Superb materials on Asia await the motivated teacher/learner. Following introductory suggestions, topics that can serve as “points of connection” for humanities and social science courses are listed.

**GETTING STARTED**

- Attend National Consortium for Teaching About Asia (NCTA) seminars, now available in 44 states. Participants receive 30 hours of instruction, $500 in free materials, $500 stipends, and build a network of colleagues and experts (www.nctasia.org).
- Look up the Japan and China Workbooks at the Asia for Educators web site, Columbia University (http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/). Exemplary materials abound. Ron Knapp’s geography section on China is a standout.
- Introduction to Japan: A Workbook, published by Youth for Understanding International Exchange, is the best introductory text for middle and high school students, touching on history, “mutual perceptions,” economics, education, U.S.–Japan relations, and more. It was researched and written by Linda S. Wojtan in 1998. The web site for Youth for Understanding International Exchange is www.yfu.org. Readers who want to purchase the material can call 1-800-TEENAGE or send an inquiry to 6400 Goldsboro Road, Suite 100, Bethesda, MD 20817.
- Humanities units on China and Japan, published by the Social Science Education Consortium in Boulder, Colorado (SSEC), are packed with useful materials. For JAPAN, note units on Tokugawa, Meiji, and Imperial Japan, and the Occupation; for CHINA, find new units on the Song and Ming Dynasties, and Revolutionary China. These materials include scholarly historical essays, a wealth of primary source material including art and literature, carefully crafted lessons, and resource lists that provide for a year’s course on East Asia. SSEC is in transition, but units are available for loan at NCTA sites, which house excellent resource centers (www.nctasia.org). Materials on Asia from the Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education (SPICE) at Stanford University are also outstanding; the thematic unit MEGACITIES focuses on demographics and the environment (http://spice.stanford.edu/). A unit under development is entitled Ethnic Minority Groups in China.
- Subscribe to Education About Asia, and order back issues. Articles initiate scholarly and pedagogical conversation, and take neophyte and expert alike into new realms. For subscription information, see http://www.asianst.org/eaa-toc.htm.

**EXCELLENT LITERATURE AND FILM**

**CAPTURE VOICES FROM AFAR AND BRING THEM INTO FOCUS**

Taking time to probe behind the headlines can dispel myths, sharpen understanding of differences and commonalities, and greatly enrich one’s teaching. The topics listed below provide points of connection for a variety of disciplines. Newcomers to Asian studies should begin by reading the background articles, or by developing one unit well and building out from there.

**Belief Systems:** “Chinese Religion: Ideas for Effective Instruction at the High School Level” by Diana Marston Wood. Education About Asia, Spring 1997 (Volume 2, Number 1).

**History:** “Using the Concept ‘Feudalism’ to Compare Japan with Europe: Words of Caution,” also by Wood. Education about Asia, Winter 2000 (Volume 5, Number 3). A related literature unit,Knight/Samurai and Lord/Daimyo: Should We Compare Europe and Japan? is available at www.smith.edu/fcceas/home.html.

EDOMATSU Web site provides woodblock prints and a delightful virtual tour of Edo (Tokyo) during the 18th century, age of the Tokugawa shoguns www.us.japan.org/EdoMatsu/.

**Imperial Japan: Expansion and War** by Jonathan N. Lipman, Kathleen Woods Masalski, and Alan Chalk. Published in 1995 by the SSEC. Lessons move students beyond the traditional historical narrative and include...
provocative excerpts from literature. For further information about availability of this publication, contact the Social Science Education Consortium, Inc., P.O. Box 21270, Boulder, CO, 80308-4270, 303-492-8154.


To purchase, send inquiries to info@cera.com or call 617-497-6446.

“Top Ten Things to Know About Japan in the late 1990s,” by Carol Gluck. Education About Asia, Fall 1998 (Volume 3, Number 2). The Master speaks.

Mysteries: “Stories of Crime and Detection: Using the Mystery Formula as an Introduction to Asian Literatures and Cultures,” by Joan Cook Wilson. Education About Asia, thematic issue on teaching Asian literatures, Spring 2001 (Volume 6, Number 1). Try one of the Judge Dee mysteries from China.


Asia through Film: To Live, directed by Zhang Yimou, presents an epic sweep through 20th century China, following one family’s misfortunes. Available at www.amazon.com.

This film, used with Asian Educational Media Service (AEMS) materials (background essays, propaganda posters, lesson plans, and more), could form the cornerstone of a course (http://www.aems.uiuc.edu/html/lessonplans/guides.html).

Shall We Dance? This poignant take on the salaryman in Japan is also featured at the AEMS lesson plan web site.

Notes One Less. This coming of age film by Zhang Ziyi presents an irrepressible female protagonist in a needy school in rural China, building to a powerful finale. The Road Home is another winner by director Zhang. Both are available at www.amazon.com.

DEBATE THIS!

Engaging students through controversy


The U.S. bombing of Hiroshima was justified/not justified. An excellent starting point is a unit in Brown University’s Choices for the 21st Century Education Program titled Ending the War Against Japan: Science, Morality, and the Atomic Bomb. Information can be obtained about this unit at http://www.choices.edu/edsummaries/bombpage.html.

Dam it? “The Three Gorges Dam: Energy, the Environment, and the New Emperors,” by Patience Berkman. Education About Asia, Spring 1998 (Volume 3, Number 1). Teachers love this balanced article, with BIG MAP directions and lesson plans. Do the problems of the Big Dam outweigh the benefits?

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