

News and Reviews Vol. 6, No. 2 Winter 2003

War and Peace

>> Directed by Anand Patwardhan. 2001. 3 hours.

This film by India's leading documentary filmmaker is so important that one could justify its requirement as part of the education of all high school students and undergraduates in America.



War and Peace was inspired by the anomaly of India, which won its independence through

the non-violent campaigns of Mahatma Gandhi, aspiring to becoming a nuclear power by conducting three underground nuclear tests in Pokhran, Rajasthan, in May 1998. The tests led to strong diplomatic protests and economic sanctions by the United States, retaliatory nuclear tests in Pakistan, protests within India by anti-war and anti-nuclear groups, and government-supported counter-rallies in favor of nuclear armaments. In his two-part, three-hour documentary, which in its present form has been banned in India, Anand Patwardhan explores the implications of the tests, the dangers of nuclear war and the human cost of uranium mining.

Patwardhan's style is to alternate between scenes contrasting the exuberant pride of Indian nationalists in their country's joining the nuclear club with the distress of their opponents who ask why a poor country like India is wasting precious resources on huge military expenditures. Since India's nuclear arsenal is intended to intimidate its neighbor, Pakistan, Patwardhan visited Pakistan after its government answered the Indian challenge with tests of its own. The film shows how popular



responses to nuclear testing in Pakistan are identical to those in India, and concludes that each country is the mirror image of the other. In both India and Pakistan, "government" is depicted as the

obstacle to friendship between peoples, and in both countries fundamentalists favor the bomb because it will help spread their religion-Islam in one case, Hinduism in the other-throughout the world. A major theme of Patwardhan's is the religious basis of nuclear arming. He shows how educated people, including the nuclear scientist who directed the tests, speak in one breath of the triumph of science and technology and the magical power of Hindu gods and ancient Hindu traditions. In both India and Pakistan, common people identify themselves with their nation's new global status as a nuclear power, and one man speaks of how Pokhran "ignited his manhood." Another theme explored by Patwardhan is how attitudes toward the tests follow class and caste divisions-

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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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For more information, contact:

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

Telephone: 1-888-828-AEMS (1-888-828-2367) or 217-265-0642 Fax: 217-265-0641 E-mail: aems@uiuc.edu Web: www.aems.uiuc.edu

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What's New?

New Assistant Program Coordinator

In our last issue, we introduced Alfredo Arcila, our new assistant program coordinator. Since then, Alfredo decided to accept a job with the U.S. Government. We are sorry he is gone, but wish him well in his new position.

In his place, we have hired Xian Barrett. Xian graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in East Asian Languages and Cultures and has studied and worked in Japan. He brings skills, experience, and enthusiasm to AEMS, and we are delighted to have him here. (A note from Xian appears below.)

New Regional Resources

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

Building on the success of our Afghanistan page, we are creating Web pages for other parts of Asia in the news. Over the summer, pages on India, Pakistan, and Kashmir were built. In the fall, we added Indonesia. Most recently, Xian and our graduate assistant Valerie Holshouser Barske have been collecting information on North and South Korea. All these pages include Internet links to lesson plans, images, news, and cultural information about these regions.

-Sarah I. Barbour, Editor

A t the beginning of January, I was appointed to the position of Assistant Program Coordinator at AEMS. In my short time here, I have come to appreciate the level of thought that has been put into the various facets of this organization.

My ties to issues related to Asia have grown over a long period of time. I am a graduate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in East Asian Languages and Cultures with a concentration on Japanese history and language. While enrolled at U of I, I was fortunate enough to study abroad for ten months at Konan University in Kobe, Japan. After graduation, I worked as a teacher of English

and human rights education in rural Kyushu as part of the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme. Additionally, as a person of Chinese descent, I have always had an interest in China. Working with AEMS allows me to pursue and enrich these interests.

I also feel very fortunate that at the same time, through AEMS' expansion into other areas of Asia, I have many opportunities to broaden my knowledge about Asia.

