

News and Reviews

Vol. 3, No. 2
Summer 2000

Scholarship and Storytelling: Dissemination in a Digital Age

>> by Namji Kim Steinemann

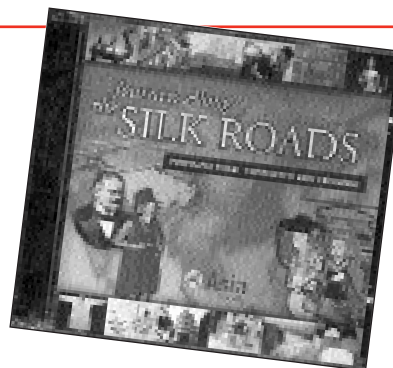
When we think about teaching Asian studies today, the messenger can be as exciting as the message. Today's students are not merely open to new interactive technologies, they are embracing them with unprecedented enthusiasm, and stories that are over a thousand years old have come alive for them when these narratives are transmitted by the dynamic forms of media available today.

The Asia Society can relate its experiences on this front from its unique position, being one of the first to use video and the Web to reach out to K-12 schools on the subject of Asia. As with the great majority of Asia Society programs, these early ventures were all collaborative efforts, with distinguished scholars-educators, including

Jackson Bailey and others, working with us on content, accuracy, and pedagogy.

But videocassettes, a breakthrough technology in the early 1980s, are still disseminated by one VCR at a time, compared to the Web, which reaches millions simultaneously, every day. The Society's AskAsia Web site averages over half a million hits per month, while the cumulative total of all the Society's sites—AskAsia.org, AsiaSource.org, and AsiaSociety.org—amounts to over 1.7 million hits per month. What does this mean? For one thing, there is a great deal of interest in things related to Asia, and we can reach a lot of people of all ages and backgrounds, in the United States and beyond, via the Web.

An important issue taken into account during



our early days of planning AskAsia is currently termed "the digital divide." Unfortunately, one constant we have found is that, even in this "wired" era, teachers are still lacking the resources to properly identify and access quality content about Asia. This is especially true in underserved urban and rural districts

using old textbooks, and even older maps, to approach the subject of Asia. Our response has been to make the lessons, readings, maps and other images on AskAsia available at no cost and copyright cleared. Further, we set up a toll-free phone and fax line for those schools unable to access AskAsia on the Internet. Using these lines, users can request lessons on China, Japan, or any nation for which we have content, and we will fax it to them.

CD-ROM is another medium that helps deliver a memorable learning experience. One of its

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COURTESY OF DOCUMENTARY EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

From *Sight Unseen*, which was filmed in Bali, Indonesia. For review, see page 8.

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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?

Welcome to the first Summer News and Reviews!

With so many fascinating items to review and with the increasing availability of computers, video, and digital equipment, we felt there was a need for more comprehensive coverage. We will continue to provide reviews of videos and CD-ROMs, but the Summer and Winter issues will allow us to review new media such as Web sites, print articles on issues such as production and pedagogy, and expand our geographical coverage. Reflecting our widening scope, this issue contains our first review of a Web site (see Richard Chalfen's review of Nagasaki University's Web site in "Old Japan, New Media," p. 6) and Namji Kim Steinemann's excellent article on technology and education. We hope that the increased number of issues will provide our readers with a wider range of information and, as always, we welcome your suggestions.

AEMS Discussion Area

New to our Web site is the Discussion Area (<http://www.aems.uiuc.edu/webboard/>). Here, users of the site will be able to post and reply to messages. We hope this area of our site will provide a useful place for educators to exchange ideas, suggestions, and their own photos, videos, and slides of Asia.

New Staff at AEMS

AEMS is expanding its staff as well as its activities. We are delighted to introduce our Assistant Program Coordinator, Elizabeth Cothen. Liz is a recent graduate of Wesleyan University, where she majored in East Asian Studies. While in college, she worked as the Assistant Coordinator for Wesleyan's East Asian Outreach Program, edited a journal featuring articles about Asia, and studied in Beijing. In addition to her Asia-related activities, Liz also interned for three summers at People for the American Way in Washington, DC. With her experience in Asian Studies, editing, education, and outreach, Liz is a wonderful addition to AEMS and we feel very fortunate to have her here. F



Liz Cothen

Scholarship

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advantages over the Web is its capability of enabling the user to read about the context and significance of a particular work or point in history. Harnessing these qualities, the Society's recently produced CD-ROM, *Journeys Along the Silk Roads: Cross-cultural Encounters and Exchange*, relates the story of the sojourner Xuanzang. While this story has been faithfully rendered in a number of wonderful books, it is invigorated when it is infused with sound, voice, and images that help students follow Xuanzang's journey.

