



Posters from the on-line Exhibit of Chinese Propaganda
Posters: [To Read Too Many Books is Harmful](#)



Propaganda Web Path-Finder

On-line Resources

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Propaganda Background Information

These sites provide an excellent overview of propaganda, in general and in China in particular. Information is from reputable sources such as the Oxford University Press. Definitions, history, types of propaganda, quotations about propaganda, techniques and models of propaganda, and examples of propaganda from the Nazis, USA, Cold War, and Iraq War are included. (Answers.com)

- ◆ Propaganda Background Information <http://www.answers.com/topic/propaganda>
- ◆ Cult of Personality <http://www.answers.com/topic/cult-of-personality-2>
- ◆ Great Leap Forward <http://www.answers.com/topic/great-leap-forward?cat=technology>
- ◆ Cultural Revolution <http://www.answers.com/topic/cultural-revolution>
- ◆ Gang of Four <http://www.answers.com/topic/gang-of-four-1>
- ◆ Norman Bethune <http://www.answers.com/topic/norman-bethune>
- ◆ Propaganda in the People's Republic of China <http://www.answers.com/topic/propaganda-in-the-people-s-republic-of-china>

Chinese connotations of the term Propaganda (Xuanchuan)

While in the Western world the word *propaganda* bears negative connotations, the Chinese word "xuanchuan" ([Chinese characters: 宣传](#)), which is liberally translated as *propaganda*, actually means *to broadcast* or *to spread (information)*, with no negative connotations that would imply bias or untruthfulness. This explains why many [English](#) speakers would consider the use of such a term as an outright acknowledgment of the biased nature of Chinese propaganda, although the term can in fact be used in politically neutral contexts. For example, Chinese "propaganda" has also served to raise public awareness about the law, the need for common courtesy, the importance of embracing science and technology, the need to take preventive measures against [SARS](#) and [AIDS](#).

- ◆ [PBS Selling War](#) / A Historic Perspective of Propaganda: From the Roman Empire, the Catholic Church, through Uncle Toms Cabin, WW I and WW II, to Modern Propaganda

Propaganda Posters

Shanghai Propaganda Poster Art Museum

- ◆ [Shanghai Propaganda Poster Art Museum](http://www.chinasnippets.com/2005/12/09/shanghai-propaganda-poster-art-museum/): <http://www.chinasnippets.com/2005/12/09/shanghai-propaganda-poster-art-museum/> One of the most interesting museums I went to lately is the Shanghai Propaganda Poster Art Centre. The museum is hidden in a basement. Here, the world of Chinese Propaganda in the Mao era opens up to you. I bought a comic book there from 1957. The cover shows an interesting view on the world at that time. The title is "Two Worlds". To find out what the

western guy is protesting about, go to the special page that has been added with more info about the [Shanghai Propaganda Poster Art Centre](#).

- ◆ Review of the museum: <http://www.chinasnippets.com/shanghai-cultural/propaganda-poster-art-centre/>
- ◆ China propaganda art evokes a revolution, now past: Collector Yang Pei Ming has converted a Shanghai basement into a makeshift museum to display some of his 5,000 posters. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0918/p07s03-woap.html>

Posters/Pamphlets/other forms of Propaganda 1937 - Present

- ◆ **Best Poster Site** [Stefan Landsberger's Chinese propaganda poster pages](#) Hosted by the International Institute of Social History (IISG), which is based in Amsterdam, these pages exhibit a private collection of Chinese **propaganda** posters, collected by Stefan Landsberger since 1949. These Chinese **propaganda** posters date from the beginnings of the People's Republic in 1949 to contemporary campaigns such as the drive to promote the 2008 Olympic Games and warnings about the SARS epidemic. The site is formed from many themed sections containing a number of posters and short explanatory notes. These sections include: the Mao cult; models and martyrs; Huxian peasant painters; early campaigns; song and dance; heroes and villains; falun gong; and the Cultural Revolution. The site also provides bibliographical details on poster artists, links to further online exhibitions and a bibliography of secondary sources on Chinese political poster art. Stefan Landsberger is a lecturer in contemporary Chinese history as well as a collector of poster art and is based at the University of Leiden, Netherlands. The site is straightforward to navigate via a series of simple links and, despite being a personal home page, presents its data in an informative and lively style. The text of posters is translated into English, which can be revealed through hovering over the Chinese text with a mouse (in posters without text, hovering gives the title), but this feature is only available through Internet Explorer. Clicking on each image displays its details. The lack of a general guide to 'reading' political poster art may leave first-time viewers confused, and the annotation of all pieces may annoy more seasoned researchers. Overall, however, the site should be useful for anyone with an interest in **propaganda** and visual arts in **China**, and provides a number of resources that otherwise would not be as readily available to researchers, students and teaching faculty. <http://www.iisg.nl/~landsberger/>
- ◆ To Read Too Many Books is Harmful <http://www.chineseposters.net/toomanybooks/> The Leiden University Sinological Libraries exhibition, To Read Too Many Books Is Harmful, explored the presence and meanings of books and literacy in Chinese **propaganda** posters from Maoist times to the reform era. Whilst literacy was encouraged in the 1950s, literary culture was denigrated and visual representation reigned in the Cultural Revolution, only for **China** to return to an emphasis on intellectual cultivation in the Reform era. In the online version of this 2004-2005 exhibition, Stefan Landsberger (Lecturer in Chinese Studies at Leiden and authority on Chinese **propaganda** art) provides an introduction to the significance of **propaganda** posters and their representation of literary culture. The remainder of the website consists of 30 posters dating from 1952 to 1996, presented in a roughly chronological series. These are best viewed as a slideshow, navigated by arrows at the foot of the screen. All the posters are annotated with text by Landsberger, which can be read as a complete essay if the posters are viewed in order. The online exhibition would be of value to anyone with an interest in socialist **propaganda** art. The substantial background text that accompanies each poster is not only informative to the general user, but would make an