Having been an educator in both Japan and here in the United States (on the elementary level), I can fully empathize with the difficulty in providing the very best materials for students on an educator's schedule. AEMS provides many valuable resources to aid educators in teaching and learning about Asia. I hope you won't hesitate to utilize us to make your job a little bit easier. \blacklozenge

-Xian Barrett, Assistant Program Coordinator

War and Peace

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the poor and the "untouchables," or Dalits, oppose the tests, while the middle class and upper caste Hindus applaud them. A third theme is the plight of the villagers who live in the vicinity of Pokhran, which has been used by the army for nuclear tests since 1974. The government co-opted their fields for the test site, has ignored their protests over the destruction of their crops from radiation, and brushed aside their pleas for a hospital to treat the many cases of cancer and birth defects among them. While the government celebrates Pokhran Day and officials speak emotionally of the new international respect India has gained because of the tests, a group of Gandhian scientists visits the village to gather evidence of the contamination and to photograph the sick and the dying in order to publicize the terrible effects of the government's policy.

Part II of the documentary takes the viewer from South Asia to Japan and the United States. Through photographs and interviews, Patwardhan shows the results of nuclear war in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He uses footage from 1945, and the viewer is spared none of the human horror and devastation of the Japanese cities. Against that background, he shows the *continued on page 7*



Chain of Love

>> A film by Marije Meerman. 2001. 50 minutes.

C hain of Love is an excellent documentary for anyone trying to understand the current processes of globalization. It shows that these processes go beyond the financial flows that have received much attention since the Asian Crisis in the late 1990s. They involve large-scale migration of people as well, and women are thoroughly integrated in these movements. The film examines exports of childcare workers/maids from the

Philippines to Europe. The transnational movement of nannies is not a new phenomenon. For many years, women from Latin America, for example, have been working—often illegally—in the United States, and the *au pair* nanny has been common in Europe. The scope of the migrations, however, has broadened, and the involvement of the Philippine authorities in promoting the export of caring labor is notable. Caring labor is now the second largest export of the country and is supported by an elaborate network of offices that is examined briefly in the film.

One of the strengths of the film is that it includes many perspectives. Interviews with working mothers who hire the Filipina maids and with the maids themselves are documented in the Netherlands and Italy. The lack of affordable care is one of the pressing problems faced by families everywhere as women increasingly enter the paid labor force. The film demonstrates that some women in high wage countries are able to use

The film examines exports of childcare workers/maids from the Philippines to Europe. global flows to prop up privileged positions that allow them to enter higher-paying jobs while bringing in maids at lower wages than available within the country. One family clearly notes that the place of the nanny is that of a servant; another treats the nanny as a friend to some extent. Rhacel Parrenas, Professor of Sociology at University

of Wisconsin at Madison and author of the book Global Servants, provides insightful commentary. The women's families and the organizations promoting the exports are filmed in the Philippines.

The film draws on the approach of recent studies of the globalized production chains of certain food products and other commodities. Caring labor is shown to be similar since the women who go to work as nannies and maids in other countries often have children themselves, who are left at home. Frequently local women are hired as nannies and maids for these children, at much lower wage rates. This contrasts with the popular perception that most of the maids are unmarried young women.

Although the film is quite strong overall, there are a few weaknesses or omissions that can serve as the basis of discussion in courses. One problem is that the film does not discuss the next link in the chain: Who cares for the children of the local maids/nannies in the Philippines? The title is somewhat problematic because it is not really love, but rather caring labor, that is being exported. Yet, many women expess love for the children they look after. This aspect is mentioned briefly but not explored in the film. Men are essentially absent. The intention of the filmmaker may be to demonstrate that men are not crucially involved in caring labor, but there are important aspects of relationships within the household that could be examined. Problems that the maids experience overseas are not explored. Rape, for example, is mentioned only once and recourse is not addressed. Other omissions include issues of uneven training of nannies or problems that emerge if a child is injured.

Not everything can be included in a 50-minute film, however, and the documentary does an outstanding job of exploring key issues involved directly in the chain of exported labor. Overall, this is an excellent and timely documentary that focuses on important gender aspects of work in the global economy.

