

## JAPAN

### BOOKS:

**The Kojiki**, translated by Basil Hall Chamberlain. Big news in early 8<sup>th</sup> century Japan: The Emperor is descended from the Sun God (if he must say so himself). Read all about it.

**Japan, An Illustrated History** by Shelton Woods. A good introduction to the fascinating history of this extraordinary land and people.

**A Traveller's History of Japan** by Richard Tames- Excellent and well-written "short course" in Japanese history with a scholarly approach despite its title.

**A History of Japan: From Stone Age to Superpower** by Kenneth Henshall – Very thematically oriented approach rather than a lot of dry facts. The author points out the recurring motifs in thousands of years of Japanese history, and they resonate well.

**The Life and Times of Tokugawa Iyeyasu** by A.I. Sadler

**Silence** by Shusaku Endo. A prize-winning 1966 novel set in 17<sup>th</sup> century Japan which recounts the lives of Jesuit missionaries during the years of the "*Kakure Kirishitans*" or Hidden Christians. This was the basis for Martin Scorsese's powerful 2017 movie of the same name (see below).

**The Tale of Genji** by Lady Murasaki Shikibu, c. 1000AD – Very probably the world's first novel, offering a colorful glimpse into the intrigues and amours of handsome Prince Genji and the Heian (classical Kyoto) imperial court.

**The Temple of the Golden Pavillion** by Yukio Mishima. Japan's revered avant-garde novelist tackles the true story of why a young Buddhist monk burned down the ethereal Golden Pavillion in 1950. A novel about beauty, obsession and evil – Mishima himself committed *seppuku* in 1970 at age 45.

**Shogun** by James Clavell. The highly acclaimed novel based on the life of Englishman William Adams who was shipwrecked off the coast of Japan in 1600 and became an advisor to the Shogun Tokugawa Iyeyasu. A fascinating and colorful look at the history and culture of feudal Japan.

**Samurai: An Illustrated History** by Mitsuo Kure

**War in Japan 1467-1615** by Stephen Turnbull

**At the Dragon's Gate-With the OSS in The Far East** by Charles Fenn- A superb first-hand account of Japanese-occupied Vietnam and China in the 1940s by an OSS (CIA precursor) operative.

**The Imperial Cruise: A Secret History of Empire and War** by James Bradley, who makes the case that Teddy Roosevelt's support of Japanese imperialism helped light the long fuse to Pearl Harbor.

**Bridge Over The River Kwai** by Pierre Boulle. Original novel on which the movie (see below) is based.

**The Pacific War Trilogy** by Ian Toll. One of the most recent and most definitive treatments, with an emphasis on naval warfare aspects. Volume 1 covers 1941-2, volume 2 1943-44, and volume 3 1944-45.

**The Pacific War** by John Costello - An excellent 1-volume (albeit 720 pages) account of a vast subject

**Retribution** by Max Hastings. An unhedged and exhaustingly referenced historical review of the latter years of World War II and Japan's inevitable destruction.

**Hirohito and The Making of Modern Japan** by Herbert Bix

**Flyboys** by James Bradley. A book chronicling the sordid events on the island of ChiChi Jima, neighbor to Iwo Jima, in 1945. Bradley (the author of *Flags of Our Fathers*) puts it all into rich context with an excellent historical overview of the war and the insanely evil "Spirit Warrior" regime that ruled Japan.

**Memoirs: 1945-Year of Decisions** by Harry S. Truman. Plain speaking from the man who made the biggest and most controversial military decision in human history.

**Hiroshima** by John Hersey. The classic tome about the bombing of Hiroshima.

**Okinawa: The Ultimate Battle** by Bill Sloan. An excellent book about this epic battle.

**Typhoon of Steel: The Battle For Okinawa** by James Belote. A well-researched tome for those interested in detailed military history and an understanding of this fiercest of battles.

**Memoirs of a Kamikaze** by Kazuo Odachi - An amazing first-hand account of a 94yo surviving kamikaze pilot - clearly unmasking the shameful realities behind this suicidal fanaticism .

**The Most Controversial Decision** by Wilson Miscamble. A measured analysis by an ordained priest and historian looking at the question of whether the use of the terrible weapon was truly necessary to save lives, or primarily a potent and expedient political tool to thwart Soviet ambitions.

