

Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Reads 2008 Screening Committee Book List #1

American Born Chinese, by Gene Luen Yang PRINTZ WINNER (YA) 2006, 240 pages, Trade Paperback, \$16.95 ISBN: 1596431520 From Publishers Weekly: As alienated kids go, Jin Wang is fairly run-of-the-mill: he eats lunch by himself in a corner of the schoolyard, gets picked on by bullies and jocks and develops a sweat-inducing crush on a pretty classmate. And, oh, yes, his parents are from Taiwan. This much-anticipated, affecting story about growing up different is more than just the story of a Chinese-American childhood; it's a fable for every kid born into a body and a life they wished they could escape. The fable is filtered through some very specific cultural icons: the much-beloved Monkey King, a figure familiar to Chinese kids the world over, and a buck-toothed amalgamation of racist stereotypes named Chin-Kee. Jin's hopes and humiliations might be mirrored in Chin-Kee's destructive glee or the Monkey King's struggle to come to terms with himself, but each character's expressions and actions are always perfectly familiar. True to its origin as a Web comic, this story's clear, concise lines and expert coloring are deceptively simple yet expressive. Even when Yang slips in an occasional Chinese ideogram or myth, the sentiments he's depicting need no translation. Yang accomplishes the remarkable feat of practicing what he preaches with this book: accept who you are and you'll already have reached out to others.

American Paper Son: A Chinese Immigrant in the Midwest, by Wayne Hung Wong. Edited and with an introduction by Benson Tong 2005, 144 pages, Trade Paperback, \$20.00 ISBN: 0252072634 Book Description: During the height of racist anti-Chinese U.S. immigration laws, illegal aliens were able to come into the States under false papers identifying them as the sons of those who had returned to China to marry and have children. American Paper Son is the story of one such Chinese immigrant who came to Wichita, Kansas, in 1935 as a thirteen-year-old "paper son" to help in his father's restaurant there. This vivid first-person account addresses significant themes in Asian American history through the lens of Wong's personal stories. Wong served in one of the all-Chinese units of the 14th Air Force in China during World War II and he discusses the impact of race and segregation on his experience. After the war he found a wife in Taishan, brought her to the United States, and became involved in the government's infamous Confession program (an amnesty program for immigrants). Wong eventually became a successful real estate entrepreneur in Wichita. Rich with poignant insights into the realities of life as part of a very small Chinese American population in a midwestern town, this memoir provides an important new view of the Asian American experience away from the West Coast. Benson Tong adds a scholarly introduction and useful annotations.

American Shaolin: Flying Kicks, Buddhist Monks, and the Legend of Iron Crotch: an Odyssey in the New China, by Matthew Polly 2007, 384 pages, Hardcover, \$26.00 ISBN: 1592402623 December 2007, Trade Paperback, \$15.00 ISBN: 1592403379 From Publishers Weekly: In this smoothly written memoir, 98-pound weakling Polly makes the age-old decision to turn his nerdy self into a fighting machine. Polly's quest for manhood leads this guy from Topeka, Kans., to the Shaolin Temple, ancient home of the fighting monks and setting for 10,000 chop-socky movies. As much a student of Chinese culture as he is a martial artist, Polly derives a great deal of humor from the misunderstandings that follow a six-foot-three laowai (white foreigner) in a China taking its first awkward steps into capitalism after Tiananmen Square. Polly has a good eye for characters and introduces the reader to a Finnish

messiah, a practitioner of "iron crotch" kung fu, and his nagging girlfriend. We get the inside dope on Chinese dating, Chinese drinking games and a medical system apparently modeled on the Spanish Inquisition. The last hundred pages of the book lose focus, and Polly doesn't convincingly demonstrate how he transforms himself from a stumbling geek to a kickboxing stud who can stand toe-to-toe with the highest-ranked fighter in the world. Although Polly may fall short in sharing Shaolin's secrets, as a chronicler of human absurdity he makes all the right moves. (Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information.

Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People, by Helen Zia 2001, 368 pages, Trade Paperback, \$15.00 ISBN: 0374527369 From Publishers Weekly: While growing up in New Jersey in the 1950s and '60s, Zia was provided with plenty of American history by her teachers, while her father inundated her with stories of China's past. Yet she was left wondering about people like herself, Asian Americans, who seemed to be "MIH--Missing in History." In this ambitious and richly detailed account of the formation of the Asian-American community--which extends from the first major wave of immigration to Gold Mountain" (as the Chinese dubbed America during the gold rush) to the recent influx of Southeast Asians, who since 1975 have nearly doubled the Asian-American population--Zia fills those absences, while examining the complex origins of the events she relates. The result is a vivid personal and national history, in which Zia guides us through a range of recent flash points that have galvanized the Asian-American community. Among them are the brutal, racially motivated murder of Vincent Chin in Detroit in 1982; the devastating riots in Los Angeles in 1992, where almost half of the \$1 billion in damages to the city were sustained by Korean-American shop owners; and the embattled South Asian New York City cab drivers who, in May of 1998, banded together with the New York Taxi Workers alliance and pulled off a citywide strike. The recent boom in the Asian-American population (from half a million in the 1950s to 7.3 million in 1990), coupled with Zia's fresh perspective, makes it unlikely that their stories will go missing again. (Mar.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Asian Americans: Oral Histories of First to Fourth Generation Americans from China, Korea, the Philippines, Japan, India, the Pacific Islands, Vietnam, and Cambodia, by Joann Faung Jean Lee 1992, 250 pages, Trade Paperback, \$14.95 ISBN: 1565840232 Description: Since the first three documented Chinese arrived in this country in 1848, more than six million Asians have followed. The huge immigrations of recent years have prompted a surge of interest in the new Asian American experience, about which little writing exists to date. In Asian Americans, these immigrants and their families present their own stories--why they came to America and what it means to be Asian in America today. **Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress**, by Dai Sijie 2001, 208 pages, Trade Paperback. \$11.95 ISBN: 0385722206 From Publishers Weekly: The Cultural Revolution of Chairman Mao Zedong altered Chinese history in the 1960s and '70s, forcibly sending hundreds of thousands of Chinese intellectuals to peasant villages for "re-education." This moving, often wrenching short novel by a writer who was himself re-educated in the '70s tells how two young men weather years of banishment, emphasizing the power of literature to free the mind. Sijie's unnamed 17-year-old protagonist and his best friend, Luo, are bourgeois doctors' sons, and so condemned to serve four years in a remote mountain village, carrying pails of excrement daily up a hill. Only their ingenuity helps them to survive. The two friends are good at storytelling, and the village headman commands them to put on "oral cinema shows" for the villagers, reciting the plots and dialogue of movies.

