

News and Reviews

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Morning Sun

>> Produced and directed by Carma Hinton, Geremie Barmé, and Richard Gordon. 2003. 1 hour, 57 minutes.

Morning Sun tells the story of the tumultuous event commonly known as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1964–1976). Like other films that cover this pivotal

Review

event in Chinese history, we are treated to scenes and descriptions of the Great Leap Forward,

the growing cult of Mao, the Revolution itself, Communist Party Congresses, Red Guard activity, and the rise and fall of the Gang of Four. Unlike other documentary films, however, this one does not compress the events into a series of negative sound bytes recreating the political history of a lost decade. *Morning Sun* is a social history of the Cultural Revolution. It relies on the words of the historical actors to explain the psychology of revolution. There are a series of threads that



Red Guard Propaganda Team, 1968.

run throughout *Morning Sun* that help illustrate the complexity of this era. Viewers are treated to a vibrant personal history, one from which they can gain a greater understanding of post-

Communist Revolution China.

Set against the backdrop of the musical *The East is Red*, which opened in October 1964 to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic, *Morning Sun* juxtaposes China's revolutionary history prior to 1964 with that which followed. The generation that would come of age during the early- and mid-1960s, the generation that would become the Red Guard, would learn from this musical and associated propaganda that it was their responsibility to take the mantle of revolutionary leadership and move forward to promote not only Chinese revolution, but world revolution. They would be taught that Mao alone was responsible for China's newly regained greatness and that the Chinese Revolution saved the nation from the yoke of Western imperialism. There was a sense of purpose.

Like many other documentary films, *Morning Sun* relies on a series of interviews shown in combination with historical images and film footage. The interviews are the heart of this film and give

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COURTESY OF LONG BOW GROUP

Members of a commune read the Little Red Book.

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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 audio-visual 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 quarterly, 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.

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What's New?

Goodbye, Xian!

Xian Barrett, Assistant Program Coordinator for AEMS, has recently resigned in order to pursue a Masters degree in Education at National Louis University. Xian began working for AEMS in January 2003. Over the past year and a half, he has worked hard, bringing new ideas and enthusiasm to the job. The staff of the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies wishes him the best in his new venture.

More Regional Resources Pages

<http://www.aems.uiuc.edu/HTML/AsianResources/AsianResources.htm>

Over the summer we added **Taiwan** and **Brunei** to our growing list of Regional Resource pages:

- www.aems.uiuc.edu/html/asianresources/Taiwan/Taiwan.htm
- www.aems.uiuc.edu/html/asianresources/Brunei/Brunei.htm

Eventually we hope to have Resource pages for all the Asian countries as well as for significant regions. We continue to welcome suggestions of additional links for all our pages (only educational resources, please—no commercial sites unless they have significant educational content available for free). Please contact AEMS at aems@uiuc.edu with suggestions or comments.

Correction

In our last issue, I included an outdated bibliography for Jin-hee Lee, who wrote the review of *Wedding though Camera Eyes*. My apologies to Jin-hee; her correct bio follows:

Jin-hee Lee is a Ph. D. candidate in modern Japanese and Korean history at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her research focuses on the practice and representations of collective violence in the culture of empire, such as the massacre of Koreans in imperial Japan following the 1923 earthquake. ♦

—Sarah I. Barbour, Editor

Morning Sun

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it its greatest impact. Going well beyond the familiar cast of talking heads, the so-called experts in the field, the producers of *Morning Sun* have allowed the historical actors to tell their own stories. We are treated to a variety of personal perspectives that help us to understand what motivated a group of impressionable, nationalistic teenagers to turn a country upside down in the name of Chairman Mao. While not meaning to downplay the violence of the decade, it becomes clear from the interviews that common teenage issues, such as peer pressure, group conformity, and challenging parental authority, were partially responsible for the escalation in violence and fervor of the Revolution. These interviews are sincere and leave a lasting impression. One easily senses the frustration and loss of this generation that continues to this day.

In addition to interviews with members of the revolutionary generation, which includes Luo Xiaohai, the founder of the Red Guard, there are interviews with several of the Cultural Revolution's victims including Li Rui, who was a high-ranking party official and Mao's secretary, and Huang Yongyu, a prominent writer who was targeted because of his satirical writing. As with the other interviews, the viewer can tell that the effects of the Cultural Revolution have not left this group. Each, in his own way, still struggles to find meaning in the events.

