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Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies ❖ University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

News and Reviews

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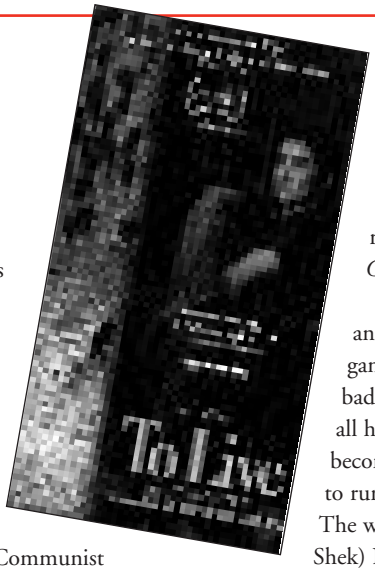
Teaching with Contemporary Feature Films from East Asia

>> by Mary Connor

essay

This year I incorporated into my 12th-grade Asian Studies course three recent award-winning films: *To Live* (1994), *Shall We Dance?* (1996), and *Sopyonje* (1993). Each film had a profound impact on my students. The films clarified readings from texts, deepened understanding of Asian cultures, and provided distinct images of the physical environments of three Asian countries. Students made emotional connections with the people of China, Japan, and Korea.



To Live (132 minutes) is a stirring production from the director-actress team of Zhang Yimou and Gong Li. I selected this film because it chronicles the struggles of a family, the Xu family, who lives through the tumultuous years of the Civil War, the Communist Revolution, the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution. History comes alive as students are taken vicariously to rural China, experience the implementation of land and thought reform, and witness the cost to the people. Students view the film after they have read and discussed W. Scott Morton's *China: Its History and Culture.*

Fughi is the master of the household and a bad landlord, who spends his time gambling instead of with his family; his bad habit causes him to lose his home and all his possessions. Now landless, Fughi becomes part of a puppet troupe and travels to rural villages to support his wife, Jiazhen. The war between Jian Jieshi's (Chiang Kai-Shek) Nationalist Army and Mao Zedong's People's Liberation Army begins, and Fughi and his troupe are seized by the Communists. He

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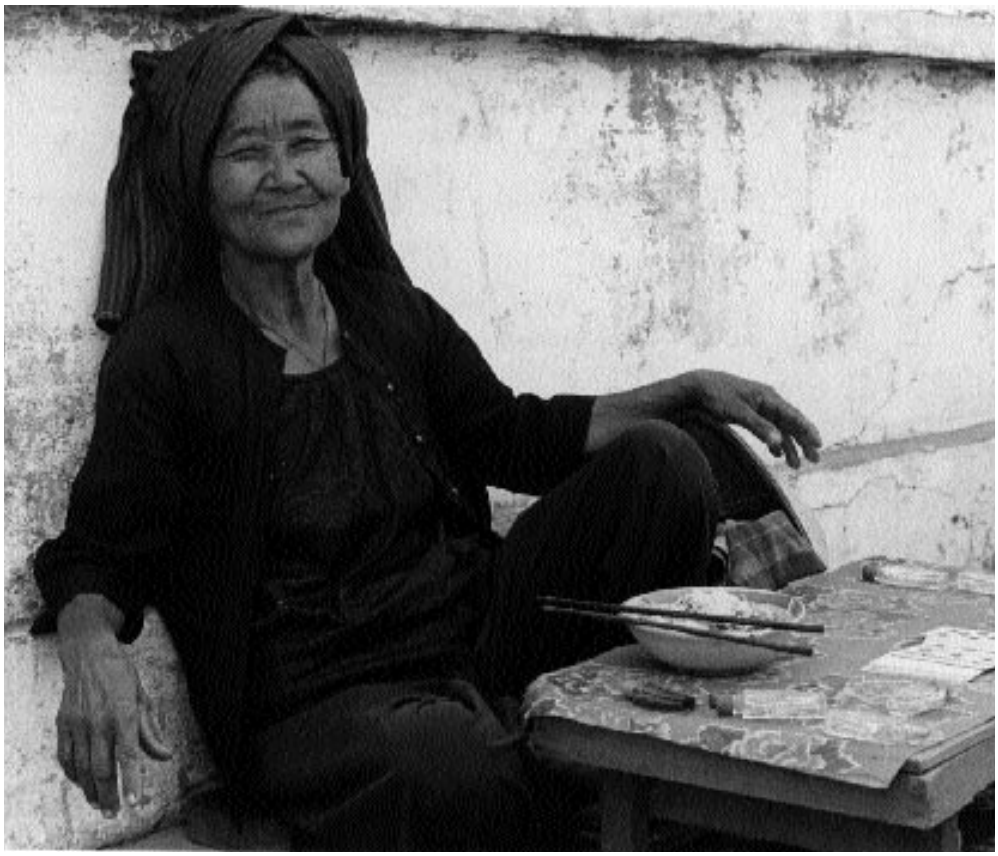

COURTESY OF MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

An elderly woman sits outside Neak Loeung provincial hospital in Prey Veng, Cambodia. For review of video, *Cambodia: Land of Beauty but Uncertainty*, see page 7.

Contents

Asian Educational Media Service
The Asian Educational Media Service (AEMS) is a program of the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. AEMS offers information about where to find audiovisual media resources for teaching and learning about Asia, and advice about which ones may best suit your needs. In addition to *AEMS News and Reviews*, published twice a year, services include a free call-in/write-in service and a Web site. To add your name to our mailing list, request additional copies of the newsletter to use in workshops or to share with your colleagues, or ask for help in locating resources, please contact us.

AEMS is made possible by generous support from The Freeman Foundation and The Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership.

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What's New?

All-New Web Site

All but the address has changed. At <http://www.aems.uiuc.edu>, you will find not only a new look but improved navigation and searching. From the homepage and every page of the site, using the "Media Search" tool, you can locate information about media materials for teaching and learning about Asia. You can search by such categories as region or country, subject, media type, and audience and by words in the title. Information provided includes not only descriptions of the materials but also reviews prepared by our panels of experts. Also included is contact information for distributors so you can easily obtain the materials. Reviews address the accuracy of the materials' content, their educational usefulness, and the audience(s) for which they are most appropriate. Though reviews are not available for all materials listed in the database, reviews will continue to be added to the database. You can help us by contributing your own reviews of media materials you have used in teaching and learning about Asia! In the reviews area of the site and from a record in the database, you can add your comments about a material and share how you have used it in your classroom. Also on the site you can browse reviews, read the newsletter on-line or download it, find out about the latest AEMS video production projects, request information via an interactive form, and explore related Web sites.

Conferences and Workshops

An important part of the work of AEMS is participation in conferences and workshops at which we have the opportunity to interact directly with our constituencies and inform them about our services.

Rebecca Payne, Program Coordinator, participated in a panel discussion at a teachers conference sponsored jointly by Earlham College's Institute for Education on Japan and Indiana University's East Asian Studies Center. The conference, entitled "Teaching East Asia in the Elementary and Middle School: Multimedia Approaches," took place in Indianapolis, Indiana on March 2.

Also this spring, AEMS participated in the annual conference of the Association for Asian Studies in Boston, Massachusetts. At the meeting, the latest video of the AEMS-affiliated Media Production Group (MPG), *Makiko's New World*, had its national premiere. The video was also featured in a roundtable, "Myth or Reality?: Oppression by the Family (*Ie*) and the State since Meiji Japan." *Makiko's New World*, along with other MPG documentaries including *Barbarians: Fierce and Friendly*, *Fit Surroundings*, and *Neighborhood Tokyo* were selected for the conference's videos showings. Also during the conference,

AEMS held a continental breakfast reception for Asian studies scholars working with us to provide expert reviews of materials for the newsletter and as part of our database and Web site.

At the annual conference of the ASIANetwork, a consortium of liberal arts colleges to promote Asian studies, to be held in Tacoma, Washington, in April, Rebecca Payne will participate in a panel, "Teaching with Technology: The Internet and the Web," and introduce the AEMS Web site to members of this organization focused on teaching about Asia.

In early summer, Rebecca Payne, at the invitation of Education for Global Involvement, Inc., a non-profit organization in the Chicago area, will present a workshop on Internet and media resources as part of an on-going professional development program for Chicago public school teachers focused on teaching about East Asia.

CHARLES HANCOCK

The AEMS Resource Library and other AEMS offices are housed at 805 West Pennsylvania Avenue. The building is located on the southeast corner of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign campus, just off the intersection of Lincoln and Pennsylvania Avenues.

