowing techniques, and motivational nuggets that all boil down to one theme: don't play the music, live it.

Not every moment is joyous; filmed shortly after the final dismantling of the Cultural Revolution, *From Mao to Mozart* offers a brief but harrowing portrait of Tan Shuzhen, a violinmaker imprisoned for over a year for the crime of crafting Western instruments. But after this remembrance of the past, the movie ends as it should, eyes and ears on the future, as adolescent cellist Wang Jian serenades the appreciative audience. A fascinating postscript, *Musical Encounters*, follows Stern's return to Beijing two decades later and catches up with Wang, now a successful recording artist, as well as others from the original film. Especially heartening is conductor Li Delun, wheeled onto the stage but still magisterial as he reteams with Stern to once again perform Mozart's Concerto in G; and through the music, two men raised a world apart who have met only twice in their lives are again made the best of friends.

Eat Drink Man Woman (1994). (Drama; Director: Ang Lee) English subtitles.

Editorial Reviews

This is not a movie to see on an empty stomach. Writer-director Ang Lee's 1994 Oscar nominee tells a family story about a chef and his three daughters through the meals the chef prepares and serves his family. This touching, dryly funny story of a family coping with personal lives and the way those lives intersect with the family relationships captures a shift in generations in Taipei. The father, a famous chef who has lost his taste buds, still cooks, though he draws no pleasure from eating. His daughters, meanwhile, deal with both the disappointments and surprises of daily living and the way their adult lives compare to the expectations the widowed father had for them. A subtle, amusing--and mouth-watering--comedy of impeccable manners. --Marshall Fine

Reviewer: Mirko Wojnowski (wjn@gmx.net) from Lawrence, Kansas

I adore this movie. To describe it I use an adjective that I pretty much reserve for this movie alone. It is beautiful. The ending always makes me cry, no matter how many times I've seen it (10 or 11 I think). The movie seems to explore whether eat, drink, man, woman—in other words food and sex—are the only things we live for but then the story and the lives of the people involved open their blossoms to reveal something deeper, something intangible, a feeling, a love, and tell us without words what life is really all about. I agree that you should see this in the original with subtitles. Food, which is the carrier of the story, is elevated to an art, and reminds me why I love Asian cuisine. The performances of the actors portraying Mr. Chu and Shan Shan are simply endearing. This movie just gives me a warm feeling in the belly whenever I watch it, and that not just because of the food. The simplicity and grace... enough, I could talk about this movie forever.

To Live (1994). (Drama; Director: Yimou Zhang) English subtitles.

Reviewer: boris_n_nina from Norristown, PA United States

This is absolutely my all-time favorite movie! "To Live" takes a different approach to narrate the confusing periods in Chinese history in the 20th century, to tell a store of life, and a history of a nation. Don't get me wrong! It's not a heavy movie like other portrayal movies of Chinese History such as "Farewell My Concubine", "Blue Kite" or "the Last Emperor" (they're good movies as well,

but no comparison to "To Live"); quite the contrary, "To Live" is humorous, delightful, positive, and encouraging. It's not only a good comedy that makes you laugh, but also makes you laugh with tears in your eyes, sad and sore in your heart.

The main story line is how an ordinary family of Fu Gui (Ge You) and Jia Zhen (Gong Li) went through their lives in various movements, wars and revolutions in China. A careless gambler, Fu Gui, lost everything he had - money, property and family - only left with a set of puppets. It's the same set of puppets that went through all the ups and downs with Fu Gui, his family and friends. Through all the tragic and comic moments and events, through all the bitter-sweetness and irony, the characters were in such a positive spirit that they could make jokes of anything in life, but only through the body languages and their eyes, you could see the heartache.

There is an old Chinese proverb that states, "the old man lost his horse, but it turned out to be his good luck". The entire movie is based on this theory: whether you gain or lose, promote or demote, you would never know if it were good for you at the end. Life is a series of comedic dramas; if you don't face it with a positive attitude and joke back, even during the hardest struggle, you would not be able to survive.

This movie is a masterpiece if you want to find out the meaning of Life, and how meaningful it is "to live"!

Big Bird in China (Sesame Street, PBS)

Plot Synopsis: Big Bird and his Sesame Street companion, Barkley, the big, fluffy dog, travel across China in search of the legendary Feng Huang, the Phoenix Bird. Along the way they visit with Chinese schoolchildren, watch a Tai Ji demonstration, learn some Chinese words and songs, and meet the mischievous Monkey King.

Reviewer: Jade (TX) Aug. 2005

I was adopted from China when I was only 3 days old, and as a child I loved the movie Big Bird in China. It is great at showing the different areas of Beijing and what China is like. I am now 17 and it may sound pathetic, but I still love the movie. I recently returned from my first trip back to China and the first movie I watched was Big Bird in China. It was a movie I constantly talked about around my friend Lindsey, who came with me to China. The story line is amazing. I HIGHLY recommend the movie to ANYBODY! It is definitely a movie that people of all ages can enjoy.

China - A Century of Revolution (Winstar Home Entertainment)

Editorial Reviews

Definitive, insightful and unforgettable, *China: A Century of Revolution* is an astonishingly candid view of a once-secret nation. This powerful program takes a remarkable first-hand look at China's tumultuous history, examining its social, political and cultural upheaval through eyewitness accounts, rare archival film footage and insightful commentary.

Part One: China in Revolution

China In Revolution begins in 1911 with the fall of the last emperor and continues through 1949, highlighting four decades of civil war, foreign invasion and the ascension of rival leaders Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek. Rarely seen photos and film footage - among the earliest ever recorded in China - reveal fascinating details of a long-censored history. Hear the facts and meet the people who experienced modern China's most violent era.

Part Two: The Mao Years

From the beginning of his rule in 1949 to his death in 1976, Mao Zedong and his colleagues attempted to forge a "new China" from a country mired in poverty and devastated by decades of war. Yet, the Mao years would bring the new People's Republic of China little stability. Rare interviews with Communist Party members and ordinary citizens involved with history's largest political experiment, reveal the turbulence, famine, violent campaigns and purges which destroyed the lives of more than one hundred million people.

Part Three: Born Under The Flag

Born Under The Red Flag begins with Mao's death in 1976, continues with the new leadership of Deng Xiaoping, and concludes with the struggle of China's paradoxical goals of economic prosperity and absolute Communist Party control. In the short span of 15 years, China transformed itself into a never-before-seen hybrid of communism and capitalism. And although it

has become the third largest economy in the world, the price has been high. Rare interviews and film footage highlight the Democracy Wall Movement, the establishment of Special Economic Zones and the dramatic student protests in Tiananmen Square.

Modern Marvels: The Great Wall of China (Documentary; the A&E Home Video)

No reviews available. In the video, the introduction of the Chinese history is centered around the construction of the Great Wall.

In Search of China (Documentary; PBS, 90 minutes)

No reviews available.

Children of Revolution (Documentary; Producer: David Hinton).

No reviews available. The film is about a group of college students' personal experience during the Cultural Revolution in the 60s.

Other Film Titles Related to Chinese Culture (Drama)

Pushing Hands By Ang Lee – about a bi-racial marriage between a Chinese man and American Woman, and the struggle between the Chinese father (a Gong-fu Master) and his son about Chinese family values.

The Wedding Banquet By Ang Lee – on homosexual relationship of a Chinese son and his parents' urge for him to get marriage and give them a grandson.

Joy Luck Club – about the generational gap between the old and the young in four Chinese-American families.