

News and Reviews

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STEVEN EMMANUEL



Bridge guard in Quang Tri Province, viewed from atop an American bunker.

Making Peace with Vietnam

■ Directed by Steven Emmanuel. 2009. 87 minutes. In English and Vietnamese with English subtitles.

Making Peace with Vietnam is a unique, thought-provoking, probing film about the lingering consequences of the

REVIEW Vietnam War. Most documentary films on the Vietnam War

focus on the U.S. political and military decisions and tactics in Vietnam. In contrast, this film leaves aside political motivation to focus on the critical question of human suffering caused by war. And unlike most Vietnam War films, it does not endorse or condemn either side of the conflict, but transcends the

dichotomy of hawks and doves and calls attention to the shared suffering and desire for reconciliation between Vietnamese and Americans. Extensively illustrated with interviews and still photos, *Making Peace with Vietnam* leads us to understand and



explore, carefully and closely, what has been neglected in discussions of the Vietnam War: the question of whether and how peace can be achieved after the war.

The film consists of six crisply edited and interlocking chapters, each focusing on a distinctive theme. Instructors may choose to use only one or more than one chapter. The film opens with a chapter entitled "Remnants of War," in which the story of suffering after the war is

told by victims and eyewitnesses to the violence through interviews and still photos. Steven Emmanuel, the film's director and narrator, sets out to connect past actions with present consequences of war and put a human face on those

who "live and breathe the legacy." Kim Phuc, one of the people he interviews, was nine years old when she ran down a road near Trang Bang with burns caused by napalm all over her naked body, becoming the subject of a famous photo taken by

continued on page 2

Contents

From the Editor	2
How to Contact AEMS	2
Reviews:	
<i>Making Peace with Vietnam</i>	1
<i>Two Million Minutes</i>	3
On North Korea: <i>Seoul Train</i> and <i>Children of the Secret State</i>	4
<i>Sumo East and West</i>	6
WEBSITE REVIEW:	
About Japan: A Teacher's Resource	5
Distributors in this Issue	8

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 (UIUC). Our mission is to help educators at all levels, from elementary through college, find multimedia resources for learning and teaching about Asia to promote understanding of Asian peoples and cultures. Our free services include:

- *News and Reviews*, published three times a year;
- An online database of audiovisual materials;
- Reference service;
- Educator workshops on teaching with film;
- Lesson plans, streaming video, film recommendations and other web resources;
- A lending library for local educators

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FROM THE EDITOR

Summer is nearly here, and we're pleased to offer you a little reading to start it off, with four new film reviews and a website review, and hope you follow it up by watching some good films. It's been a difficult year for much of the world; here's to a little well-earned summer relaxation.

Going Green

This will be the last printed issue of the AEMS newsletter, at least for the foreseeable future. Like many organizations this year (not least, a few major newspapers) we are facing budget constraints, and cutting printing and postage costs is one way we can continue to offer a comprehensive program promoting the use of video and technology for teaching about Asia.

Starting with the Fall 2009 issue, we will move to an online-only format, and with this comes new potential, including the ability to embed video and audio clips within our reviews and essays, not to mention the obvious convenience of hyperlinks. We will still publish three issues a year on our current schedule (September, January, and May).

To be sure you don't miss any of our film reviews, teaching essays or filmmaker interviews, **please join our email list!** Just drop a line to aems@illinois.edu, or fill in our online contact form at www.aems.uiuc.edu/contact and ask to be added. Each time the newsletter is published, you'll receive an email linking you directly to the new issue; we'll also continue to send you announcements of new features on the AEMS website.