**Robert J. Oppenheimer: American Prometheus** by Kai Bird and Martin Sherwin

**Downfall: The End of the Japanese Imperial Empire** by Richard Frank

**The Art and Culture of Japan** by Nelly Delay. A nice compendium of a vast subject.

**The Book of Yokai** (Japanese ghosts) by Michael Dylan Foster

**Travelers' Tales: Japan**, edited by Donald George and Amy Carlson. A sampling of literary excerpts from classic travel pieces on Japan. Captivating and an easy read.

**The Inland Sea** by Donald Richie. Travelogue and paean with almost poetic descriptions of the Seto Sea's charm and beauty by inveterate Japanophile Donald Richie ("the Lefcadio Hearn of our time").

**A Beginner's Guide to Japan** by Pico Iyer

**Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan** by Lefcadio Hearn. Classic (1891) writings by Japan's most famous expatriate resident and the West's first great observer of Japan. Read carefully and you will note that much of the "beauty" of the Japanese psyche that Hearn praises will later be twisted by the militarist regime into an ugly and destructive jingoism.

**Memoirs of a Geisha**, by Arthur Golden. Read the book, skip the movie (which missed the essence). An amazing "walk in the shoes" of a geisha.

**The Films of Akira Kurosawa** by Donald Richie. Prolific Japanese observer and aesthete turns his eye and keen insight toward Japan's greatest cineaste.

**Dave Barry Does Japan** On a (much) lighter note, the inimitable Dave Barry offers very funny and razor-sharp insights into Japanese culture and psyche.

**The Secrets of Mariko: A Year in the Life of a Japanese Woman**, by Elizabeth Bumiller. An intimate glimpse into the private world of a Japanese housewife and her family in a changing (1990s) Japan.

**The Art of the Japanese Garden** by David and Machiko Young. Excellent and richly illustrated. (They are lovely people to boot- I worked with them on a Smithsonian program.)

**Zen and The Fine Arts** by Shiniochi Hisamatsu

**The Complete Book of Japanese Cooking** by Emi Kazuko. This is a combined food encyclopedia and cookbook, well-illustrated and well-priced. You can also download my own ***Japanese Culinary Lexicon*** from my [Scholar At Sea](#) website.

**A Taste of Japan** also by Donald Richie. A classic tome on Japanese cuisine and its unique aesthetic by Japan's greatest Western observer of our time.

#### FILM and TELEVISION:

***Samurai Trilogy Collection***- Three of film legend Akira Kurosawa's "samurai cinema" masterpieces in one DVD set: *The Seven Samurai*, *Yojimbo*, and *Sanjuro*. All starring samurai superstar Toshiro Mifune.

***Shogun*** 1980 TV series based on James Clavell's novel which itself is based on the story of William Adams in Tokugawa Iyeyasu's Japan. Starring Richard Chamberlain and the famed Toshiro Mifune.

***The Last Samurai*** – 2004 – Well-done if romanticized historical fiction (it conflates several real-life events including the life of William Adams, the life of Saigo Takamori, the Boshin War and the War of the Northern Coalition) that nevertheless provides real and entertaining insight into the mid-1800s Meiji "Restoration" period. Starring Tom Cruise but the excellent Ken Watanabe steals the show.

***Yasuke, The Black Samurai***, 2021 Netflix animated special based on a real historical figure.

***The 47 Ronin***, 2013 - Not Keanu's best, but recounts the timeless story of honor and sacrifice

***The Last Emperor*** – 1987 epic directed by Bernardo Bertolucci. A masterpiece on the life of Pu Yi, China's last Emperor. A great work of cinematic art as well as an excellent historical drama on the rise of Japan and fall of the Qing Dynasty. Begins in 1912 and ends in the 1950s People's Republic of China.

***Empire of the Sun***- directed by Steven Spielberg 1987 – A beautiful epic tale of the Japanese invasion of Shanghai seen from the perspective of a British boy (played by young Christian Bale).

**John Rabe** 2009, directed by Florian Gallenberger. A truly superb and under-appreciated film based on the life of German industrialist John Rabe and his efforts to save the Chinese from Japanese atrocities in Nanking during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Every bit as compelling as **Schindler's List**.

**The Bridge On The River Kwai** – 1957, directed by David Lean. The classic and still great Hollywood version (fiction) of the real events in Japanese-controlled Thailand in WWII.

**The True Story of the Bridge On the River Kwai** – The History Channel. The real scoop. Makes the Hollywood film and the whole subject even more interesting.