Historical images complement the interviews and provide historical background. In addition to photographs and film clips that specifically relate to the interviewees, the producers have utilized a fresh set of historical images that go beyond what have become the standard post-Communist Revolution photo and film montage. Because one of the central threads that runs through this film

Asia for Educators Online, Columbia University



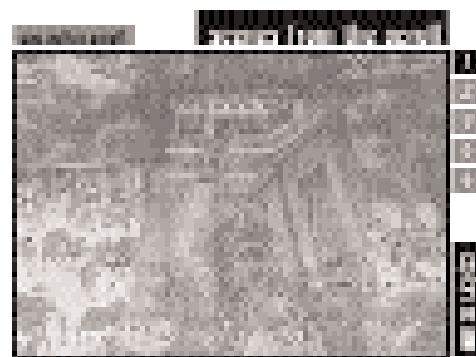
Developed by the Asia for Educators Program at Columbia University, **Asia for Educators**

Online (<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu>), is designed to serve faculty and students in world history, culture, geography, art, and literature at the undergraduate and pre-college levels. The site features classroom print units, background material for faculty, and self-contained interactive web modules accessible by subject area (geography, history, art) or by chronological periods following the National Standards in World History and the AP timelines.

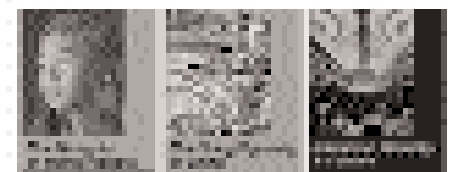
At the core of Asia for Educators Online are digitized versions of the individual units formerly comprising the popular printed teaching guides produced originally by the East Asian Curriculum Project—*China: A Teaching Workbook* and *Contemporary Japan: A Teaching Workbook* (winner of the 2000 Franklin R. Buchanan Prize for “outstanding curriculum publication”). In order to accommodate users coming to AFE Online with different approaches to the material, these units have been organized into three categories: Subject Area, Time Period, and Resource Type. The subject areas covered include art, language, literature, religion and philosophy, geography and population, society and culture, economy and trade, foreign policy and government, and inventions and ideas. The units themselves range in format from introductory readings and primary source readings with discussion questions, background readings for teachers, and classroom exercises and activities

to guides for teaching with literature and film, timelines, and theme-based chronologies.

In addition to these text-based units covering Chinese and Japanese history and culture, AFE Online has several video-based units featuring pre-eminent scholars in the field speaking on various topics—specifically on Confucianism, Tang poetry, Classical Japan, Medieval Japan, Tokugawa Japan, modern Japanese government, and contemporary Japanese culture and society—as well as three theme-based units, on China’s Song Dynasty, the Mongols and the Yuan Dynasty, and China and Europe (1500–1800) all with image banks, bibliographies, and additional classroom materials. Forthcoming in Fall 2004 is an image-rich unit on the Grandeur of the Qing Dynasty featuring four inspection tour scrolls commissioned by the Kangxi and Qianlong emperors, produced in partnership with New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art and Columbia University’s Media Center for Art History.



Featured units



Additional resources on AFE Online include an East Asia in World History Webcourse, which provides an overview of East Asian history from 400 BCE to the present; several “key points” and “central themes” units for teaching about China, Japan, Korea, India, and Southeast Asia; and a searchable database of recommended resource materials to order.

Resources currently in development include database questions (DBQs), lesson plans, illustrations, and a list of key maps for teaching about

Asia, as well as a searchable database of online Asian art resources found in museums in the U.S. and abroad.

A related AFE-developed initiative of interest to Asian studies educators is the **Forum on Asia in the Curriculum**, an online discussion board open to the community of educators at large. Launched in 2003 and with 275 registered members at present, the Forum features discussion sections for keeping up with new and ongoing developments in the field, including conferences and meetings, grant and professional development opportunities, study tours and summer seminars, as well as sections for sharing teaching tips and syllabi for specific subject areas, and also discussions specific to various professional organizations (ASIANetwork, Asian Studies Development Program, Committee on Teaching about Asia of the AAS, China Special Interest Group of the AAS, Council on Conferences of the AAS, and the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia). The Forum can be accessed at www.asiainthecurriculum.org.

Sara Leeun Huong is the Web Producer/Designer, Asia for Educators Program of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University.

is the state’s appropriation of art for the sake of revolution, we are also treated to excerpts from Cultural Revolution–era films that had significant impact on that generation.