Gale Summerfield is Director of the Women and Gender in Global Perspectives Program and Associate Professor of Human and Community Development at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Chain of Love is available from First Run/ Icarus Films. Price is \$390 for purchase and \$75 for rental.



Gao Rang (Grilled Rice)

>> Directed by Claude Grunspan. 2001. 52 minutes.

A mericans have real and fictional visual familiarity with what Americans call the Vietnam War—Hollywood movies, great PBS documentaries, books by American photographers and photojournalists—but few have a visual perspective from the "other side," that of the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong.

One of the earliest attempts to document the dual perspectives of the American/Vietnam war was As Seen By Both Sides: American and Vietnamese Artists Look at the War, currated in 1989 by David Thomas and the Indochina Arts Partnership. Since 1994, with the lifting of the American embargo, more visual materials by Vietnamese photojournalists, filmmakers, and artists have become available. One of the most dramatic was the Tim Page and Horst Faas 1997 exhibition, Requiem, with an accompanying book, honoring photojournalists on both sides who died or went missing during the French and later American wars in Indochina. This continues to be an anchor exhibit at Hanoi's War Remnants Museum and has toured the United States. Last year the National Geographic Society published Another Viet Nam: Pictures of the War Seen from the Other Side, edited by photojournalists Douglas Niven and Christopher Riley featuring photographs taken by North Vietnamese and Viet Cong war correspondents.

In the same vein comes Claude Grunspan's 2001 documentary, *Gao Rang (Grilled Rice)*. Grunspan documents the experience of Vietnamese soldiers/cameramen who filmed the wars against the French and the Americans through interviews with the filmmakers and projectionists. He includes some original footage of the filmmakers' work, much of it self-conscious propaganda to rally the troops and the citizens in North Vietnam's cause. One filmmaker says, "Things were clear. It was them or us," and another tells us that his job was to show the "heroic fight against American aggression." In one scene babies are lowered in a line of suspended cradles into a bomb shelter, while in another 1953 snippet about Dien Bien Phu, young soldiers are photographed smiling in victory. Over the 30-year period of war, most young Vietnamese soldiers would not return home, nor would many cameramen, who were also at risk in combat zones from bullets, bombs, and malaria. For them, however, Ho Chi Minh's words rang forth: "Nothing is more important than independence and freedom."



As Grunspan states on his Web page (see sidebar, page 6), he first thought of the project when he met one of the war cameramen at a dinner. Fascinated by the drama of the story and the complexity of the cameraman's perspective, he decided to return to Vietnam and make this documentary. He tracked down several other Vietnamese wartime cameramen, and this film is the result.

The film has significant value for scholars of Vietnam. Even though most original footage is mere snippets, these wartime materials make this a compelling documentary in itself as it reveals the brutality of war. There is Uncle Ho with the troops fighting against the French, footage of anti-aircraft gunners, the image of an American warplane falling from the sky, the pilots parachuting down into the hands of their captors, dive-bombers at the DMZ, the resulting destruction of B-52 raids on Hanoi, and women warrior-farmers with rifles strapped to their backs ready to shoot at the warplanes overhead, face to the earth and back to the sky, planting rice to supply the heroic soldiers.

The documentary also provides a self-reflexive glimpse into the minds of characters important to the development of a nascent Vietnamese film industry. This is a human interest story: the principal figures, cameramen and projectionists, reflect on their role during the war, and how they might have shot images differently given the perspective they now have a quarter century past. One states that he regrets not having a "critical historical awareness" and that they "could have left much better images." Everything was made to look too easy, with impeccably dressed soldiers and their cheerful countenances. One filmmaker confesses *continued on next page*

Kurosawa

>> PBS Great Performances Series. 2002. 2 hours.

Kurosawa is a two-hour documentary portraying the life of Akira Kurosawa (1910–1998), one of Japan's most famous film directors. Film shots, critics' comments, and an interview with the director himself are mixed in with reminiscences of his son and daughter, colleagues, actors and actresses to give a moving picture of a man who made such legendary films as *Rashomon, Seven Samurai, Ikiru* and *Ran.* Also noted is Kurosawa's influence on such Hollywood greats as Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, and Clint Eastwood.