**King Rat** 1965, directed by Bryan Forbes, starring young George Segal, based on the James Clavell novel. A beautifully filmed allegorical tale of life in Singapore's infamous Changi Prison during the Japanese occupation. Clavell was a real-life prisoner in Changi during the war.

**Day of the Kamikaze**- Excellent Smithsonian program available on DVD about the world's first mass suicide bomber operation – unfathomable but true.

**Okinawa: The Last Battle** - History Channel DVD on the "Typhoon of Steel".

**Letters From Iwo Jima** and **Flags of Our Fathers** (2006) directed by Clint Eastwood. These two companion pieces tell the tragic tale of Iwo Jima from the Japanese and American sides, respectively. By far the best and most intelligent work Eastwood has ever done, and among the best WWII films.

**The Railway Man** 2013, directed by Jon Teplitzky and starring Colin Firth and Nicole Kidman. A moving story about the lasting personal trauma of war – and forgiveness.

**The Sands of Iwo Jima** 1949. The Duke at his best as the haunted Sgt. Stryker.

**Tora! Tora! Tora!** 1970. An intelligent historical drama looking at the events that led up to the day of infamy in Oahu on December 7, 1941.

**Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo** 1944. A classic film nicely re-telling the story of the amazing and heroic Doolittle Raid of 1942. Van Johnson and Spencer Tracy star.

**Silence** 2017, directed by Martin Scorsese. Finally made after a 20-year gestation period, this tale of the 'Hidden Christians' starring Liam Neeson & Andrew Garfield is beautiful, brutal (be aware) and powerful.

**Oppenheimer** 2023, directed by Chris Nolan - star-studded cast and mega-hype but IMHO a missed opportunity that failed to mine the profundity of the real story. See **The Day After Trinity** below.

**The Day After Trinity**, 1981- superb documentary directed by Jon Else - available on Amazon Prime Video. Far better treatment of the subject than the Hollywood blockbuster.

**The Inland Sea** 1991 - a beautiful film based on Donald Richie's classic travelogue/philosophical treatise

**Spirited Away** 2001 - A highly acclaimed Japanese *anime* fantasy film by the renowned Hayao Miyazaki that will transport you into the world of 'yokai' - ghostly spirits of Japanese folklore.

**Tampopo** 1987 - A whimsical modern 'ramen Western' wryly satirizing American 'spaghetti westerns'.

**Shogun** - 2024 - Brilliant re-imagining of the 1980 mini-series based on James Clavell's novel. Darker, more textured, with a spellbindingly cunning Toranaga (Tokugawa) played by the great Hiroyuki Sanada.

## ON THE WEB:

**20,000-Year History of Japan in 10 mins**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Echp1N4o0Y&feature=youtu.be>

**Japanese Cosmology: The Age of Gods**

<https://japanthis.com/2020/06/12/japanese-cosmology-japanese-mythology/>

**Shinto** – An overview <https://www.ancient.eu/Shinto/>

**History of Japan Podcasts** - <https://historyofjapan.wordpress.com/>

**BUYUUDEN: Japanese History** - a truly excellent compilation of videos on Japanese history

<https://www.youtube.com/@BuyuudenJapaneseHistory/videos>

**The Tale of Genji and The Art it Inspired**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/23/arts/design/genji-met-musum-review>

**The Samurai Archives** –The very interesting musings of graduate students and other Japanese history buffs, examining both history and contemporary society. Most of the material is about feudal Japan.

<http://www.samuraipodcast.com/>

**Tokugawa: The Cunning Shogun Who Outlasted His Rivals**

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/premium/article/tokugawa-ieyasu-japan-shogun-shogunate>

***Bushido: The Samurai Code for Kamikaze Pilots and Businessmen***

<https://bigthink.com/thinking/bushido-japanese-samurai-code-kamikaze-pilots-businessmen/>

***The True Story of Jules Brunet and The Last Samurai***

<https://allthatsinteresting.com/last-samurai-true-story-jules-brunet>

***How A Lady Invented The Novel***

<https://theculturetrip.com/asia/japan/articles/the-tale-of-genji-the-worlds-first-novel/>

***Glossary of Japanese Buddhism*** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary\\_of\\_Japanese\\_Buddhism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_Japanese_Buddhism)