New Anime Resources Available Soon

With funding from the Center for Global Partnership, AEMS offered a special, three-part program this spring, "Teaching Japan Through Anime." Building on an educator workshop and a public event for teens offered here in central Illinois earlier this spring, we will be publishing a lesson plan and other resources at the About Japan website (reviewed in this issue) and the AEMS website. Look for them later this summer! ■



Astro Boy

—Tanya Lee, Editor

Making Peace

continued from page 1

Associated Press photographer Nick Ut on June 8, 1972. Today, at age 45, like tens of thousands of Vietnamese, she lives with the memory of individual and collective pain and loss resulting from the 19 million tons of chemicals dropped by the United States in Vietnam. As the narrator recounts the number of bombs and tons of Agent Orange dropped in Vietnam, we see still photos of innocent children who were and are their victims, including a four-year-old boy born without eyes yet still able to cry, and deformed embryos in jars in the basement of a medical research institute. Such startling visual reminders of the cruelty of war are difficult to look at, but they offer an honest and powerful testimony to the legacy of the war.

As one of the few films on the Vietnam War made in the United States to include the Vietnamese perspective, this film does not merely look at the reality of Vietnamese suffering. At the core of the film, in fact, is the desire for peace and reconciliation between the Vietnamese and Americans. Chapter Two, "Mending Wall,"

raises the question, "Have we made peace with Vietnam?" More than thirty years after the U.S. troops withdrew from Vietnam, how do we measure whether peace has been achieved? The Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., however thoughtfully and brilliantly designed, memorializes only the deaths of Americans. In his voiceover, Emmanuel quotes Robert Frost's poem "Mending Wall": "Before I built a wall, I'd ask to know what I was walling in or walling out." The film shows the audience that millions of Vietnamese, those who suffer from high cancer rates or birth defects, and those who died during the war or were killed after it by land mines and cluster bombs still in the ground, are "walled out" from the American memory of the Vietnam War. So are the American veterans who have yet to heal themselves.

The third chapter, "Hearts and Minds," illustrates how shared suffering connects the Vietnamese and American veterans and prompted them to establish charitable, humanitarian organizations, such as the Office of Genetic Counseling and Disabled Children (OGCDC) and the S.P.I.R.A.L. Foundation.

continued on page 7

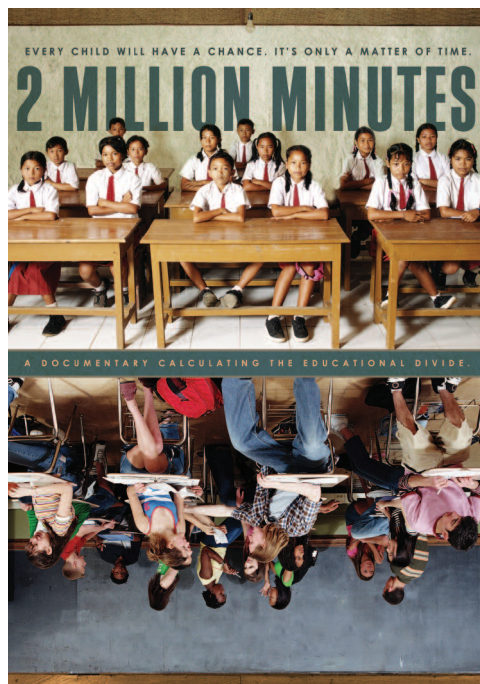
2 Million Minutes

■ Directed by Chad Heeter. 2008. 54 minutes. In English and Chinese, with English subtitles.

Two *Million Minutes* follows six engaging students from China (Shanghai), India (Bangalore), and the United States (Carmel, Indiana) as they work through their final year of secondary school and apply to college. Two million minutes is the approximate number of minutes in four years; the question posed by the film is: how do top students in the three countries spend their four years of secondary school? It will not surprise American audiences to know that even excellent American students devote a lot of time to extra-curricular activities and some have part-time jobs. By contrast, the Indian and Chinese students profiled in the film spend almost all of their waking hours studying and improving themselves. They acknowledge that American students have more “fun,” but define success in strictly academic terms. As the 17-year-old Indian boy says, his career has already been chosen; he will become an engineer.