Resource Library Collection Grows

The AEMS Resource Library makes available a collection of videos and curriculum materials on a free-loan basis to teachers in the Champaign-Urbana schools and faculty and students at the University. Most curriculum materials include audio-visual components such as a set of slides or a video. Materials may be borrowed for two-week periods. The Library is located at 805 West Pennsylvania Avenue, Room 213, and is open 10:00 a.m.–12 noon and 1:00–5:00p.m., Monday through Friday. Visitors are encouraged to contact the AEMS offices to schedule an appointment. You can contact us by phone (217-265-0640), fax (217-265-0641), or e-mail (aems@uiuc.edu).

The collection currently includes 76 videos and 16 curriculum units with new titles in a wide range of subject areas in Asian studies being added. Among the Library's new acquisitions are the following titles. For educators wishing to order for themselves any of these titles, the contact information for the distributor listed is given in the "Guide to Distributors" on the back page of the newsletter and the purchase price is provided below.

• *The Confucian Tradition* Series. Titles include: *The Confucian Tradition* (46 min.), *The Confucian Tradition in Literature—Chinese Poetry: Origins of a Literary Tradition* (34 min.), *The Confucian Tradition in Literature—Poetry of the Tang and Later Dynasties* (43 min.). 1997. Level: high school and above. Produced by Columbia University's Project on Asia in the Core Curriculum of Schools and Colleges. Distributed by the Annenberg/CPB Collection. Price: $110. This series, intended to provide background for faculty and teachers, looks at the key elements of Confucian thought in China and its impact on literature. A print guide accompanies the videos. A Web site based on this resource can be found at <http://eacp.easia.columbia.edu/> (Click on "Asian Topics.").

• *Japanese History and Literature* Series. Titles include: *Classical Japan and the Tale of Genji (553-1185)* (45 min.), *Medieval Japan and Buddhism in Literature (1185-1600)* (45 min.), and *Tokugawa Japan and the Puppet Theater, Novels, and the Haiku of Basho (1600-1868)* (70 min.). 1996. Level: high school and above. Produced by Columbia University's Project on Asia in the Core Curriculum of Schools and Colleges. Distributed by the Annenberg/CPB Collection. Price: $110. This series, intended to provide background for faculty and teachers, integrates historical themes with the literature of periods in Japan's history. A print guide accompanies the videos. A Web site based on this resource can be found at <http://eacp.easia.columbia.edu/> (Click on "Asian Topics.").

• *The Pacific Century* Series. Titles include: *The Two Coasts of China: Asia and the Challenge of the West, The Meiji Revolution, From the Barrel of a Gun, Writers and Revolutionaries, Reinventing Japan, Inside Japan, Inc., Big Business and the Ghost of Confucius, The Fight for Democracy, Sentimental Imperialists: America in Asia,* and *The Pacific Century: The Future of the Pacific Basin.* 1992. Level: high school and above. Produced by the Pacific Basin Institute in association with KCTS/Seattle and NHK/Japan. Distributed by Annenberg/CPB Collection. Price: $299. This series of 10 one-hour videos focuses on the history of the nations of the Pacific of the last 150 years and provides a geographic, cultural, and historic framework for the study of the region. It examines the interconnections among these nations and their shared history with the United States. Print guides for faculty and teachers accompany the videos. The series can be used together with the textbook, *The Pacific Century: The Emergence of Modern Asia*, 2nd ed., by Mark Borthwick, Westview Press, 1998.

LEONARD KAMERLING

Heart of the Country

>> Directed by Leonard Kamerling. Distributed by First Run Icarus Films. 58-minute and 90-minute versions (1998 and 1997 releases respectively) are available.

An elementary school and community in a remote rural village (Kanayama, population 400) of northernmost Japan (Hokkaido) are the dramatic focus of this highly professional documentary video. Filmmakers from the University of Alaska Museum organize their images to show an elementary school year, following the rhythms of the seasons. Harvest, snow, New Year's and graduation festivals frame the seasonal sections. At the end, we are reminded of remote bureaucratic controls over the school as the beloved principal, after two years in the community, is reassigned to a distant city school.

We do see lively kids, respectful and ever ready to speak out in public and school ceremonies, who entertain local elders, and cooperate in school tasks such as cleaning the school building. We hear from the articulate and philosophical principal, who feels that "School is where kindness should soak through." He is echoed by dedicated teachers, concerned parents, local leaders, and older people who contrast the present with their past. Teachers and parents have become more like friends than disciplinarians. All agree that the most important goal of the school is to develop children's individual spirit and "heart" in their entry, via the school, to "society." No one is willing to put academic knowledge and test preparation ahead of the social goals. Building a community through school friendships and activities is the curriculum. Cooperation, not competition, is expressly valued in the work of the school.

This video is an excellent antidote for a narrow educational interest in Japanese children's high rates of academic achievement.

The narrative is spoken by adult informants and translated in subtitles. The only English one hears is in a fifth-grade English class—a unique curricular addendum since in the national curriculum English is officially introduced as a subject in the middle school. Though unsaid, one suspects that the "foreign teachers" referred to by the children are the unseen filmmakers. Some messages are conveyed by visual means, including a delightful sequence of the principal and a teacher doing their morning physical exercises in the hallway while children follow their teachers in their individual classrooms. There is a radical egalitarianism here that defines everybody as a full participant in the school community—which is often extended to include local elders, as well as parents, in school celebrations.

The title, "Heart of the Country," is taken from the traveler and poet Basho, whose quote opens the film.

> Culture's beginnings;
> from the heart of the country
> rice-planting songs.

It is a nostalgic vision of the simple agrarian origins of a society, which the filmmakers seem to appreciate as much as the contemporary Japanese public. Even though we see dairy farming, rather than rice-growing, the community appears as an harmonious ideal of Japanese culture. One farmer recounts how his friends helped him to rebuild his barn after a disastrous fire. The title in English (but not in Japanese) carries the ambiguity of "country"—is it the heart of rural, or national, settings that is implied?

The adults recognize, however, that they are far from the mainstream of Japan. One mother worries about how her child will fare in the competitive society of the big city. Not everybody expects their children to stay in place—though the dairy farmer hopes that his son will follow him on the farm. The school does not represent the modal reality of Japan, even while the ideal images are more widely shared. Average class sizes of Japan (40 or more) do not compare with classrooms with only a few students. The sheltered rural lifestyle is found only in a few remote places. Most Japanese will never set foot in such a place, not only remote, but cold and snowy for much of the year. One is tempted to speculate on a comparable representation of school life in America—perhaps an Alaskan bush village as the "heart" of our country?

Nevertheless, much of what is said in the film is the same as my interviews more than 35 years ago with similar people in a community much closer to Tokyo and more typical of Japanese schooling. Parents comparing their children's schooling with their own said much the same things—though a number added criticisms of student disrespect for teachers and the "friendly" relations which teachers wanted with their students. "A little more *kibishii* (severity) would be better," they said. Then, as now, a request to compare their own school experience with that of their children led to an outpouring of educational philosophy. The formal New Year's party for teachers at the principal's home was exactly what I experienced.

Educational uses for this video could well include university classes in comparative education, educational anthropology/sociology, and Japanese society. It shows the school as an institution that reflects the assumptions and structures of Japanese society. It is, in itself, a model of how one might inquire into the myriad connections of a

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Small Happiness: Women of a Chinese Village

>> Part of the *One Village in China* film series. Produced by Carma Hinton and Richard Gordon. Distributed by the Long Bow Group. 1984. 58 minutes.

Filmed in the village of "Long Bow" in the northern Chinese province of Shanxi in the early 1980s, *Small Happiness* is a beautiful, useful, striking, and memorable film. Filmmaker and narrator Carma Hinton, daughter of China scholar William Hinton who authored two books about the Long Bow village, spent much of her childhood in China. Her long-standing relationship with the people of Long Bow may account for her excellent rapport with the subjects of the film, and their willingness to speak on camera with such warmth, honesty, and candor about painful and important times of their lives.

One of several excellent films about Long Bow, *Small Happiness* focuses on village women and the vast changes they have experienced in the course of their lives. We meet several charming old women who remember with sadness, anger, grace and humor, the difficulties they faced in their youth when their feet were bound and they had to crawl on their knees in pain to the outhouse, how they met their husbands for the first time on their wedding day, and how they were kept in the house at the beck and call of their mothers-in-law. Applauding changes since the revolution, and criticizing as "old feudals" the husbands, parents, and in-laws who oppressed them, older women tell us how different life is today, and how much easier young women now have it.

