

News and Reviews

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The Asian American Studies Committee Film Series

>> by Ida Fadzillah

The Asian American Film Series is currently one of the most successful programs of the Asian American Studies Committee (AASC) of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. It was begun in the Spring of 1999 by Lena Choe, then AASC Staff Associate, and consisted of four films during March, Asian American Awareness Month at the University of Illinois. The Film Series continued in the spring of 2000, and this year was expanded by Sharon Lee, the current Staff Associate, into a monthly screening of films.

Each year the AASC Film Series has showcased specific themes or issues. The subtitle of the 1999 Series was "An Introduction to Asian American Histories," with each film chosen for its treatment of significant moments in the experiences of Asians in America. *Blue Collar and Buddha* deals

with anti-Asian violence, which occurred in the 1990s against Southeast Asians in

Rockford, Illinois; *Meeting at Tule Lake* and *Heart Mountain* both address the incarceration of Japanese Americans in the internment camp at Tule Lake during World War II; and *Roots in the Sand* is a historical look at the South Asian presence in America. In the spring of 2000, the Film Series concentrated on addressing issues of identity among Asian American youth: *Kelly Loves Tony* examines a year in the life of teenage Laotian Americans; *Mixed Feelings* illuminates the experiences of growing up biracial in American society; and *Miss India Georgia* looks at issues of femininity and assimilation among second generation Indian Americans living in the South. This year's selection—eight films in all and co-sponsored by



the Asian Educational Media Service—is sub-titled "Asia/America: Intervention, Immigration, Imagination."

The films deal with different aspects of Asian and Asian American history, bringing to the forefront complex issues of transnationalism and diasporic crossings.

The aim of creating an Asian American Film Series was to increase awareness of Asian American issues around the University of Illinois campus. The Film Series is accomplishing this in several ways. Not only do the films themselves disseminate information, but putting together a film series on a yearly basis brings together an eclectic group of students, staff, and faculty who share ideas, time, and resources. I was in charge of the spring 2000 Film Series, and worked with our

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COURTESY OF DOCUMENTARY EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Detail of image from *Circles and Cycles: Kathak Dance*, which was filmed in India. See review, page 4.

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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 audiovisual media resources for teaching and learning about Asia, and advice about which ones may best suit your needs. In addition to *AEMS News and Reviews*, published quarterly, services include a free call-in/write-in service and a Web site. To add your name to our mailing list, request additional copies of the newsletter to use in workshops or to share with your colleagues, or ask for help in locating resources, please contact us.

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What's New?

Last spring, our newsletter included a survey card on which we asked readers to give us some feedback on our current services and make suggestions for the future. 62 people responded. Here are some of the results:

Respondents were split almost evenly between those who are involved with education on the K–12 level (28) and college (27). Four were involved with Community/Continuing Education and three checked “other.”

Over half the respondents (35) had never seen our Web site. If you have access to the Internet, I encourage you to have a look at it. We have recently redesigned parts of the site to make it more user-friendly and easier to navigate. The site's main feature is a database of over 3000 audiovisual materials on Asia, which includes abstracts, running time, purchasing information, and reviews. Also on the Web site is a Bulletin Board for exchanging information, images and essays, and a list of related sites.

One quarter of the respondents indicated that they had ever heard of our help service. Originally, the help service was intended as a personalized search service for people who did not have access to our Internet site. But we have also been able to help people track down copies of out-of-print films, special interest Web sites, and performing arts organizations. Answering questions is part of our job and in searching for information, we often become aware of all kinds of new resources. Just call or e-mail us and we will do our best to help.

Most interesting were readers' individual comments and suggestions. A few readers asked that we focus more on specific regions such as South Asia and Korea. Both our newsletter and database are somewhat biased toward Japan and China for the simple reason that the majority of materials available in English on Asia focus on those countries. It is part of our mandate, however, to seek out materials on other countries in Asia and review them. We will continue to do so and will try to make the coverage of geographic regions as comprehensive as possible.

