

# News and Reviews

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COURTESY OF THE CENTER FOR MUSIC TELEVISION



## Jazz in Japan

>> Written and hosted by Sidney D. Brown. Produced and directed by Eugene Enrico.  
University of Oklahoma Center for Music Television, 1999. 30 minutes.

**A**mong jazz fans, Japan enjoys a reputation as “jazz heaven.” This image seems plausible when one beholds the enthusiasm, knowledge, and commitment of those relatively few Japanese who would qualify as jazz buffs, not to mention

the availability of high-quality reissues of classic jazz recordings long out of print in the United States. A recent conversation on the Blue Note Records chatboard addressed the question of “why Japanese dig jazz so much,” as if it were some

bizarre enigma. While the breadth of the fan base for jazz in Japan is habitually overstated, the video *Jazz in Japan* (the sixth installment in Early Music Television’s Japanese Music series) lucidly demonstrates that Japanese have been deeply engaged with jazz for nearly a century.

It is difficult to imagine a more qualified team for producing such a film. Eugene Enrico, director of the Center for Music Television, produced the five previous videos in the *Japanese Music* series, introducing viewers to traditional festival, court,

*continued on page 2*

**Above:** Louis Armstrong, the great American musician, and Hisashi Moriyama, a jazz trumpeter who was born in California, but made his career in Japan.

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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.

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?

I regret to report that Liz Cothen, Assistant Program Coordinator for AEMS, will be leaving us in August to go back to graduate school full-time. Since she started working for us in July 2000, Liz has been an invaluable colleague. She has catalogued our library, made numerous improvements to our Web site and database, and worked hard to raise AEMS' profile among the K-12 community. *News and Reviews* readers may know her best through her regular "Bargain Buys" column, the last of which appears in this issue.

Liz will be working toward a Masters degree in Library and Information Science with an emphasis on school media. She plans to pursue a career in children's librarianship at a public or school library. We at AEMS and at the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies wish her the best in her studies and will miss her very much.

Liz can be reached at 217-333-9597 or at [cothen@uiuc.edu](mailto:cothen@uiuc.edu) until August 20.

## New Teacher's Guide for *To Live*

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

Kelly Long, Assistant Professor of History at Colorado State College, has written a teacher's guide to Zhang Yimou's popular feature film, *To Live*. The film shows events in China from the 1940s to the 1970s. The guide, which is aimed at high school level classes, provides historical background to the film, discussion questions, activities, and suggested readings.

## Spring/Summer Issue

This issue combines what would ordinarily be the Spring and Summer issues. The Fall *News and Reviews* should be out in September and will be a special issue focusing on feature films.

## Address Updates

Moving house? Changing jobs? Please be sure to let us know your new address. You can use the enclosed postcard (please note on it that this is a new address) or e-mail us at [aems@uiuc.edu](mailto:aems@uiuc.edu). Your cooperation will ensure that you continue to receive *News and Reviews* on a timely basis and will help AEMS save both postage and paper. ♦

—Sarah I. Barbour, *Editor*

## Jazz

*continued from page 1*

and theater music genres. The indefatigable Sidney Brown, emeritus professor of history at the University of Oklahoma and an expert on the Meiji oligarchy, pioneered Western-language studies of jazz in Japan over two decades ago. He has presented several conference papers on Japanese and Japanese American jazz history and musicians, supplementing his reading of the Japanese literature on the subject with his own oral history research. Excerpts of Professor Brown's interviews with performers such as Moriyama Hisashi and Charles Kikukawa appear throughout *Jazz in Japan*.

Viewers of Ken Burns' PBS documentary *Jazz* will find the narrative strategy and method of presentation familiar: the story is propelled by a wealth of images (still photographs, album covers, promotional materials, etc.) and tasty anecdotes about eminent individual artists. The development of jazz is traced from transoceanic luxury liners to occupied Shanghai, recording studios to dance halls, U.S. servicemen's clubs to

cabarets. The final third of the film spotlights Japanese artists who gained recognition internationally. The narrative effectively ends with the Occupation, ignoring the post-1960 avant-garde movement completely. There is thus little overlap between this film and Craig McTurk's 1999 documentary *Tokyo Blues: Jazz and Blues in Japan*, which does have historical content but also a more obvious interest in the contemporary scene.