When another city boy leaves the mountains, the friends steal a suitcase full of forbidden books he has been hiding, knowing he will be afraid to call the authorities. Enchanted by the prose of a host of European writers, they dare to tell the story of *The Count of Monte Cristo* to the village tailor and to read Balzac to his shy and beautiful young daughter. Luo, who adores the *Little Seamstress*, dreams of transforming her from a simple country girl into a sophisticated lover with his foreign tales. He succeeds beyond his expectations, but the result is not what he might have hoped for, and leads to an unexpected, droll and poignant conclusion. The warmth and humor of Sijie's prose and the clarity of Rilke's translation distinguish this slim first novel, a wonderfully human tale. (Sept. 17) Forecast: Sijie's debut was a best-seller and prize winner in France in 2000, and rights have been sold in 19 countries; it is also scheduled to be made into a film. Its charm translates admirably strong sales can be expected on this side of the Atlantic.

Becoming Madame Mao, by Anchee Min 2001, 340 pages, Trade Paperback, \$13.95 ISBN: 0618127003 From Publishers Weekly: Historical fiction acquires new luster and credibility in Min's brilliant evocation of the woman who married Mao and fought to succeed him. As she proved in her memoir, *Red Azalea*, Min is a forceful writer, but her first novel, *Katherine*, did not prepare us for the highly dramatic, psychologically penetrating and provocative narrative she presents here. A girl called Yunhe is born to a rural concubine in 1919; she renames herself Lan Ping when, in 1934, she runs away to Shanghai with ambitions to be an actress, and later joins the Red Army; and finally, she is dubbed Jiang Ching by the man she marries, Mao Zedong. Madame Mao has become a myth, but Min has the background and the insight to imagine her afresh, and to create a complex psychological portrait of a driven, passionate woman and a period of history in which she would suffer, rise and prosper, and then fall victim to her own insatiable thirst for power. Min draws Madame Mao with bold, arresting strokes, gives her a fierce, imperious voice and a personality devoid of humility or self-knowledge. Lan Ping sets out to seduce the charismatic Mao, and wins him--for a time--until her jealousy, the machinations of his trusted aides, and Mao's own loss of interest cast her into limbo. By then a veteran of the inner circle betrayals that Mao encouraged, Jiang Ching's attempts to wrest personal power, but that becomes her undoing. As with a fine ink brush, Min details her heroine's series of love affairs and marriages, divorces and acrimonious partings, roles in Chinese opera and movies, endurance in the shadow of Mao's disfavor, desperate ploys to regain his attention, and brief time in the limelight during the Cultural Revolution. As a chronicle of ambition, betrayal, murder, revenge, barbaric cruelty, paranoia and internecine rivalry, the narrative speeds through its turbulent time frame: 1919-1991. But it is foremost a character study of a determined, vindictive, rage-filled, cruel and emotionally needy woman who flourished because she reinvented herself as an actress in different, self-defined roles-- and because China was ready for her. Min uses several effective prose devices to spin her narrative at top speed. Short first- and third-person vignettes juxtapose Madame Mao's early experience with the comments of an omniscient narrator who relates pivotal circumstances to events that will grow from their consequences. Such foreshadowing not only raises tension, it also helps readers construct a mental chart of historical figures and events. Striking metaphors and vivid Chinese proverbs enhance Min's tensile prose, but it is her trenchant comments about the ways in which powerful individuals can paint bold colors on the panorama of history that distinguishes her spellbinding novel.

Bone: A Novel, by Fae Ng 1994, 208 pages, Trade Paperback, \$12.95 ISBN: 006097592X From Library Journal: In sharp contrast to the overdramatized lives of Chinese Americans in

Amy Tan's work, Ng's simply written first novel is totally without sensationalism. Yet because her characters are depicted so realistically, the reader cannot but be moved by the hopes, grief, and quarrels of two generations of Chinese Americans in San Francisco's Chinatown. Mah, who has worked hard all her life in garment sweatshops, finally is able to own her baby-clothing store. Her husband, Leon, who used to be a merchant seaman, worked two shifts in ships' laundry rooms to provide for his family. Nevertheless, the family is torn apart after Ona, the middle daughter, jumps from the tallest building in Chinatown. The bones of contention and bones of inheritance come together in great turmoil as Nina, the youngest daughter, leaves Chinatown for New York City and then Leila, the oldest, marries and moves out to the suburbs. Leon, the paper son to old Leung, fails to keep his promise to take Leung's bones back to China. Thus, a family's tragedy is cast in greater historical context, and the reader is rewarded with a rich reading experience. Recommended for all libraries. - Cherry W. Li, Los Angeles

The Bonesetter's Daughter, by Amy Tan 2001, 353 pages, Paper, \$7.99 ISBN: 0804114986 Trade Paperback, \$14.95 ISBN: 0345457374 From Publishers Weekly: Tan's empathetic insight into the complex relationship of Chinese mothers and their American-born daughters is again displayed in her latest extraordinary, multi-layered tale. Now suffering from Alzheimer's, Lu Ling's references to the past are confusing and contradictory particularly her desperate attempts to communicate with her deceased Precious Auntie, who was her nursemaid and Ruth worries about her mother's health. But when Ruth translates Lu Ling's lengthy journal, she learns that her mother was once a strong-willed, courageous girl who overcame a background of family secrets and lies, persevered despite romantic heartbreak and survived tremendous hardships and suffering in war-torn China. Tan deftly handles narrative duties as Ruth, the exasperated but loving daughter, while Chen is perfect as the quick-speaking, accented Lu Ling. Lu Ling's first-person diary is particularly suited to audio: we hear the young girl directly reveal her secret hopes and dreams, and watch her grow from a naive innocent to a sharp-eyed survivor.