extremely useful teaching resource. <http://www.tcc.leidenuniv.nl/index.php3?c=168>

- ◆ [Power of Persuasion Posters from the USA](#)
- ◆ [WW II Propaganda/Leaflets](#) Falling From the Sky: This webpage focuses on the history and the collecting of WW2 airdropped and shelled propaganda flyers and pamphlets. IMPORTANT: The allied air forces, USAAF and RAF, did airdrop many millions of these aerial leaflets from their B17, B24 and Lancaster airplanes over Nazi Germany. So did the Luftwaffe drop leaflets over England. The Germans even used the famous V1 rocket for this! Airdropped leaflets often contained the strategic type of propaganda (aims to influence the target in the long term).
- ◆ [War, Propaganda and the Media](#) Probably every conflict is fought on at least 2 grounds: the battlefield and the minds of the people via propaganda. The “good guys” and the “bad guys” can often both be guilty of misleading their people with distortions, exaggerations, subjectivity, inaccuracy and even fabrications, in order to receive support and a sense of legitimacy.
- ◆ [Frank Webbers Propaganda Page](#) includes American Propaganda Posters. Propaganda is not the same as advertising or art. Art today is preoccupied with abstract ideas; advertising tries to get you to buy something. Propaganda, on the other hand, is interested in making you *believe* something. It is the stronger societal force; once you start believing in an idea or ideology you will buy anything – metaphorical or literal – it tries to sell you. Many good links.
- ◆ [Propaganda Techniques](#)
- ◆ [China posters online : University of Westminster](#) This site provides access to a collection of several hundred Chinese posters which are held by the Centre for the Study of Democracy at the University of Westminster. They cover the period 1960-1990 and encompass a wide range of themes relating to Chinese political and social history of the period including: Chinese Communist party **propaganda**; images of Chairman Mao; the cultural revolution; the Red Army; Chinese foreign policy; images of the West; and the position of women in Communist **China**. The material is arranged into thematic lists which may be browsed. Alternatively the database can be searched by subject keyword. All items have catalogue records which provide information about the date and artist. Some background information on the history and context of the posters is also provided. http://home.wmin.ac.uk/china_posters/
- ◆ [Chairman smiles: posters from the former Soviet Union, Cuba and China](#) This site offers access to 145 political posters Russia, **China** and the Soviet Union which have been taken from the collection of the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. They include posters from the Russian Revolution of 1917, the five year plans of the 1930s and the rule of Joseph Stalin. The Chinese posters cover the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution from 1966-1976. They also provide an insight into the **propaganda** and cult of Mao Tse-Tung. The Cuban collection covers Cuban politics in the 1960s. Also available on the site is information on the designers and a bibliography of further reading. <http://www.iisg.nl/exhibitions/chairman/index.php>

- ◆ [Revolutionary tides: the art of the political poster 1914-1989](http://revolutionarytides.stanford.edu/) This site provides free access to digitized images of over 100 political posters produced in the period 1914-1989. They are taken from the holdings of the Hoover Institution and Wolfsonian Florida International University. The posters consider the changing nature of revolution and the role of the political poster . Materials are organised by theme. Topics covered include the crowd, mass persuasion and **propaganda** and political leadership. Key events covered include: the Chinese communist party revolution, the fall of the Berlin wall and communism in Europe. There are also materials relating to Russia, Germany (Nazi propaganda) It is possible to search or browse the site. Copyright information is displayed. Access to images requires Flash plug ins.
<http://revolutionarytides.stanford.edu/>