The filmmakers clearly believe that America will fall behind—if it has not already done so—unless standards are raised and students devote more time to study. The American system is “broken,” as one expert interviewed in the film states. American students do poorly in comparison to students in other countries, according to international studies of academic achievement. The statistics are daunting; even rigorous American schools require only two years of math and science, while by the time a Chinese or Indian student graduates from high school, he/she will have studied much more advanced levels of both. The average American student spends 900 hours in the classroom and 1500 hours watching television in a year. That said, top American students do work hard; it's the distribution of time—on academics, sports and other extra-curricular activities, and paid work—that raises concerns among some observers.

A Chinese secondary school principal who visited the United States in 2007 as part of an exchange program reflected afterwards, “Is the purpose of education to ask questions or to answer questions?” (in “Opposite Extremes or Connected at the Root? A Comparison of Basic Education in China and the United States,” Wu Shimin, unpublished paper, November 2007 [translated by Wang Peihui]). For the film's Indian and Chinese children—and their parents, who are extremely involved in the lives and education of their children—education is a matter of providing the right answers to questions, and is a means to an end, a “passport out of poverty.” Americans tend to focus on the process of education, on learning how to learn and how to think—in other words, on asking questions. The film argues that Americans mis-



takenly believe in their own superiority (one area in which American students consistently out-perform their peers in other countries is self confidence), and don't understand that in an increasingly global world, the United States is falling behind.

The film does not consider what seems to be a paradox of American education; while many recognize that we have severe problems at the pre-collegiate level, American undergraduate and graduate institutions attract applications from spectacular students from all over the world, suggesting that we must be doing something right. One of the warnings sounded in the film, in fact, is that many graduate students in the United States are foreign, as though we should somehow feel threatened by this fact. One might argue instead that we benefit when we attract the best and the brightest from all over the world.

Another issue to consider is what kind of people different education systems produce. Chinese educators who visit the United States often comment favorably on the emphasis on individuality and creativity fostered by American schools, and, perhaps surprisingly, on the collaboration and problem-solving skills at the heart of much of American pedagogy. In a world in which people frequently work in teams, knowing how to work with others is a critical skill. In fact, many employers in China complain about the lack of real-world skills possessed by Chinese college graduates, even those from the top academic institutions. The applicants know how to memorize, and how to solve math or science problems, but they are unprepared to func-

tion in a professional environment.

What is missing from the film is any consideration of students who are not privileged enough to attend an excellent school, as defined by each country. The three countries mandate varying years of compulsory education (in many states in the United States the standard is age sixteen; in India it is through age fourteen; and in China it is nine years), and in reality there is huge variation in access to education and in quality in all three. The purpose of “No Child Left Behind,” President George W. Bush's education plan, was to raise the standard of education for *all* children. Many would argue that we have fallen short, but equal access to education is an American ideal, while educational elitism is a given in China and India.

Two Million Minutes raises very interesting questions about the purposes and goals of education, and about the roles of the family, community, and society at large in raising children. With framing and discussion, it could fruitfully be used for students from middle school through college in classes ranging from geography to social studies, education to area studies, sociology to international affairs. The tendency of some Americans towards complacency could be challenged through discussions raised by the film. ■

Margot E. Landman is senior director for education programs at the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations. She had the good fortune to begin studying Chinese in high school; she continued in college, and then was among the first Americans to go to China to teach after diplomatic recognition in 1979. Since her return to the United States in 1982, she has worked in educational and cultural exchange between the United States and China, or Asia more broadly, at the university and pre-collegiate levels.

HOW TO PURCHASE: *Two Million Minutes* is available on DVD from Broken Pencil Productions. Price is \$200 for universities and corporations; \$100 for K–12 schools, non-profit organizations and public libraries; and \$25 for home schooling use.

Additional Resources

Broken Pencil Productions has also produced two follow-up DVDs:

- *Two Million Minutes in India, Chapter 2: A Deeper Look at Indian Education*, and
- *Two Million Minutes in China, Chapter 3: A Deeper Look at Chinese Education*

Pricing is the same for each DVD purchased individually or for the package of three.

On North Korea

■ *Seoul Train*. Directed by Jim Butterworth, Aaron Lubarsky, Lisa Sleeth. 2004. 54 minutes.