***Japonisme: How Japanese Art Influenced and Inspired the Impressionists***

<https://mymodernmet.com/japanese-art-impressionism-japonisme/>

***What Did Van Gogh Learn From Japanese Artists?*** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boxylJrNxRg>

***How Japan Influenced the Impressionists*** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1tt3Xpf8Lo>

***China, Japan and The 21 Demands***

<http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/china-japan-and-the-21-demands/>

***The Washington Naval Conference of 1922***

<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/naval-conference>

***This Day in History: December 7, 1941***

<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/pearl-harbor-bombed>

***Major Battles in the Pacific*** from PBS special “The American Experience”.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/pacific-major-battles/>

***Battle of the Coral Sea: The First Aircraft Carrier Battle in History***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NB5hH3ksvKE>

***Japanese History Thru Film***- article available on the IMDB

<http://www.imdb.com/list/ls074864845/>

***Pacific Overtures*** – Brilliant comedic 1976 Stephen Sondheim musical about the forced opening of Japan. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQ546PASgHI>

***History of Japan in 9 Minutes*** by Bill Wurtz on You Tube – spot on and witty!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mh5LY4Mz15o&list=PLo7FOXNe7Yt9nQlysoQ9MJIGGV2ZIs26X&index=1>

***Why Humans Are Cruel*** from Vox online

<https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2017/12/14/16687388/violence-psychology-human-nature-cruelty>

***How Evil Happens*** <https://medium.com/aeon-magazine/how-evil-happens-a7e023f905a9>

***Diplomacy That Will Live in Infamy: How Teddy Roosevelt Lit the Fuse That Led to Pearl Harbor***

[https://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/06/opinion/06bradley.html?\\_r=2&hp](https://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/06/opinion/06bradley.html?_r=2&hp)

***Why is the Plight of Comfort Women Still So Controversial?*** NY Times August 2017

[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/14/opinion/comfort-women-japan-south-korea.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/14/opinion/comfort-women-japan-south-korea.html?_r=0)

***An Important Statue*** – on the ‘Comfort Women’ memorial in San Francisco- [The New Yorker](https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/an-important-statue-for-comfort-women-in-san-francisco), Oct 2017

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/an-important-statue-for-comfort-women-in-san-francisco>

***The Seven Decade Fight For Okinawa***

<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/06/16/asia/japan-okinawa-bases-new-battle-intl/index.html>

***Invasion of Malaya: First Shot in the Pacific War***

<https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/people/2016/12/08/invasion-of-malaya-the-japanese-arrive/>

***A Kamikaze Pilot Who Escaped Death Tells His Story***

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/03/world/asia/japan-kamikaze.html>

***Tianan and Hiroshima: 75 Years Later***

<https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/atomic-bomb-hiroshima-75th-anniversary-intl-hnk/index.html>

***The Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*** – actual 1945 post-bomb footage

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cn8hcq8bPqs&feature=youtu.be>

***The Enola Gay and the Hiroshima Bombing, 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary***

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/history/hiroshima-anniversary-enola-gay-mission/>

***This Day in History: The Pacific Theatre*** (nice compilation of key events in succinct monographs)

<https://www.history.com/tag/pacific-theater>

***Deaths by Country in WWII (Source: National Museum of WWII, New Orleans)***

<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/students/research-worldwide-deaths-world-war>

***U.S. National Park Service - Monuments to Japanese Confinement***

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/japaneseamericanconfinement/visit.htm>

**Farming Behind Barbed Wire- Japanese Americans remember Incarceration**

<https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/farming-behind-barbed>

**Final Stragglers: The Last Japanese Soldiers to Surrender**

<https://mikedashhistory.com/2015/09/15/final-straggler-the-japanese-soldier-who-outlasted-hiroo-onoda/>

**How To Apologize**

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/08/apology-contrition-responsibility-benefits/675025/>

**The World Is Running Out of Japanese People**

<https://qz.com/1295721/the-japanese-population-is-shrinking-faster-than-every-other-big-country/>

**The Age of Depopulation**

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/world/age-depopulation-surviving-world-gone-gray-nicholas-eberstadt>

**Abdication, Succession, and Japan's Imperial Future**

<https://apjif.org/2019/09/Breen.html>

**Japan's Day Care Crisis: Forcing Mom's to Stay At Home**

[https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/04/07/japan-economy-daycare\\_n\\_9583014.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/04/07/japan-economy-daycare_n_9583014.html)

**Japan's Successful Economic Model**

<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/japan-successful-economic-model>

**Shinzo Abe Transformed Japan's Relationship With Taiwan**

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/shinzo-abe-transformed-japans-relationship-taiwan-counter-threats-china>

**Shinzo Abe - A Tough Act to Follow**

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/japan/2020-09-22/shinzo-abe-will-be-tough-act-follow>

**Showdown: American Forces in Japan** in *The Economist*- Feb 14, 2015. A good compendium of the history leading to the dynamic situation with Okinawans and Tokyo in firm opposition.