- ◆ [Visual art as cultural memory in modern china](http://kaladarshan.arts.ohio-state.edu/exhib/poster/exhibintro.html) the online exhibition, Picturing Power: Posters of the Cultural Revolution, presents images from the University of Westminster's Chinese **propaganda** poster archive as they appeared as a traveling exhibit at Ohio State University. Easily reached via a link from the main page, the exhibition is divided into four periods, spanning from 1963 to 1979. By clicking on thumbnail images in the task bar, users can browse larger versions of the posters annotated with title, date and artist information, or can see the posters as full-page images. Posters cover: model heroes; agriculture; military images; and portraits of Party leaders. The main page of the online exhibition also acts as a gateway to a conference website, 'Visual Art as Cultural Memory in Modern China', which lists papers presented at this 1999 symposium. The online exhibition itself is easy to navigate and its images are of a high quality. However, the posters may have benefited from more textual background detail. Nevertheless, the images are valuable primary resources for any researcher with an interest in the purposes and meanings of **propaganda** art in Maoist **China**.
<http://kaladarshan.arts.ohio-state.edu/exhib/poster/exhibintro.html>

- ◆ [The Jon Sigurdson Collection](#) Chinaposters — The Cultural Revolution: Evolving Modernization Viewed in China's Political Posters based on Jon Sigurdson's Collection of Posters 1963-1983

- ◆ [The Oliver Laude Collection](#) The images you are about to see were collected over a three year period while working in China on a book project on traditional rural Chinese architecture. Between 1989 and 1992, I traveled to China to document the extraordinary beauty and refinement of Chinese vernacular architecture. If you were to go to any Chinese city and look for these posters (some are stamps) you most likely would not be fruitful in your search. To find such works of art you must travel to small towns and villages where they are still sold, even though this is becoming the exception, not the rule. These posters are used to decorate the walls of schools, private homes and government institutions. They are produced by the central government in Beijing and reflect the many political changes of the past 47 years of communist rule. They are in many ways a very good historical record of the economic, political and social turmoil China has undergone since 1949. They also are tools of the central government's propaganda machine. While some are quite lucid others reflect darker and more painful periods in China's history.

- ◆ [Street posters](#), a very nice site by Rice University: Transnational China Project Image Archive: "China's Public Advertising Culture: Spiritual Civilization, Local Development, Privatization and Public Service"
- ◆ [Ann Tompkins \(Tang Fandi\) and Lincoln Cushing Chinese Poster Collection, East Asian Library, U.C. Berkeley](#) This site is hosted by docspopuli.org. It provides free access to a online collection of over 500 images of Chinese political posters from the Ann Tompkins (Tang Fandi) and Lincoln Cushing Chinese Poster Collection, East Asian Library, U.C. Berkeley published since the 1960s. They include numerous examples of Chinese government **propaganda**. Topics covered include Chairman Mao; Chinese communist party, and the Cultural Revolution. Each entry has bibliographic details. Copyright information is displayed on the website. <http://www.docspopuli.org/ChinaWebCat/gallery-01.html>
- ◆ [Center for the Study of Political Graphics](#)
- ◆ [International Institute of Social History](#) On-line exhibits of Chinese poster

Chinese Pamphlets

- ◆ [Chinese pamphlets: political communication and mass education in the early period of the People's Republic of China](#) This is a special online collection hosted by the Center for Research Libraries. It provides free access to an online collection of several hundred Chinese political pamphlets published during the period 1947-1954. They include examples produced by the Chinese Communist party and the Kuomintang. They cover a range of political topics including examples of political **propaganda**, materials on Chinese foreign policy, security, relations with the Soviet union and economic and social reforms. They also offer insight into the communication techniques used by the Communist party. Most materials are offered in Chinese only. A small number of pamphlets are in English. The database can be searched or browsed. Information on copyright is displayed on the website. http://ecollections.crl.edu/cdm4/index_hunters.php?CISOROOT=/hunters

Other Cultural Revolution Memorabilia

- ◆ [Mao Badges, Posters and Ephemera](#) by Kurt Groetsch [Chairman Mao Zedong Badges & Ephemera](#) An interesting look at the world of Chinese Cultural Revolution-era artifacts.

Woodblocks (Nianhua)

- ◆ [The Iris Wachs Woodblock exhibition](#) FROM THE COMMUNIST REVOLUTION TO THE OPEN-DOOR POLICY AND BEYOND 1945-1998
- ◆ [A.E. Maia do Amaral's Woodblocks Collection](#)
- ◆ [The James Flath nianhua collection](#) Until the mid-20th century, *nianhua*, (New Year woodblock prints) were the most common form of household decoration in China. As the title of the genre suggests, most *nianhua* were designed to facilitate New Year celebrations, and with their themes of enduring optimism and brilliant colors they brought a spark of light into an

otherwise dreary mid-winter environment. Once posted, however, they would stay in place, continuing to influence the spiritual, social and cultural values of the family long after the initial festival had passed.