Using digital images, voice, or music to teach your material does not constitute a "dumbing down" of the content into some Disneyesque rendering, but allows the story to tell itself while pro-

viding context. Once again, we will use the story of Xuanzang as related on the *Journeys* CD-ROM as an example. The beauty of a medium such as CD-ROM is that students can click on specific words that will lead them to pages where they can read basic precepts of Buddhism, learn about dynastic China, see supportive images or hear related audio files, and even calculate how far Xuanzang really walked. And then, with a click, they can return to the primary narrative.

Before the first line of script is written, content developers have to ask a series of crucial questions. As soon as the content/thematic focus has been decided, we then ask: "Who is our audience?" If our audience consists of students, which grade range? Or do we design text and activities tailored to different grades and different learning styles?

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“What are we really offering and how can technology further this?” It is important to make promises to your audience that you can keep. If, for instance, your content does not lend itself to strategic games, do not try to push it in this direction or add games. Instead, think about what your program is offering and maximize it. In the case of our CD-ROM, our main asset was stories. We felt it was important for our audience to “connect” with our characters in a personal way, but we also wanted to allow users the freedom to make connections with larger historical processes.

Finally, it is worth asking, “How can I tap even more content potential through technology?” In our case, we realized that technology is an excellent way to bring primary source texts and visuals into the classroom and have students engage with them directly as part of their learning. Once you have your goals clearly in mind, then you can begin building the foundation.

At different points in the process, we have brought in consultants to help us with pedagogical issues or software programming issues. We have found that it is always best to establish the foundation of your program, and your program goals, before you collaborate with an outside technological consultant. In the case of *Journeys Along the Silk Roads*, we had already done our homework with several prominent scholars before we began working with graphic designers and computer programmers. By then, we already had a firm concept of:

- which characters would represent the various historical eras on the Silk Roads
- the stories those characters would tell
- whether those characters would be historical or fictitious (we chose historical characters)
- what students would be able to learn from the characters
- the kind of follow-up activities that would enrich the learning experience

One way to help select a potential partner is to look at his or her track record, to determine

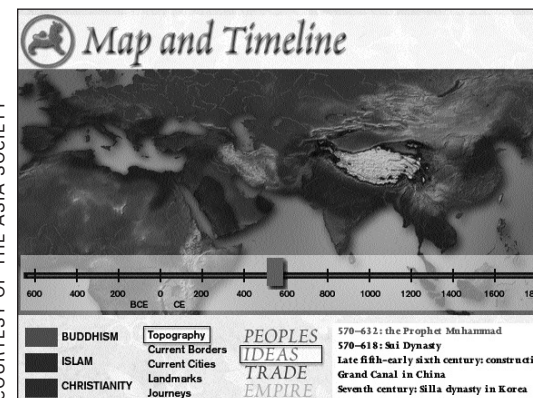
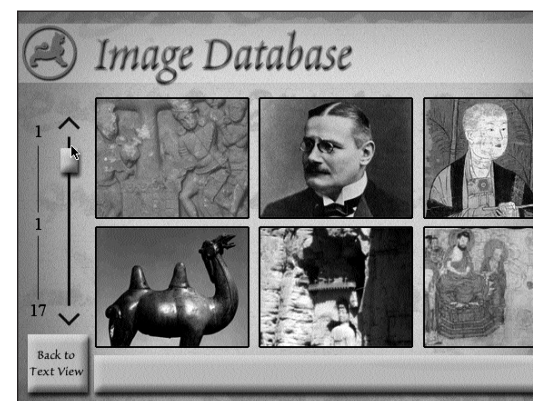
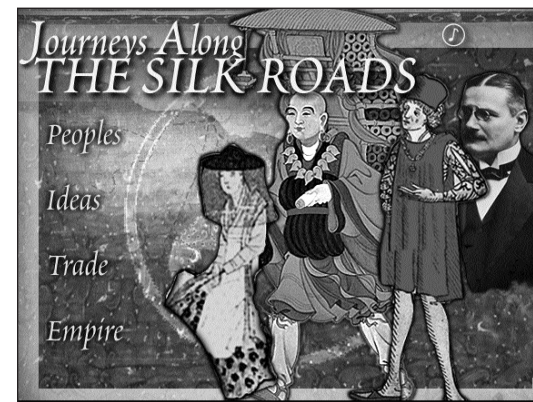
whether he or she has done similar projects as well as whom they have worked with in the past and to see the finished product for yourself. Sometimes a recommendation is just not enough, because people have different standards. It is always best to personally examine the consultant's most recent product, whether it is a Web site, CD-ROM, video, or game, to get an understanding of his or her capabilities.