Several readers requested that we provide a way for people to exchange classroom ideas and post information about upcoming seminars, conferences and in-services. If you would like to contact other AEMS readers, please utilize our Web site's Bulletin Board <http://www.aems.uiuc.edu/webboard/>.

Several respondents suggested that AEMS create more educational material. We recently decided to produce a series of teacher's guides to selected feature films and documentaries. I will write more about these guides in an upcoming issue. In the meantime, please let us know about the video resources that you have found most useful and we will consider creating a guide for them.

My thanks to all of you who responded. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome so please don't hesitate to contact us.

—Sarah I. Barbour

AEMS Web Site Updated and Redesigned

We invite you to visit our web site (www.aems.uiuc.edu) to view recent changes, download teachers guides, and locate other free information about educational media and materials on Asia. ♦



Thanks, Caroline!

During a quarter-century of helping them on Asian Studies workshops and media projects, I accumulated a stack of snapshots of Jack and Caroline Bailey. Among their many achievements the Baileys created AEMS' predecessor organization, the Center for Educational Media at Earlham College. And for four years Caroline has served on the AEMS national Advisory Board. She is leaving the board in order to pursue other projects, and this note is one small way for me, the staff, and the Board to show our appreciation for her years of selfless service.

In the snapshots we usually see both of the Baileys, together with other people involved in whatever Bailey-led project was going on at that moment. As I riff through the photos, I realize that there are times when Caroline is nowhere to be seen—and then I remember why: she was the one behind the camera. Or she was off-camera in a corner of the room, taking a phone call probably intended for Jack. I have some shots of Jack Bailey in solo. But not once does Caroline appear in a photograph all by herself. And that little fact tells a big story.

Caroline Bailey is one of those persons-without-whom: the silent partners every volunteer organization relies upon—those willing to invest large amounts of time and energy in service of the cause, but who don't clamor to be put in the spotlight or paid with dividends of publicity. Projects were in the name of Jackson H. Bailey, but everybody knew that Jack would not have been half as effective a skipper without his First Lieutenant.

Jack told how one time he was rushing from Indiana to Japan for a series of meetings. His plane to Detroit was late, and he was racing to board the connecting flight to Tokyo. As he was explaining to the check-in clerk how he must be on that flight, the clerk looked up and said, "But, Mr. Bailey, you can't travel on your wife's passport." Jack had to return home, fetch the right passport, and arrive in Tokyo a day late.

Caroline Bailey leaves AEMS with a model of selfless service that others should strive to emulate. Thanks, Caroline... ♦



David W. Plath, Program Director



Jack and Caroline Bailey

AASC Film Series

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AASC undergraduate interns and work study students to choose the movies. Together, we screened various films found through the NAATA (National Asian American Telecommunications Association) catalogues, the UIUC Media Center movie lists, and Asian American Studies professors' personal collections. Many films were rejected because the interns found the contents too vague or inappropriate for undergraduates.

A screening series is also a wonderful way to bring together a diverse viewing audience. The interns were in charge of advertising and designed flyers, which they put up across campus. They also spoke about the Series to Asian American Studies classes and to Asian American student organizations, attracting many undergraduates to the event. The interns also introduced the films and led the discussions that followed each screening. This helped create an atmosphere in which both the interns and the attendees felt comfortable talking

about and questioning the issues raised in the films. Several professors also attended to see if the films would be appropriate to show in their classes. The films were shown at the Asian American Studies building; many who came to see the Series had never been there before and were thus made aware of its many resources for both students and faculty.

Finally, films can examine ideas that are not necessarily dealt with in classrooms or lectures. While there are several classes on Asian American Studies taught at the University of Illinois, they cannot deal with all issues of significance to the Asian American experience. The films in our series serve to fill a gap by making such issues as biracial identities and South Asian history accessible to the community.

The success of the Film Series is due to a number of factors. First, showing films on a college campus is not a costly endeavor. The only film bought for the spring 2000 Series was *Mixed Feelings*. *Kelly Loves Tony* was loaned by a faculty member, and *Miss India Georgia* was borrowed from the Media Center. Advertising costs were

limited to photocopies, and expenses for the actual event were for snacks and drinks. This year none of the films were purchased: they were borrowed either from the Media Center or from AEMS.