Having co-hosted previous Enrico productions, Brown is clearly comfortable onscreen: his presence is warm and engaging, though thoroughly professional. The visual presentation is skillful and engrossing, and the soundtrack is rich with original recordings by Japanese jazzers. The Fujika Kōji Quintet, a regular fixture at Tokyo's Birdland, opens and closes the film with its silky smooth swing.

The major events of Japan's tumultuous twentieth century serve mostly as a backdrop in *Jazz in Japan*, rarely intruding to shape the narrative's content. My own approach has been to portray jazz as deeply implicated in the contentious discussions regarding national identity, modernity,

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## Being Hmong Means Being Free

>> Hosted by Lia Vang. A NEWIST/CESA 7 Production. 2000. 60 minutes.

**B***eing Hmong Means Being Free* documents significant aspects of the history, traditions, and culture of Hmong people and portrays a variety of issues in their difficult experiences as fighters for the CIA in Laos, then as refugees after the Vietnam War's end in 1975, and finally as immigrants to the United States. It was produced by Northeastern Wisconsin In-School Telecommunications at the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay and Wisconsin Public Television, and is meant to facilitate multi-cultural understanding. It is set primarily in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Hmong residents are narrators and interviewees who chronicle activities and events in their lives. The video is hosted by a sophisticated Hmong high school student (she graduated in 2001) whose family is given particular attention, but it draws upon Hmong from a variety of backgrounds in telling its story. The film, which is very well made, would be useful for high school and college audiences as well as adult community groups.

The Hmong are rather unique immigrants in that they came as families via refugee camps in Thailand from a preliterate society practicing hill farming and animal keeping in the mountains of Laos but resettled mainly in urban areas of the United States. (Some moved subsequently to rural areas of Montana and California, but many remain in cities such as Green Bay or Minneapolis-St. Paul.) The film focuses upon family life, and issues such as family solidarity, gender roles, the very difficult relationships between generations, rites of passage at marriage and death, religious life (both shamanic and Christian), and prejudice, harassment, and violence experienced at the hands of white residents. Though the people involved are in northern Wisconsin, many of their experiences can be gen-



COURTESY OF NEWIST/CESA 7

**Lia Vang, the 17-year-old host of *Being Hmong Means Being Free*.**

eralized to other parts of the country.

The film will be of particular interest to students and their teachers as it deals with the problems faced by young people who must live in two worlds, their Hmong-speaking households and their schools. Their parents know little or no English, often have only periodic employment, relate little to non-Hmong people, and distrust

institutions such as the police or courts. At school young people must cope with problems such as English mastery and successful study, social relationships, and friendships and dating, as well as prejudice against minorities. They must learn to navigate American life while also maintaining their Hmong sense of identity. The film focuses on those who are doing this successfully in various ways, but allows them to speak about their problems and experiences. It also tells, briefly, the sad story of one young man who was killed in a hate crime. (That young people are succeeding in their adaptation is reflected in the election in February, 2002, of Mee Moua, a woman in St. Paul, Minnesota, who became the first Hmong elected to an American state senate.)

A 108-page teacher's guide provides details on some themes of the video, suggested activities relating to Hmong and to multi-cultural understanding, a bibliography, Web sites, the full script of the video, some Hmong folk tales and food recipes, and more information on the Vang family who are highlighted in the video. ♦

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**Clark Cunningham** is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has been a long-time Associate of the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies and has served as its Director. He was also Vice Chair of the Asian American Studies Committee. He took a D. Phil. at Oxford University and has spent a number of years doing research and teaching in Thailand and Indonesia, and teaching about Southeast Asia and Asian Americans at UIUC.

*Being Hmong Means Being Free* is available from NEWIST/CESA 7. Price is \$50 for rental and \$190 for purchase.

*continued from previous page*

cultural authenticity, creativity, and sense of place in the world that shaped Japan's modern history. Brown and Enrico rather depict jazz as a bridge that spans cultural chasms with relative grace and ease. "Jazz is the world's music," Brown declares, "one of the great cultural ties that binds the United States and Japan, as important as baseball." It is a view that is neither uncommon nor indefensible, but which risks obscuring important and provocative problems in U.S.-Japan relations if absorbed uncritically. The militant Islamicist rhetoric that culminated in the September 11th

terrorist attacks has sobered many to the caustic resistance Americana encounters around the world. No doubt students in the post-9-11 era will have a much less sanguine perspective on global cultural flows than that offered here. *Jazz in Japan* thus instigates, as we say in the trade, a “teachable moment.”