In many cases, the age of the audience speaks to the types of technologies to which they will have access. Another decision a content developer must make has to do with the relationship of the audience (the learners) to the technology. For example, colleges and universities are usually equipped with computers on high-speed networks, and products designed for that audience can push the limits of technology rather fearlessly. You can go for extended animations or video downloads on the Web, for example, if your audience is going online using the kind of high-speed, broadband network found on major college campuses. In contrast, an interactive product designed for a third-grade classroom, for example, will have to account for computers that are two to three years behind the latest version along with Web browsers that probably have not been updated since the computers were installed. In our case, when we were designing AskAsia, we found that schools using Netscape version 3.0 and later were able to view the frames on our Web site, while schools using older versions of Netscape were unable to see or use them.

The production and delivery of a high-quality learning experience for students depends on an artful balance of content and medium. If you have a good story to tell, even if you still have the task of finding an exciting way to tell it, you have won half the battle. Your story will motivate people on the project and your desire to tell the story effectively will help drive your process. For the Asia Society, supporting our storytelling with scholarly accuracy and the energy of new interactive technologies has proven to be an effective means to reach out to today's students. **F**

Namji Kim Steinemann is the Vice President of the Asia Society's Education Division and also serves as the Executive Director of the Society's National Commission on Asia in the Schools, led by Governor James B. Hunt, Jr. of North Carolina.

To order a copy of the *Journeys Along the Silk Roads* prototype CD-ROM call 1-888-ASK-ASIA, fax 1-888-FAX-ASIA, or send an e-mail to heatherc@asiasoc.org. To find out more about the Asia Society's K-12 educational programs, materials and initiatives, visit the Asia Society online (please see the Guide to Distributors for URLs).



>> Produced and directed by Eugene Enrico and David Smeal. Distributed by the Center for Early Music Television, University of Oklahoma. 1989. 57 minutes.

The video's strongest moments are short segments devoted to each instrument in the ensemble. The instrument is described and characteristic phrases or rhythms are performed. Instruments that have important structural relationships, such as the *ryûteki* transverse flute and the *hichiriki* double reed pipe, are made to play together independently of the ensemble to illustrate these relationships. In this way the "modular"

...this is a worthwhile introduction to the tradition of *gagaku*, one probably best suited for college-level survey courses in “world music” or Asian studies.

As *gagaku* is a performance art incorporating music, dance (called *bugaku*), and sumptuous costuming and design, video offers an ideal medium. It also presents certain challenges that I'm not sure the filmmakers have entirely succeeded in overcoming. The video is hosted by William P. Malm, professor of ethnomusicology at the University of Michigan and the doyen

There are a few other points of complaint. The titles of pieces being performed are always provided in Roman script, but only sometimes in Japanese script. I was unable to discern any rhyme or reason in this. The coverage of *gagaku's* historical development is spotty and leans toward rhetorical flourish. No mention is made of native Japanese forms such as *mikagura*, which are just as much a part of the tradition as the *tôgaku* and *komagaku* repertoire modeled on Chinese and Korean precedents. This creates the impression that *gagaku* was basically imported wholesale from continental Asia and given a quickie Japanese polishing job. The Japanese contribution is a good deal more significant than this, as becomes apparent when one listens to what remains of Korean *gagaku* (called *ah-ahk*), examples of which are not provided on the video. One slightly dubious assertion is that the reason so much repertoire has disappeared is because court musicians were forced to play Western music as well as *gagaku* during the Meiji Restoration in the late nineteenth century. This may have been a factor, but a slightly more plausible explanation for these losses is that *gagaku* was not regularly performed in court for almost seven hundred years from the early Kamakura period, kept alive only by a loose confederation of guilds. The Meiji Restoration revived the court tradition instead of smothering it.

Despite its minor flaws, however, this is a worthwhile introduction to the tradition of *gagaku*, one probably best suited for college-level survey courses in “world music” or Asian studies. Motivated high school students and civic groups such as Japan-America friendship societies will also find it interesting. More advanced students of music or Japanese culture, however, should supplement the video with the scholarship of authors such as Robert Garfias, Eta Harich-Schneider, and Carl Wolz in English, and Masumoto Kikuko in Japanese. **F**

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Kerim Yasar studied ethnomusicology at the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music as a Monbuscho Research Student from 1998 to 2000. He will commence studies this fall toward a Ph.D. in pre-modern Japanese literature at Columbia University.