Bridegroom Stories, by Ha Jin 2001, 240 pages, Trade Paperback, \$13.00 ISBN: 0375724931 From Publishers Weekly: It's difficult to think of another writer who has captured the conflicting attitudes and desires, and the still-changing conditions of daily life, of post-Cultural Revolution China as well as Ha Jin does in his second collection, which follows his NBA-winning novel, *Waiting*. These 12 stories attain their significant cumulative effect through spare prose penetrated by wit, insight and a fine sense of irony. One realizes in reading them that while human nature is universal, China's cultural and political repression exacerbates such traits as fear of authority (and the desire to circumvent it), male chauvinism and suspicion of outsiders. In "The Woman from New York," a young wife and mother who goes to the States for four years finds, on her return to Muji City (where most of these tales are set), that her child, her marriage, her job and her honor are forever lost. American business methods clash with Chinese traditions in "After Cowboy Chicken Came to Town," in which Chinese workers' anger about the behavior of their boss, Mr. Shapiro, is redoubled when they discover one of their own countrymen practicing the strange ethics of capitalism. Such varied protagonists as college professors, a factory worker, a horny cadre member, two uneducated peasants and a five-year-old girl illustrate the ways in which hardship, lack of living space, inflexible social rules and government quotas thwart happiness. The title story is perhaps the most telling indication of the clash of humanitarian feeling and bureaucratic intervention. The protagonist, who has been taught to believe that "homosexuality... originated in Western capitalism and bourgeois lifestyle," is unable to credit his own sympathy for his son-in-law, who is sent to a mental hospital to cure his

"disease." Ha Jin has a rare empathy for people striving to balance the past and the future while caught on the cusp of change. (Oct.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Brothers: A Novel, by Da Chen 2006, 432 pages, Trade Paperback, \$14.95 ISBN: 0385720602
From Publishers Weekly: Acclaimed memoirist Chen (Colors of the Mountain) draws on his experiences growing up during the Cultural Revolution for this arresting novel about two brothers negotiating the momentous changes that have buffeted China in recent decades. The protagonists are half-brothers: Tan, the privileged, legitimate heir of Gen. Ding Long, and Shento, the general's abandoned bastard child. While Tan is "groomed to be a leader," Shento is placed in a hellish orphanage where he plots revenge. Shento eventually escapes, joins the army and rises to the head of the president's security detail. Meanwhile, caught on the wrong side of the changes sweeping China following Chairman Mao's death, Tan's family is discredited and flees to their ancestral home in the south where Tan builds an economic empire. Tan also falls in love with the beautiful orphan, Sumi Wo, who has an illegitimate son by Shento. When Sumi and Tan become involved in the pro-democracy movement, they attract official attention, putting the estranged brothers on paths that will converge at Tiananmen Square. Chen's inventive and sprawling family saga eloquently recreates a time of enormous upheaval.

China, Inc., by Ted Fishman 2005, 365 pages, Trade Paperback, \$15.00 ISBN: 0743257359
From Publishers Weekly: A lively, fact-packed account of China's spectacular, 30-year transformation from economic shambles following Mao's Cultural Revolution to burgeoning market superpower, this book offers a torrent of statistics, case studies and anecdotes to tell a by now familiar but still worrisome story succinctly. Paid an average of 25 cents an hour, China's workers are not the world's cheapest, but no nation can match this "docile and capable industrial workforce, groomed by generations of government-enforced discipline," as veteran business reporter (and Chicago Mercantile trading firm founder) Fishman characterizes it. Since Mexican wages were (at the time) four times those of China, NAFTA's impact has been dwarfed by China's explosive growth (about 9.5% a year), and corporations and entrepreneurs operating in China have few worries about minimum wages, pensions, benefits, unions, antipollution laws or worker safety regulations. For the U.S., Fishman predicts more of what we're already seeing: deficits, declining wages and the squeezing of the middle class. His solutions (revitalize education, close the trade gap) are not original, but some of his statistics carry a jolt: since 1998, prices in the U.S. have risen 16%, but they've fallen in nearly every category where China is the top exporter; a pair of Levis bought at Wal-Mart costs less today, adjusted for inflation, than it did 20 years ago—though the company no longer makes clothes in China. First serial to the New York Times Magazine; author tour.(Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc.

China Road: A Journey Into the Future of a Rising Power, by Rob Gifford 2007, 352 pages, Hardcover, \$26.95 ISBN: 1400064678
From Booklist: National Public Radio China correspondent Gifford journeyed for six weeks on China's Mother Road, Route 312, from its beginning in Shanghai for nearly 3,000 miles to a tiny town in what used to be known as Turkestan. The route picks up the old Silk Road, which runs through the Gobi Desert to Central Asia to Persia and on to Europe. Along the way, Gifford meets entrepreneurs hoping to cash in on China's growing economy, citizens angry and frustrated with government corruption, older people alarmed at changes in Chinese culture and morality,

and young people uncertain and excited about the future. Gifford profiles ordinary Chinese people coping with tumultuous change as development and commerce shrink a vast geography, bringing teeming cities and tiny towns into closer commercial and cultural proximity; the lure of wealth is changing the Chinese character and sense of shared experience, even if it was common poverty. Gifford notes an aggressive sense of competition in the man-eat-man atmosphere of a nation that is likely to be the next global superpower. Vanessa Bush. Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

China Shakes the World: A Titan's Rise and Troubled Future – and the Challenge for America, by James Kyngé 2006, 288 pages, Trade Paperback, \$14.95 ISBN: 0618919066 From Publishers Weekly: Since China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, binding its billion-plus population more tightly to the global economic system, the Asian giant's prodigious appetite for food, technology and natural resources has dramatically accelerated profound changes already well underway across the planet. Kyngé, the Financial Times's former Beijing bureau chief, makes the voracious "appetites" of the new China his constant concern, as he uncovers the sources of and limitations on the giant country's epochal growth. Beginning with a scene in Germany's postindustrial Ruhr—where a steel mill is sold, deconstructed and shipped more than 5,000 miles for reassembly near the banks of the Yangtze River—Kyngé assesses the socioeconomic transformations of China's low "Industrial Revolution-era" labor costs and modern production technology at home and abroad. But for all its world-shaking potential, notes Kyngé, "China's endowments are deeply lopsided." Key weaknesses—such as a shortage of arable land, serious environmental devastation and pollution, systemic corruption and a dearth of resources—are conversely helping to ensure that China will have to manage its growing hegemony in a symbiotic manner with partners on the economic and geopolitical playing fields. Despite the subtitle, and a chapter devoted to China's acquisition of U.S. technologies, Kyngé focuses at least as much on China's significance for Western Europe. Overall, Kyngé's crisp assessment of the dynamics involved is both authoritative and eye-opening.