Although we learn of many ways in which women's lives have improved—for example, foot binding is no longer practiced, young people have a say in whom they marry, divorce is permitted, and health care is much better—women's tales tell of a situation that is still far from "equal." Filmed during the early stage of decollectivization in Long Bow, we see how men opt for factory work or work in the city and leave much of the agricultural work, housework and tedious and lower paid work to women. Women face a double burden as they are responsible for the household work as well as for work outside the home. With regard to family planning, young women are often in a double bind, caught between state restrictions that promote fewer children and husbands and in-laws who demand at least one son. As one woman tells us, women are sterilized rather than men, because "if a woman's health is ruined, it doesn't matter as much since she stays home anyway." Many villagers still believe that a son is a "big happiness" and a daughter a "small happiness," since daughters move away after marriage and boys remain in the household and maintain the patrilineal line of descent. Decollectivization has further reinscribed the value of boys for rural households, since they are also viewed as an important source of labor.

RICHARD GORDON

The film is filled with provocative lines and memorable scenes revolving around marriage, birth, children, and work. At a wedding ceremony we see a young bride reluctantly kowtow with her husband as the names of his kin are read aloud. While making noodles, a middle-aged woman grumbles that when her children are naughty and won't listen to her she tells them "too bad birth control came too late for you!" An older woman tearfully tells us how she was sold to her husband, and of the famine and starvation long ago that led to the infanticide of her newborn son. Another remembers her in-laws criticizing her big feet, teasing "the person hasn't shown up yet, and her two feet have already arrived!" A group of unmarried young women speak of the dismal conditions in the village saw-blade-polishing factory where they work, and they describe subtle means by which they attempt to bring about better conditions. The factory hires women, according to the manager, because "men are too strong and can't sit still for that long. They can't stand the confinement."

Although students are often drawn to the more dramatic images of bound feet, the kowtowing bride, and the topics of infanticide and family planning, the film deals with these topics in such a balanced and sensitive way that we view such practices within a wider historical and cultural context. The film allows viewers to identify important changes that have taken place in Chinese women's lives since the revolution, and to think about the attitudes of different generations of women. Extremely rich, entertaining, and informative, despite the fact that it was filmed over a decade ago, *Small Happiness* remains a wonderful resource for a wide range of high school or university classes dealing with Chinese culture, Chinese history, world cultures, social studies, gender, kinship, or anthropology. ✦

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Nicole Constable is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh. She is the author of *Maid to Order in Hong Kong: Stories of Filipina Workers* (1997) and *Christian Souls and Chinese Spirits* (1994) and editor of *Guest People: Hakka Identity in China and Abroad* (1996).

Small Happiness: Women of a Chinese Village is available from the Long Bow Group. Price is $250 for purchase and $60 for rental plus $15 shipping and handling.

COURTESY OF FILMAKERS LIBRARY

Eyes of the Storm: The Return of Hong Kong to China

>> Directed by J. Tobin Rothlein, Street Voice Productions. Distributed by Filmakers Library. 1999. 52 minutes.

Filmed between May and July of 1997, *Eyes of the Storm* takes us into the lives of Hong Kong citizens up to and during the historic July 1st handover back to mainland China. In various "pictorial" segments, the film captures the many sides of Hong Kong life—from the bustling commercial areas of Nathan Road, to aerial shots of the lush green of the New Territories and Victoria Peak. This film is about contrasts and the multi-dimensionality of Hong Kong life. Rothlein interviews many different people, including vocal democracy leaders Christine Loh, Emily Lau and Martin Lee. The film also introduces us to numerous dissidents who take their pro-democratic ideals into the streets. In particular, Rothlein devotes a great deal of time to student activist Linda Wong. By focusing on Wong's personal confusions and fears as she openly contemplates the handover and her role as an activist, the film transcends the purely political by capturing very human elements of the handover.

…the film transcends the purely political by capturing very human elements of the handover.

Although J. Tobin Rothlein sets out to "make sense" of the socio-political impacts of the handover, he brilliantly draws out various tensions and confusions latent within this historic moment. Throughout this timely and important film, we see the interviewees wrestle with serious questions of identity. As Loh points out, though her cultural and ethnic roots are Chinese, the still foreign idea of Chinese *citizenship* problematizes her new post 1997 identity. The film's focus on the authoritarian regime in Beijing and the lasting impact of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre raises serious questions about social memory. Can Hong Kong people simply forget June 4th, or is a healing process of memorializing these events necessary, such as the controversial erection of the Pillar of Shame at Hong Kong University? Hong Kong history is being written and re-written; remembered and forgotten. Indeed, what is most brilliant about this film—and what makes it an honest appraisal—is that it illuminates the tense uncertainty of the present and future of Hong Kong. What I enjoy most about the documentary is that it poses far more interesting questions than it does conclusive answers.

While my students found the film's early attempt to problematize the Hong Kong handover very provocative, they noted (as did I) that the film undermines the idea of uncertainty by focusing too much on the not-so-desirable elements of the Beijing regime. And while the need to recognize events like June 4th is crucial, the multi-dimensional nature of the film quickly becomes a very uni-dimensional, unproblematic diatribe against Mainland China. That is to say, while the film nicely illuminates the tremendous confusions, tensions and even uneasy indifference in Hong Kong, it offers a solid conclusion: China will act to the detriment of Hong Kong. During a visit to Hong Kong, I attended Martin Lee's pro-democracy rally on the night of the handover. I was surprised to see the relatively small turnout, and was shocked that the majority of protestors were foreigners, human rights activists and foreign celebrities. Perhaps the attitudes of Hong Kong peoples toward China are not nearly as conclusive as the film suggests.

A second flaw of the film is the absence of any analysis of the British colonial presence in Hong Kong. Christine Loh nicely describes the handover as an occasion of "hellos" and "good-byes." Yet, it remains unclear as to what or whom Hong Kong is saying goodbye. The film does not explain why Hong Kong was under British rule, nor does it analyze the Sino-British Accords and Governor Chris Patten's attempts to implement some democratic institutions before 1997. (In fact, Patten is not mentioned once in the film.) In addition to the film's scant treatment of political history, it understates the extent to which the British colonial legacy shapes Hong Kong's identity and problematizes the current identity debate.

This film is appropriate for college-level students, and best suited for an introductory-level course. In terms of political and social analyses, the instructor will have to provide the students with some background on Chinese and Hong Kong history. I think that the strength of the film, however, is not its historical-political contributions, but rather, its provocative themes. The film served as an effective springboard for broader discussion in my seminar. Issues such as identity, social memory and the fluidity and construction of history are, I think, the most exciting directions in which global scholarship and pedagogy are heading. The film ends with a plea from Martin Lee when he says to a group of journalists: "I hope you do not simply leave Hong Kong in a few days time and forget about Hong Kong. So keep watching." *Eyes of the Storm* will not let us forget. ❖

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Joseph Wong is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the department of political science, University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he is also a lecturer for courses in comparative politics including the undergraduate honors seminar. His research interests are in issues of democratization and political economy in East Asia. He is currently an associate in research at Harvard University's Fairbank Center for East Asian Research.

Eyes of the Storm: The Return of Hong Kong to China is available from Filmakers Library. Price is $295 for purchase and $75 for rental.

The Story of Puttinan

>> Part of the *Turning 16* series. Produced by Robbie Hart and Luc Cote. Distributed by Bullfrog Films. 1994. 26 minutes.

This film is part six of an eight-part series about being a teenager in various places around the world. This program tells the story of Puttinan, a Thai girl who had to leave her country home and family at 13 to earn money working in a textile mill in Bangkok. Through a fairly accurate translator, Puttinan tells her story, and is shown working at the age of 16, as an advocate for working children in Bangkok. She is also seen attending night school, visiting her mom in her home village, lying in bed drawing pictures of the countryside, planning for and participating in a puppet show about child labor, and singing and dancing at a New Year's party for child workers.

On a typical day, Puttinan arrives at the train station at 7:30 in the morning to meet children who are arriving in Bangkok to look for jobs. She talks with them about the dangers of talking to strangers, accepting snacks that may be laced with drugs, and being tricked into prostitution. She also shows them around "The Second Home," a Bangkok shelter for children. A sequence featuring her work with one boy who has just arrived provides a view of this process, and the educational materials Puttinan uses.