Kurosawa's personal struggles, the video argues, are reflected in his movie characters. His early experience with the death of a dog and a later look at the horrific damage from the great Kanto earthquake of 1923 allegedly made him acutely aware of the frailty of human existence. Starting life as a left-wing painter rebelling against his stern father's samurai heritage, Kurosawa moved into films after his brother's suicide, but only did his best work, the video claims, after being freed from first Japanese militarist and then American Occupation pressures to produce the "right" kind of themes. His early success in the United States made some Japanese suspicious; he was also apparently strong willed, incapable of small talk, and so depressed after the end of his relationship with the legendary actor Mifune Toshio and a box office flop that he tried to commit suicide. His later films became more gloomy, the video charges, but Kurosawa himself tells the audience that he is not a pessimist, but rather a realist trying to get the rest of us to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

While I found all this fascinating when I first saw the video on PBS, I had a surprisingly tepid reaction when asked to see the program a second time for this review. The video now seemed overly long, as there were some drawn out scenes of modern Tokyo, a sword fight (from Seven Samurai) unnecessarily repeated, and an ending that struck me as anti-climatic. Japanese names were not given Japanese-style (surname first), and the fabled city of Kyoto is pronounced with three syllables instead of two. There is no discussion of Kurosawa's allegedly unhappy married life. The narrator fails to mention that Mifune's character (again in Seven Samurai) is not a samurai by birth, and that this film, like so many others, reflects Kurosawa's strong political views. Nor am I sure that all his later films are only gloomy. The 1991 film Dreams, for example, admittedly has his apocalyptic visions of a dying Japan in a nuclear age, and yet there is also a rather saccharine portrayal of a utopian village.

Even more importantly—at least to me as a history, as opposed to film and literature, teacher—we do not learn as much as we might about how to teach these films. I would like to know more about why Kurosawa tells us that he is fascinated by Noh theatre and by non-verbal expression and why his colleagues fondly recall that in certain key scenes, he did not want his actresses to blink. Closely related, at least in my mind, would be some discussion of how to deal with the fact that almost all my undergraduates think that traditional Japanese films are overly long and way overacted. Put another way, what I missed this second time around were insights that would help an amateur like me to teach Kurosawa's fascinating films.

Kurosawa thus has its pedagogical limitations, and yet it is also a superb video biography. By putting an unusually rich amount of film clips and interviews into a coherent narrative, the video presents a very moving portrait of a seminal figure in the history of film. This alone makes it well worth seeing.

Peter K. Frost is the Frederick L. Schuman Professor of International Relations at Williams College, an Associate Editor of *Education About Asia*, and Editor of the AAS series, *Resources for Teaching About Asia*. He regularly offers courses on Japanese history and the Vietnam War.

Kurosawa is available from PBS Great Performances. Price is \$24.98 for video, \$34.98 for DVD.

A free lesson plan for grades 9–12 is available at http://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/education/plan_ kurosawa_overview.html.

Gao Rang

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that "life is still difficult," and that the Vietnamese are still waiting for their sacrifices in the name of independence and unification to deliver on their promises. These anti-romantic views echo the new realism found in Bao Ninh's *The Sorrow of War* and Duong Thu Huong's *Novel Without a Name*, novels which reject reveling in revolutionary sacrifice and reveal the hardship, tragedy, and often the contradictions of revolutionary propaganda.

The physical material, celluloid film, was kept dry by storing it with grilled rice used as a desiccant. The jungle was an inhospitable place for film, and humidity rusted the cameras and ate at the film. Alas, for all of the efforts of the filmmakers, humidity has been the victor, and tragically, the original filmstrips are in a terrible state of deterioration, and many are being stripped of the silver nitrate for recycled use. These secondary glimpses of those materials as edited into *Gao Rang* may be all that is left for viewers in the future. Not surprisingly, most Vietnamese have not seen these extraordinary images of thirty years of war, mixed with everyday life, as represented by the North Vietnamese and NLF filmmakers. Grunspan's documentary may provide the Vietnamese an opportunity to reclaim their visual history of this period.