■ *Children of the Secret State: North Korea*. Directed by Carla Garapedian. 2003. 46 minutes.

Seoul Train and Children of the Secret State: North Korea offer complimentary perspectives on one of the most isolated countries in the world. Its government a vestige of the authoritarian cults of person-ality of yesteryear, North Korea is known internationally for its eccentric “Dear Leader” Kim Jong-il, its nuclear brinkman-ship with the United States, and a famine that killed an estimated two million in the late 1990s and continues to stunt the growth of an entire generation of North Koreans.

These two documentaries provide some insights into the humanitarian challenges facing North Korea as well as the ways in which neighboring states, activists, and interna-tional institutions are address-ing these issues. North Korean refugees escape by traversing the narrow Tumen River that forms the border with China. There they can hide among the ethnic Korean population of the Yanbian region before making their way to Mongolia or another country with the hope of seeking political asylum in South Korea. A handful of North Koreans, however, sneak back into their country in order to secretly film the famine and state security at work. *Children of the Secret State* and *Seoul Train* both use this kind of footage in order to make the case that North Korea is a humanitarian and human rights disaster.

Children of the Secret State focuses on footage of children whose growth has been stunted by the famine. The footage and disappearance of Ahn Chol, a North Korean brave enough to secretly return to his country many times, drives home the severity of North Korea’s security apparatus and the real dangers faced by those who would oppose it. The filmmakers supplement Ahn’s footage and story with interviews and footage taken during a government-sanctioned tour to the North Korean capital of Pyongyang. The documentary is thus able to contrast the monuments, rhetoric, and



Above, from *Seoul Train*: Two-year-old Han-mi looks on in agony as her mother is wrestled to the ground by Chinese guards at the Japanese Consulate in Shenyang, China.

Right: In 1998, the World Food Program conducted a study of child malnutrition in North Korea. The results showed that 15.6% of children were wasted and 63.8% were stunted. *Children of the Secret State* focuses on footage of children whose growth has been stunted.

well-fed youth of the capital with the emaciated frames of children in the mountainous northern part of the country. The filmmakers also spend a considerable amount of time in the Yanbian region of China waiting to hear from Ahn Chol before eventually leaving for South Korea without word. The thatched roofs of Yanbian and the skyscrapers of Seoul offer glimpses into North Korea’s past and its possible future.

Seoul Train focuses primarily on the under-ground railroad of activists working to help North Korean refugees. As such, it is as much concerned with the actions of the Chinese government and the United Nation Human Rights Council (UNHRC) as with the workings of North Korea. The film follows activists as they unsuccessfully try to help two different groups of North Koreans cross into Mongolia and storm a Japanese con-

sulate in China, respectively. Through interviews with these families just before they are caught by the Chinese soldiers guarding the consulate, *Seoul Train* brings to light the desperation of North Korean refugees and the very real dangers they face. Similarly, the arrest and subsequent eight-month imprisonment of South Korean activist Chun Ki-won, whom we see before and after this incident, illustrates the dangers voluntarily faced by concerned activists. *Seoul Train* really distin-guishes itself, however, through its inclusion of interviews and press conferences with officials from prominent NGOs such as *Medicins Sans Frontiers* (or Doctors Without Borders), the Chinese government, the United States Congress, and the UNHRC. This enables *Seoul Train* to raise important questions on the role of other states and the UN in addressing the situation in North Korea.

Although both documentaries have educational value and are appropriate for high school through adult audiences, *Seoul Train* is unparalleled as a resource. Not only does the film itself cover the complexities of the situation from various angles, a treasure trove of bonus materials is included on the DVD. Several interviews with the filmmakers and U.S. Senator Sam Brownback give the viewer insight into how the U.S. Congress regards North Korea. There are also a number of extended scenes, including those featuring the Han-mi family—later captured crossing into Mongolia—and public executions in North Korea.