In making the point about the severity of the child labor problem in Thailand, the film provides some useful statistics about the economic hardship in the countryside and the alarming numbers of young children who have migrated to Bangkok to work and send money home. In addition, the film also shows some disturbing scenes of children working at highly repetitive jobs in factories. Some of the children are clearly physically and mentally disabled, and many others are very thin.

While the film does not provide a balanced view of teenage life in Thailand, the focus on Puttinan does put a human and multi-dimensional face on the child labor problem. Also, since Puttinan has stopped working in a factory and is attending school, the viewer is left with a glimmer of hope.

While the film contains some disturbing images of children working in harsh conditions, it is, I think, suitable for more mature elementary students, and certainly for middle school, high school and college students. This program could easily be used to encourage discussions about young people in other cultures, and about problems young people face at home and abroad. A caution: As would be the case with any film about social problems, this program provides an uneven slice of Thai life, and should be presented in the context of other information about Thailand. ✦

Merle Wallace is Assistant Professor of Education and Anthropology at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. She has conducted ethnographic fieldwork and written about Thai and Lahu college student cultures in Northern Thailand.

The Story of Puttinan is available from Bullfrog Films. Price is $175 for purchase and $50 for rental.

Cambodia: Land of Beauty but Uncertainty

>> Produced and distributed by the Mennonite Central Committee. 1994. 13 minutes.

This set of slides, transferred to video and set to Khmer music, is a beautiful and well-presented introduction to recent Cambodian history and current conditions. The photos begin with scenes of daily life, scenery, houses, the Royal Palace and many shots of people's faces. The story is thus personalized from the outset. A brief overview of early history emphasizes the Angkor Wat temple complex. We are walked through a single year in the agricultural cycle from New Year's celebrations to planting through harvesting. Then the tone shifts to the upheavals of the last twenty-five years, including the American bombing, the coup that ended the monarchy, the rise of the Khmer Rouge and the horrors of their rule. The emphasis is on the fact that no one in Cambodia was left untouched by the death and destruction of this period. What is highlighted about the next decade, after the Vietnamese ousted the Khmer Rouge, is the rebuilding of the country and the embargo from the West. Fighting continued in the 1980s with remnants of the Khmer Rouge allied with two small non-communist resistance factions who had support from China and the West. The video then shifts to note the peace negotiations, and the United Nations mission. More than 90 percent of the registered voters turned out on election day in 1993, electing a new government.

A realistic discussion follows of the problems that remain: banditry, crime, economic instability, a growing gap between urban and rural populations, and the legacy of landmines. Mention is made of the newly legalized Christian church. Finally, the video discusses the work of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), which has been working in Cambodia since 1981. The pictures show MCC projects: irrigation, tree planting, well drilling and health care training.

The video does an excellent job of summarizing a complex historical and political situation in a brief package. While the narrator speaks slowly and clearly, the nature of the material might restrict the use of this piece to older audiences. The video would be good for all adult audiences with no previous knowledge of the country. It could also be useful for high school or middle school classes, though teachers at any level should be prepared for tough questions like: Why did the U.S. bomb Cambodia? Why did the Khmer Rouge kill so many people? Why did the U.S. support the Khmer Rouge for the seat at the UN? By putting so much information into such a short piece, the producers by necessity raise more questions than they have time to answer.

My criticisms are few. The correct pronunciation of the name of the capital is Phnom Penh, with the "Ph" pronounced, not 'Nom Penh. The

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

mention of the Christian church seems unnecessary, but obviously there are other uses for this film, including fundraising for MCC projects. The film is slightly dated, since it predates the July 1997 coup, the defeat of the remnants of the Khmer Rouge, and the death of Pol Pot.

There are very few films available on contemporary Cambodia, and many of those focus only on the violence. This film is useful because while giving an overview of recent upheavals, it also gives us, however briefly, a glimpse into people's lives. ✦

Judy Ledgerwood is Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Southeast Asian Studies at Northern Illinois University. She is co-editor of two books, *Cambodian Culture Since 1975: Homeland and Exile* (1994) and *Propaganda, Politics and Violence in Cambodia* (1995).

Cambodia: Land of Beauty But Uncertainty is available from the Mennonite Central Committee. Price is $15. The video is also available for loan.

We Are Not Your Monkeys and *Occupation: Millworker*

>> Both films produced by Anand Patwardhan. Distributed by First Run Icarus Films. 1996. 5 and 20 minutes.

These two short pieces are presented on one videotape together. The pieces are related in that they both present working-class or lower-class Indians, and their responses to situations of oppression and disenfranchisement. The first *We Are Not Your Monkeys* is a cultural response to the situation and the second *Occupation: Millworker* is a political response.

We Are Not Your Monkeys presents an interesting counterpoint to Hindu nationalism from within a Hindu social system in a concise format. A group of Dalits (oppressed, formerly know as untouchables or Harijans [children of god, as coined by Mohandas Gandhi]) sing two songs on this 5-minute video. The first addresses the origins of the Hindu social system with the coming of Aryans to South Asia (an event some revisionist Hindu nationalist historians are now challenging as a colonial invention) and the start of the subjugation of the indigenous peoples to them, and relates this system to the Hindu epic *Ramayana,* casting the Dalits as the monkey army of the Monkey General Hanuman. The second song the group sings starts with an account of the writing of the Indian constitution and its main author, Dr. Ambedkar, the founder of the Dalit movement and a Dalit himself. In this song, the Hindu nationalists are accused of creating a diversion from the failure of the Indian state to meet its constitutional duties to supply basic needs for the poor and to eliminate caste discrimination by demonizing Muslims through the issue of Babri Masjid and other matters, and of trying to turn Dalits and low caste Hindus into a new monkey army against the Muslims of India. Aside from the unusual forum in which these ideas are presented, the amazing thing about this troupe is that their songs convey these very complex ideas in a genuinely entertaining and moving format which sticks in the mind after hearing. Hearing these ideas presented at a political rally, where they would be more expected, would not be nearly as memorable for either the audience in person or students who view this video, as their presentation in song. The question which is left unanswered in this video is: who else is likely to hear this? The troupe is filmed in what looks like an abandoned factory, or perhaps a vacant lot in a *basti* (a squatter settlement) with virtually no audience. Filming them in a wider context may have been more effective in making their songs seem like a living part of the Indian political scene.

Aside from the unusual forum in which these ideas are presented, the amazing thing about this troupe is that their songs convey these very complex ideas in a genuinely entertaining and moving format which sticks in the mind after hearing.

Occupation: Millworker presents the case of a group of Mumbai (Bombay) millworkers who have been locked out of their cotton mill for 4 years. The mill was apparently closed due to a bank foreclosure, although this seems to be somewhat of a ruse so that the mill owner can sell the now very expensive real estate on which the mill is situated. The mill workers manage to break the lock that the bank has put on the mill and enter it to begin cleaning it up and getting it ready to operate. Much is made of questioning the workers on how they came to this pass, and on whether or not they will be able to run the mill on their own. The gist of this question of ability to run the mill is whether the workers have the technical skill to do so without management. It would seem a naive question at best as the general admiration shown for the workers throughout the film seems to give way to skepticism about their technical abilities. This question also begs the much more important question, which is: can the workers operate the mill in such a way that they can make a living from it? Much as the workers rue it, the changing economics of India in general and Mumbai in particular made it more attractive for the mill owner to shut the mill than to continue to operate it. No attention is given to the question of why the situation should be any different with the workers running the mill. This is not to say that they cannot run it profitably, that seems to be accepted as a given by the filmmaker, but no evidence is offered as to why this is so. ❖

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Keith Snodgrass is Outreach Coordinator and Assistant Director of the South Asia Center at the Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington. His work has focused on religion and politics in North India and Pakistan, as well as on K-12 education about South Asia in the U.S. He has taught courses on media and society in South Asia and reviews materials for several education journals.

We are Not Your Monkeys and *Occupation: Millworker* are available on one video from First Run Icarus Films. Price is $190 for purchase and $50 for rental.

Teaching with Films

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witnesses mass killings by the Nationalists and is promised that if he serves Mao's army he will be returned to his family. With the victory of the Communists in 1949, Fughi returns home. He finds that Longer who became a rich landlord as the result of his gambling was publicly denounced and murdered. Fughi acknowledges that it is good to be poor because the Communist party favors the proletariat and desires to improve the lot of the people of China.