For this small financial investment though, a lot was gained. Film is a medium through which complex ideas such as racial identity and assimilation can be expressed and understood by diverse groups of people. This was demonstrated in the animated discussions which always followed a showing. Also, unlike conferences or lectures, screenings are an event that consistently attract undergraduates. Undergraduate students do not have a lot of time to spare during the day, but several have found the Asian American Film Series to be a stimulating way to spend their lunch hour. After some enjoyable screenings, several student organizations on campus have requested to borrow films from the Series to show their own members. Finally, participants in the Film Series always left screenings more informed about the variety of

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>> A video by Robert S. Gottlieb. 1989. 28 minutes.

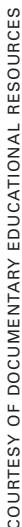
Initially, *abhinaya* is illustrated by dancer Saswati Sen portraying one of the milkmaids featured in the stories about Krishna; she demonstrates churning butter and then storing it in a pot hanging from the ceiling (the latter cleverly explained through intercutting with a miniature painting). Immediately thereafter, the second element of pure dance is demonstrated by Daksha Seth, who demonstrates the importance of the dancer's marking the return of the first beat of the rhythmic cycle (*tala*) with a special posture arrived at with a climactic series of movements. Next, Jai Kishan further emphasizes the link between physical movement and the rhythm of the music, as realized on the drum by reciting rhythmic syllables (*bol*) also used by drummers



Despite the high quality of the film production, the excellence of the artistic personnel, and a cameo appearance by the *tabla* superstar Zakir Hussain as narrator, the full potential of this film has not quite been realized because of the somewhat disconnected way in which its various components are linked. In a film of 28 minutes, one can only hope to stir the interest of the viewer to seek more information and fuller examples. This

For college or high-school courses that deal with the performing arts, this could make an effective contribution to the inclusion of non-western materials, especially if the instructor has access to supplementary material like Sunil Kothari's beautifully illustrated overview of the genre in his *Kathak: Indian Classical Dance Art* (Abhinav Publications, 1989). To use this documentary most effectively, the teacher should pause frequently in order to elaborate on what has been illustrated and to make sure that the point of an excerpt has been absorbed before proceeding to the next. In this way, some of the continuity lacking in the film can be supplied by interacting with it. ♦

Circles and Cycles: Kathak Dance is available from Documentary Educational Resources. Price is \$145 for purchase and \$45 for rental.



Passing Through

>> A film by Nathan Adolfson. 1999. 27 minutes.

In 1995, during his senior year in UCLA's film school, Nathan Adolfson decided to go to Korea as a foreign exchange student. Korea was a strange land to Adolfson, despite the fact that he was born and raised there until the age of three, when he was adopted by Brook and Kathy Adolfson of Coon Rapids, Minnesota. With his Hi-8 camera and a travel guidebook in his hands, not knowing what to expect, Adolfson embarked on his journey to Korea. *Passing Through* tells a deeply personal story about the observations and surprising discoveries that changed his life and the way he viewed his identity.

Born in Incheon, Korea, as Chai Chee Man, Nathan Adolfson is one of an estimated 100,000 to 150,000 Korean-American adoptees living in the United States. Growing up in Minnesota, Adolfson was assimilated into the culture of his adoptive family, and traces of his Korean background remained only on his Asian face. *Passing Through* follows Adolfson's journey, starting with the interviews he conducts with his adoptive parents before leaving for Korea. His journey in Korea begins at Yonsei University, where, for the first six months, he studies with other exchange students. Although he does not expect an instant connection to Korea, he is disappointed to realize that he remembers nothing about his birth land and feels alienated and dislocated. He does not fit in with either the drunken foreign exchange students from America or militant Korean student demonstrators whose monthly clashes with the

police flood the campus with tear gas. One day, as he gasps for air through the smoke, he finds himself asking, "What am I doing here?" He realizes that he is neither a traveler on vacation nor is he returning home; he is just "passing through" as a stranger in the foreign land where he doesn't understand the language or the culture.

in issues
cultural identity
n adoptees.