Perhaps the most insightful bonus material is a 36-minute panel discussion at the Council on Foreign Relations. The panel includes Senator Brownback and the film-makers as well as Donald Gregg, former CIA opera-tive in the region, ambas-sador to South Korea, and current President of the Korea Society. Ambassador Gregg has travelled to North Korea on several occasions and has one of the more balanced views on the challenges and play-

ers in the region. Finally, *Seoul Train* includes a virtual library of PDF files on the topic, including extensive primary documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the North Korea Human Rights Act of 2004, the North Korea-China Bi-lateral Agreement, and reports from Amnesty International. High school, undergradu-ate, and graduate students would all find useful

continued on page 5

About Japan: A Teacher's Resource

■ <http://aboutjapan.japansociety.org>

About Japan is a wonderful resource for teachers created by the Japan Society. This is an extensive site with many resources, but not so overwhelming that it turns away the user. In fact, *About Japan* is easy to navigate and user-friendly. Any K–12 instructor who teaches about Japan will find something of value in this website.

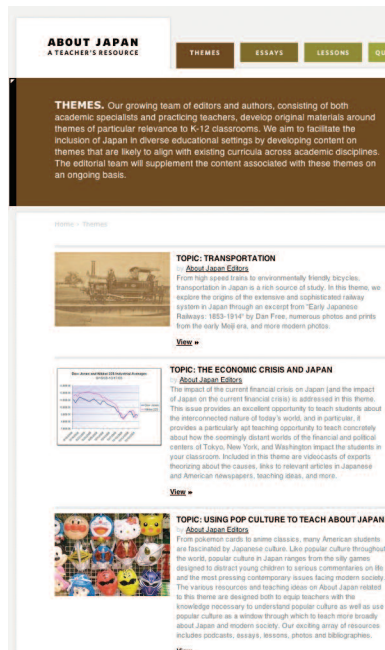
The opening welcome on the homepage tells you everything that it offers:

This site provides educators and specialists in Japan Studies a space for sharing, discussing and developing teaching ideas and resources about Japan, especially as they relate to K–12 classrooms.

The site features thought-provoking essays; classroom-ready lesson plans; an area for asking and answering questions; resources including historical documents, maps and images; and member profiles. In addition to user-generated content, the editorial team will develop original materials organized around different themes. We invite you to contribute materials of your own and join the discussion.

The website ambitiously seeks to create a community of teachers and learners to collaborate and share their thoughts on Japan. Six navigation bars on the top of the website orient the user: **Themes, Essays, Lessons, Questions, Resources, and Members**. Open up either the Questions page or the Members page to get an idea of what the creators of *About Japan* envision. There is an open forum for educators to ask other educators questions about curriculum and resources (you must register as a member first). The *About Japan* editors have even opened questions themselves to generate discussion. The Members page allows the user to find other educators in their area with similar interests and teaching level.

The website is devoted to K-12 education and



is not slanted to any one interest group or topic. Again, there is something here for everyone. The other four navigation bars will direct you to numerous resources to assist teachers in the classroom. I highly recommend using the “Explore” box that each of the bars offers. If I were looking for lesson plans on Japanese politics for my high school history

classes, I could pull up eleven lessons that are very well laid out and easy to follow. If I wanted further background reading by renowned specialists I could go directly to the Essays and find factual, concise, and readable essays that are printable for my students. All the topics have a teaser with a short description, visual, and an indicator for the grade level and subject area. Life doesn't get any better than this for a teacher!

This website offers quite a bit for students as well. The essays are remarkable and students should be encouraged to use this site for research. The Resources section opens up an impressive list of maps, photographs, art, links, timelines, and

★ **Look for a lesson plan from AEMS on About Japan this summer on teaching with anime!**



podcasts that would enhance any classroom project. My favorite is a visual resource of Japanese recipes (maki zushi and rice balls!) that are suitable for any grade-level.

About Japan gets two very

enthusiastic thumbs up from this teacher. Bookmark it immediately and send the URL to other teachers. Register as a member and get involved in the discussions. Encourage others to do the same and this website will grow to become a collaborative website used by a community of teachers and learners who share a love “about Japan.” ■

Alex Echevarria teaches East Asian history and culture in the International Baccalaureate Program at Rampart High School in Colorado Springs. He was a 2007 recipient of the Heinz Elgin Outstanding Teaching Award from the U.S.–Japan Foundation.