During the Great Leap Forward the Xu family experiences communal living and donates pots and pans to help with the production of steel. Their young son dies in a tragic accident while working to help modernize China. During the Cultural Revolution the daughter falls in love with a Red Guard. The wedding celebration features Communist propaganda songs, and the wedding gifts are Mao's little red book. During the Cultural Revolution all doctors are considered intellectuals and therefore suspect. When the daughter goes into labor and develops complications, she dies because trained hospital personnel are no longer available. In spite of constant tragedy, Fughi and Jiazhen rebound again and again because of strong family ties and their belief that communism brings hope of a better life.

In *Shall We Dance?* (119 minutes) students are transported from a drab, barren village in rural China to the modern, vibrant city of Tokyo. This contemporary comedy humanizes the Japanese and offers American students an intimate view of a typical Japanese family. The film culminates six weeks of Japanese history, society, and culture. The principal resources are

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Teaching with Films

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Edwin Reischauer's *The Japanese Today* and *Tora No Maki.*

The comment at the beginning of the movie explains that in Japan, where even married couples do not embrace in public, ballroom dancing is "beyond embarassing." Mr. Sugiyama, an attractive Tokyo businessman, has spent most of his married life working his way up the career ladder. He has been able to make enough money for a down-payment on a house for his wife, Masako, and his teenage daughter, Natsuko. He gets up early every morning, eats breakfast, rides his bicycle to the station, then rides the train to work. At night he reverses this procedure, has dinner, and tumbles into bed. He feels boxed in.

His life changes when he looks out the train window one evening. He sees a beautiful, melancholy woman, Mai, who is looking out from her dance studio. Captivated by her, Mr. Sugiyama tells no one of his decision to take dancing lessons. He quickly becomes excited about the world of dance and hopes to have dance lessons with Mai. Night after night he comes home late. Masako realizes that something is wrong, but as a traditional Japanese wife she does not confront the man that she loves. She hires a detective.

The acting and dancing in *Shall We Dance?* are brilliant. Students will be amused and deeply touched. They witness the Japanese work ethic and etiquette, the pressures of everyday living, and the separate lives of executive husbands and wives. They better understand the tremendous pressures on the Japanese to conform. Director Masayuki Suo's message: many Japanese wish to change and to find greater meaning and enjoyment in their lives.

The acting and dancing in *Shall We Dance?* are brilliant. Students will be amused and deeply touched.

Sopyonje (117 minutes) is the first internationally recognized Korean film. While it might be more difficult to locate, it is well worth the effort. I introduced my students to this film for the first time this year; the impact was stunning. *Sopyonje* opened their world to the human experience of being Korean in the twentieth century. Each one of my students professed love for the film.

The story takes place during the 1950s and 1960s. Dongho, a man in his thirties, arrives at a village looking for his beautiful sister, Songwha. They were orphaned when very young, and Yubong, a man who loved their widowed mother, cares for them after she dies. He is a vagabond singer and teaches Songwha *pansori* (traditional Korean folk music) and Dongho the drum. They wander about Korea entertaining, but their lives get harder during and after the Korean War.

COURTESY OF KOREAN CULTURAL SERVICE

With the influence of Western culture, *pansori* gradually gets less popular. Dissatisfied with the poverty and hardships of his life, Dongho leaves after a spat with Yubong who seeks perfection. Obedient to her father, but overcome with sorrow, Songwha is unable to sing. Yubong blinds her because he believes that blindness will lead to her mastery of *pansori.* Songwha's life is incredibly pitiful, especially after Yubong's death.

At the end of the film Dongho finds his sister. They are reunited through the hauntingly beautiful singing of Songwha and Dongho's drum accompaniment. While they never acknowledge each other in conversation, their love and joy of being reunited is incredibly moving; however, they separate after a night of singing and drumming together. Dongho leaves, and Songwha continues her vagabond life.

Fascinated by the new sounds and rhythm of *pansori*, my students wanted to purchase the soundtrack. Not only were they moved by the story and the music, but they connected emotionally to the Korean people and their tenacity in preserving their culture. In the process of viewing *Sopyonje*, my students traveled with the *pansori* singers along the beautiful countryside and villages of Korea through the seasons of the year.

In follow-up activities students discussed the commonalities between the three Asian cultures, such as close family ties and the limited role of women. In culminating activities students wrote short papers that explained how each film has deepened their understanding of China, Japan, and Korea. ✦

Mary Connor is a high school teacher of Asian Studies and Advanced Placement United States history at Westridge School in Pasadena, California. She has been published in *Social Education*, *Social Studies Review*, and *Education about Asia* and has spoken at annual conferences of the National Council for Social Studies the past four years. During the summer of 1997, she participated in the Keizai Koho Center fellowship program to Japan.

Tora No Maki I, II, and *III*, curriculum guides written by participants in the Keizai Koho Center fellowship program to Japan, are available from the National Council for the Social Studies. Tel: 202-966-7840.

Videography

To Live (1994, Director: Zhang Yimou, 132 minutes) is available from Facets Video. Price is $19.98.

Shall We Dance? (1996, Director: Masayuki Suo, 119 minutes) is available from Facets Video. Price is $103.99.

Sopyonje (1993, Director: Kwon-taek Im, 117 minutes) is available from the Korean Cultural Service. Duplication of the video may be requested by sending a blank tape and specifying the title.

COURTESY OF FIRST RUN ICARUS FILMS

Electric Shadows

>> Directed by Herve and Renaud Cohen. Distributed by First Run Icarus Films. 1993. 26 minutes.

This well-crafted and subtle film follows the development of a traveling cinema troupe (from Xiuwen Commune) consisting of two men and one woman to explore the impact of the Post-Mao market reform on rural culture. Set in the heartland of Sichuan, the film opens with a memorable scene of an old peasant woman singing to the camera the famous theme song of *Street Angel* (1936). Her obvious enthusiasm evokes a sense of nostalgia that becomes the underlying tone of the film.

Set in the heartland of Sichuan, the film opens with a memorable scene of an old peasant woman singing to the camera the famous theme song of *Street Angel* (1936).

The film keeps narration to a minimum, and thereby enhances the "realism" of the rural life it has "recorded." As the narrative voice tells us, traveling cinema began around 1949 when the Communist government recognized the importance of film as a tool of propaganda and sent troupes to the countryside where there were no established theaters. So itinerant film projectionists were propaganda officials, prestigious and privileged. But things have rapidly changed after the onset of the economic reform. Carefully following the daily routines of the traveling troupe, which is responsible for twenty villages, with a nice mix of long and medium shots, the film shows us the various aspects of daily life in the countryside and the difficult lives of itinerant film projectionists. We watch them carrying loads of projection equipment and films and slides on their shoulders as they climb hills and cross bridges and walk long hours on muddy roads just to get to their job sites. But the greatest threat to the troupe is the privatization of the economy and the increasing diversity of forms of mass entertainment since the 1980s. Now they no longer descend to the village as the agent of the state ideology. Rather, under the pressure of what one projectionist calls the "marketization of cinema," they become semi-private entrepreneurs at the mercy of the peasants who pay for the screening. They need to show kung-fu films, along with educational materials (which the state requires), to keep the audiences happy. They are forced also to supplement their meager income by showing films to private occasions. In fact, a rich peasant hires the Xiuwen troupe to show films, which include the 1960 classic *Liu San Jie* (Third Sister Liu), at his nephew's wedding ceremony. *Electric Shadows* ends with a moving scene in which all the middle-aged guests at the film show are singing with both enthusiasm and nostalgia, just as the old woman does at the film's opening scene, the famous theme song of *Liu San Jie* while watching it on the screen.

The last scene of *Electric Shadows* brings out important questions regarding Chinese society and culture in the 1980s and 1990s: to what extent is nostalgia a significant ethos in post-Mao/Deng China? How would popular culture develop in the contemporary Chinese village? This fine film would surely provoke fruitful discussions and reflections in any twentieth-century China course. ✦

When Cultures Collide: China and the U.S. in the 21st Century

>> Part of the *NewsMatters* series. Produced and distributed by Knowledge Unlimited, Inc. 1998. 20 min.

With President Clinton's policy of "comprehensive engagement" with China in the news as well as the usual contentious issues regarding China, i.e., human rights, trade, and security, the importance of teaching about U.S.–China relations in U.S. high school classrooms cannot be overemphasized.

When Cultures Collide: China and the U.S. in the 21st Century is one in a series of six *NewsMatters* programs. Each 15–20 minute video in the *NewsMatters* series examines an issue or topic in the news.

