

Editor's Note: A shorter version of this review was published by the Asia Educational Media Service (AEMS) of the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. AEMS provides information about Asia-related materials to scholars and educators. For further information contact: Sarah I. Barbour, Program Coordinator. Phone: (888) 828-2367 or (217) 265-0641. E-mail: aems@uiuc.edu.

T*rav's Travels China* is a very basic, accurate, engaging twenty-minute video with some animation features. The video is geared to elementary school audiences and would best be suited to the third and fourth grades. It begins with a fully animated introduction, animated full-color maps of states, regions and cities, and ends with a fully animated closing. The music is lively and original; it also contains fun and entertaining sound effects. The print matter on the box states "all programs in this series exemplify the five themes of geography as set by the National Geography Standards," and this is true. If one looks beyond the main character, Trav, the video makes a good travelogue of distinctive natural and historical Chinese features in each region.

The video begins by situating China in its international setting (continents) and regional setting (Pacific Rim). From there we view the following:

- the Yangze River (fishing, swimming, no discussion of the Three Gorges Dam).
- Beijing (the Forbidden City, kite flying, a touch of communist ideology and the one-child policy, and the hobby of song birds and crickets).
- Shanghai (a port city, an elementary school, and bicycles as a main means of transportation).

Trav's Travels China

A FILM BY SHUI-BO WANG

DISTRIBUTED BY IVN ENTERTAINMENT, INC.
1390 WILLOW PASS ROAD, SUITE 900
CONCORD, CA 94520
PHONE: 925-688-0833 OR 800-669-4486
FAX: 925-688-0848

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- Suzhou (excellent brief footage of silk production from cocoons to cloth, and Chinese medicine and pharmacies).
- Xian (Qin dynasty terracotta warriors).
- Yellow River (effect of floods on society).
- Sichuan (tea cultivation, the great Buddha at Leshan, home of the pandas, cradle of farming, and different types of Chinese food).
- Kunming (the stone forest and the Torch Festival of the Bai Chinese minority nationality).
- Dali (three Indian Buddhist-style pagodas).
- The Great Wall.
- Tibet, Nepal, the Himalayan Mountains and Mt. Everest (yaks, barley, Buddhism, the Potala, and the complicated relationship Tibet has with China—as a result of China's occupation of Tibet, the Tibetan way of life is changing).

Trav's Travels China is made very appealing through excellent photography, both overviews and close-ups, of China. The narrator's pronunciation of Chinese place names is acceptable to decent, and the video content is accurate. The video provides some thematic continuity in the areas of food, animals, lifestyle, land, ancient relics, and minority nationalities, as it presents highlights of representative places in regions of China. Elementary school students will enjoy this interesting introduction to China tailored for their level.

This video can be used by third through sixth grade teachers in two ways. Teachers could show the entire video as an introduction to Chinese geography and culture. Each section of the video opens with a color map of the region, and this enhances the video's use as an introduction to China for students. The video can also be shown in sections, with each

section used as an introduction to one of the five themes of geography. Teachers could then use materials they have developed in the past and use the video as an attention-getting device. The video comes with a teacher's guide which is a one-page pamphlet slipped inside the video cover. Not a very extensive educational tool, this teacher's guide provides a short list of some vocabulary words used in the video, as well as eleven suggested activities and extensions, and sixteen overview questions that link the video content to the geography standards. The ideas in the teacher's guide would perhaps be most useful to the beginning teacher. ■

MARLEEN KASSEL is Project Director of Discover China in Our Schools, a professional development program for K-12 teachers, at the China Institute in New York City. She received her Ph.D. from Columbia University's East Asian Languages and Cultures Department.