*Jazz in Japan* will prove useful in high school- and college-level social studies or humanities courses addressing Japanese culture, popular music, globalization, and transnational cultural exchanges. I would like to see it marketed to jazz studies programs, as well, as a much-needed corrective to the parochialism of most jazz curricula. ♦

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**E. Taylor Atkins** is author of *Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan* (Duke University Press, 2001), co-author (with Katharine C. Purcell) of “Korean P’ansori and the Blues: Art for Communal Healing” (*East-West Connections* 2: March 2002), and editor of *Jazz Planet: Transnational Studies of the “Sound of Surprise”* (forthcoming from the University Press of Mississippi).

*Jazz in Japan* is available from the Center for Music Television. Price is \$32.95.





Chinese soldiers, lavishly costumed, are cast as extras for the Beijing production of *Turandot* staged in the Forbidden City.

## The Turandot Project

>> A film by Allan Miller. 2000. 87 minutes.

In 1997, Zubin Mehta, the Indian-born former conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, and Zhang Yimou, the award-winning Chinese film director (*Raise the Red Lantern*, *To Live*, etc.) collaborated in staging the Italian opera, *Turandot*, in the Teatro Comunale de Firenze, Italy. A documentary video chronicling the staging of this opera was produced by Allan Miller. In 1998, a year after the Florence performance, Zubin Mehta and Zhang Yimou again collaborated to stage *Turandot*, this time at the Imperial Palace (also known as the Forbidden City) in China. Again Allan Miller made a video documentary, entitled *The Turandot Project*, of this production which is the focus of this review.

*Turandot*, an opera in three acts, was composed by Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924). The story is based on a Persian legend, which was supposed to have taken place in Beijing, China, in legendary times. It focuses on a virgin princess, Turandot, who condemns her unsuccessful wooers to death if they fail to decipher three riddles. Eventually, Calaf, an unknown prince from a foreign country, succeeds in deciphering Turandot's riddles and offers one of his own. Puccini also adds a character not included in the original story, the slave girl Liu, a somewhat enigmatic character of Tartar origin who serves in Calaf's father's household and is secretly in love with Calaf.

The staging of the *Turandot* production in Beijing, as well as the making of the documentary,

involved a huge cast of people representing many different nationalities, types of professional training, and expertise. As nine consecutive performances were scheduled for the Beijing performance, three groups of principal soloists were used, with each group giving three performances each. The orchestra and chorus of Maggio Musicale Fiorentino who participated in this production had already rehearsed a year in advance in Florence. Hundreds of dancers from the Beijing Dance Academy were engaged to perform the many dance numbers. In order to fill out the vast performance space, director Zhang Yimou engaged 300 soldiers from Detachment 15 of Beijing Division II as palace guards who performed a processional drum parade in the courtyard. The lighting team consisted of Italian and German lighting engineers and a large team of Chinese electrical technicians. Chinese designers, workmen, tailors, and embroiders were responsible for the production of sets, properties, and costumes respectively. Armies of translators of Chinese, Italian, and German languages were there to make cross-cultural communication possible. Finally, Chinese and Western cameramen produced the documentary video jointly.

Occasionally the contents provide fascinating glimpses of the cultural assumptions and expectations of the various participants of this project.

Here are some interesting examples:

(1) The documentary begins with comments

by Zubin Mehta relating to the conception and evolution of the *Turandot* production. Even though Zhang had little previous knowledge of Western opera, Mehta justifies his selection of the Chinese film director Zhang Yimou as his collaborator to direct the staging of *Turandot* by claiming that as Zhang is Chinese, he would add "authenticity" to the production of a Chinese story. Such a view could be thought to smack of essentialism, but Mehta's quest for authenticity served as the major impetus for the project.