Determined to find the “real” Korea, he leaves the Yonsei exchange student dormitory at the end of the six months, moves into a boarding house, and actively seeks ways to reconnect his past to the present. Then one day, two months after his move, his parents in Minnesota receive a letter from the adoption agency, which inquires into the whereabouts of Chai Chee Man, on behalf of his Korean family. Less than a week after receiving the forwarded letter, Adolfson meets his Korean sister and brothers who have been trying to find him for many years. A major Korean broadcasting company airs the emotional meeting on a national television show, and Adolfson’s story is told to Korean viewers as one with a happy ending. However, to Adolfson, the sudden events bring him both happiness and sadness, and the questions of his identity grow even more complex. After another year in Korea, he returns to the United States to pursue his film career.

Passing Through is a personal video diary of Adolfson's observations, encounters, and thoughts in Korea. The viewer gets to follow the unplanned and unexpected events as experienced by Adolfson,



COURTESY OF NAAIA

and the questions he asks himself are sincere and inviting. At the end of the film, he concludes that he is merely “passing through” his life both during the trip to Korea and in the United States: “Maybe I am like the rivers I spend so much time on the banks of. Rivers begin small and narrow, but as they are fed by other rivers, lakes, and streams, they become larger, wider, deeper.”

I recommend this video to anyone interested in issues of cross-cultural identity and Korean adoptees. It is appropriate for all ages, and the vagueness of the video's ending provides an excellent discussion topic. In addition, the questions raised in *Passing Through* go beyond adoption and ethnic identity; more fundamentally, the video questions how we define and view ourselves. And it tells a story of a young man who is Chai Chee Man by birth and Nathan Adolfson by upbringing but who is, most importantly, a survivor and a talented filmmaker. ♦

[illegible]

Esther S. Kim is Assistant Professor of Theatre at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is the author of *Finding a Voice: Asian-American Theater History, 1960–1999*.

Passing Through is available from NAATA. Institutional price is \$175 for purchase, \$45 for rental.

AASC Film Series

continued from page 3

Asian American resources available to them on this campus and elsewhere. They were able to sign up for the AASC mailings, and to tour the AASC Reading Room and browse the journals. For these reasons and more, the AASC will continue to screen movies dedicated to bringing Asian American issues to the forefront in our community. ♦

[illegible]

Ida Fadzillah is a doctoral student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is currently working on her dissertation focusing on adolescent girls in

Northern Thailand and their perceptions of future options. She is also the graduate assistant at the Asian American Studies Committee at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

For a complete listing of this semester's AASC Film Series titles and times, please contact the AASC office at 217-244-9530 or look at its web page at <http://www.uiuc.edu/unit/aasc>.

Videography

Blue Collar and Buddha (1988, 57 minutes) is available from NAATA. Price is \$150 for purchase and \$60 for rental.

Meeting at Tule Lake (1994, 33 minutes) is available from NAATA. Price is \$150 for purchase and \$60 for rental.

Heart Mountain: Three Years in an Internment Camp (1997, 26 minutes) is available from NAATA. Price is \$175 for purchase and \$45 for rental.

Roots in the Sand (1998, 57 minutes) is available from NAATA. Price is \$265 for purchase and \$65 for rental.

Kelly Loves Tony (1998, 57 minutes) is available from NAATA. Price is \$265 for purchase and \$65 for rental.

Mixed Feelings (1998, 45 minutes) is available from Asia for Kids. Price is \$19.95 for home use and \$79.97 for institutional use.

Miss India Georgia (1997, 57 minutes) is available from Urban Life Productions. Price varies depending on intended use.

>> Written by Sally Ingleton. Produced by Singing Nomad Productions 1997. 51 minutes.

The film is launched with separate introductions of the two designers, Guo Pei and Sun Jian, both in their early 30s. Guo Pei is employed as the chief designer of a large apparel company in Beijing that targets the mass market, while her former classmate and best friend Sun Jian works for

There should have been great promise in this

If students can be given appropriate background information and focus before seeing the film, it might capture their interest. If so, it could provide a foundation for useful classroom discussion about some of the transformations that are altering China today. ♦

Mao's New Suit is available from Filmmaker's Library. Price is \$350 for purchase, \$75 for rental.