The Chinese in America: A Narrative History, by Iris Chang 2003, 448 pages, Trade Paperback, \$16.00 ISBN: 0142004170 From Publishers Weekly: In this outstanding study of the Chinese-American community, the author surpasses even the high level of her bestselling *Rape of Nanking*. The first significant Chinese immigration to the United States came in the 1850s, when refugees from the Taiping War and rural poverty heard of "the Golden Mountain" across the Pacific. They reached California, and few returned home, but the universally acknowledged hard work of those who stayed and survived founded a great deal more than the restaurants and laundries that formed the commercial core—they founded a new community. Chinese immigrants building the Central Pacific Railroad used their knowledge of explosives to excavate tunnels (and discourage Irish harassment). Chinese workers also married within the Irish community, spread across America and survived even the racist Chinese Exclusion Act of 1880, which lost much of its impact when San Francisco's birth records were destroyed in the earthquake and fire of 1906 and no one could prove that a person of Chinese descent was not native born. Chang finds 20th-century Chinese-Americans navigating a rocky road between identity and assimilation, surviving new waves of immigrants from a troubled China and more recently from Taiwan and Hong Kong. Many Chinese millionaires maintain homes on both sides of the Pacific, while "parachute children" (Chinese teenagers living independently in America) are a significant phenomenon. And plain old-fashioned racism is not dead—Jerry Yang founded Yahoo!, but

scientist Wen Ho Lee was, according to Chang, persecuted as much for being Chinese as for anything else. Chang's even, nuanced and expertly researched narrative evinces deep admiration for Chinese America, with good reason. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Chronicles of Tao: The Secret Life of a Taoist Master, by Ming-Dao Deng 1993, 496 pages, Trade Paperback, \$20.00 ISBN: 0062502190 Description: This extraordinary spiritual odyssey "transcends the tangible and points to the mysteries of all we can imagine and all we cannot" (Los Angeles Times). Part adventure, part parable, this true story of the making of a Taoist master leads readers through a labyrinth of Taoist practice, martial arts discipline, and international intrigue. Line drawings.

Colors of the Mountain, by Da Chen 2000, 320 pages, Trade Paperback, \$14.95 ISBN: 0385720602

From Publishers Weekly: The grandchild of a former landlord--China's most spat-upon class after the Revolution--Chen was regularly beaten to a pulp by other children and, despite performing at the top of his class, repeatedly denied the right to continue at school. His family of nine--including his brother, three sisters, grandparents and parents--subsisted on moldy yams alone for entire winters. Meanwhile, his grandfather was attacked randomly by neighbors and forced by the local authorities to guard lumber and tend fields. Chen's father, with his prerevolutionary college education, eventually managed to extract himself from the labor camps by becoming skilled in acupuncture (he used the biggest needles on the hated "cadres"). At the climax of this survival story, Chen, the book's first-person narrator, and his older brother, Jin, both compete in China's first nationwide, open educational tests in 1977: "We were out to make a point. The Chen family had been dragged through the mud for the last forty years.... Now it was time." Scoring among the top 2% of the country, the 14-year-old Chen achieved his dream of attending Beijing Language Institute. According to the epilogue, after graduating with high honors, he wound up in New York at age 23, where he won a scholarship to attend Columbia Law School, and later landed a job on Wall Street and married a doctor. Despite the devastating circumstances of his childhood and adolescence, Chen recounts his coming of age with arresting simplicity. Readers will cry along with this sad, funny boy who proves tough enough to make it, every step of the painful way.

The Eighth Promise: An American Son's Tribute to His Toisanese Mother, by William Poy Lee 2007, 288 pages, Hardcover, \$23.95 ISBN: 159486456X From Publishers Weekly: Starred Review. While many immigrants are focused on assimilation, Lee's mother, Poy Jen Lee, came to America with a different agenda. In 1948, Poy Jen agreed to leave Suey Wan, her Toisan village in the Pearl River delta of China, to come to America as the wife of a Toisanese-American man. Before leaving, she made eight promises to her mother, among them that she'd find good husbands for her sisters and arrange immigration papers for her mother and brother; teach her children Chinese and Toisan customs, so they'd know their heritage; keep clan sisterhood strong; and cook traditional medicinal soups. The eighth promise bound Poy Jen to the fundamental Toisan ethos, "to live her life in complete compassion" for all people—her family, her Chun clan sisterhood and her larger community. In this remarkable memoir, mother and son, in alternating chapters, tell the story of their life in San Francisco's Chinatown from the 1950s to the present. Between American racism and power struggles in the Chinese community, it's a tribute to Toisan endurance that Poy Jen not only held her family together but also brought

her children back to China to fortify their clan connection. Fans of Amy Tan and Maxine Hong Kingston shouldn't hesitate to embrace this formidable matriarch and the son she taught to cook her chi soups. (Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved

Feather on the Breath of God: A Novel, by Sigrid Nunez 2005, 192 pages, Trade Paperback, \$13.00 ISBN: 0312422733

From Publishers Weekly: In this luminous debut novel about a young woman of mixed race, Nunez writes with fierce clarity, rare empathy and sharp humor of immigrant dreams and frustrations. The vulnerable, nameless narrator, who grows up in a Brooklyn housing project in the 1950s and '60s, is the daughter of Carlos, a silent, workaholic Chinese-Panamanian father, and Christa, a self-dramatizing German mother, who met shortly after V-E Day in Germany. Moving to New York in 1948, they raise three daughters in a marriage marked by poverty, violent quarrels and Christa's agoraphobia. Through flashbacks, Nunez shows Christa growing up in a Catholic boarding school taken over by the Nazis, while her father, an anti-Hitler protester, is arrested and confined in a concentration camp. The narrator-ignored by her father and dominated by her mother-escapes into a perfectionistic, masochistic world of ballet classes and becomes anorexic. Later, she has a doomed affair with a married Russian immigrant taxi driver with an unsavory past. The novel is marked by uncompromising honesty and the vivid immediacy of Nunez's prose. Author tour. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Foreign Babes in Beijing: Behind the Scenes of a New China, by Rachel DeWoskin 2005, 304 pages, Trade Paperback, \$13.95 ISBN: 0393328597 From Publishers Weekly: DeWoskin moved to Beijing in 1989, shortly after the military squashed the democracy movement in Tiananmen Square, but just as China's younger population began embracing Western ideologies and commodities. This entertaining romp through her five-plus years in Beijing details her life as a PR consultant—and as the star of the wildly popular Chinese nighttime television drama *Foreign Babes in Beijing*. After getting the gig on a lark, DeWoskin became known, sometimes even in her real life, as the character Jiexi, an American who falls in love with a married Chinese man, in the 20-episode drama, which aired to an estimated 600 million viewers. Her memoir weaves humorous tales of Sino-U.S. culture clashes both on and off the set with astute observations of the two cultures, as well as a significant amount of Chinese history. Though she admits frequently to being homesick for New York, DeWoskin feels for the loss of more traditional Chinese culture: "Consumerism became a religion; companies arrived like missionaries... seducing the average Zhou Schmoe with products he had never known he needed." The book offers a generous helping of Chinese words (along with their English translations and insights into the young people's "Chinglish"), as well as *Lost in Translation*-esque glimmers of the differences between the Chinese and American acting worlds. Agent, Jill Grinberg