(2) Although Zubin Mehta claimed that the Ming dynasty style costumes used for the production are authentic and therefore a perfect match to the Ming architecture of the palace stage, to my eyes many of the so-called Ming style costumes are similar to the costumes used in Peking Opera, some of which are in Ming style, but many others are an eclectic mixture of fancy costume styles, including some pseudo-Tang dynasty (618–906 ad) costumes which probably derived from Tang tomb fresco paintings. In recent years they have been copied and appropriated by movies showing the exotic past of China, and by productions of musical and dance spectacles to entertain foreign tourists.

(3) An amusing set of scenes show the rehearsal of the young soldiers recruited from Detachment 15 to play the roles of palace guards. One scene shows the soldiers marching into the performing arena carrying little folding stools which they then sit on to be lectured by their captain, who admonishes them to take good care of the costumes and not to ogle the pretty dancers. In spite of this order, the camera catches many of them casting furtive glances at the young female dancers. In another scene, someone relates that these young men were astonished upon hearing Western operatic singing for the first time, saying it sounded exactly like a cow mooing! Finally, we hear from the Detachment Commander that national pride motivated the Chinese government to participate in this project: a theme heard again and again in subsequent statements made by Chinese from different walks of life. According to the Commander: "We come from the people, and we serve the people. [We are participating in this project because] we want our Chinese heritage and culture to march onto the world stage. An Army without culture is a stupid Army. We not only teach our soldiers how to fight, but we give them cultural and moral ideals as well, and that is the essence of a Socialist Army. We sing as we march, because we have culture!" Next we see the soldiers sitting down, singing an army song in unison under a conductor. This juxtaposition of army singing amidst a rehearsal of *Turandot* is a startling cultural encounter.

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# The National Clearinghouse for U.S.-Japan Studies

in focus

Funded by the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership, the **National Clearing-**

**house for U.S.-Japan Studies** at Indiana University specializes in providing educational information about Japan at little or no cost to K-12 students, teachers, specialists, and curriculum developers.

## New Publications

The Clearinghouse publishes the *Japan Digest* series, *Internet Guides*, and an annual newsletter. *Japan Digests* are two-page summaries covering a variety of topics related to Japan and U.S.-Japan relations. Two recent *Japan Digests* are "Examining Japan's History Textbook Controversies" and "Understanding Okinawa's Role in the U.S.-Japan Security Arrangement." *Internet Guides* are handy references to online resources. Recent titles include "Japan in World History," "Japanese Festivals and National Holidays," and "Japan's Imperial Family." All these publications are available online and paper copies are available at no cost.

## Enhanced Databases

The U.S.-Japan Database is a bibliographic database of educational materials including curriculum units, teaching guides, abstracts of articles from journals like *Education about Asia*, and reference resources. The Clearinghouse also maintains a searchable database of lesson plans. Both the Lesson Plan Database and the U.S.-Japan Database are searchable online at the Clearinghouse Web site. In addition, staff is available to conduct custom searches for educators free of charge.

## Expanded Services

The Clearinghouse site on the World Wide Web provides an access point to Clearinghouse publications and databases, as well as a gateway to numerous other resources such as AEMS, SPICE (Stanford Program for International and Cross-Cultural Education), and local Japanese Consulates.

The Clearinghouse also prepares complimentary Information Packets which include print versions of most *Japan Digests* and *Internet Guides*,

the newsletter, as well as information on a variety of other Japan-related resources. Information Packets are a perfect introduction to K-12 educational resources on Japan. Please note that educators are invited to order Packets for distribution at conferences, seminars, and workshops. ♦

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(4) In another revealing scene concerning Chinese national pride, we see Zhang Yimou chatting with members of the Chinese production team. After exhorting them to do their best, he says: "The performance [of *Turandot*] provides us Chinese a chance to appear on the international stage together with the best of Western artists, and to show the world that [what we do here] can match their dedication, seriousness, and artistic excellence. That is why I took on this task; I want to raise the profile of the excellence of the Chinese cultural tradition to the world, so that we can achieve the international recognition that has long been overdue to us."