>> Produced by Adam Zhu. Directed by Emma Joan Morris, Li Quiang and Rob Fruchtmann. 2000. 90 minutes.

A look at the farming community in Anhui Province, where the shift from collectivized to individual family farming began in 1978, shows similar contentment. The transition seems to have gone well for those in the countryside—a conclusion belied somewhat later on, when the situation of the migrant workers is examined. In any event, it is in the urban areas where the iron-rice bowl economy was the norm for two generations. There, just about everyone had a job in one of the state-owned enterprises (SOEs). The SOEs were not designed to make profits but to provide people with livelihoods. When profitability became the governing law, these units were ill-equipped to compete and were only kept afloat with government subsidies. While the state continues to provide life support to a large number of SOEs—particularly the big (i.e. 50,000 employees-plus)

By the 1990s there was an army of over 100 million migrant workers, most of them coming from the countryside to the cities in search of bet-

Postscript: The Fanso web site (www.FanSo.com) was nowhere to be found in the fall 2000 on China's web (only dated references to its services were pulled up). The new market system had a couple of lessons to teach the Qinghua grads: While the opportunities are there, there are no guarantees and life is not that simple.

In Search of China is available from PBS Video. Price is \$19.98 for home use and \$49.95 for institutional use.



The economic boom times that China has enjoyed for the past two decades have provided work for migrant workers, but mostly of the hard, menial, and sometimes dangerous variety.

Chinese Media Resources Under \$30

>> Elizabeth Cothen, AEMS Assistant Program Coordinator

The high cost of many media resources can be discouraging for educators trying to stick to a budget; schools have enough trouble buying books without having to worry about spending a sizeable

Bargain Buys!

chunk of their allotted money on one videotape. Fortunately, is it not necessary to pay a premium for quality instructional resources. In fact, the film quality of many inexpensive documentaries is often very high because their distributors have the money to mass-produce them. But, as with all products sold cheaply, large quantities of these videos must sell in order for the distributors to make a profit. Therefore, moderately priced videos need to have broad appeal, resulting in productions that are frequently, but not always, more general and not at the cutting edge of their field. While this may decrease the value of these films in professional and graduate school settings, it often makes them perfect for introducing Asia to K-12 students and lower level college classes.

This column, which for the next few issues will appear as a regular feature, will review inexpensive videos and other resources that the AEMS staff believes are worthwhile. Each column will focus on a different region of Asia, starting in this issue with China. I have excluded those items I felt were overly orientalist, unclear, or lacked academic content.

Introducing China: Documentaries for Students with Little Background

One of the more prolific producers of educational documentaries focusing on world cultures is IVN Entertainment, Inc. Their *Video Visits* series introduces dozens of countries around the world, concentrating on important sites and cultural practices. *Video Visits—China: Ancient Rhythms, Modern Currents* provides a simple and interesting account of modern Chinese life. Moving from North to South, then East to West, this documentary features many of China's famous places, including Beijing, Shanghai, Suzhou, the Three Gorges, and Tibet, as well as cultural practices such as painting, traditional music, and Buddhism. Because *China: Ancient Rhythms, Modern Currents* is more descriptive than analytical, and because its coverage of Chinese history is only superficial, I would recommend this video be shown to middle-grade students (7-10 grade) as their first introduction to China. Another IVN production, *Trav's Travels—China*, uses much of the same footage as *Video Visits* and follows a similar format, but is

aimed at 3-6 graders. (*Trav's Travels—China* was reviewed in detail in our Fall 1999 issue.)

Another somewhat dated, but fun introduction to Chinese culture for elementary school students is *Big Bird in China*. Big Bird plays a clueless tourist who visits China in search of the mythical Phoenix (a famous bird from America meets a famous bird from China). Aided by the Monkey King, played by an actor of the Beijing Opera, and a young Chinese girl who speaks English, Big Bird is given a series of clues to find the Phoenix, which take him past many famous sites. The video features numerous scenes with Chinese school children at play and adults practicing tai chi. Also aimed at the younger set is *Global Families—China* for ages 5-10. *Families* features two 15-minute segments narrated by children, one living in a rural village and the other in a moderately sized city. Each segment details the families' daily routines, carefully avoiding judgements about their lifestyle and subtly emphasizing the similarities between Chinese and American children.