The Vietnamese are often still caught in their own propaganda, through the Communist Party's continued zeal for revolutionary exhortation and overestimation of the revolution's successes. This is sustained by a people whose character still endures and is gracious amidst great pain and hardship. This film shows us that Vietnam, like the United States, continues to be drawn back to issues and concerns from the American War. The Vietnamese are straining to reconcile these contradictions as they are drawn to the promise of a better future. America is still tormented by representations and old visualizations of a war it did not win. ◆

Jack Harris is a Professor of Sociology at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York. He has published in *Vietnam Social Science* in the area of men's studies, and has served as the Colleges' Director of the Vietnam Term Abroad Program. He is currently Co-Director of a Department of Education grant to foster faculty and curricular development on Vietnam.

Gao Rang (Grilled Rice) is available from First Run/Icarus Films. Price is \$390 for purchase and \$75 for rental.

The following books mentioned in this review are available from Amazon.com:

Requiem: By the Photographers Who Died in Vietnam (1997), by Horst Faas, Tim Page, and David Halberstam, \$59.50

As Seen by Both Sides: American and Vietnamese Artists Look at the War (1991), ed. by C. David Thomas, \$24.95

Another Viet Nam: Pictures of the War from the Other Side (2002), by Tim Page, ed. by Douglas Niven and Christopher Riley, \$35

Novel Without a Name (1996) by Duong Thu Huong, \$11.20

The Sorrow of War: A Novel of North Vietnam (1996), by Bao Ninh, \$10.36.

Vietnam: The Last Battle

>> A film by David Munro and John Pilger. 1995. 52 minutes.

A s we rush headlong into another unwise military adventure in Iraq (and who knows where else?), it seems prudent to consider the end result of our longest and most wasteful military effort against the people of Vietnam. The United States "lost," but did the Vietnamese (and Laotian and Cambodian) people "win"? John Pilger seems to ask in this film.

Award-winning Australian-born journalist John Pilger, who has a long history covering Vietnam (beginning in 1966), returned there with a film crew in 1995 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the liberation of Vietnam. Though the Clinton Administration had lifted the twenty-year, American-led embargo on trade and investment with Vietnam by this time, it seems that Pilger's visit may have taken place before the announcement of normalization of diplomatic relations between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the United States in July 1995.

The film opens with devastating footage of the war and the last days of the war in 1975. Pilger reminds the viewer of the near-total devastation suffered by Vietnam and its people through thirty years of warfare as the United States attempted to split that country into permanent halves. Former President Reagan's reference to the war as a "noble cause" chills the heart of any viewer who was alive and aware during that awful period.

This official lie is challenged by the words of former U.S. Marine, Robert Muller, as he is interviewed in the film near the spot where his unit landed in the late 1960s. Muller was shot and paralyzed from the waist down during a battle in Vietnam. As an early member of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) and a founding member of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) and the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAF), Muller has long been in opposition to the right wing efforts to "rescue" the Vietnam war and turn it into this so-called "noble cause." He first landed in Vietnam as a soldier committed to the mission, but it did not take him or others long to realize that "Vietnam was a lie. It was a lie from the beginning, throughout the war, and even today, as they are trying to write it into the history books."

Pilger then points out how, following its defeat by Vietnamese revolutionary forces, the United States under President Jimmy Carter established one of the most devastating embargoes in international history against the people of Vietnam. This was to teach them and anyone else who might dare challenge American dominance in the world a serious lesson: you might win the war, but you will lose the peace. Margaret Thatcher joined in by persuading the European Community to set a ban on shipments of milk to Vietnamese children. Vietnam became almost totally dependent on the Soviet Union as a result of these practices, something, which many feel, was the real purpose of the embargo; that is, push Vietnam into the Soviet bloc in order to "prove" the official lie about the Vietnamese revolutionaries as puppets of Moscow, at the same time causing a drain on the economy of the Soviet Union.