(5) Finally, I want to talk about one episode showing the clash and compromise between Zhang Yimou and the famous Italian lighting engineer Guido Levi. More than any other episode, this one highlights the difficulty in international collaboration between artists from different cultures who carry different sets of cultural assumptions and expectations. After seeing the lighting arrangement by Levi, Zhang was unhappy, finding the lights too dim. Being a carrier of the Chinese stage tradition, Zhang wanted a uniformly bright light to shine on the stage in order to illuminate the brilliant costumes and headdresses worn by the actors; being a specialist



**Sharon Sweet, internationally renowned soprano, stars as Princess Turandot in the Beijing production of *Turandot*.**

of contemporary Italian operatic lighting, Levi wanted dimmer lighting with different gradations of illumination according to the requirement of the dramatic situation. In an interview from which Zhang Yimou was absent, Levi said bluntly that he considered uniformly bright lighting a vulgar monstrosity, and went on to say exactly what he thought of this production: "Today we are losing the public that loves opera, so we have to look for a director with a [recognized] name. So we hire a cinema director [to do the job]. Why? Because everyone goes to the movies and not the opera, and that's the main reason. However, the result is not always..." but he did not finish the sentence.

In the end, Levi gave in and compromised with good humor. The documentary ends with scenes of the final performance and the approval of the audience who rewarded Zubin Mehta and Zhang Yimou with many rounds of applause.

This documentary is best used as a lesson to teach cultural sensibility and international collaboration. However, the teacher should be prepared to do some preliminary research on the cultural and performing traditions of the Chinese stage and those of the Italian opera in order to make the lesson meaningful to students. ♦

Isabel Wong is Director of Overseas Projects and Foreign Visitors and Assistant Professor of Musicology at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her publications and papers have dealt with aspects of Chinese musical theater, the history of Chinese musicology, the intellectual history of Chinese music in the twentieth century, music and politics in China, popular music in Shanghai during the republican period, and music of Chinese American communities.

*The Turandot Project* is available from Zeitgeist Films. University price is \$195 for purchase and \$150 for rental. The video will be available for purchase on June 25, 2002.

>> Directed by Dodge Billingsley. Produced by Combat Films and KBYU Television. 2000. 57 minutes.

The film certainly recognizes Helen Foster Snow's contributions...yet these are downplayed.

years, from the Chinese student movement to her marriage (at age 25) to Edgar Snow, forced her into a role or position she had not originally intended to take up. This seems to have been the

As a classroom tool, *Helen Foster Snow: Witness To Revolution* would be difficult, but not impossible, to use. It is a documentary about Helen Foster Snow. It is not about China in the 1930s; rather it is about an ambitious American woman in China during this period. While there is a significant amount of archival footage and some explanation of the events that she was able to witness, the events are not the focus of the film. The documentary itself could not be used as an introduction to the period as the unfolding events are used only to explain Helen Snow's actions. The events themselves are only cursorily placed in the larger context of the chaotic political situation of the time. Viewers without some prior knowledge of the political situation of China during this period will not come away with a clear understanding and will have a tough time understanding the background. ♦

*Helen Foster Snow: Witness To Revolution* is available from Filmmakers Library. Price is \$295 for purchase and \$75 for rental.



>> Directed by Elisabeth Dubreuil. 2001. 52 minutes.

*No Silence in this Court* is a delightful film that can be enjoyed on many levels. It successfully tells the story of this alternative justice system, while at the same time giving a view of Indian village life.

the Open Court. In all cases, Parikh presides over the Open Court and allows each disputant to state her or his case. Once the court has heard the facts of the case, each disputant is allowed to pick jurors from amongst the villagers attending the court that day to represent them and work out an agreement. Once the jury returns from its discussion, and presents its resolution to the Open Court, the court's officers put the agreement in writing. In each of the three cases presented, the

*No Silence in this Court* is a delightful film that can be enjoyed on many levels. It successfully tells the story of this alternative justice system, while at the same time giving a view of Indian village life. It also gives much needed attention to the condition of the *adivasis*, presenting their lives in a sensitive yet honest way. Dubreuil crafts a fine film—one which is suitable for many audiences. It could easily be used in a high school social studies class or in a number of undergraduate courses on India, including introductory surveys, cultural anthropology, sociology, or indeed, criminal justice. ♦

*No Silence in this Court* is available from First Run/Icarus Films. Price is \$390 for purchase and \$75 for rental.