Beyond the Basics: Building on Knowledge

For teachers looking for more in-depth descriptions of particular aspects of Chinese culture, the Discovery Channel offers two very good 50-minute documentaries focusing on China's two most famous sites, the Forbidden City and the Great Wall. *Forbidden City: The Great Within* features famous Chinese actors reenacting life in the emperor's palace from the beginning of the Qing dynasty (1666-1912) to its fall. Because the narrator's description of court life includes discussion of the role of concubines and eunuchs in some detail, this video is most suitable for late high school and college students. *Secrets of the Great Wall* discusses not only the history and culture associated with the Great Wall, but also endeavors to find out how the structure was built and how it was utilized to defend the nation. Like *Forbidden*

City, Secrets is intended for an older age group.

Just as Discovery produces quality documentaries about famous locales, A&E Biography specializes in accessible portrayals of important people. Their videos focusing on Confucius and the current Dalai Lama discuss the childhood, development, philosophy, and influence of these two great men without over-politicizing them. The biography of Confucius features reenactments of scenes from his life and historical artwork of his image. Both documentaries could be shown to most high school and college students. (A&E has also produced biographies of Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong, but I have not seen them.)

My favorite of all the documentaries in the under \$30 range is *China: Emerging Powers*, narrated by Deborah Wang, a former ABC News correspondent to Beijing. In many ways very similar to *In Search of China*, a PBS production reviewed in this issue, *Emerging Powers* concentrates on how current economic changes in China are impacting the people who live there. Focusing on the *san lao jie*, or three old classes, the generation that graduated from high school during the Cultural Revolution and was sent to the countryside to work, it discusses how Chinese values have changed from socialist idealism to a desire to get rich and prosper. The video interviews people whose lives have been both improved and hurt by the economic reforms, but as a whole *Emerging's* tone is upbeat, insisting that China is waking up and can no longer be ignored.

Alternative Media

Videos are not, of course, the only media available; there are numerous slide units on the market that also make excellent teaching



>> Produced by the International Motion Picture Company. 1998. 27 minutes.

There are, of course, many more resources available at reasonable prices, including a whole list of feature films I do not have space here to write about. Anyone interested in a more comprehensive list of Asian K-12 resources, visit www.aems.uiuc.edu/K-12.html or call us at 1-888-828-AEMS. ♦

www.aems.uiuc.edu ♦ 9

>> Films for the Humanities
and Sciences. 1996. 20 minutes.

The film begins with the effects of limestone quarrying on the city of Dehra Dun itself. Dehra Dun is famous for its excellent prep schools, which attract over 100,000 students from well-off families throughout India. The Dehra Dun segment of the film, which centers on the city's water shortage created by erosion and the choking of nearby rivers with limestone debris, depicts students of both boys' and girls' schools cheerfully



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ENVIRONMENT
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well-connected environmentalists were involved in precipitating the action of the Supreme Court. One fault of the film is that it does not explicitly explore the issue in terms of class conflict between well-meaning middle-class environmentalists and desperate workers whose first obligation is to feed their families.

Other segments of the film portray the plight of local farmers whose village homes were pummeled by falling rocks from the quarries above them, whose farms were covered with stones, and whose rivers were buried under mounds of rock. Most peasants in the area have abandoned their farms and moved to the cities in search of work. The final segment deals with an environmentally enlightened company that for years carefully mined their limestone on terraces, restored and reforested quarried areas and removed stones from rivers and streams. The Supreme Court and the environmentalists forced even this mine to close because so much damage had been done to the region that they wanted all mining stopped. But half the nearby villagers worked in the mine and now face the prospect of joining the army of unemployed in India. The fact that the government has made no