Lianhuanhua : Illustrated Books and Comics

- ◆ [Literature in line : Lianhuanhua picture stories from China](http://kaladarshan.arts.ohio-state.edu/exhib/ccomic/comdscp.html) The online exhibition, Literature in Line, focuses on lianhuanhua (literally, 'linked pictures') and their function in the early twentieth century. The term lianhuanhua was coined in Shanghai in the 1920s to describe illustrated books which served the same functions as cartoons and comics familiar to Western audiences. Early in their evolution, lianhuanhua featured traditional stories, popular dramas and film. In the Maoist era, they were used for **propaganda** purposes, only to return to less revolutionary themes after Mao's death. This online exhibition features 14 lianhuanhua from 1950 to 1985. The main page of the resource provides a comprehensive introduction to lianhuanhua, and the drawings themselves can be reached by clicking on a linked drawing at the top of the page. Several pages from each lianhuanhua are featured. The main page for each book features a short introduction to the background of the book's production, and a brief synopsis. Clicking on individual images reveals a translation of the drawing's accompanying Chinese text. Featured stories include such revolutionary classics as The White Haired Girl, and Li Shuangshuang. The online resource would be of interest to anyone researching the intersection of visual and literary culture in modern **China**. In addition to the images themselves, the website includes an impressive amount of background information.
<http://kaladarshan.arts.ohio-state.edu/exhib/ccomic/comdscp.html>

Stamp Art

- ◆ **Communism on Stamps Website** <http://www.reds-on.postalstamps.biz/> (check the CultRev and Mao's legacy sites)

Health Posters

- ◆ [Republican public health posters](#) 25 posters with translations

Background information: Posters and Art of China

- ◆ [The Museum of East Asian Art](#) The website of the Museum of East Asian Art in Bath offers users information on the museum's location, gives details of its educational activities and provides textual descriptions of past and current exhibitions. The museum was established in 1993, and holds one of the most impressive selections of jade in the UK and some of the finest bamboo carvings in Europe, as well as ceramics and bronzes from **China**, Japan, Korea and Southeast Asia. From the main page of the website, users can navigate to sections on planning visits to the museum, and descriptions of its changing main exhibitions. The 'News' section contains press releases on current and past exhibitions, including: **propaganda** posters from the 1960s and 1970s; trade in silk, spices and ceramics; work by artist Rebecca Yue; and Tibetan Buddhist art. There is also substantial information on the history of the museum, with a short essay on the museum's founder, Brian S McElney. The

website also acts as a gateway to other online resources relating to East Asian art through its 'Links' section. Researchers and teachers may find the 'Education' section of the website of interest, which gives details on the museum's activities with schools and researchers, including access to the dedicated 'handling collection'. More details on permanent exhibits and features on the museum's non-Chinese collections would have been welcome. However, the website seems intended to be used as a companion to a visit to the museum rather than as a replacement for it.

<http://www.meaa.org.uk/>

- ◆ [China : 5,000 years](#) China: 5,000 years is an online exhibition of modern Chinese art that accompanies the 1998 gallery installations in the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, and in the Guggenheim Museum, SoHo. The exhibition explores the ways Chinese artists defined modernity and their own tradition against the complex background of China's recent history. The themes covered are Innovations in Chinese Painting (1850-1950), The Modernist Generations (1920-1950), Art for New **China** (1950-1980), and Transformations of Tradition (1980-1998). Styles include: woodblock; oil painting; calligraphy; and 'guohua' (or 'national painting'). Inside each section, works are displayed as thumbnail images, which appear as full size when selected. Each work includes artist details and date, and sometimes is annotated with background historical detail. The graphic arts and woodcuts sections are particularly impressive, and display fine work from the Republican period with work by Lu Xun and scenes of the poverty and misery of the Chinese people observed by young artists attracted to the new Communist movement. It is also refreshing to see oil painting from the Maoist period when visual culture from this era is often perceived purely in terms of the **propaganda** poster. Although the website has not been updated in some time, and some links (such as that to the general exhibition website) are unreliable, the 295 images are a fascinating introduction to the varying styles and innovations in Chinese art and calligraphy in the last 150 years.
<http://kaladarshan.arts.ohio-state.edu/exhib/gug/intr/china.html>
- ◆ [CNN in-depth specials : visions of China](#) The CNN online resource, Visions of **China**, was created in response to the fiftieth anniversary of the People's Republic in 1999. From its main page, users can access textual information on aspects of social, cultural and political life in contemporary **China**, including features on: Chinese **propaganda** posters; modern Chinese art; quotations from Mao's Little Red Book; and issues surrounding Chinese Communism's intersection with the market economy. Users will also find many multimedia elements, including interactive games, a photo gallery of images of contemporary **China**, and a 'video map', which includes short clips from CNN reports from around **China** and Taiwan. Scattered throughout the resource are opinion pieces from American academics, human rights activists and Chinese government representatives. The website is a valuable source of online images and video material on contemporary Chinese life. Although users should take into account the origin of the resource, it would be a useful introduction to modern Chinese life for undergraduates and further education students, as well as introducing the key issues that govern China's relations with other nations on the world stage.
<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/1999/china.50/>