# Asian American Resources for Under \$40

For my last "Bargain Buys" column, I have decided to focus on media about Asian Americans. Asian studies and Asian American studies are of course separate fields—to suggest

*Bargain Buys!*

are motivated to teach about Asia because of growing numbers of Asian American and newly immigrated Asian students in their classrooms. In order for these children to be better understood by their peers, it is important to teach not just about their ancestral background (in China, Korea, India, etc.), but also the circumstances of their families' arrival and adaptation to this country. The media I have chosen highlight important transitional moments for Asian Americans: immigration to the United States, incidents of discrimination (most memorably the Japanese internment), and finally success accompanied by continued struggle.

## The First Generation: 1900–1940

Asians began arriving in this country en masse right around the Civil War period. Chinese immigration was sparked by the gold rush in California starting in 1849 and continued as Chinese laborers found work on the Northern Pacific Railroad and in the mines. In 1884, there was large-scale immigration to Hawaii by Japanese people coming to work the sugar plantations. By the turn of the century, there were 120,248 foreign-born Asian immigrants living in this country, predominately on the West Coast. By 1930, that figure had more than doubled.<sup>1</sup>

*Moving Memories*, a documentary produced by the Japanese American National Museum and hosted by *Star Trek* star George Takei, features home films taken by several of these early Asian pioneers. Since the lives of Japanese immigrants during the 1920s and '30s were not recorded in early newsreels and motion pictures, amateur footage taken by businessmen, priests, teachers, etc. is an invaluable addition to the historical record. The clips in *Moving Memories*, divided into sections by filmmaker, depict family life,

community events, and economic development during that period.

Many Caucasians on the West Coast were not thrilled to see Asians establishing themselves. A series of anti-Chinese demonstrations resulted in dozens of deaths and in thousands of residents being forcefully evicted from their homes. At the same time, legislation was passed limiting further immigration. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 prevented additional Chinese laborers from coming to the United States. The "Gentlemen's Agreement" of 1907 between the United States and Japan reduced immigration from Japan. By the 1920s, Asian immigrants could not own land, become citizens, or marry white people.

The *Multicultural Peoples of North America* series deals with these events, chronicling how they affected Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Americans in three separate videos. In addition to discussing the group's history, each video profiles a family, emphasizing the differences and desires of each generation, and features a short biography of an influential member of that ethnic group. Aimed at grades 4–10, this series explores important issues including identity formation and the effects of racial discrimination. I would recommend choosing only one of these videos to purchase, however, because they are too similar to one another to warrant screening all three. A similar series, *American Cultures for Children* for grades K–4, includes videos about the same three ethnic groups, as well as one about Vietnamese Americans. *American Cultures* spends less time on Asian American history than *Multicultural Peoples*, focusing more on cultural aspects, such as food, festivals, language, and literature.

## The Japanese Internment: 1942–1945

The Japanese American National Museum has developed an excellent documentary series for teach-

ing about the Japanese Internment called *Once Upon a Camp*. Each video is targeted toward a particular grade level and is accompanied by an extensive teacher's guide featuring historical background and suggested activities.

*The Bracelet*, intended for grades K–5, features a Japanese American teacher reading a children's book to her second-grade class. The book, also titled *The Bracelet*, is about a young girl named Emi who is forced to leave her home for the camps. Right before she leaves, her best friend, a little white girl, gives Emi a bracelet so that she will always remember their friendship. At the camp, Emi

accidentally loses the bracelet, but learns that some memories are carried in our hearts.

The *Once Upon a Camp* video for middle school students, *Dear Miss Breed*, features letters written by young people in the camps to children's librarian Clara Breed. This short film combines old footage of camp life with the voices of children reading excerpts of the letters. The result is a moving account of the frustration and sadness felt by Japanese Americans during this period. *Interactions*, the final video in the series, follows four high school students as they learn about the Internment. Initially they knew almost nothing about the event, but after surfing the Web for information, visiting the Japanese American National Museum, talking with several Japanese people who had been sent to the camps as teenagers, and visiting Manzanar, a desolate former camp in eastern California, they came to better understand the injustice perpetrated by the United States government.

**Asian Americans Today**  
Despite reparations for the Internment and the elimination of racially





based immigration laws, discrimination against people of Asian descent persists in this country. After the Vietnam War, thousands of Southeast Asian refugees poured into this country. Generally poorer and less educated compared to recent East Asian immigrants, these people have been deprived of many necessary social services and occasionally have even become the victims of attacks. During the early 1990s, a group of Hmong teenagers in Wisconsin produced several amateur films about their lives in America. My favorite, titled *Color Blind*, is a series of interviews with minority students, at least half of whom are Asian, talking about racism, culture, and identity. Filmed on video, this program, more than any other I've seen, deals with the realities of modern racism.