From One Root Many Flowers: A Century of Family Life in China and America, by Virginia C. Lee 2003, 325 pages, Hardcover, \$28.88 ISBN: 1591020816 Book Description: Steadfast love and devotion, dashed hopes, and a triumph over pain have been constants in Virginia C. Li's family and in her own life. In this thoroughly engaging chronicle of her family's journey, readers will come to know what inspires so many immigrants and first-generation citizens to dedicate themselves and their lives to the betterment of their ancestral homelands. Li's narrative also provides insight into the understanding of the creation and spirit of the two great

worlds of China and the United States. From the Publisher: From historic roots deeply embedded in a land far away, to ones that have been uprooted and replanted again, I am fortunate to know firsthand how brave, new lives can blossom like beautiful flowers in another land. As the daughter of Chinese dignitaries, a transplanted refugee, mother, university professor, and international consultant, I have seen the human spirit of four generations of Chinese and then Americans attain triumph from despair and disappointment. This is a story of how two distinct worlds and proud cultures have come to work together, to offer a glimpse of hope and a future for humankind. -- from the preface

Golden Child, by David Henry Hwang [play] 1998, 53 pages, Trade Paperback, \$6.50 ISBN: 0822216825

CurtainUp.com review: Golden Child won an OBIE after its run at the Public Theater seventeen months ago despite decidedly mixed reviews. Most of the negative comments related to the awkwardness of the opening and closing scenes set in contemporary New York. The move to Broadway involved recasting and rewriting during a series of out-of-town tryouts (including a very well-received run in Singapore). Now the play has returned to New York for a Broadway run. While a play can be improved, there can also be so much diddling around either make things worse or prove the game of rewriting to be hardly worth the candle. Fortunately the main strengths of the original are intact so our original review stands. The play still focuses on the flashback to China, circa 1918 and the conflict between tradition and change as depicted through one man's family. The actors who made the strongest contribution to the play's pleasures, have reprised their roles in this production -- Tsai Chin as the first and most dramatically important of the three wives and Julyana Soelistyo in her dual role as the play's title character and as the narrator Andrew's grandmother. Director James Lapine continues at the helm and the physical production is beautiful as ever with the same set, lighting and costume designers in place. Alas, all the rewriting -- making the narrator older, having grandmother appear in a dream instead of as a vision in a taxicab -- has done little to dispel the quibbles that sent Mr. Hwang back to his computer keyboard to begin with. The general concensus seems even more mixed than for the original Off-Broadway production. Like so many writers of a first-time-around-the-block super hit, Hwang's biggest problem in winning critical support is not whether the Broadway version is better than the Off-Broadway one, but whether whatever he does can measure up to the slam-bang dramatic impact of his M. Butterfly. By having grandma pop up in a dream instead of the original taxicab, he now has given himself another burden of having his dream compared to Teyve's sleep visit to his ancestors in Fiddler on the Roof. In the final analysis, this new Golden Child may well find enough of an audience to enjoy a substantial Broadway run, not so much in spite of the so-so critical reception but because this seems to be a season for a heartening receptivity to dramas.

Inheritance, by Lan Samantha Chang 2005, 320 pages, Trade Paperback, \$13.95 ISBN: 0393327116 From Publishers Weekly: A complicated sister bond echoes through generations in this somber follow-up to Chang's well-received debut novella and stories, Hunger. In China in the early 1930s, sisters Junan and Yinan are inseparable, even as Junan matures into beauty and Yinan remains awkward and plain. Junan enters into an arranged marriage and falls in love with Li Ang, her soldier husband. Separated from him when the Japanese invade China, Junan sends the unmarried Yinan to keep her husband's household. What is intended as an arrangement of convenience turns to betrayal when Li Ang and Yinan have an affair. As China is divided by

communism, the family is also rent in two. Junan and her daughters Hong (who is also the narrator) and Hwa end up in the States, while Yinan and Li Ang remain in mainland China with their son and are effectively banished from memory. It is memory—rather than dramatic action—at which Chang excels; her prose is lovely, but even images of the turmoil of war and displacement read at somewhat of a remove. Still, the sense of long family histories both spoken and unspoken is powerful, and the restrained conclusion has the force of Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*. Chang's sophomore effort may not chart new ground, but is still a solid effort.

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The Long March: The True History of Communist China's Founding Myth, by Sun Shuyun 2007, 288 pages, Hardcover, \$26.00 ISBN: 0385520247 From Publishers Weekly: The Long March—the 8,000-mile trek by 200,000 Communist soldiers in 1934 while fleeing the Nationalists—is still legendary in Chinese Communist Party lore, but there are a lot of myths surrounding it, as the Chinese-born author discovers when she retraces the march's steps. Meeting wizened march veterans, the author, raised on the heroism of the march, is shocked to discover the reality: stories of starvation and desertion, violence against women and unnecessary deaths. For years afterward, some of the veterans didn't receive full pensions. A filmmaker and television producer who divides her time between London and Beijing, she also finds that Mao made strategic mistakes attributed to others, and used the march ruthlessly to defeat his rivals and cement his hold on Communist power. Her interviews with veterans are among the book's highlights, but just as fascinating as the interviews and archival research is her travel through China. She colorfully describes the countryside, which in her eyes maintains its ancient beauty even amid creeping 21st-century modernity. Some readers may need to do a little background reading on 20th-century Chinese history, but the rewards make it worthwhile. Map. (June 12)

The Lost Daughters of China, by Karin Evans 2001, 288 pages, Trade Paperback, \$14.95 ISBN: 1400064678 Amazon.com: The Lost Daughters of China is that rare book that can be many things to different people. Part memoir, part travelogue, part East-West cultural commentary, and part adoption how-to, Karin Evans's book is greater than the sum of its parts. Evans weaves together her experience of adopting a Chinese infant with observations about Chinese women's history and that country's restrictive, if unevenly enforced, reproductive policies. She and her husband adopted Kelly Xiao Yu in 1997, and anyone curious about adopting from a Chinese orphanage—which houses girls and disabled boys—will learn about the mechanics and the emotional freight of the two-year process. Borrowing an image from Chinese folklore, Evans conveys herself, her husband, and their daughter as tethered by a red string that yoked them across an ocean and an equally awesome cultural divide. The elegant prose is spiced with bits of ironic cultural dissonance. A discount shopper, Evans "felt more than a little strange buying China-made [baby] clothes with which to bundle up a tiny baby, one of China's own, and bring her home." On a bus tour through southern China, she is one of a "bunch of Americans with Chinese infants singing 'Que Sera Sera' in the middle of a sea of traffic. Will she be happy? Will she be rich?" To suddenly hear Doris Day over the horns of a Kowloon traffic jam is heady stuff indeed. The Lost Daughters of China is at its best when describing Evans's tally of emotional loss and gain. At one point the bureaucratic adoption process is unaccountably delayed, but her father dies during that time and she's able to sit by his bedside. The most mysterious example of this emotional calculus is Kelly's birth mother. Evans invents many plausible scenarios that caused this unknown woman to abandon her three-month-old daughter at a market. These

incomplete, necessarily provisional stories help give a face to the larger cultural processes that compel new parents to abandon 1.7 million girl babies annually. The stuff of headlines--human rights, infanticide, rural and urban poverty--is rendered personally relevant in Evans's compelling book. --Kathi Inman Berens