After nearly ten years of isolation and pariah status, new leadership came into the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) in 1986. Responding to widespread public discontent with shortages and other economic hardships, the VCP put forward the program of *Doi Moi*, or "renovation." This may be compared to the *perestroika* and *glasnost* programs then being introduced in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev.

This "renovation" opened Vietnam to the vagaries of the so-called "free market" with the hope that this might help to crack the Western embargo and minimize dependence on the Soviet Union. Of course, it was already clear that the Gorbachev regime in the USSR was also interested in cutting back on the support given to friendly regimes in order to bolster the faltering Soviet economy. Here, the Vietnamese were also watching the economic experiments then taking place in the People's Republic of China to their immediate North.

With the experiment of *Doi Moi*, according to one person interviewed in the film, "color returned to our lives." The "free market" was now the official ideology for Vietnam's rulers, though all Vietnamese were apparently hopeful that they might be able to control the negative aspects of this. The bulk of the film then shows the viewer, through a series of surprisingly frank interviews, just how dangerous this "new" economic strategy may be to the masses of the Vietnamese people.

What the film presents to us is reflected well in the words of Professor Gabriel Kolko, from his book titled *Vietnam: Anatomy of a Peace* (Routledge, 1997):

...a dual economy and social system is emerging; smaller part that is urbanized and unequal, but relatively much better off and growing, and the other largely very poor, predominantly rural, with enduring social problems. (p. 157)

Pilger and Munro leave the question of Vietnam's future success wide open. They are fearful, along with many of the Vietnamese in the film, that the war may have been won, but the peace will be lost.

Vietnam Web Sites

Sites related to AEMS reviews

Gao Rang

http://membres.lycos.fr/gaorang Still images from the film, as well as background, reviews, and production information (in French).

The Writing and Films of John Pilger http://pilger.carlton.com Includes video clips from Vietnam: The Last Battle, a list of books and articles about Vietnam, and related links.

The Vietnam War

www.vietnampix.com A collection of some of Tim Page's photographs.

Contemporary Vietnam

Vietnam Resources

www.aems.uiuc.edu/HTML/vietnam.htm AEMS' page of links to image collections, lesson plans, maps, and cultural information.

- Chaudoc, Vietnam Photographs http://members.aol.com/chaudoc Scenes of daily life in modern Vietnam.
- Vietmedia: Vietnamese Culture www.vietmedia.com/culture Information about food, festivals, and other aspects of Vietnamese culture.

Asia Society: Vietnam Resources www.askasia.org/teachers/Instructional_ Resources/Regional/Vietnam.htm Lesson plans, readings, and maps.

This is a very important film for courses in Southeast Asian politics and history, as well as courses in U.S. foreign policy. It would certainly be necessary for any instructor to fill in the gaps from 1995 to the present, but this takes nothing away from the film's power. ◆

Joseph T. Miller is currently an Advising Specialist with the Student Academic Affairs Office in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and has a zero-percent-time appointment as an Adjunct Assistant Professor in Political Science. Since 1995, he has also served as a National Coordinator for Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Inc., an organization he joined in 1970.

Vietnam: The Last Battle is available from First Run/Icarus Films. Price is \$390 for purchase and \$75 for rental.

Vietnam: Anatomy of a Peace, by Gabriel Kolko, is available in paperback from Amazon.com for \$22.95.

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Japanese of today pleading with the Indians not to develop nuclear weapons. In Washington, D.C., Patwardhan visits the Smithsonian during the controversy over the revisionist displays of the American bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War II. When the Smithsonian historians showed some remorse and questioned the textbook view of the American government's motives for the first nuclear bombings, right-wing protesters forced the Smithsonian to censor the exhibit. One of the historians points out that not one congressperson or senator spoke out in defense of the exhibit. Patwardhan then shows an American fundamentalist preacher, bedecked in the flag, haranguing his congregation about the union of God and patriotism, while in India Prime Minister Atul Behari Vajpayee, who leads the Hindu chauvinist party, makes a similar speech in Hindi. Near the end of the film, Patwardhan examines the corruption and payoffs that have taken place between international armament salesmen and high officials in the Indian government. He ends the film, which began with a depiction of the assassination of Gandhi by a militant Hindu, with a quotation from Gandhi whose message is that the only hope for the survival of mankind is love and friendship among peoples.