<sup>1</sup>According to the table "Immigration to U.S.: 1850–1930, 1960–1990." Reported in a U.S. Census Bureau document on March 9, 1999. Can be located online at: <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0778579.html>.

[illegible]

## Asian American Web Sites

*A More Perfect Union: Japanese Americans and the U.S. Constitution*  
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/perfectunion/experience/index.html>

<http://www.densho.org>

Densho is a nonprofit organization started in 1996, with the goal of documenting oral histories from Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during World War II.

<http://dizzy.library.arizona.edu/images/chamer/chinese.html>

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aamhtml/aamhome.html>

*Asia Society Special Report: Exploring Race in America: An Interview with Frank Wu*  
<http://www.asiasource.org/society/frankwu.cfm>

<http://www.aafe.org>

<http://www.manaa.org>

<http://www.modelminority.com>

*New York Public Library's Bibliography for Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month*  
<http://www.nypl.org/branch/kids/asian/asian.html>

The Bargain Buys column is now online at

<http://www.aems.uiuc.edu/HTML/BargainBuys.html>

The *American Cultures for Children* series (1997, 25 minutes each) is available from Asia For Kids. Price is \$29.95 each.

*Chinatown* (1997, 60 minutes) is available from KQED, Inc. Price is \$19.95.

*Color Blind* (1995, 40 minutes) is available from NEWIST/CESA 7. Price is \$35.

*Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision* (1994, 83 minutes) is available from Asia for Kids. Price is \$29.95.

*Moving Memories* (1992, 31 minutes) is available from the Japanese American National Museum. Price is \$14.95.

The *Multicultural Peoples of North America* series (1993, 30 minutes each) is available from Asia for Kids. Price is \$39.95 each.

The *Once Upon a Camp* series (2001) is available from the Japanese American National Museum. *The Bracelet* is 25 minutes. *Dear Miss Breed* is 13 minutes, and *Interactions* is 33 minutes. Price is \$19.95 each, including teacher's guide.

www.aems.uiuc.edu ♦ 9



>> A cd-rom-based multimedia curriculum unit. Produced by StarFestival, Inc. 2000.

The students soon  
learned that  
Japanese people  
have televisions  
and pencils  
“just like we do”!

When we started the unit students brainstormed what they knew (or thought they knew!) about Japan. The students soon learned that

2. It's fun to learn to communicate with other people.
3. It's fun to learn about other people.
4. If we learn about different cultures then we won't have wars. We will know how to act around people who are different than us and we will learn that they are really not that different.
5. We won't make fun of people just because they're different from us.
6. If a new student comes to Barkstall Elementary School, it will help us understand them.

The teacher's manuals are very user-friendly and give a nice amount of background information. I like how students are asked to think critically about the Japanese culture and compare it to their own. My only regret was that I did not have more cd-roms for students to explore Professor Miyagawa's life at their own pace or a projector so that the whole class could see the screen a bit better. I think the key to the success of this unit is that it has a personal approach. The students got to know a real Japanese person and his thoughts and struggles. In the end, Professor Miyagawa realizes that he is both American *and* Japanese and that he can be a bridge between the two cultures. I think the students applied this understanding in their own lives as well. This experience in teaching is not one I will soon forget. I would recommend these materials to anyone who has a passion for multicultural education. ♦

*StarFestival* is a cd-rom-based multimedia curriculum for K-12 students. It is distributed by StarFestival, Inc. The Basic Set (which includes cd-rom, Teacher's Guide, Diary, and Field Notes) is \$120. Components may also be purchased individually. Please contact distributor for prices.

>> A digital video by Trinh T. Minh-ha. Produced by Jean-Paul Bourdier and Trinh T. Minh-ha. 2001. 87 minutes.