Morning Sun is a welcome addition to the classroom because of its in-depth analysis of the Cultural Revolution and surrounding events. One of the biggest problems I find with most documentary films on post-1949 China designed for the classroom is that they are highly superficial and try to compress fifty-plus years of history into twenty-eight or so minutes. This film is accurate and detailed in its coverage. Narrated by the familiar voice of National Public Radio’s Margot Adler, *Morning Sun* maintains a level of discourse that is perhaps too sophisticated for viewers with little or no knowledge of the Cultural Revolution. For those viewers who have even the most limited understanding of the political history of this era, however, this film is highly informative and could

serve as the basis for extended discussion and analysis. The only possible drawback to using *Morning Sun* in the classroom is its length, although this is not insurmountable. The film is divided into eight parts, each of which could serve as a convenient breaking point. An additional feature that makes this film especially student/classroom-friendly is its companion Web site, www.morningsun.org/longbow, that contains a host of additional material, including interactive translations of Mao’s *Little Red Book*, extended interviews, *The East is Red* in its entirety, interactive radio and television clips, and additional historical images. ♦

David G. Wittner is Associate Professor of East Asian History at Utica College.

Morning Sun is available from NAATA in VHS. Price is \$295 for purchase. A DVD edition will be available soon.

Robert Fortune: The Tea Thief

>> A film by Diane Perelsztejn. 2001. 52 minutes.

This excellent film about tea and the tea trade comes with a provocative title. Diane Perelsztejn presents several challenging ideas and provides marvelous footage of present-day tea districts in China and India in this 52-minute film originally produced by an Australian, French, and Belgian team. Although the title and storyline are historical, the film footage provides a brief and useful introduction to several key areas of world tea production including Fujian's Wuyi Mountains and Anhui's Huangshan as well as the Darjeeling hills in India. The film includes over a dozen interviews with tea merchants, experts, and producers that add to its interest. Even the opening titles appear over a display of present-day Chinese tea ceremonial practices. I would recommend it as a film to introduce almost any topic about tea history, tea production, and Chinese tea culture. The film can be used at both the high school and college level.

The film's storyline involves a Scottish botanist, Robert Fortune, whom the British East India Company hired away in 1848 from his position as head of the Chelsea Physic Garden. The Company sent him back to China where he had conducted botanical explorations along the China coast a few

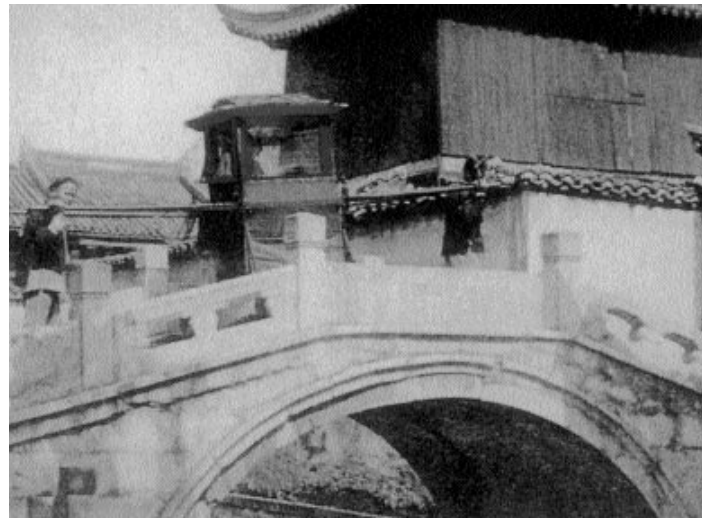
years earlier. The Company wanted Fortune for more practical, money-making purposes than his earlier findings of new species of peonies and azaleas. His new mission in China was to procure tea seeds and plants to be grown in India. The Company had lost their monopoly on importing Chinese tea in Great Britain in the 1830s and hoped to promote tea cultivation in Indian territory where the Company governed. Thus, although the British East India Company had lost its monopoly over British markets, it could insure a British-controlled supply for the rapidly expanding world market for tea.

Fortune accepted the Company's generous salary and agreed to travel beyond the zone of permitted foreign travel into several famous Chinese tea production areas in Anhui, Jiangxi, and Fujian provinces. He had considerable success in gathering plantings and even procured the services of some Chinese men skilled in the picking and cur-

ing of tea. The film uses the clandestine nature of Fortune's travels through China and his smuggling of tea seeds and plants as the basis for its title of "tea thief." (In fact, British amateur and professional scientists, including Charles Darwin, roamed the world in the 18th and 19th centuries collecting flora and fauna, but they have usually been celebrated as path-finding scientists, not thieves.)

Since the visual record of Fortune's travels is slight, the producers use mostly present-day footage into which they intersperse some

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Filmakers Library, 124 East 40th Street, New York, NY 10016. Tel: 212-808-4980. Fax: 212-808-4983. E-Mail: info@filmmakers.com. Web site: www.filmakers.com.

First Run/Icarus Films, 32 Court Street, 21st Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11202. Tel: 718-488-8900. Fax: 718-488-8642. E-mail: info@frif.com. Web site: www.frif.com.

National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA), 346 9th Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103. Tel: 415-552-9550. Fax: 415-863-7428. E-mail: distributor@naatanet.org. Web site: www.naatnet.org.