Above: Akebono, nee Chad Rowan of Hawai'i, the first non-Japanese yokozuna (grand champion) in the 2000-year history of sumo.

Sumo East and West

■ Directed by Ferne Pearlstein. 2003. 85 minutes.

Sumo *East and West* packs a great deal into 85 minutes: the postwar rise of sumo, Japan's centuries-old national sport; the late-twentieth-century dominance of sumo by foreigners from Hawai'i; the various ancient symbols and rituals and traditions that still accompany life in the Japan Sumo Association (JSA); all unfurling against the backdrop of jumbo-tron billboards flashing above Tokyo's cell phone-toting hipster urban youth. And if looking at sumo in Japan isn't enough, we also get a taste of sumo's growing internationalization; a dog track's casino in Los Angeles is cleared so a make-shift sumo ring can be duct-taped to the carpet for the North American Sumo Championships.

The unifying thread is the story of Wayne Vierra, one of fourteen men who left Hawai'i in the late 1980s and early 1990s to follow in the footsteps of Jesse Kuhaulua, the first non-Japanese *sumotori* successful enough to retire into one of the Japan Sumo Association's coveted elder positions. Like most men who enter the JSA's brutal and almost monastic world, Vierra fell victim to the sport's archaic rules regarding injury: absences in major tournaments count as losses that send a wrestler down the ranking sheet, and if out long enough, he must quit altogether.

When we first meet Vierra in the film, he has returned to Hawai'i and is trying to hide his dejection at the outcome of his brief but promising career in Japan. We find that he has adopted not only the practice of sumo, but its deeply traditional way of life. Vierra clings to the hope sumo will one day become an Olympic sport, giving him a

second chance at a career. Far away from the hallowed grounds of Tokyo's Hall of National Sport, where he once competed against up-and-coming Kobe Bryants of sumo, we watch him meticulously carve a perfect sumo ring into his backyard on Hawai'i's North Shore with a garden hoe, cover it with sand from the beach across the road, and prepare for an International Sumo Federation tournament to be held in a municipal gym in northern Japan.

Sumo East and West's one-part culture clash, one-part culture acceptance story is told completely and eloquently through interviews and images. None is more powerful than the pre-tournament construction of the JSA's official raised clay ring, which we see being built by hand according to centuries-old tradition. "The way" of sumo that Vierra clearly reveres is demonstrated in part with the image of a Shinto priest purifying the new ring in an elaborate ceremony before ten

thousand empty seats, bringing home the fact that sumo is much more than just a sport. The visual tone is one of deep, stoic respect, and it helps explain the major difference in the fortunes of two other Hawai'i men who appear prominently in the film: the outspoken Konishiki, whose trouble with sumo's largely unspoken cultural requirements kept him from becoming the first-ever non-Japanese *yokozuna* (the sport's top rank), and the soft-spoken and humble Akebono, who later achieved the historic promotion with comparatively little controversy.

Integrated into a comprehensive lesson plan, *Sumo East and West* could be an extremely useful teaching tool, serving as a point of departure into

a number of the cultural realities the film tends to gloss over in its need to pack everything in (see PBS's comprehensive, official website for the film for a helpful place to begin). For example, the concept that a woman would be thought to irreparably defile the sacred ring by merely touching it—let alone competing on it—could be an interesting avenue into further study of Japanese gender issues. As for Hawai'i, Wayne Vierra's continued commitment to sumo despite the long odds of it ever becoming an Olympic sport; Yokozuna Akebono's own admission that sumo likely saved him from his brother's life as a drug dealer in Hawai'i; and the fact that the hazing victim depicted in the film returned to Hawai'i only to find constant unemployment and, finally, murder at the hands of a crystal meth dealer, all suggest a reality for young Hawaiian men far different from that of the swaying palm tree "paradise" the film's images imply.