- ◆ [China's Proletarian Myth: the Revolutionary Narrative and Model Theatre of the Cultural Revolution by Trevor Thomas Hay \(2000\)](http://www4.gu.edu.au:8080/adt-root/public/adt-QGU20030226.093518/) This site provides access to the full-text of a phd thesis submitted to Griffith University, Australia in 2000. It is made available on the Internet as part of the Australian Digital Theses Program. The dissertation examines the relationship between political **propaganda** and art in the context of the Chinese cultural revolution. In particular it focuses on the attempts to reform the Beijing opera undertaken by the wife of Mao Zedong. The nature of mythology is also discussed in terms of its relationship with ideology and popular culture.
<http://www4.gu.edu.au:8080/adt-root/public/adt-QGU20030226.093518/>
- ◆ **Background on Posters from Artelino.com:** <http://www.artelino.com/articles/chinese-propaganda-posters.asp>
- ◆ **Maopost.com More Propaganda Posters:** <http://db1.maopost.com/wcat=mao&wlan=en&wreq=backhome>
- ◆ Rethinking Cultural Revolution Culture Exhibition, *Universitätsmuseum Heidelberg Picturing Power: Art and Propaganda in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* <http://www.sino.uni-heidelberg.de/conf/propaganda/>

Primary Sources: History and Literature of China

- [Taiwan and U.S.-China Relations](#) [Reading]

This unit offers a historical overview of Taiwan and U.S.-China relations. An introductory reading is followed by two important **primary-source documents** [[The Shanghai Communique \(1972\)](#) and [The Taiwan Relations Act \(1979\)](#)] and discussion questions.

- [The Chinese Political System and the Communist Party](#) [Reading]

This unit provides an overview of the Chinese political system and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) with **excerpts from the constitutions** of the [Communist Party of China](#) and of the [People's Republic of China](#). These primary documents can highlight for students how the Communist Party is the real political power in China. [A chart of the political structure of China](#) is also included, to help students better understand the relationship between the party and the state in a communist system. Discussion questions also included.

- [What Makes a Good Communist Party Member?](#) [Reading]

This unit provides a discussion of the personal and political qualifications for CCP (Chinese Communist Party) membership and of how to best be a good communist. Discussion questions are included. A brief introduction is followed by the following **primary-source readings:** [Quotations from Chairman Mao on Being a Good Communist in China](#); ["How to be a Good Communist," by Liu Shaoqi](#); and [Letter to the Editor on the Criteria for Communist Youth League Membership](#).

- [Chinese Leaders](#) [Reading]

This unit introduces students to three significant leaders of modern China: [Mao Zedong](#) (1893-1976), [Zhou Enlai](#) (1898-1976), and [Deng Xiaoping](#) (1904-1997). Includes several of Mao's most well-known and commonly read speeches.

- **[Democratic Theory in China and Tiananmen Square](#) [Reading]**

This unit provides a brief introduction to the history of democratic theory in China and a discussion of the events prior to and on June 4, 1989 at Tiananmen Square. Discussion questions are included. Several readings and a brief **[chronology of events at Tiananmen](#)** are included. **Primary-source readings** include: **[The May 13th Hunger Strike Declaration](#)** and **[Interview at Tiananmen Square with Chai Ling](#)**.

- **[Macartney and the Emperor](#) [Reading]**

Qing restrictions on Western trade increasingly frustrated Europeans, especially the British. In 1792 the Great Britain sent a diplomat, a Lord Macartney, to present its demands to the emperor. This unit describes that encounter and includes the following:

- ~ introductory note to teachers with suggestions for teaching about Macartney's mission
- ~ student reading discussing European contact and trade with China prior to and on the eve of Macartney's mission to China
- ~ **primary-source reading: ["Two Edicts from the Emperor"](#) (the Qianlong Emperor's response to the Macartney mission)**
- ~ discussion questions and suggested activities

- **[The Opium War and Foreign Encroachment](#) [Reading]**

In the fifty years after Macartney's visit (see Teaching Unit "Macartney and the Emperor," above), Western powers pushed their demands further, leading to war and the gradual shift from tribute to treaty relations. This unit examines the events surrounding the Opium War and the Treaty of Nanking (Nanjing), which concluded the Opium War, and the increasing foreign encroachments upon China during the nineteenth century, and includes the following:

- ~ student reading discussing the trade imbalance between England and China, Britain's solution to this problem, and the growing foreign demands, encroachments, and resulting "unequal treaties"
- ~ **primary-source reading: ["The Treaty of Nanking, August 1842"](#)**
- ~ **primary-source reading: [Commissioner Lin Zexu's "Letter of Advice to Queen Victoria" \(1839\)](#)**
- ~ discussion questions and suggested activities

- **[Internal Crises I: Demographic Disasters](#) [Reading]**

This unit explores the domestic crises that China faced in the nineteenth and early twentieth century and includes the following:

- ~ brief introduction followed by reading: "Crisis in Population and Ecology"
- ~ images and activity: wood block prints that graphically portray the extent of the crisis when mixed with ecological disasters; also a suggested activity on famine
- ~ **primary-source reading: ["Starvation"](#) (a Chinese woman's account of the 1887-88 famine that afflicted North China ten years after the famine depicted in the above wood block prints)**
- ~ discussion questions and suggested activities

- **[Internal Crises II: Rebellions](#) [Reading]**

This unit examines the significant popular revolts and rebellions that occurred in China during the 19th century and includes the following:

- ~ a brief introduction: "Rebellions and Revolts"

~ **primary-source reading:** ["The Taiping Plan for Reorganizing Chinese Society"](#) (from the mid-century Taiping Rebellion; describes the land system with which the Taipings experimented)

~ **primary-source reading:** ["Ode for Youth"](#) (from the mid-century Taiping Rebellion; written for young people; states clearly the beliefs the Taipings promoted)

~ discussion questions and suggested activities

• **[From Reform to Revolution](#)** [Reading]

After China's defeat in the Opium War of 1842, thinkers tried to understand what made the West so strong and how China could best respond. This unit traces the debates about reform from the mid-nineteenth into the early twentieth century, as arguments for more radical reform, including revolution, increased. The unit includes the following:

~ a brief introduction, followed by the **student reading** ["Western 'Usefulness' Versus Chinese 'Essence'"](#)

~ **two primary-source readings:** [Feng Guifen's "On the Adoption of Western Learning"](#) and [Yan Fu's "Learning from the West"](#) (the introduction and the first reading provide the context for understanding the differing approaches to reform as argued by the two Chinese thinkers in these readings)

~ **two more readings:** ["Liang Qichao — China's First Democrat"](#) and ["Sun Yatsen's 'Three People's Principles'"](#) (discussing the life histories and the far-reaching ideas of two key intellectuals of this period)

~ discussion questions and suggested activities

• **[The May Fourth Movement](#)** [Reading]

The so-called "May 4th Movement" or "new culture" movement began in China around 1916, following the failure of the 1911 Revolution to establish a republican government, and continued through the 1920s. This unit includes the following:

~ a brief introduction

~ **primary-source reading:** ["Our Final Awakening," by Chen Duxiu \(1916\)](#) (the disdain for traditional Chinese culture felt by many Chinese intellectuals and the desire for radical reform as expressed in the May Fourth Movement is exemplified in this reading)

~ **primary-source reading:** ["On The Need For a New Life Movement," by Chiang Kai-shek](#) (in 1934, Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of China, heralded the New Life Movement which was to rally the Chinese people against the Communists and build up morale in a nation that was besieged with corruption, factionalism, and opium addiction)

~ **primary-source reading:** ["Reform Our Study," by Mao Zedong](#) (written in the 1930s, before the Communists took power; highlights Mao's efforts to borrow Western ideas while simultaneously reaffirming Chinese values)

~ discussion questions and suggested activities

• **[Farmers and the Chinese Revolution](#)** [Reading]

This unit looks at the plight of China's peasantry in the twentieth century and concludes with a reading by Mao Zedong on rural revolution. As Mao began to adapt Marxism to Chinese realities, his reliance on rural people to forge revolution would emerge as a distinct feature of the Chinese Revolution. The unit includes the following:

~ introduction discussing the situation of China's farmers and how Marxist ideas were applied to address China's particularities

~ **primary-source reading:** ["Spring Silkworms," by Mao Dun](#) (demonstrates a growing awareness on the part of a new breed of politically engaged and socially conscious urban writers in the 1920s and 1930s, of the plight of people in the countryside)

~ **primary-source reading: ["Report on the Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan," by Mao Zedong \(1927\)](#)**

(expresses Mao's insistence on the importance of the rural problem)

~ discussion questions follow each primary-source reading

- **[Mao Zedong and the Chinese Revolution](#) [Reading]**

This unit traces the life of Mao Zedong from his early years until the victory of the Chinese Communists in 1949, focusing particularly on his ideas about revolution in China, and includes the following readings:

- **[Cultural Revolution Literature: Hao Ran](#) [Reading]**

This unit provides an introduction to the life and work of Hao Ran, an author of great popularity in China during the Cultural Revolution period. Hao's writing is discussed here in relation to the Communist Party and the history of the Maoist period. The unit includes:

~ brief introduction for teachers discussing Hao Ran's writings and literary style

~ student reading offering an overview of Hao Ran's life and his literary career

~ **primary-source reading: [excerpt from "Date Orchard" \(a story by Hao Ran\)](#)**

~ discussion questions for students

Primary Sources: Contemporary China through Autobiography

This section is designed to introduce students to contemporary China since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, by exploring what it has been like to live in China under communist rule. In recent years a number of autobiographies have emerged that recount the excitement, exhilaration, chaos, excesses, and human triumphs and tragedies of the socialist revolution and China's economic modernization efforts. Told by young Chinese, many of whom are now émigrés, they offer a vivid picture of what it was like to be young and involved in the remaking of a nation.

Teaching Units

- **[Introduction to *The Dragon's Village* by Yuan-tseng Chen](#)**

[**Theme: Establishment of the New Regime: Land Reform (1949-1953)**]

This is an autobiography of a young city girl who took part in land reform in a remote mountain village as a teenager. This book will engage students personally while giving them a firsthand account of how the revolution developed. Discussion questions are included.

- **[Introduction to *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China* by Jung Chang](#)**

[**Theme: Building Chinese Socialism**]

This memoir traces the transformations of twentieth century Chinese history through the lives of three generations of Chinese women. The novel is quite long. Indicated selections have been chosen for students to explore several of the important political movements and resulting social reorganization that took place during the years leading up to the Cultural Revolution. Discussion questions are included.

- [**Introduction to *Born Red: A Chronicle of the Cultural Revolution* by Gao Yuan and *Son of the Revolution* by Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro**](#)

[Theme: The Cultural Revolution (1966-76)]

These two autobiographies address aspects of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Assigning different books to different class members and then having them each present reviews would be a good way to discuss a very difficult and tragic period in Chinese history. Discussion questions are provided and correspond to the indicated pages. This unit also includes a background reading on the Cultural Revolution. Refer to the recommended web resources for further information. Songs of the Cultural Revolution can be found at The Internet Chinese Music Archive.

- [**Introduction to *Almost a Revolution* by Shen Tong**](#)

[Theme: The Democracy Movement and Tiananmen Square Incident (1978-89)]

This is a memoir of China's democracy movement and the June, 1989 Tiananmen Square Incident, as seen through the eyes of student leader, Shen Tong. This book highlights the bold aspirations, hopes, and political motivations of a new generation of Chinese who protested the restraints imposed by their country's government. Discussion questions are provided and correspond to the indicated pages. Background readings on democracy theory in China, newspaper coverage of the Tiananmen Square Incident, web resources, and a chronology of events at Tiananmen Square are also included.

Recommended Web Links

[**The People's Century: Interview with Jin Jingzhi \(PBS\) \(www.pbs.org/wgbh/peoplescentury/episodes/greatleap/jingzhitranscript.html\)**](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/peoplescentury/episodes/greatleap/jingzhitranscript.html)

From the award-winning 26-part PBS series [**The People's Century**](#), which examines the turbulent years of the 20th century through the personal testimony of the people who lived them, this is the story of Jin Jingzhi, a Chinese citizen in Shanghai who lived through the revolution of 1949.

[**Shaping Hong Kong's Future: A Conversation with Anson Chan \(Institute of International Studies, UC Berkeley\) \(globetrotter.berkeley.edu/conversations/Chan/\)**](http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/conversations/Chan/)

A conversation (taking place on January 27, 1997) with Dr. Anson Chan, then Chief Secretary of Hong Kong. A career public servant, Dr. Chan was a principal advisor to Hong Kong's Chief Executive and head of Hong Kong's 190,000-member civil service. Dr. Chan was the first woman, and the first person of Chinese ancestry, to hold that position. This interview is part of the "Conversations with History" series from the Institute of International Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. The page includes the interview in video format, as well as an annotated transcript.

[**The Political Education of a Chinese Dissident: A Conversation with Wei Jingsheng \(Institute of International Studies, UC Berkeley\) \(globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people/Wei/wei-con0.html\)**](http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people/Wei/wei-con0.html)

A conversation (taking place on November 19, 1998) with Chinese dissident and human rights activist Wei Jingsheng. This interview is part of the "Conversations with History" series from the Institute of International Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. The page includes the interview in video format, as well as an annotated transcript.

- [A Chinese Proverb](#) [Reading]

This unit contains the text of a single Chinese proverb.