"Show a country, speak of a culture, in whatever way, and you will enter into fiction while yearning for invisibility," Minh-ha says early in the video, as she illuminates the significance of ritual and spectacle as a bridge between the past and the present. From images of modern life—the bustling, neon-lit streets of Tokyo at night, the recurring use of the bullet train as a metaphor for a journey of discovery—to quiet passages that focus on traditional Japanese art, architecture, and religious practices, the filmmaker engages in a meditation on the cultural meanings that are expressed through the performance of rituals. The spontaneity of street performers is contrasted with the formal theatricality of a traditional stage production; young girls in conventional Japanese dress and makeup are as engaged in a public performance of their gender roles as the drag queens who don similar costumes at a drag show. Through all of these images, Minh-ha interrogates the ideas and values—often contradictory—that the Japanese people express among themselves and for a global audience. "How tall is Japan?" she asks, taking a symbolic measure of the country. "Height? Weight? Age?"

While the early parts of the film are poetic and visually ambiguous, the last quarter of the film becomes a more explicit articulation of Minh-ha's interests in gender issues, postcolonial theory, and cultural politics. She uses narration and images of newspaper articles to present a historical perspective on the 1960s demonstrations that

A black and white photograph. The upper portion features a close-up of a woman's face, looking upwards and to the left. She wears a wide-brimmed hat and a kimono. The lower portion shows a traditional Japanese building with a white wall and dark wooden frame. A small, dark lantern is mounted on the wall. Through a large window, a small figure of a person holding an umbrella is visible, standing in a dark interior space.

This video is appropriate for advanced high school and college students. It has broad applicability in a variety of areas: social studies, anthropology, women's studies, and examinations of culture and identity. It would also be useful in visual-arts classes, and for students of filmmaking, who would

[illegible]

*The Fourth Dimension* is available from Women Make Movies. Price is \$375 for purchase and \$175 for rental.



**Asian Educational Media Service**

Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
230 International Studies Building, MC-483  
910 South Fifth Street  
Champaign, IL 61820

<http://www.aems.uiuc.edu>

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## Guide to Distributors

>> A list of distributors mentioned in this issue of *AEMS News and Reviews*

**Asia for Kids**, 4480 Lake Forest Dr. #302,  
Cincinnati, OH 45242. Tel: 800-888-9681. Fax:  
513-563-3105. E-mail: [sales@afk.com](mailto:sales@afk.com). Web site:  
<http://www.aems.uiuc.edu>.

**Center for Music Television**, School of  
Music, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK  
73019. Tel: 405-325-3978. Fax: 405-325-7574.  
Web site: <http://www.ou.edu/earlymusic>.

**Filmakers Library**, 124 East 40th Street, New  
York, NY 10016. Tel: 212-808-4980. Fax 212-  
808-4983. E-mail: [info@filmakers.com](mailto:info@filmakers.com). Web site:  
<http://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](mailto:info@frif.com). Web  
site: <http://www.frif.com>.

**Japanese American National Museum**,  
Museum Store, 369 East First Street, Los Angeles,  
CA 90012. Tel: 888-769-5559. Fax: 213-687-  
9142. E-mail: [museumstore@janm.org](mailto:museumstore@janm.org). Web site:  
<http://store.yahoo.com/janm>.

**KQED, Inc.**, 2601 Mariposa Street, San  
Francisco, CA 94110. Tel: 800-358-3000 or  
415-864-2000. Web site: <http://www.kqed.org>.

**NEWIST/CESA 7**, 2420 Nicolet Drive,  
IS 1040, Green Bay, WI 54311. Tel: 800-633-  
7445. Fax: 920-465-2576. E-mail: [newist@uwgb.edu](mailto:newist@uwgb.edu). Web site: <http://www.uwgb.edu/newist/index.html>.

**StarFestival, Inc.**, Tel: 617-216-4714 or  
888-216-7611. Fax: 617-243-0084. E-mail:  
[info@starfestival.com](mailto:info@starfestival.com).

**Women Make Movies, Inc.**, 462 Broadway,  
Suite 500WS, New York, NY 10013. Tel: 212-  
925-0606. Fax: 212-925-2052. Email: [info@wmm.com](mailto:info@wmm.com). Web site: <http://www.wmm.com>.

**Zeitgeist Films**, 247 Centre Street, 2nd Floor,  
New York, NY 10013. Tel: 212-274-1989. Fax:  
212-274-1644. E-mail: [web@zeitgeistfil.com](mailto:web@zeitgeistfil.com).  
Web site: <http://www.zeitgeistfilm.com>.