Knowledge Unlimited notes that its programs are "designed to promote discussion and critical thinking in the classroom," and that its videos "rarely if ever provide clear-cut conclusions about an issue. Rather, each video's goal is to leave more questions in viewers' minds than answers." These objectives and goal are most effectively met in this very useful classroom supplement.

When Cultures Collide: China and the U.S. in the 21st Century explores China's role as a global power and also poses questions such as "How can the United States effectively oppose China's

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Poshek Fu teaches history and cinema studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is completing a book on the cultural politics of occupied Shanghai cinema during World War II.

Electric Shadows is available from First Run Icarus Films. Price is $190 for purchase and $50 for rental.

Japan: The Tarnished Miracle

>> Produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Distributed by Filmakers Library. 1999. 18 minutes.

This video is superficial, sensationalistic, inaccurate, and underinformed. By trying to do too much with too little, it undercuts both its quality and its utility.

Four issues crucial to the 1990s come under treatment. They are the general conditions of the Japanese economy, changing modes of work and job loyalty, the dilemmas arising from the rapid growth of an elderly population, and difficulties associated with new immigrants. The selection of issues is commendable, because these four matters are assuredly important, owing to their centrality and their apparent intractability. It is the manner in which these issues are treated that vitiates the documentary's value.

Four issues crucial to the 1990s come under treatment…conditions of the Japanese economy, changing modes of work and job loyalty, the dilemmas arising from the rapid growth of an elderly population, and difficulties associated with new immigrants.

The format relies almost entirely on static visual images of a few talking heads. The three major ones are putative authorities on the economy, society, and the elderly, respectively. These arbitrarily chosen figures are, for the most part, prudent and deliberate in their comments. However, the video is edited to sensationalize their words by ripping them out of context and redeploying them in an overly portentous narrative. Moreover, in this work that runs barely eighteen minutes in all, highly complex problems are often treated in just a sentence or two, against a background of brief clips of a job site, a youth group, or an elderly widow.

Although the producers focus on the right issues, they treat them wrongly. One minor irritant is the frequent mispronunciation of Japanese terms. Another is the presence of crucial errors. These include a serious underestimate of the value of commercial bank debt in Japan today, and a gross misrepresentation of what is often called "lifetime" employment in postwar Japan. The video is also underinformed about a number of critical topics. One is the history of work opportunities for Japanese women, both before and after 1945. Another is the explanation for Japan's rapid economic growth between 1955 and 1974. Such lapses are inexcusable in the 1990s, because there is a large body of concise, authoritative scholarship readily available on modern Japan to assist documentary makers in commanding, if not mastering, their subject before filming.

Teachers working with juniors and seniors in high schools and/or freshmen and sophomores at the college level might be able to use this documentary for one, fifty-minute session. They would have to provide a great deal of supplementary material in advance, in order to situate the issues addressed in a fuller, more appropriate context. They would also have to recognize that the video provides basically just a small set of opinions felt by individuals experiencing economic recession, job change, and care-giving demands. That said and done, I think the documentary could then provoke a short but spirited discussion. ❖

Gary D. Allison is the Ellen Bayard Weedon Professor of East Asian Studies at the University of Virginia, where he specializes in the history of modern Japan. His interpretative study of *Japan's Postwar History* (1997) has been widely adopted for use in college classrooms. He is completing work on *The Columbia Guide to Modern Japanese History*, scheduled for publication in summer, 1999.

Japan: The Tarnished Miracle is available from Filmakers Library. Price is $195 for purchase and $55 for rental.

Cultures Collide

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communist government while contributing so significantly to its growth?" and "How does the United States feel about its role as the biggest trade partner with a country that does not support many basic human rights for its people?" A succinct history of Chinese communism is presented as well as sketches of some of China's past political leaders. The video provides students with the historical context for examining present leadership in China and contemporary issues such as U.S.–China trade relations and China's most-favored-nation trading status. U.S. high school students' perspectives on these issues are effectively woven into the script.

This 20-minute video raises many complex questions for students and given its length and even-handed treatment of contentious issues, would be a very useful supplement to high school classes on Asian studies, world history, international economics, U.S. history, or contemporary issues.

A 12-page teacher's guide provides background information for the teacher, readiness activities, discussion questions, and several reproducible activities which range in complexity from locating China's political leaders' names among a maze of letters to interpreting political cartoons and graphs on Chinese trade and responding to questions regarding U.S.-China and China-Taiwan relations. An interesting activity focuses on cultural and social differences between China and the United States.

The example given is one that focuses on differences between U.S. and Chinese views on human rights. It is presented in a balanced, even-handed manner, and encourages students to consider perspectives on both sides.

The video kit also comes with an 11" x 17" poster called "A Guide to China," which shows the geographic location of places such as Tibet, the Yangtze River, Macau, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Beijing and notes important facts and significant events that occurred in these places. This poster could serve multiple purposes in a classroom—not only as a student reference and a quick snapshot of historical events in China's history but also as a sample poster from which students can develop their own.

Lastly, the *NewsMatters* Web site <http://www.ku.com> provides regularly updated information on various topics related to its programs. ❖

Gary Mukai is the Director of the Asia/Pacific Project of the Stanford Program on International and Cross-cultural Education (SPICE), and Acting Director of SPICE, Stanford University. SPICE specializes in the development of curriculum for K-12 schools on international topics.

When Cultures Collide: China and the U.S. in the 21st Century is available from Knowledge Unlimited, Inc. Price is $59.95.

The Effect of TV on Culture in India

>> Produced by Simon Lawson and BBC, The Open University. Distributed by Films for the Humanities and Sciences. 1996. 30 minutes.

This is a look at television in India in 1996. It points out that with the introduction of satellite and cable TV there has been a tremendous boom in Indian television in the last 15 years. In a country like India with its huge population, 50 percent literacy rate, weak communications network and linguistic and cultural diversity, TV could have tremendous power for change. The film indicates that TV thus far has fallen far short of its potential. TV programs have been directed primarily at entertaining the middle class, and, with the exception of programs on such topics as family planning and sanitation broadcast by Doodarshan, the official Government television channel, television has ignored the rural majority.

The narrator tells us that commercial television first came to India at the time of the Gulf War when through satellite broadcasting Star TV broke the monopoly of Doodarshan. Star brought popular musical channels and lively TV programs. The real breakthrough came in 1992 with the introduction of Zee TV providing soap operas, popular music and dance, sitcoms and news broadcast in Hindi. It forced Doodarshan to start its own popular channel called "Metro." Now there are a dozen satellites, broadcasting in all major languages with about 40 channels to choose from and reaching 15 million homes. Most of the TV shows are produced in the Indian film capital, Mumbai (Bombay). As demand for new shows has increased, more and more producers are resorting to showing old Hindi popular films. India has the second largest television advertising market in the world but its economic impact is uncertain. While one commentator said that this advertising helps the government's economic liberalization program by stimulating interest in new products, another pointed out that advertising has created more useless consumerism and siphoned money from savings.

The video alternates between snippets from popular TV shows and learned commentaries by producers and professors. The excerpts from Indian TV films showing lively popular musical and dance routines and bits from melodramatic soap operas in both Hindi and English provide some provocative and interesting moments and some idea of what Indians view on television. The weakest part of the video is in its treatment of its major theme—the effect of TV on Indian culture. Although there is reference to the way in which modern ideas on women have been introduced through rebellious soap opera heroines, there is nothing said about the way musical programs have influenced musical tastes or how such programs as the serialized epics, the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, have influenced popular Hinduism. Nor is there any mention of the impact of the news programming on Indian politics. The video seems too narrow in its subject matter to appeal to high school students and too simplistic for students in college-level communications courses. ✦

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Blair B. Kling has been teaching South Asian history and civilization at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign since 1962. He has published numerous books and articles on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Indian history and is currently working on a study of Jamshedpur, a center of steel and automobile manufacturing in eastern India.

The Effect of TV on Culture in India is available from Films for the Humanities and Sciences. Price is $89.95.

Heart of the Country

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school with its community. I would encourage viewers to figure out the unstated questions of the filmmakers—both those that underlay the larger project and those questions not heard as people responded to interviewers not shown in the film. Because the film is not child-centered and does not focus on children's perspectives of the school, it would not have as much interest for children. But it is an excellent antidote for a narrow educational interest in Japanese children's high rates of academic achievement. ✦

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John Singleton has studied education in Japan, beginning with an ethnography of a semi-rural middle school in relation to its community (*Nichū: A Japanese School*, 1967) and more recently has focused on apprenticeship in Japanese folkcraft pottery villages. He is Professor Emeritus of Education and Anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh and is the editor of *Learning in Likely Places: Varieties of Apprenticeship in Japan* (1998).