The Love Wife, by Gish Jen 2005, 400 pages, Trade Paperback, \$14.00 ISBN: 140007651X From Publishers Weekly: Before Lan, a distant relative, arrived from China, the Wong family knew who they were: father Carnegie; mother Blondie; two adopted Chinese daughters, Lizzie and Wendy; and one biological son, Bailey. Except for baby Bailey, each member takes turns beseeching the listener to understand the Wong family from his or her perspective. It seems fitting that multiple narrators should take turns telling a story that explores the complex frontiers of the modern American family, but their overlapping, interrupting voices create a chaos that, while accurately representing family life, may prove unsettling to listeners. Additionally, interjections like Carnegie's single-line rejoinders to Blondie's laments, or Lizzie's sudden, venomous reactions to Wendy's sweet childhood stories make the characters feel more like disembodied voices than real people. Carnegie and his daughters are given clear voices and appropriate accents, but Blondie's voice sounds strangely exotic and not at all Middle American, as it's supposed be. All in all, though the novel has the makings of an important work of literature, this audio translation may bring listeners more confusion than satisfaction. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc.

Modern China: An Illustrated History, by J.A.G. Roberts 1998, 320 pages, Trade Paperback, \$19.95 ISBN: 0750925701

From Booklist: Roberts, a specialist in East Asian history, has provided an informative and easily digestible survey of the past 200 years of Chinese history. Unlike many Western historians, Roberts generally avoids the trap of viewing events through a Eurocentric prism; he frequently reminds us that an immense nation such as China can resist outside influences while following internal dynamics. General readers will find the text easy to follow, yet historians who wish to gain a more specific knowledge of Chinese history will not be disappointed. A perfect public library choice. Jay Freeman

My Country Versus Me: The First-Hand Account by the Los Alamos Scientist Who Was Falsely Accused of Being a Spy, by Wen Ho Lee and Helen Zia 2003, 352 pages, Trade Paperback, \$14.95 ISBN: 0786886870 From Publishers Weekly: In a story that would seem fantastic even if it were fictional, the Taiwan-born Lee relates his traumatic saga of being accused by the government of the high crime of espionage, detailing his life before, during and after the accusation. Lee, a "patriotic" American scientist who worked at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, helped develop our national defense capabilities and also assisted the FBI to help protect U.S. nuclear secrets. He was shocked to find himself the subject of scrutiny. Nevertheless, based on nothing but hollow government allegations, apparent racism and the need for a scapegoat, Lee explains how Congress' and the national media's portrayal of him as a traitor more dangerous than the Rosenbergs resulted in ruining his life and reputation. Though not convicted, he spent nearly a year in 1999 shackled and chained in prison. Now that his case has been settled, he is free to tell his story, and Stella's reading of it is superb. He chose to avoid an obvious Chinese accent, opting instead to deliver the text using only the stiffness associated with someone whose first language is not English. This makes for a performance that

is so convincing, it is shocking to hear his voice sans this effect when he reads Zia's acknowledgements at the book's end. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

One Billion Customers: Lessons from the Front Lines of Doing Business in China, by James McGregor 2005, 336 pages, Hardcover, \$28.00 ISBN-10: 0743258398 Trade Paperback – not yet published, \$15.00 ISBN: 074325841X

From Booklist: McGregor has spent nearly two decades as a journalist and business executive in China. China, as he notes, is crashing its way onto the world scene as a rapidly growing economic powerhouse, and the challenge confronting the nation is learning to manage the large, complex organizations that will be necessary if the country is going to continue its ambitious climb to the top of the economic ladder. McGregor posits that the sudden transition from the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s to the scramble for wealth in the 1980s and 1990s has left a deeply scarred society experiencing an economic and social upheaval. To reach the next step in its economic evolution, he believes that China must find ways to go beyond some of the lingering cultural, social, and psychological barriers that will soon impede that progress. The struggle now is to discover the management principles and techniques that will harness and focus the immense energy and intelligence of the Chinese. A detailed case study of an unparalleled rise to power. George Cohen Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

Red Azalea, by Anchee Min 1994, 306 pages, Trade Paperback, \$13.00 ISBN: 1400096987

From Booklist: This is an honest and frightening memoir of growing up in Communist China during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. Min describes a systematically deprived Shanghai childhood (the family was forced into successively meaner quarters); school days spent as a member of the Red Guard, spouting the words of Chairman Mao and being forced to publicly betray her favorite teacher; and later teen years on a work farm in order to become a peasant because peasants were the only true vanguard of the revolution. The farm years, with their backbreaking workdays and heartbreaking, lonely nights, exemplify the grinding insanity of the Cultural Revolution, the terror and dehumanization it inflicted on ordinary Chinese. Eventually, Min was tapped by the party to be in the propaganda film *Red Azalea*, during the making of which she suffered more humiliation and political subterfuge. What is so extraordinary is that Min managed to keep a tight hold on her spirit. Her autobiography is not just a coming-of-age story or history lesson; it is a tale of inner strength and courage that transcends time and place. Jackie Sasaki: It is a mesmerizing read and very accessible to a wide audience. It is part personal history and part history of China in the 20th Century. The language is rich and poetic, hard to believe this young woman learned to speak English watching *Sesame Street*. Anchee Min is a dynamic speaker. Her readings tend to be more of a performance and an event than a simple reading. She is a marvelous example of "bridging the two worlds". There are some great discussion topics - politics and ideology in China, the Cultural Revolution, the individual vs. society, principles vs. survival, sexual identity, just to name a few.

Red China Blues: My Long March from Mao to Now, by Jan Wong 1996, 405 pages, Trade Paperback, \$15.95 ISBN: 0385482329 From Publishers Weekly: This superb memoir is like no other account of life in China under both Mao and Deng. Wong is a Canadian ethnic Chinese who, in 1972, at the height of the cultural revolution, was one of the first undergraduate foreigners permitted to study at Beijing University. Filled with youthful enthusiasms for Mao's

revolution, she was an oddity: a Westerner who embraced Maoism, appeared to be Chinese and wished to be treated as one, although she didn't speak the language. She set herself to become fluent, refused special consideration, shared her fellow-students rations and housing, their required stints in industry and agriculture and earnestly tried to embrace the Little Red Book. Although Wong felt it her duty to turn in a fellow student who asked for help to emigrate to the West, she could not repress continual shock at conditions of life, and by the time she was nearly expelled from China for an innocent friendship with a "foreigner," much of her enthusiasm, which lasted six years, had eroded. In 1988, returning as a reporter for the Toronto Globe Mail, she was shocked once again, this time by the rapid transformations of the society under Deng's exhortation: "to be rich is glorious." Her account is informed by her special background, a cold eye, a detail. Her description of the events at Tiananmen Square, which occurred on her watch, is, like the rest of the book, unique, powerful and moving.