Gagaku: The Court Music of Japan is available from the Center for Early Music Television, University of Oklahoma. Price is \$27.95.



www.aems.uiuc.edu F 5



Old Japan, New Media

>> *Memories of Japan 1859–1875, Japanese Photography in Dutch Collections*. Edited by I.Th. Leijerzapf and H.J. Moeshart. Distributed by IDC Publishers Inc. 1996. *Japanese Old Photographs in Bakumatsu-Meiji Period* (<http://oldphoto.lb.nagasaki-u.ac.jp/unive>).

CD-ROMs such as *Memories of Japan 1859–1875* and Internet sites such as Nagasaki University's provide the perfect vehicles for what otherwise remains archival material, inaccessible to the very people who have the most to gain from its availability. Reading about Deshima, Nagasaki, and other treaty ports is memorably enhanced by seeing these locations in historical images. As a student of a broad range of Japanese media, I am especially grateful for efforts that put new media to scholarly use. To have so many images in one place, available "above ground" and beyond archival walls is a great contribution.

As its title suggests, the CD-ROM's 1100-plus images are cited as "photographic impressions of Japan between 1859 and 1875." All images were either taken or collected by Dutch people living in

Japan during that time. Sharp, clear images depict landscapes, cities and towns; important events (e.g., the frequently shown results of attacks on Europeans); and portraits of many people from

this time period, including the Shogun, Dutch personnel and scholars, Naval officers, amateur photographers, and "the charm of the Japanese women and girls."

The specified time period covers the beginnings and development of photography in Japan, during some difficult, turbulent and

much contested times. Historical context tells us about a time of forced treaty-making with the United States, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Russia, which pulled Japan out of a period of 250-year self-imposed isolation. In turn, we see images of the ports in Nagasaki, Yokohama, and

...instructors can take advantage of such Web offerings by accessing them mid-lecture, enhancing learning by offering a sense of "being there" seldom experienced in previous models of pedagogy.

Hakodate, treaty ports open for trade accompanied by increased amounts of problematic cross-cultural interaction. We see photographs of entrepreneurs, travelers, consuls, envoys, priests, barbers, and a groom, as well as members of the transformed Japanese political hierarchy and many others. The CD-ROM reminds us that newly available cameras were used in the service of witnessing selective examples of accelerated change, from the Bakumatsu era at the end of Tokugawa to the beginning of the Meiji Restoration in 1868. In turn, this CD-ROM offers us a pictorial sample of these selective views.