Without further discussion, these stories as well as some other scenes from the film (a we-know-what-to-laugh-at clip from a WWII-era propaganda film freely discussing "Jap diplomats" and "the Jap army," for instance) pose the risk of perpetuating some of the stereotypes the film is trying to confront. Still, I could not think of a better introduction to sumo to pique the interest of high school students, encouraging them to do further research on not only the exciting sport, but also the cultural contexts for the sport's practice in Japan and Hawai'i. ■

Mark Panek is an assistant professor of English at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, where he teaches creative writing and composition.

Gaijin Yokozuna, his biography of Hawai'i sumo champion Akebono, was nominated for the 2007 Los Angeles Times Biography of the Year Award, and the 2007 Kiriama Prize for Nonfiction.

Additional Resources

Sumo East and West, official website for the film, includes short bios of all the sumo wrestlers featured in the film and other supplementary information: www.sumoeastandwest.com.

PBS's Independent Lens website for the film for general information about sumo (including a glossary), profiles of the wrestlers in the film, an interactive guide to "sumo style," and more: www.pbs.org/independentlens/sumoeastandwest.

HOW TO PURCHASE: *Sumo East and West* is available on DVD through the film's official website. Price is \$250 for universities and other institutions; \$150 for secondary schools, public libraries and non-profit organizations; and \$44.95 for individual home use.

The filmmakers are offering a special 20% discount to AEMS subscribers. Purchase DVD through www.sumoeastandwest.com, and enter discount code BS6EBNWS on the checkout page. (Please note that this discount applies only to home video for individual use, not educational or institutional purchases.)

Making Peace

continued from page 2

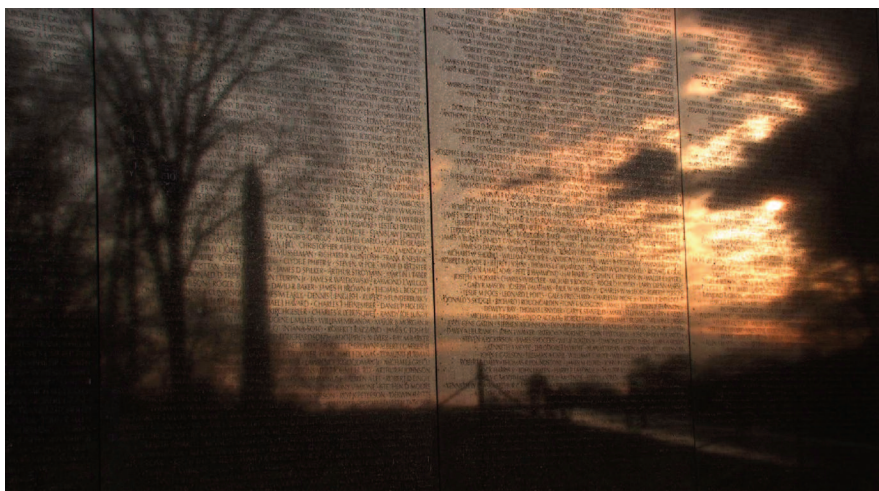
In addition to looking at the peace-making and reconciliation efforts between Vietnamese and Americans through humanitarian works, *Making Peace with Vietnam* explores the meaning and practice of peace, which makes it unusual among war films. In the fourth chapter, "Peace in Ourselves, Peace in the World," the venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, a renowned Zen Buddhist poet and peace activist who started the "Engaged Buddhism" movement and as a result was exiled by both the North and the South Vietnamese governments, declares in a simple and clear voice that peace must begin in oneself and that if one cannot heal oneself, one cannot help heal others. His teachings on peace influence many Vietnam veterans, one of whom describes his journey of healing and peace as "not about forgetting but about creating a new future by living in the present moment."

The last two chapters, "Going Back" and "Beginning Anew" deal with American veterans' emotional return visits to Vietnam, decades after the war, and with young Vietnam today, as it looks forward to the future, respectively.