The Rice Room: Growing Up Chinese-American from Number Two Son to Rock 'n' Roll, by Ben Fong-Torres 1995, 272 pages, Hardcover, \$22.95 ISBN: 0786860022 Paper – out of print
From Library Journal: Fong-Torres, a founding editor of Rolling Stone, rose to fame as one of America's top rock and entertainment journalists through interviews with the likes of Bob Dylan and Ray Charles. With a professional sensitivity to conflicting issues, he describes the frustrations he felt growing up with a double identity--Chinese and American. The constant struggle between the urge to assimilate into the American mainstream and a strong sense of obligation to his parents and Chinese tradition gives ironic twists to his life, affecting his career in radio and journalism, his relationships with both Caucasian and Chinese women, and even his way of communicating with his parents. Unlike his journey through life, Fong-Torres's writing is smooth and right to the point. Under the bitter and regretful overtones lurk a good sense of humor and wit. Recommended for most collections. - Mark Meng, St. John's Univ. Lib., New York River Town:

Two Years on the Yangtze, by Peter Hessler 2002, 432 pages, Trade Paperback, \$13.95 ISBN: 0060953748

From Publishers Weekly: In China, the year 1997 was marked by two momentous events: the death of Deng Xiaoping, the country's leader for two decades, and the return of Hong Kong after a century and a half of British rule. A young American who spent two years teaching English literature in a small town on the Yangtze, Hessler observed these events through two sets of eyes: his own and those of his alter ego, Ho Wei. Hessler sees China's politics and ceremony with the detachment of a foreigner, noting how grand political events affect the lives of ordinary people. The passing of Deng, for example, provokes a handful of thoughtful and unexpected essays from Hessler's students. The departure of the British from Hong Kong sparks a conversational "Opium War" between him and his nationalist Chinese tutor. Meanwhile, Ho Wei, as Hessler is known to most of the townspeople, adopts a friendly and unsophisticated persona that allows him to learn the language and culture of his surroundings even as Hessler's Western self remains estranged. The author conceives this memoir of his time in China as the collaborative effort of his double identity. "Ho Wei," he writes, "left his notebooks on the desk of Peter Hessler, who typed everything into his computer. The notebooks were the only thing they truly shared." Yet it's clear that, for Hessler, Ho Wei is more than a literary device: to live in China, he felt compelled to subjugate his real identity to a character role. Hessler has already been assured the approval of a

select audience thanks to the New Yorker's recent publication of an excerpt. (Feb.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information

Snow Flower and the Secret Fan: A Novel, by Lisa See 2006, 288 pages, Trade Paperback, \$13.95 ISBN: 0812968069 From Publishers Weekly: Starred Review. See's engrossing novel set in remote 19th-century China details the deeply affecting story of lifelong, intimate friends (laotong, or "old sames") Lily and Snow Flower, their imprisonment by rigid codes of conduct for women and their betrayal by pride and love. While granting immediacy to Lily's voice, See (Flower Net) adroitly transmits historical background in graceful prose. Her in-depth research into women's ceremonies and duties in China's rural interior brings fascinating revelations about arranged marriages, women's inferior status in both their natal and married homes, and the Confucian proverbs and myriad superstitions that informed daily life. Beginning with a detailed and heartbreaking description of Lily and her sisters' foot binding ("Only through pain will you have beauty. Only through suffering will you have peace"), the story widens to a vivid portrait of family and village life. Most impressive is See's incorporation of nu shu, a secret written phonetic code among women—here between Lily and Snow Flower—that dates back 1,000 years in the southwestern Hunan province ("My writing is soaked with the tears of my heart,/ An invisible rebellion that no man can see"). As both a suspenseful and poignant story and an absorbing historical chronicle, this novel has bestseller potential and should become a reading group favorite as well. Copyright © Reed Business Information

South of the Clouds: Exploring the Hidden Realms of China, by Seth Faison 2004, 288 pages, Hardcover, \$25.95, ISBN: 0312306407 Trade Paperback – Out of Print ISBN: 0312306415 From Publishers Weekly: In 1984, when Faison first went to China to study, the country was just recovering from the Cultural Revolution, and a "big nose" like Faison was quite the oddity. Still, Faison was sociable, chatting up everyone willing to talk. After a brief stint as a cub reporter at the Hong Kong Standard, he was assigned to Beijing in 1988, in time to cover the crisis of Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989. Having become a China expert of sorts, Faison came back to New York and, after covering the Golden Venture sinking, returned to China in 1995 as the New York Times's Shanghai bureau chief. While Faison tells the big stories with a journalist's economy—just enough background to refresh one's memory, coupled with an eye for telling details—it's the smaller, more personal stories that enthrall. When he describes his midnight forays to the sauna massage spas at his hotels, or his love affair with China's leading choreographer, a notorious transsexual, it's hard to stop reading—and it's not because he shares any prurient details. Readers will become very fond of Faison—his frank doubts about his masculinity, his willingness to wonder about his attraction to Chinese women and, yes, his longing for spiritual depth. An inspiring personal journey, an informative cultural exploration—Faison's memoir works on many levels. Photos. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Spring Moon: A Novel of China, by Bette Bao Lord 1981, 464 pages, Trade Paperback, \$14.95 ISBN: 0060599758

From 500 Great Books by Women; review by Erica Bauermeister: Spring Moon is a big and engrossing novel, the literary equivalent of a rich, indulgent dessert. Spanning five generations of a Chinese family, the book illuminates the social and political upheavals of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century China through its focus on Spring Moon, the cherished, if headstrong daughter

of the wealthy and powerful house of Chang. Spring Moon's feet are bound when she is seven, and when she screams in pain she is told "It is for your own good, child... No matter how beautiful, how rich, how filial, no man will marry feet that flop like a yellow pike." But although she is part of a household that continues the old traditions, Spring Moon is determined to learn to read and soon becomes the favorite of her uncle, who once studied in America. The love that develops between them and continues despite their marriages to others threatens many of the traditions and codes of honor that are the foundation of the house of Chang. Their affair raises in microcosm many of the ethical controversies faced by a changing China, and as the generations pass, as large and illustrious households disappear, as a mother's secret and personal transgressions are replaced by her daughter's open rebellion and revolutionary fervor, we witness the immense changes in China on both an intimate and grand scale.