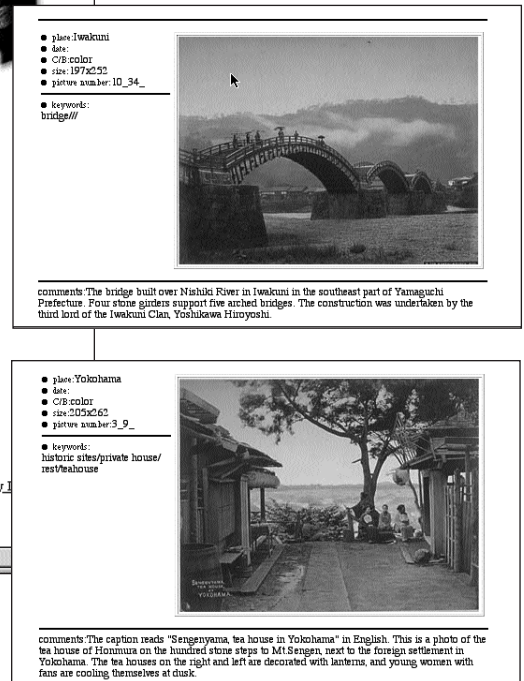
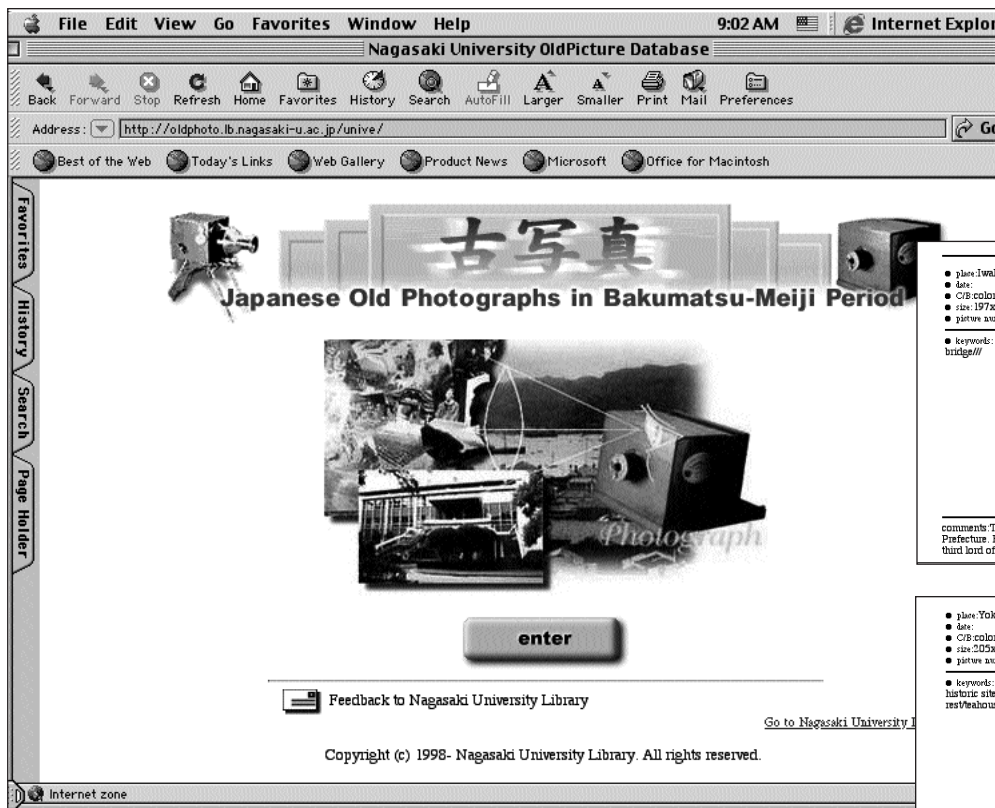
The content of this CD-ROM is organized in two parts, the Introduction and the Collection. In the Introduction, we find a very helpful contextual essay, well illustrated with images from the Collection. Major sections are devoted to useful summaries of "Japan and the Outside World" and "The Introduction of Photography in Japan." In this way we are given an informal tour of the holdings. In the Collection, viewers find 1,188 black and white images from nineteenth century Japan. Descriptions tell of how these collections survived fires, robberies, and custodial changes over the years. In short, the images are nicely contextualized within Japanese history and the survival of its pictorial representation. Users will also find a map of Japan (and a detailed one of Yokohama) indicating relevant locations. For additional reference, the CD-ROM contains a short bibliography and translations of frequently cited Japanese terms and is accompanied by a how-to-use booklet written in both English and Japanese.

There are only a few things I can suggest for improvement. For student use, considerably more bibliographic reference attached to the image display would be helpful. Also, I was disappointed to see that this CD-ROM was not Macintosh user-friendly. With Macs making such a good recovery in recent years, it would make sense to have *Memories of Japan* available for both Macintosh and non-Mac systems. As a detail, I would have liked to have found dates attached to the individual images on the thumbnail pages or the range of dates as a title of each of these 80 pages. And, although I found the results of the "zoom in" feature to be disappointing, the "fill screen" was very helpful.

I also missed some comment on how Japanese people felt about being photographed at this particular historical period. A frequently cited sense of fear was expressed in several ways. "Once photographed your shadow will fade, twice photographed your life will shorten" was one way in which the Japanese expressed their distrust of this new photographic apparatus. (Winkel 1991, 24).

In a related project, in another innovative medium, we find Nagasaki University's collection

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of photographs on a Web site entitled, “Japanese Old Photographs in Bakumatsu-Meiji Period”



(<http://oldphoto.lb.nagasaki-u.ac.jp/unive>). Again the emphasis is on the earliest stage in the history of Japanese photography, and the goal is to make the collection accessible on a worldwide scale, reach an expanded public, and surpass the archive. This collection spans a greater time period, into the 1990s, and more geography, namely “foreigners’ settlements, urban and rural scenery, tourist spots, customs and people in Nagasaki, Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Kobe and elsewhere.” Here, we find many more hand-painted images. The site claims that “As of the end of March 1999, items in the collection numbered 5,414, making it one of the largest collections in Japan.” This site offers four means of search/reference: by keyword, area, shelf number, or straight search. The “comments” section for individual photographs is generally more informative than that of *Memories of Japan*.