Exquisitely shot and beautifully edited, *Making Peace with Vietnam* is an important and powerful film documenting the complexities of war. In the images of present-day Vietnam, we see remnants of the past and the continuing struggle for peace on both sides of the conflict from more than thirty years ago. This film is quiet and contemplative, leading the audience to meditate on what peace really means and how it can be achieved. It provides a balanced account of the legacy of the Vietnam War.

This wonderful documentary is suitable for high school and college students who are studying the history and culture of Vietnam, the Vietnam War, and issues concerning human rights. The statistics from studies about the bombs and chemicals used by the United States in Vietnam are informative and clearly assembled and can be used by instructors to provoke discussions on what the numbers tell us about war and the long-term effects of war on soldiers and civilians. The different but interconnected chapters can be used effectively either together as a whole or separately to address different issues of war. *Making Peace with Vietnam* is a fine, inspirational, and courageous film about confronting the reality of war. It is a highly valuable addition to the existing body of film on the Vietnam War. ■

Shu-chin Wu is an assistant professor of Asian History at Agnes Scott College and a Board member of ASIANetwork. Her research and teaching interests include modern Chinese social and



STEVEN EMMANUEL

Top: Women fishing on the Perfume River, Hue.

Middle: Heart surgery patients at Hue Central Hospital. Even today, many children are victims of the 19 million tons of Agent Orange dropped in Vietnam, still contaminating the natural environment.

Bottom: Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C.

intellectual history, ancient Chinese thought, the representation of history in film and literature, the Vietnam Wars, and the theory and practice of history.

HOW TO PURCHASE: *Making Peace with Vietnam* is available on DVD for \$15 from Iridescent Films.

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North Korea

continued from page 5

information here for research projects on North Korea, China, human rights, underground railroads, and transnational advocacy.

Although both films make significant contributions to the body of resources on human rights and Northeast Asia, among other topics, they also share some of the same shortcomings. Neither film attempts to explain how North Korea's agricultural system failed in the 1990s, nor do they situate the famine within larger historical and political contexts. Also, neither film engages with alternative views of North Korea. For example, there is no mention of North Korea's economic reforms, or of South Korea's "Sunshine Policy." Former South Korean President Kim, Dae-Jung's openness to North Korea has led not only to family reunions but also to tours to the eastern side of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and to the construction of the Kaesong Industrial Complex just north of the DMZ. The Kaesong Industrial Complex combines South Korean capital with North Korean labor, and could employ over 300,000 North Koreans within a few years. The increasing levels of trade and cooperation between the Koreans along with the free-trade zone established near the Chinese border are already transforming the North Korean economy, albeit slowly and unevenly.

Similarly, neither film discusses how aggressive American rhetoric that includes North Korea in the "Axis of Evil" has exacerbated North Korea's nuclear brinkmanship. This omission is glaring because the United States cannot put pressure on

China with regard to refugees precisely because it needs China to bring North Korea to the negotiation table regarding nuclear weapons. Finally, by not presenting the argument for engagement favored by South Korea, China, and some in Washington, both films tacitly support conservatives who argue for regime change in North Korea at any cost. Given that conflict on the Korean peninsula would cost an estimated one million lives and a trillion dollars, this is a dangerous position to support, even if only implicitly.

These criticisms notwithstanding, both *Children of the Secret State* and *Seoul Train* would be valuable additions to high school, city, and university libraries and courses. ■

Charles Jones (pseudonym) is a Ph.D. candidate in sociology at a top American university and has spent most of the last twelve years working throughout East Asia.

Additional Resources

Seoul Train, official website for the film, includes links to many resources and information on how to get involved: www.seoultrain.com.

HOW TO PURCHASE: *Children of the Secret State* is available on DVD for purchase from Hardcash Productions. It is also available for viewing at Google Video, YouTube, and on the Sprword website: www.sprword.com/videos/childrensecret.

Seoul Train is available on DVD for purchase from New Day Films. Purchase price is \$275 for colleges and universities and \$90 for public libraries and high schools.

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