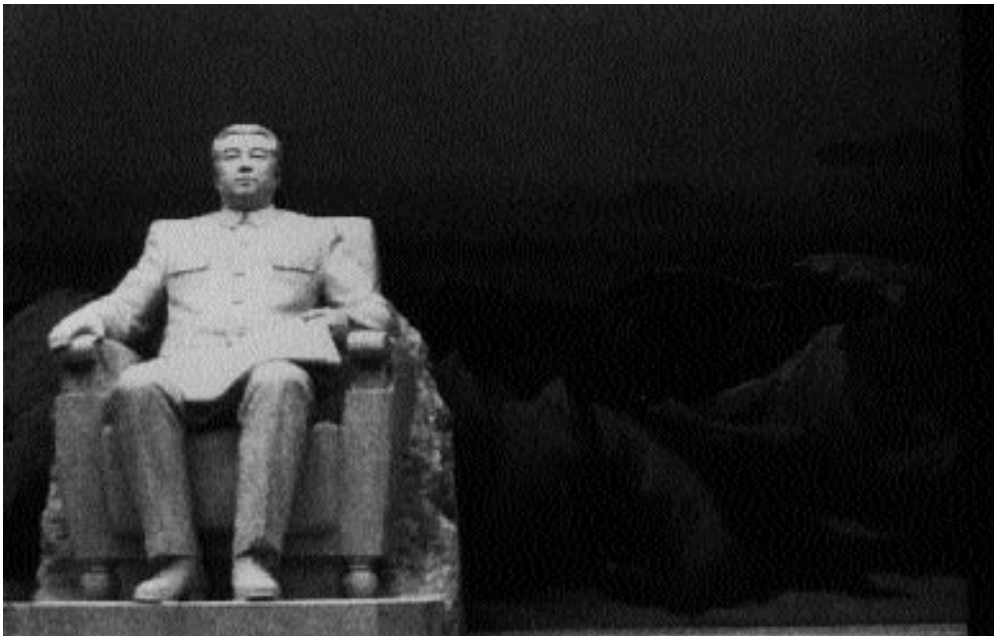
Heart of the Country is available from First Run Icarus Films. Price for 58-minute version is $390 for purchase and $75 for rental. Price for 90-minute version is $440 for purchase and $100 for rental.

LEONARD KAMERLING

Students, teachers, parents, and community people look on as rice is pounded for the making of *mochi* (rice cakes), a tradition of Kanayama Elementary School's Snow Festival.

Pyongyang Diaries

>> Written, directed, and narrated by Solrun Hoaas. Distributed by First Run Icarus Films. 1998. 52 minutes.



COURTESY OF FIRST RUN ICARUS FILMS

The Norwegian-Australian director Solrun Hoaas' documentary *Pyongyang Diaries* offers a rare and unusual glimpse into the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, North Korea). What few images of North Korea reach the West are generally threatening glimpses of military parades, stock footage of the controversial nuclear reactor at Yongbyon, or—more recently—wrenching photographs of children emaciated by famine. North Korea's international "image problem" is a result both of the DPRK government's extremely careful control of outgoing information and of the Western media's preoccupation with sensationalism: war and famine sell news; everyday life does not. Hoaas' film makes a great contribution to our awareness of this little-seen and poorly understood country by showing that, indeed, everyday life does go on in the DPRK, despite the regime's self-portrayal of monolithic solidarity and the Western (and South Korean) portrayal of North Korea as a nation of mobilized automatons. The film stands virtually alone, at least among English-language documentaries, in its balanced, non-ideological and humane attempt to get "inside" the DPRK and show some of the contradiction, complexity, and diversity of life in today's North Korea.

The film is based on two visits the director made in 1994 and 1996, the former as the first Australian filmmaker to attend the Pyongyang International Film Festival. The film shifts back and forth between the two visits, which creates some confusion at times. Hoaas is clearly no expert on Korea, and sometimes it shows. The film relies excessively on long interviews with English-speaking guides whose opinions are not always terribly interesting or informative. Overall, the film has a rough, home-made feel that can be distracting; occasionally, for instance, the director's narration becomes inaudible. Nevertheless, in part because of the low-budget nature of the film (hand-held camera, no film crew in sight), Hoaas is able to get into the nooks and crannies that most larger productions could not. Sometimes she pushes too far and is firmly told to point her camera elsewhere, but only at one point toward the end of the film does she begin to show irritation at the official restrictions on her filming. Her attempt to uncover the spontaneity in this ostensibly highly regulated society is laudable. One of the most striking scenes is a shot of aging *halmonis* (grandmothers) dancing gaily in a park. In another scene, children are loitering on the street, and then march to school singing a paean to Kim Jong Il. Hoaas interviews people on the streets as well as artists, actors, and dancers, and refreshingly avoids all government officials (unless one counts her guides as officials).

Pyongyang Diaries is a remarkable film simply for the fact of being made. It provides a much-needed counterbalance to the available print and film resources on "Korea" which are almost entirely devoted to South Korea and usually ignore the one third of the Korean population who live North of the DMZ.

The film includes visits to the city of Kaesong and the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) dividing North and South Korea, as well as a trip to Paektu Mountain on the Sino-Korean border where she sees the log-cabin "birthplace" of Kim Jong Il (who, outside of North Korea, is thought to have been born in Russia). There is also a brief interview with a North Korean defector to South Korea shot in 1997. Hoaas made the film before the North Korean famine reached its peak in the spring and summer of 1997; when I visited Pyongyang in late 1997 everyday life was a bit grimmer than the film portrays.

Pyongyang Diaries is a remarkable film simply for the fact of being made. It provides a much-needed counterbalance to the available print and film resources on "Korea" which are almost entirely devoted to South Korea and usually ignore the one third of the Korean population who live North of the DMZ. Appreciation of the film requires some background in Korean and East Asian history and international affairs. It would be best for college-level or possibly high school courses on Korean or Asian history and society, provided the teacher gave supplementary materials to the students in advance. The film could also be useful outside the classroom to broaden public understanding of North Korea, whose people are currently suffering great hardship but where life, somehow, does go on. ✦

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Charles Armstrong is Assistant Professor of History at Columbia University, where he specializes in modern Korean and East Asian history. He has published numerous articles on Korean history and politics and is writing a book on the formation of the DPRK in the late 1940s. He visited North Korea in November 1997 with a humanitarian assistance organization.

Pyongyang Diaries is available from First Run Icarus Films. Price is $390 for purchase and $75 for rental.

From the Editorial Board

"From the Editorial Board" is a column in which members of our on-campus editorial board comment on their experience with media about Asia and suggest exemplary materials in their areas of expertise. This second column is written by Nancy Abelmann, Associate Professor of Anthropology and East Asian Languages and Cultures.

Several years ago one of my Latin Americanist colleagues approached me about the possibility of using in her courses several of the Korea-focused videos I had ordered for the department. Needless to say, I was delighted, delighted that Korea-focused materials would find their way to general anthropology classrooms. As you know, the representation of the Koreas in curriculum on East Asia remains sparse; thus many Koreanists are deeply committed to promoting the inclusion of the Koreas in studies and in representations of Asia generally, and East Asia in particular. Some Koreanists lament a dearth of pedagogically friendly materials on the Koreas, but I have long felt that the problem lies not in the materials, but rather with educators who don't quite know where to begin when it comes to the Koreas. This is where the right video can play a role—by bringing written materials on the Koreas to life. Of course the "right" video also needs the right introduction, especially when one is straying into areas and topics far afield from one's training—the constant in the life of an educator! This is where AEMS comes in; it is AEMS's combined commitment to expertise and education that makes its work so valuable.

In my own teaching I have found that students never complain about the length or difficulty of a video assignment outside of class and that subsequent classroom discussions are always enhanced. Although it is almost cliché to note, I count myself among those teachers who have been dazzled by the visual acumen and literacy of my students. John Berger and Jean Mohr's *Another Way of Telling*, a book of photographic essays and essays on photography, has been a favorite of mine for anthropology classes because it has always incited enormous debate on the theory and methods of anthropology—debates not incited with equal verve by written works! In my own teaching on South Korea I have incorporated not only videos but a number of subtitled feature films available through the Korean consulates of New York and Los Angeles.