- [Confucian Thought](#) [Reading]

An overview of Confucian Thought. Unit includes the following:

- ~ introduction for teachers (covering the historical context of Confucian thought)
- ~ students' introduction to *The Analects*: ["What Did Confucius Say?"](#)

- [Taoism and Legalism](#) [Reading]

An introduction to Taoism and Legalism, two important schools of thought in existence during the time of Confucius. Unit includes short readings introducing Taoism and Legalism, as well as the following:

- ~ **primary-source reading:** [selections from the *Tao-te Ching*](#)
- ~ **primary-source reading:** [selections from the *Chuang-tzu*](#)
- ~ **primary-source reading:** [selections from the *Han Fei tzu*](#)
- ~ each selection is followed by discussion questions

- [Macartney and the Emperor \(1792\)](#) [Reading]

The Qing Dynasty's policy of imposing restrictions on Western trade increasingly frustrated Europeans, especially the British. In 1792 Great Britain sent a diplomat, Lord Macartney, to present its demands to the emperor. This unit describes that encounter and includes the following:

- ~ introductory note to teachers with suggestions for teaching about Macartney's mission
- ~ student reading discussing European contact and trade with China prior to and on the eve of Macartney's mission to China
- ~ **primary-source reading:** ["Two Edicts from the Emperor" \(the Qianlong Emperor's response to the Macartney mission\)](#)
- ~ discussion questions and suggested activities

The Opium War

- ◆ [The Opium War and Foreign Encroachment](#) [Reading]

In the fifty years after Macartney's visit (see Teaching Unit "Macartney and the Emperor," above), Western powers pushed their demands further, leading to war and the gradual shift from tribute to treaty relations. This unit examines the events surrounding the Opium War and the Treaty of Nanking (Nanjing), which concluded the Opium War, and the increasing foreign encroachments upon China during the nineteenth century, and includes the following:

- ~ student reading discussing the trade imbalance between England and China, Britain's solution to this problem, and the growing foreign demands, encroachments, and resulting "unequal treaties"
- ~ **primary-source reading:** ["The Treaty of Nanking, August 1842"](#)
- ~ **primary-source reading:** [Commissioner Lin Zexu's "Letter of Advice to Queen Victoria" \(1839\)](#)

~ discussion questions and suggested activities

- ◆ [Digital China \(Harvard University\)](#)
(cyber.law.harvard.edu/ChinaDragon/opium_frames.html)
This website includes a page on the Opium War with Chinese Commissioner Lin Zexu's letter of advice to Queen Victoria dated 1839 (which served to precipitate the war) and links to other websites dealing with this topic.

Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung)

- ◆ [Mao Tse-tung Internet Library](#)
(www.marx2mao.org/Mao/Index.html)
The site contains texts from Volumes I to V of "Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung," "Quotations from Mao Tse-tung" and other relevant documents. The texts may also be accessed by topic under "Reading Guide."
- ◆ [Selected Works of Mao Zedong](#)
- ◆ [The Mao Zedong picture gallery](#)
- ◆ [Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung](#) An English translation of the *Little Red Book*
- ◆ [Chairman Mao Zedong Badges and Ephemera](#), the reincarnated '...From the barrel of a gun'-site of Kurt Groetsch
- ◆ [MoMAO.com, Cyber Art Museum of Zhang Hongtu](#), offering many "faces of Mao" and other highly original art work, definitely worth a visit!!

The Cultural Revolution

- ◆ [Virtual Museum of the "Cultural Revolution"](#)
(www.cnd.org/CR/english/)
This site presents materials in print about the Cultural Revolution culled from the writings of scholars of the Cultural Revolution, readers' contributions, and articles in electronic and print publications. Only a small selection of these materials are currently available on this English-version site. The rest of the selections can be noted in the English table of contents.

Other Resources

- ◆ [Internet East Asian History Sourcebook](#)
(www.fordham.edu/halsall/eastasia/eastasiasbook.html)
This Fordham University website offers a collection of links to useful primary-source documents, articles, essays, speeches, images, and more on topics related to East Asian history, including many resources on China from 1849 to the present concerning government reforms, China's rejection of the West, and early communism.

- ◆ [World Civilizations: An Internet Classroom and Anthology](http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/MODCHINA/MODCHINA.HTM)
(www.wsu.edu/~dee/MODCHINA/MODCHINA.HTM)
This Washington State University website contains several modern Chinese history resources. Click on "Contents" to choose essays on the 1911 Revolution, the Communist revolution, nationalism in China, and more. Other features are an anthology of Chinese readings that include writings by Confucius and Lao Tse, an excerpt from the Qing dynasty novel *Dream of the Red Chamber*; a glossary of Chinese culture and history, and a list of Internet resources on Chinese history.

- ◆ [China the Beautiful](http://www.chinapage.org/china.html) (www.chinapage.org/china.html) This website produced by a professor emeritus of Chinese history and culture contains timelines, maps, and art, literary, and history resources, including portraits of Chinese emperors.