Sweet Bamboo: A Memoir of a Chinese American Family, by Louise Leung Larson 2001, 240 pages, Trade Paperback, \$15.95 ISBN: 0520230787 Book Description: Sweet Bamboo is the vivid and absorbing memoir of a Chinese American family who lived in Los Angeles since the first years of the twentieth century. Lovingly recounted by the second daughter, who went on to become the first Asian American reporter for a major American newspaper, this account illuminates the many changes that occurred in the family as members increasingly became integrated into American society. While much of the attention given to Chinese immigrants has focused on the struggles of working class people, this book sheds new light on a different kind of immigrant experience--that of privileged Chinese parents and their children living in relative affluence in a predominantly white neighborhood. The family saga begins in China's Kwangtung Province, in the village of Gum Jook (Sweet Bamboo), about 31 miles south of Canton. It follows Louise Leung Larson's parents through their arranged marriage in 1898, to their arrival in Los Angeles, the birth of three daughters and five sons (named after American presidents), and her father's development of a successful herbalist business. Larson's intimate portrait of her family, her lively depiction of Los Angeles at the turn of the century, and her engaging descriptions of meals eaten, holidays celebrated, school events, visits from relatives, and much more make this a richly textured excursion into the dreams and disappointments of everyday life. The death of the author's mother in 1957 marks the end of an era for the Tom Leung family. An epilogue brings the story to the late 1980s, tracing the intermarriage of the third and fourth generations, and the family's diminishing sense of its Chinese identity. A postscript by the author's daughter, Jane Leung Larson, provides details of the fourth and fifth generations Leungs and recounts Jane's trip to China where she visited her parents' birthplaces and met relatives from both her grandmother's and grandfather's families. Taken together, these keen observations illustrate several generations' adaptation to dual cultures and the formation of a unique Chinese American sensibility.

Waiting, by Ha Jin 1999, 320 pages, Trade Paperback, \$13.00 ISBN: 0375706410 From Publishers Weekly: Jin's quiet but absorbing second novel (after *In the Pond*) captures the poignant dilemma of an ordinary man who misses the best opportunities in his life simply by trying to do his duty. As defined first by his traditional Chinese parents and later by the Communist Party. Reflecting the changes in Chinese communism from the '60s to the '80s, the novel focuses on Lin Kong, a military doctor who agrees, as his mother is dying, to an arranged marriage. His bride, Shuyu, turns out to be a country woman who looks far older than her 26 years and who has, to Lin's great embarrassment, lotus (bound) feet. While Shuyu remains at

Lin's family home in Goose Village, nursing first his mother and then his ailing father, and bearing Lin a daughter, Lin lives far away in an army hospital compound, visiting only once a year. Caught in a loveless marriage, Lin is attracted to a nurse, Manna Wu, an attachment forbidden by communist strictures. According to local Party rules, Lin cannot divorce his wife without her permission until they have been separated for 18 years. Although Jin infuses movement and some suspense into Lin's and Manna's sometimes resigned, sometimes impatient waiting, they will not consummate their relationship until Lin is free. It is only in the novel's third section, when Lin finally secures a divorce, that the story gathers real force. Though inaction is a risky subject and the thoughts of a cautious man make for a rather deliberate prose style (the first two sections describe the moments the characters choose not to act), the final chapters are moving and deeply ironic, proving again that this poet and award-winning short story writer can deliver powerful long fiction about a world alien to most Western readers. (Oct.) FYI: Jin served six years in the People's Liberation Army, and came to the U.S. in 1985.

Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China, by Jung Chang 1991, 524 pages, Trade Paperback, \$16.00 ISBN: 0743246985 From Publishers Weekly: Bursting with drama, heartbreak and horror, this extraordinary family portrait mirrors China's century of turbulence. Chang's grandmother, Yu-fang, had her feet bound at age two and in 1924 was sold as a concubine to Beijing's police chief. Yu-fang escaped slavery in a brothel by fleeing her "husband" with her infant daughter, Bao Qin, Chang's mother-to-be. Growing up during Japan's brutal occupation, free-spirited Bao Qin chose the man she would marry, a Communist Party official slavishly devoted to the revolution. In 1949, while he drove 1000 miles in a jeep to the southwestern province where they would do Mao's spadework, Bao Qin walked alongside the vehicle, sick and pregnant (she lost the child). Chang, born in 1952, saw her mother put into a detention camp in the Cultural Revolution and later "rehabilitated." Her father was denounced and publicly humiliated; his mind snapped, and he died a broken man in 1975. Working as a "barefoot doctor" with no training, Chang saw the oppressive, inhuman side of communism. She left China in 1978 and is now director of Chinese studies at London University. Her meticulous, transparent prose radiates an inner strength.

YELL-Oh Girls! Emerging Voices Explore Culture, Identity, and Growing Up Asian American, by Vickie Nam, 2001, 336 pages, Trade Paperback, \$13.00 ISBN: 0060959444 From Booklist: Nam issues a call to action of sorts in this anthology of essays by young Asian American women. The contributors, from China, Hawaii, Laos, Vietnam, and even India, range in age from 13 to nearly 40, but they are alike in their hope to rediscover their roots and connect with others like themselves. Many feel disaffected, ignored, and denied in Eurocentric culture--caught between two worlds because of their skin, their language, their parents, their feelings about beauty and food, and even their silence. As might be expected, the quality of the selections varies. Some are much smoother than others, and the chapter introductions, by Nam, are at times too long. Still, readers--Asian Americans in particular and other readers in general--who have felt the pain of being outsiders will be swept along by the authors' sincerity and their efforts to use writing to clarify who they are. Stephanie Zvirin

Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White, by Frank Wu 2003, 416 pages, Trade Paperback, \$16.00 ISBN: 046500640X From Publishers Weekly: Beginning with a recap of his childhood bewilderment with the paltry selection of appealing Asian characters in 1970s

American pop culture, Frank H. Wu, associate professor at the Howard University School of Law, describes the alienation experienced by Asian-Americans in the 20th-century in *Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White*. An activist and journalist (the *Washington Post*, the *Nation*, the *L.A. Times*, etc.), Wu discusses key moments and phenomena in Asian-American history: the WWII internment camps, the 1992 L.A. riots, the "model minority myth," the virulent anti-Asian sentiment in the U.S. during the 1980s' recession (exemplified by the murder of a Chinese American engineer by two white auto workers, fined \$3,780 for the crime) and periodic fads involving "Asian-ness" in American media. His sobering, astute, compelling investigation locates the particulars of Asian-American experience with racism in this country's spectrum of ethnic and cultural prejudice. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.