The power of the film derives from its brilliant cinematography and narration, its juxtaposition of points of view and its total honesty. Patwardhan never preaches, he simply shows things the way they are and lets his audience react. The film is suitable for high school and college students, and its content is so rich and diverse that it offers endless topics for class discussion. Although it may be too long to show in one sitting and many of its images are disturbing, its message is so important that its showing should be a priority in any course touching upon the contemporary world, as well as in science and engineering courses with units on professional ethics. For any student, it is an education in social responsibility.

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.

War and Peace is available from First Run/ Icarus Films. Price is \$490 for purchase, \$150 for rental.



Cultural Adventure with Jan Reynolds

>> A film by Jan Reynolds. 2002. 40 minutes.

P art adventure story, part anthropological study, with a little geology, history, and religion thrown in, *Cultural Adventure with Jan Reynolds* takes viewers on a journey through the Himalyas. Jan Reynolds, a writer, photographer, and world-class athlete, produced, wrote, and narrates the film, which consists of still photos and moving video, supplemented with some simple animations and graphics.

Jan opens the film by rather casually explaining that she became interested in the Himalayas while there setting skiing and high-altitude ballooning records. From this remarkable opening, she goes on to explain a few aspects of Sherpa culture. She makes an effort to relate this culture to our own, comparing Buddhist monks to ministers and rabbis, and referring to yaks as "Sherpa trucks." One of the film's great strengths, in fact, is Reynolds' casual, friendly attitude toward the people she encounters; she is neither condescending nor obsequious, and viewers are able to get a glimpse of the Sherpas as simply people.

While promoting travel as an important way to understand the world, Reynolds also discusses some of the environmental degradation wrought by the tourist industry; in particular, the loss of trees for fuel and buildings and the subsequent erosion of valuable cropland. She also includes a very brief explanation of the geological origins of the Himalayas, then goes on to describe her own journey across the Nangpa La pass from Nepal into Tibet. This crossing provides real drama, as she describes being caught, alone, in a snowstorm. Trapped in her tent, sick, and running out of food, she was found by a couple of traders who gave her food in return for shelter in her tent. She made it the rest of the way into Tibet. From here, she describes some of the hardships imposed on the Tibetans by the Chinese, and touches on a few of the ways that Chinese rule is changing

What I enjoyed most about this video was Jan's easygoing attitude toward travel and exploration.



Tibetan culture.

Although the video does not go into great depth in subjects such as the environment, Buddhist religion, or geological formation, it could be used as an interesting introduction to these and other subjects. Better yet, it could be used in a multidisciplinary class to illustrate some of the ways in which

culture is related to environment. More ideas can be found on Jan's Web site, which provides information about her and her adventures as well as a teacher's guide for the video. The video itself could be used, whole or in part, at a variety of levels. The guide is probably best suited for late-elementary/early middle school students.

What I enjoyed most about this video was

Jan's easygoing attitude toward travel and exploration. Traveling alone through deserted snowy passes in the Himalayan mountains is probably more difficult and more dangerous than Jan makes it seem. Nonetheless, by focusing on the relationships she builds with locals rather than on hardships and exotic customs, Jan makes these faraway destinations feel within reach. If there is nothing like travel to broaden the mind, this video is to be applauded for making travel itself feel accessible and fun. Athlete, adventurer, photographer, and anthropologist, Jan is an role model whose down-to-earth attitude will engage and inspire students.

Sarah I. Barbour is Program Coordinator of the Asian Educational Media Service.

Cultural Adventure with Jan Reynolds is available from www.janreynolds.com. Price is \$19.99. An accompanying teacher's guide is available on the same site at no cost.