With some preparation, and modern classroom technology, instructors can take advantage of such Web offerings by accessing them mid-lecture, enhancing learning by offering a sense of “being there” seldom experienced in previous models of pedagogy.

Finally, I am reminded of a statement made by John Dower in 1980: "Among Westerners, the historians of photography have neglected Japan, and the historians of modern Japan have neglected photography and indeed much of the whole visual record, including paintings, posters, and car-

toons.” (1980, 3). Twenty years later, we can claim that this is not the case, and CD-ROMs such as *Memories of Japan 1859–1875* and Nagasaki University’s Web site contribute to this healthy reversal. **F**

[illegible]

Richard Chalfen is Professor of Anthropology at Temple University and member of the Asian Studies Faculty. His courses cover visibility and visual cultures in the United States and Japan and relations of cultural anthropology to home media. Brief course descriptions, book contents, and current research can be found at: <http://nimbus.temple.edu/~rchalfen>.

Memories of Japan 1859-1875, Japanese Photography in Dutch Collections (for use with Windows 3.1 or higher) is available from IDC Publishers Inc. Price is \$500 for purchase.

References

Dower, John W. "Ways of Seeing—Ways of Remembering: The Photography of Prewar Japan." In *A Century of Japanese Photography*, edited by the Japanese Photographers Association, 1–20. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.

Winkel, Margarita. *Souvenirs from Japan—
Japanese Photography at the Turn of the Century*.
London: Bamboo Publishing Ltd., 1991.

Sight Unseen

>> A film by Nicholas Kurzon. Distributed by Documentary Educational Resources. 1996. 27 minutes.

The film revolves around a Balinese Hindu priest and his family. It is 27 minutes of images from Bali that show mainly juxtapositions. But what juxtapositions! A sign in Bali advertising Texas BBQ while a Balinese musical group sings the Israeli song "Hava Nigila." The priest chewing betel nut and speaking to the filmmaker in Indonesian (not in Balinese), juxtaposed with a smiling Colonel Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken fame. A ceremonial procession with a Coca Cola sign in the background. The son of the priest watching Indonesian television showing "America's Funniest Home Videos." Interspersed throughout the film, we see images of an ice cream vendor pushing his cart along Balinese roads, and a tour bus with an English speaking guide. The film ends with the priest fishing on the ocean shore while a jumbo jet aircraft lands at the airport, all to the sounds of "Deep in the Heart of Texas."

To me, these juxtapositions seem entirely ordinary, everyday fare, not only in Bali but in Indonesia and the world generally. This is the era of globalization, of mixture, hybridity, culture flows, transnationalism, and instant media communication. Culture is a process, always in motion. The themes shown in this film have been discussed for decades by the Balinese scholar James A. Boon, as well as by others. Balinese culture is not static.

But the filmmaker, Nicholas Kurzon, highlights the traditional-modern juxtapositions in opposition to the tourist perspective. Tourists, he says, come to Bali as the last paradise, a tropical wonderland, the Island of the Gods. The tourists feel that the authentic Bali is slipping away (a theme for at least 70 years), and that they have come too late. The Balinese are being overrun by outside influences, but tourists still look for the unspoiled Bali. As such, the tourists fail to see the Bali that is before them, in the present moment, in the here and now. They take photographs that confirm their prior images. In the main, this is an accurate characterization of tour agency advertising and of the kind of images

that tourists capture with their cameras.

Sight Unseen counters the tourist image of Bali by showing the mixtures of culture in juxtapositions. Also, the anonymous voice-over says explicitly that nothing is permanent and that tradition means renewal. I agree, but I knew this before I saw the film. Nor is the execution of this perspective in the film that striking or extraordinary.

I would show *Sight Unseen* in my tourism seminar or in more general anthropology or social science classes along with any one of a number of more standard tourist films about Bali. After showing the two films, one after the other, I would then raise a number of questions for class discussion, particularly two questions.

The first problematic I would pose as follows. We know that the Balinese have been living with tourism for 70-odd years and very intensively since 1969, when the international airport was constructed, yet they continue to practice Balinese culture and ritual.



Their culture has been modified but not lost. I would ask, what other choices do they have as they are, after all, Balinese? I would point out that in addition to tourism the Balinese have been subjected to modernizing influences so that indeed the "outside" is now "inside" Balinese culture. Tourism itself is now very much a part of Balinese

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My review has been critical but *Sight Unseen* does raise these fascinating questions. It is an excellent takeoff point for discussion, and it undoubtedly has and will find use in many classrooms. F

Sight Unseen is available from Documentary Educational Resources. Price is \$195 for purchase and \$50 for rental.