Let me take my soap-box moment to recommend a few videos, to encourage you too to put the Koreas on your map. *An Initiation Kut for a Korean Shaman* is an especially accessible (and inexpensive!) video by Laurel Kendall (with Diana Lee, videographer), an American anthropologist of Korea. It refers loosely to two of her books: a monograph on Korean shamanism, *Shamans, Housewives, and Other Restless Spirits* (University of Hawaii Press, 1985), and *The Life and Hard Times of a Korean Shaman* (University of Hawaii Press, 1988), a fascinating analysis of one woman's tales about her life. The video offers an unlikely protagonist, a woman who, in spite of the gaze of the cameras and many onlookers, is having a very hard time being initiated—she simply is not moved by the spirits. The apparent failure of the initiate makes the film a wonderful touchstone for discussions about belief and religion generally, allowing students to explore how difficult it is to think about, to translate, religious practices remote from their own experiences.

Nancy Abelmann

Homes Apart is a remarkable video that takes up what Choong Soon Kim (*Faithful Endurance: An Ethnography of Korean Family Dispersal*, University of Arizona Press, 1988) calls sundered families, those divided families resulting from the north-south division of Korea. The film follows the travels of one middle-aged Korean American man to North Korea where he meets his mother very briefly. The actual moments in the video devoted to the brief visit in North Korea are few; the video's focus is rather on the strange configuration that Korean family dispersal takes—in this case among South Korea, Japan, the United States, and North Korea. The video thus maps a complex geopolitical and historical story on the far-flung lives of a single family. To my recollection, the film begins and ends with the voices of the traveler's twin girls, adding the child's mind's eye to this story and making the video particularly accessible for young people. I cannot help but digress with a story myself. When I first showed the video in a classroom at the University of Illinois, one of the students became visibly very excited when the traveler first appeared, exclaiming that he was her uncle. I was taken aback, and a bit confused as to how to proceed; I stopped the video and asked her how she felt about our class watching a video that she had never seen about her own uncle. She gave the go-ahead and what is in any viewing a very emotional film, brought an entire classroom to tears—that the tragedy of the Korean division had somehow found its way into the life of a fellow student was too much to bear.

Let me also introduce *Sa-i-gu*, meaning 4-2-9 (or April 29, referring to the Los Angeles Riots/Uprising), a video documenting Korean women's responses to the 1992 Los Angeles Riots, and particularly to the Korean story in those Riots, as one of the key groups of victims of looting and burning. Most of the women featured in the video are first generation adult immigrants, much more at home speaking in Korean, and very much transnationals. I like this film not only because it touches on an important historical chapter in U.S. recent history but because we are privy to Korean émigré women talking, and we get a sense of them and their worlds beyond the particular (and, of course, important) frame of the Riots. While, I am straying to the terrain, so often a transnational one, of Asian America, let me close with a brief mention of a favorite personal/documentary video, *History and Memory*, a beautiful and moving autobiographical film featuring the voice and gaze of the daughter of Japanese American parents interned during World War II. The video presents the shards and fragments in the narrator's life that have come to stand for her parents' history: from family momentos to snippets of Hollywood films. Like *Sa-i-gu*, this video's borders or boundaries are hard to draw. *History and Memory* leads to rich discussion about just that, history and memory. Both of these videos can be supplemented by easily available writings on the Los Angeles Riots and the Japanese Internment.

Videography

History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige (1991, 32 minutes) is available from Women Make Movies. Price is $275 for purchase and $75 for rental.

Homes Apart: Korea (1991, 56 minutes) is available from Third World Newsreel. Price is $225 for purchase and $75 for rental.

An Initiation Kut for a Korean Shaman (1992, 36 minutes) is available from the University of Hawaii Press. Price is $30.

Sa-i-gu (1993, 36 minutes) is available from NAATA Distribution. Price is $150 for purchase and $65 for rental.

Exploring Cultural Continuity and Change in Bali with Videos and Readings

>> by Clark E. Cunningham

essay

Economic development may founder when technology-oriented development specialists lack understanding of the vital links between material and symbolic elements in a society. The integration of two excellent videos and related readings can allow a teacher to explore this issue on the island of Bali, which is a microcosm for development in many Southeast Asian societies. *The Three Worlds of Bali*, a video suitable for grade 11 through college level, vividly introduces issues of cultural continuity and change. One sees television used to communicate messages about Hindu-Balinese religion and the vitality of traditional rituals, and one learns about the violent encounters between Balinese and Dutch in the early twentieth century, as well as the present encounters with foreign tourists who come to Bali by the hundreds of thousands each year to experience its aesthetically sophisticated culture. One learns of ecological change caused by introduction of new "Green Revolution" rice varieties and technologies in the 1970s, and one sees the uneasy relationship between Balinese and their Gods, and between Balinese and the Indonesian national government, reflected in the vivid drama of *Eka Dasa Rudra*, a ceremony held once a century.

This video, rich in content and well photographed, has insightful commentary by J. Stephen Lansing, an anthropologist at the University of Michigan who has devoted his career to studying Bali. Lansing's article, "Balinese Water Temples and the Management of Irrigation" (*American Anthropologist*, 89, 1986, pp. 326-341) complements the film and could be read by a teacher or by college-level students for a deeper understanding of the way in which Hindu temples and ritual regulated the flow of irrigation water on the island. The video shows briefly how new rice varieties and irrigation techniques introduced by foreign and Indonesian "experts" did little to benefit farmers, but in fact threatened them; and how traditional temple rituals regulated the flow of water and planting cycles in a beneficial way.

A second video, Lansing's *The Goddess and the Computer*, illuminates the ways in which agriculturists, hydrologists, and the anthropologist came to understand this traditional agricultural system and how they modeled it on computers for better understanding and better utilization of the system. Teachers and advanced students can then consult his book, *Priests and Programmers: Technologies of Power in the Engineered Landscape of Bali* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991) in which he presents far greater detail on the temple-managed water system and the way in which thousands of rice farmers were linked "in hierarchies of productive relationships" over large watersheds, the pinnacle of which was the Goddess of the Crater Lake at a mountain temple. He shows how colonial imperatives of power led the Dutch to overlook (misunderstand) this system, why the Green Revolution so undercut it, and why Balinese farmers returned to traditional ways. Most importantly he shows why "economic development" guided by Western scientific and technological assumptions often overlooks the fact that "the material and the symbolic form a single complex" in cultures like that of Bali.

The video shows briefly how new rice varieties and irrigation techniques introduced by foreign and Indonesian "experts" did little to benefit farmers, but in fact threatened them; and how traditional temple rituals regulated the flow of water and planting cycles in a beneficial way.

A high school or college teacher and college students could then compare this discussion of Bali by reading an article by L. Onvlee about the links between the symbolic and the material in conflicts over building a dam for irrigation on the nearby island of Sumba in the late 1930s (pp. 150-163 in *Structural Anthropology in the Netherlands*, edited by P.E. De Josselin De Jong. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977). They and advanced high school students also could read a comparative case study which deals with complex material and symbolic links between livestock and ritual feasting on the island of Flores (near Bali and Sumba) by Hans J. Daeng (pp. 254-267 in *The Real and Imagined Role of Culture in Development: Case Studies from Indonesia*, edited by Michael R. Dove. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988). In these ways videos and readings can be effectively integrated to develop broader and deeper perspectives on an issue important to contemporary Asia. ✦

Views of a water temple (top) and terraced hillside fields (bottom) in Bali. Photographed by the author.

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The Three Worlds of Bali (59 min.) and *The Goddess and the Computer* (58 min.) are available from Documentary Educational Resources. Price of *The Three Worlds of Bali* is $145 for purchase and $40 for rental. Price of *The Goddess and the Computer* is $245 for purchase and $60 for rental.

Asian Educational Media Service
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Korean Cultural Service, 2370 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008. Tel: 202-797-6343. Fax: 202-387-0413. E-mail: korinfo@koreaemb.org. Web site: http://www.koreaemb.org/new/consul/KIC/kiclib/.

Long Bow Group, 22 D Hollywood Avenue, Hohokus, NJ 07423. Tel: 201-652-1989. Fax: 201-652-1973.

Mennonite Central Committee, 21 South 12th Street, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500. Tel: 717-859-1151. Fax: 717-859-2171. Email: mccresources@mcc.org. Web site: http://www.mennonitecc.ca/mcc/resource/index.html.

NAATA Distribution (National Asian American Telecommunications Association), 346 Ninth Street, Second Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103. Tel: 415-552-9550. Fax: 415-863-7420. E-mail: distribution@naatanet.org. Web site: http://www.naatanet.org.

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