Despite its drawbacks, the film is clearly of value to classes studying either environmental issues or third-world problems. It is concerned with an urgent, real-life problem of contemporary India (though unfortunately the film makers could not resist the temptation of filling the sound track with exotic music while depicting Indian landscapes). American high school audiences might also appreciate the realistic depiction of their Indian counterparts. Above all, the film offers rich material for class discussions of the economic and ethical issues involved in environmental decisions, of the social responsibility of industry, both domestic and global, and of the differences between the human costs of environmentalism in our country and in India. ♦

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Blair B. Kling, Professor Emeritus, taught South Asian History and Civilization at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign from 1962 to 2000. He has published numerous books and articles on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Indian history and is currently working on a study of Jamshedpur, a center of steel and automobile manufacturing in eastern India.

India: Environment and Industry is available from Films for the Humanities and Sciences. Price is \$99 for purchase.

>> Part of the *Japan: The Land & Its People Series*. Created by the Nippon Steel Human Resources Development Co. 1990. 35 minutes.

effective camera work, whose excellent timing transmits the tremendous energy created on the stage to the viewers. Also effective are the English subtitles of dramatic dialogues and chanting, and the transcription of the entire narration in English and Japanese in the attached script, features not always given in a theater video but very helpful for teaching.

imports such as musical instruments and masks from advanced Asian countries in ancient times. Putting Japanese civilization in this historical and geographical perspective adds to a deeper understanding of its theatre arts that are intercultural and interdisciplinary in nature.

The medieval Noh is represented by *Adachigahara*, a play about a supernatural transformation of an old woman, spinning in a desolate mountain hut, into a demon who takes revenge on the travelling priests who broke their promise not to see her inner room, which is filled with corpses. The change of masks and other surrealistic staging of theatrical interests are vividly portrayed in the selected segment. Noh is usually known for the elegant and mystical aesthetics of dance plays, but the producer's intention here seems to have been to choose a more dramatic piece in the vein of the other two plays represented, thus making this video more appealing to Western audiences.

>> Produced by Nippon Animation Company. Parts 1 and 2, from the series "Animated Classics of Japanese Literature." Based on the book by Natsume Soseki. 1986. 52 minutes.

This version...
emphasizes scenery
and environmental
elements.

This version of *Botchan* emphasizes scenery and environmental elements, with interesting views of Japanese

architecture, both indoors and out, aerial shots of the city, and diverse scenes such as the public baths, a graveyard, and sunsets, which are artistically and colorfully presented. The occasional songs are lively and varied and enhance the atmosphere of key scenes. The translation may be

Because of the subtitling and mentions of red-light districts and geisha, this video would not suit elementary school settings. And, although *Botchan* could be used to point out glimpses of Japanese culture, such as traditional clothing or public bathing, to slightly older students, it would not provide much introduction to Japanese culture as there is little focus on family, employment issues, arts, leisure, economy, politics or religion. *Botchan* would best be used as a literary study with themes based on characters, such as deception, friendship, retribution, and arrogance, as discussion topics. The video alone probably would not offer much to upper level students, but presented along with an English translation of the book to students who have no knowledge of Japan, or who struggle to picture the story in their minds, this brief animated version could enhance mental images or understanding of the characters and story. ♦

Botchan is available from Central Park Media Corporation. Price is \$26.96 for purchase.

by texts alone and this video more than complements readings with its exuberant beauty and dynamics of the classical theatre unique to Japanese culture.

testimony to the fundamental spiritual heritage running through Japanese theater up to the present. This aspect is lucidly expounded in Benito Ortolani's *Japanese Theatre: From Shamanistic Ritual to Contemporary Pluralism* (Princeton University Press, 1995), the first comprehensive work on the subject in English and a useful guide for students of Japanese theater. ♦

The Tradition of Performing Arts in Japan: The Artistry of Kabuki, Noh and Bunraku is available from Insight Media, New York. Price is \$139.

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Central Park Media Corporation, 250 W. 57th Street, New York, NY 10107. Tel: 212-977-7456 or 800-626-4277. Fax: 212-977-8709. E-mail: info@teamcpm.com. Web site: <http://www.Centralparkmedia.com>.

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