Ajit is available from Filmmakers Library. Price is \$225 for purchase and \$55 for rental.

China: Beyond the Clouds, Parts I and II

>> Produced, directed and photographed by Phil Agland. Distributed by the National Geographic Society. 1994. Approximately 4 hours.

National Geographic's *Beyond the Clouds* (*Yun Zhi Nan*) is an interesting four-hour collage of people and incidents that take place in a remote area of China during the early 1990s. A number of story lines revolve around three individuals and one group.

Doctor Tang, a kindly practitioner of Chinese medicine, runs a clinic; Teacher Lu, a quiet man with a big (five children) family, teaches in the countryside; and Mr. Mu, at the time of the filming a butcher, is the town blowhard by avocation. A group of four or five grannies appear intermittently to cackle about the times while japing among themselves.

The ongoing sagas of these characters and others flow through the four one-hour segments. The first is titled *Small Town in China*. While in a sense accurate, this is a deceptive appellation. The action takes place in or about the town of Lijiang, whose population of 50 to 100 thousand qualifies it as "small" by Chinese reckonings. All the same, Lijiang is by no means a Chinese Springfield. Rather, Lijiang is the urban center of the Naxi Autonomous region in Yunnan Province. The Naxi—the nationality of the grannies and perhaps some of the other characters as well—are a very small national minority (total population less than 240,000) with a unique cultural package (e.g., it is a matriarchal society). In the Lijiang district, ethnic Yis and Tibetans (who live in the surrounding mountain foothills) also come to town to rub shoulders with the Naxi and the Hans (Chinese). This autonomous region itself abuts the Tibetan Autonomous Region and Burma; consequently it is not one's typical Chinese town.

...an interesting four-hour collage of people and incidents that take place in a remote area of China during the early 1990s.

...offers a close up look at the lives of a number of memorable characters in a small town.

However remote and singular this site, the story lines tracked through the course of the documentary are familiar enough to American viewers:

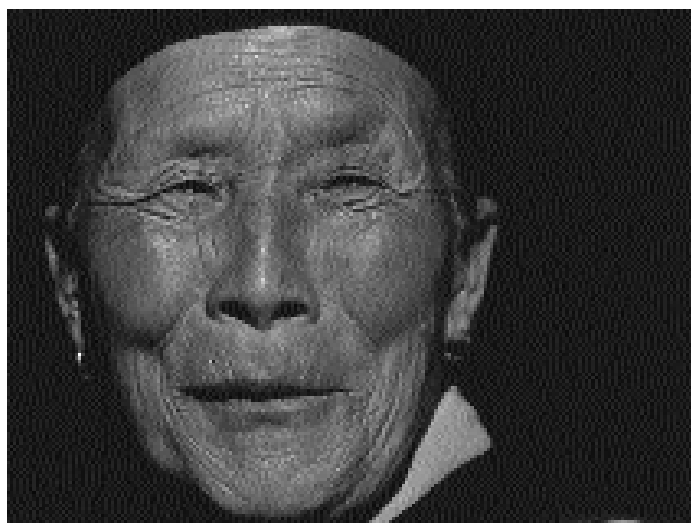
a murder, a sad story, parents fretting over their children's futures, and the elderly passing judgement on the present while reminiscing about the past. Asan, the nephew of Mr. Mu, is killed in a teenage gang brawl in the summer of 1991. The investigation of this incident by the police and Mu's push to see Asan's slayers punished is followed up through the summer of 1992.

Similarly, there is the ongoing saga of Xiaoyan (Little Swallow), the toddler daughter of a teacher at Lijiang Normal School, Ms. Zhou. Teacher Zhou hopes that Dr. Tang will be able to treat Little Swallow's cerebral palsy. While the doctor does his best, he himself worries about the prospects of his own daughter, as do Mr. Mu and Teacher Lu. The doctor is nearing retirement and would like his daughter to take over his practice, but she does not have a college education. Mu's daughter has difficulty focusing on her studies in middle school and it is unlikely that she will get into high school. In

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the nearby Yi mountain village, Lu's daughter is diligent, but is still failing in grade school. The elderly also muse about today's youth. Their voices rising out of the background like a Greek chorus, the grannies damn the evils (gang fighting and drugs) of today, yet recollect that things were hardly idyllic when they were young. These then are the story lines that provide the warp and woof of this particular town in *Beyond the Clouds*.