Asian Educational Media Service

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

www.aems.uiuc.edu

The Crossing: One Family's Daring Rescue

>> ABC's Nightline. 1998. 20 minutes.

he Crossing's timing is significant. Tens of thousands of North Korean refugees have escaped starvation and political oppression and are hiding out in China in sheer terror of being arrested, repatriated, and executed. In response to their desperate plight, the United States Congress has drawn up a bill that would earmark up to \$80 million to help feed, clothe, and move to safety people who escape North Korea. Senator Sam Brownback has also introduced legislation allowing North Korean refugees to apply for refugee status or asylum. Human rights advocates have protested China's policies of repatriation, which often lead to death, but China fears an uncontrollable influx of North Koreans if it ends forced repatriation. Recent reports about North Korea's nuclear capabilities have further compounded problems.

The Crossing provides a dramatic and inspiring account of author Helie Lee's courageous rescue of relatives from North Korea. Her story presents a microcosm of the troubles and hardships experienced by the North Korean people. It is a compelling story of faith, love, and Lee's fulfillment of a promise to reunite three generations of her family.

For forty-one years Helie Lee's grandmother, Hongyong Baek, never gave up hope that her eldest son, Yong Woon, who disappeared during the Korean War, was still alive. Her last words to him were, "Come back to me unharmed, I beg you, I will be here waiting." Then in 1991 an unexpected letter arrived informing her that her son was still alive. Two years later as economic conditions deteriorated in North Korea, all communication stopped. In 1996, Lee's first book, *Still Life with Rice*, was published. Not realizing that her book would be a success in the United States and throughout Asia, she had not anticipated that the book's references to her uncle would put his life in jeopardy. Since Hongyong Baek was eighty-five and had been hospitalized twice by poor health, the family moved quickly to rescue her son.

In April 1997 Lee, her father, and grandmother flew from Los Angeles to Seoul to Beijing and finally to a remote area that borders North Korea. Their mission involved extensive planning, frustration, bribery, delays, physical hardships, and tremendous risks. In viewing the documentary, the audience witnesses the harrowing crossing of the Yalu and observes the fear and paranoia that split the family. Five members of the extended family decide to stay behind. Those who flee carry rat poison that they will ingest if border guards catch up with them. They fear that those that have stayed behind will die. They ultimately travel by car and train across China to the South Korean embassy in Hanoi. The other five members of the family escape, but they are forced to hide for months in Beijing awaiting word on their request for political asylum. Ultimately they receive fake identification and get permission to fly to Seoul via Ulaan Baatar in Mongolia. Several weeks later all branches of the family unite in Seoul for the first time. After Hongyong Baek embraces Yong Woon, all members form a semicircle in front of her, lower their heads, and bow deeply before her.

This film has been used very effectively in the classroom. Students who have read Helie Lee's books, *Still Life with Rice* and/or *In the Absence of Sun*, will appreciate being able to visualize the members of the family. The documentary serves as a glowing tribute to the life of Lee's remarkable grandmother, and conveys an understanding of the Korean people's longing for reunification of their country. ◆

Mary E. Connor is a teacher of Asian studies and United States history at Westridge School, Pasadena, California. She is the author of *The Koreas: A Global Studies Handbook* published in April 2002. *The Koreas* is part of ABC–CLIO's new *Global Studies: Asia* series.

The Crossing is available from ABC. Price for private use is \$39.95. Price for institutional use is \$79.95.

In the Absence of Sun (2002) and Still Life with Rice (1996), both by Helie Lee, are available from Amazon.com for \$25 and \$16.80 respectively.

Guide to Distributors

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

Amazon.com. Web site: www.amazon.com.

ABC News Store. Tel.: 800-505-6139. Web site: www.abcnewsstore.com.

First Run/Icarus Films, 32 Court Street, 21st Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11202. Tel: 718-488-8900. Fax: 718-488-8642. E-mail: info@frif.com. Web site: www.frif.com. Jan Reynolds, 4786 Mountain Road, Stowe, VT, 05672. E-mail: janreynolds@ pshift.com. Web site: www.janreynolds.com.

PBS Great Performances. Tel.: 800-336-1917. Web site: www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/ shop/wnetvideo.html.