The underlying motifs of these narrative threads are highlighted in the titles of the other three segments of this film: *Sense of Family*, *For the Sake of Our Children*, and *To be Remembered*. Save for the loud Mu's doubtful relationship with his wife, strong bonds of love and affection qualify the relations between all of the above players and their families. Whatever the situation with his wife, Mu takes it upon himself to see that Asan's slayers are brought to justice. Ironically, it is for the sake of the youths of the other gang (and their parents) that those who killed the lad are handled leniently. Once it was determined that Asan and his friends were themselves armed and had probably instigated the brawl, this seems to be the just settlement. The gang youths get off lightly but it is the drug dealers who haunt this part of China who receive the full measure of justice: the death penalty. In the last segment, the news is broadcast throughout Lijiang township that 100 drug dealers have been executed on a summer day in Yunnan. It is the drug traffic that the Chinese government is at war with and it was dealing and running drugs that once provided Lijiang youth gangs with much of their action, but now most of the gang members are wary of the drug business. And if they break that habit, then perhaps the Naxi grannies will find something of merit in today's youths for these ladies recollect too well how their own youth was blighted by drugs and drunken mates.

Be that as it may, *Beyond the Clouds* offers a close up look at the lives of a number of memorable characters in a small town. Because of the strong sense of family ties and concern for the livelihoods of the children among the folks there, this town is perhaps not that remote a place in China after all. **F**

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China: Beyond the Clouds is available from the National Geographic Society. Price is \$39.95.

Part 1: The Time of Troubles (to 1949), Part 2 : The People's Republic of China (1949–1996)

>> Directed by Ahmed Lalle. Distributed by First Run/Icarus Films. 1998. 52 minutes each.

When I first received this double tape set for review, I was excited, since it promised to be loaded with “entirely original archives and motion pictures.” The videos do not disappoint in this area. Footage in Part 1 from the late Qing through the 1920s, ’30s and ’40s, much of which I had not seen previously, tells the story of the “time of troubles” quite eloquently.

A consistent return to the theme of the “jaws of time” (Karl Marx) is also an effective method of showing the contradictions between internal and external pressures for fundamental change in China. For example, reference to the warlords as “front men for the foreigners” reflects the awful state of China’s domestic situation as well as the direct responsibility of foreigners (the West, Russia, and Japan) for much of this.

The videos fall down in Part 2, largely from lack of attention to chronology. Whereas in Part 1, the story flows quite smoothly, in Part 2, especially in the sections on the 1950s and 1960s, many incidents are presented out of order. This is rather frustrating for anyone who knows the historical sequence, and it could be very confusing for any students who were expected to learn about this period through the video.

For example, discussion about the cooperative movement of the early 1950s uses language more relevant to the Great Leap Forward (GLF) of 1958–1961. Then, when presenting the story of the GLF, there is reference to Mao having been criticized and being forced to give up some power, though the timing of this is not part of the story.

Even more enervating is the placement of the Hundred Flowers Movement and the Anti-Rightist Campaign, both of which happen or begin in 1957, *after* the events of the Great Leap Forward. They are discussed as if they were responses to the GLF, rather than as campaigns which preceded, even set the stage for, the Great Leap. One laughable sequence refers to the Anti-Rightist Campaign, which began in 1957 under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, as a “campaign against right-handed people.”

Then, suddenly the viewer is presented with

film of the first nuclear weapon test in China. Though this event took place in 1964, the narrator does not mention this, but rather goes on to describe the 1958 attacks on the Offshore Islands (near Taiwan) and the 1959 suppression in Tibet. Another example of this creative chronology shows Mao's famous July 1966 swim in the Yangzi River as *following* the August 1966 kick-off rallies for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and *after* references to the end of the Cultural Revolution. This just doesn't make sense.

Once the video gets past this period, it improves greatly. The treatment of the "Open Policy" of the 1980s and the drastic changes of the 1990s are very informative and present a clear picture of the current issues for *China Yellow, China Blue*.

One final note: for the specialist, the uneven and inconsistent transliteration and pronunciation through both videos will be rather bothersome. F

Joseph T. Miller obtained an MA in Asian Studies (1974) and a Ph.D in Political Science (1979) from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has taught Chinese politics and Communist political theory at the University of Melbourne in Australia, and he is currently the Undergraduate Academic Advisor in Political Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

China Yellow, China Blue is available from First Run/Icarus Films. Price is \$490 for purchase and \$100 for rental.

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