<http://www.economist.com-long-running-struggle-over-new-military-base-coming-head-showdown>

**Japan Wrestles With Its Views on 'Outside People' Amid Population Crisis**

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/sep/04/japan-wrestles-with-its-population-crisis?>

**Pew Foundation: "Hostile Neighbors: Japan vs. China"** – recent data on inter-country attitudes

<http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/09/13/hostile-neighbors-china-vs-japan/>

**Kintsugi: The Art of Precious Scars** <https://www.lifegate.com/kintsugi>

**Why Do Cats Hold Such Mythic Power in Japan?**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/10/t-magazine/japan-cats-travel.html>

**Japan's Obsession With Bizarre Mascots**

<https://www.sbnation.com/2020/3/18/21174767/japanese-mascots-yuru-chara>

**Japanology.org – A web magazine on Japanese Culture**

<https://japanology.org/>

**New Words From The Land of the Rising Sun Make It Into the OED**

<https://www.oed.com/discover/words-from-the-land-of-the-rising-sun/>

**The Japanglish' Song- fun! -** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K12l63BcMRc>

**Japan Guide: Food & Drink** <https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e620.html>

**How To Eat Sushi Like A Tokyo Local**

<https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/how-to-eat-sushi-tokyo-local-cmd/index.html>

**Top 50 Japanese Foods** (4-minute video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-sfkK0XlOrE&feature=youtu.be>

**Toshikoshi Soba- A New Year's Tradition**

<https://medium.com/why-japanese-people-eat-a-bowl-of-soba-noodles-on-new-years-eve-11d7f118b9a0>

**Sampuru - The Japanese Art of Fake Food** <https://arigatojapan.co.jp/plastic-food-japan/>

**Faux Feast- A Guide to Japanese Fake Food (Plastic Replicas)**

<https://www.today.com/food/trends/sampuru-japanese-art-fake-food-rcna26990>

Note: My **TIMELINE of JAPANESE HISTORY, BUDDHISM PRIMER, NOTES on SHINTO, SAKE PRIMER, JAPANESE CULINARY LEXICON** and numerous other handouts related to my JAPAN LECTURE SERIES can be downloaded from my website:

[Scholar At Sea®](https://www.scholaratsea.com)

(<https://www.scholaratsea.com>)

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## TAIWAN

### BOOKS:

**Forbidden Nation** by Jonathan Maplethorpe. A compact introduction to the turbulent history that gave shape to Taiwan's "complicated destiny" that is still playing out today.

**Why Taiwan Matters**, by Shelley Rigger. A good summary of Taiwan's history and its outsized economic/geopolitical importance

**Taiwan: A New History**, edited by Murray Rubinstein. A nice compilation of essays on Taiwan's history from pre-historic times through the current era.

**China Condensed** by Dr. Ong Siew Chey – A solid skeleton upon which to build and flesh out your knowledge of Chinese history.

**The Anthropology of Taiwanese Society**, edited by Emily Ahern. Provides insight into both the history of Taiwan and the role of class and ethnicity in contemporary Taiwanese society.

**Taiwan: A Political History** by Denny Roy. A good introduction to the complex and colorful politics of Taiwan and how that has shaped its dual identity as nation-state and province.

### ON THE WEB:

***Taiwan's 400 Years of History*** – A good summary of key events with links to important articles and documents. <http://www.taiwandc.org/history.htm>

***The Economist Explains: Why Taiwan and China Are Divided*** – A succinct summary of a complex situation, as only The Economist (my favorite newsmagazine) can do.

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2014/08/economist-explains-16>

**AXIOS China Newsletter** – The amazing Bill Bishop - China scholar, financial entrepreneur (founder of CBS's MarketWatch), American expat in Beijing, and Sinophile – compiles this news digest/blog and anyone can subscribe electronically at no charge (though donations are welcome).

<https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-china>

***Trump and Taiwan*** in Foreign Policy Research Institute Newsletter, March 2017

<http://www.fpri.org/article/2017/03/donald-trump-is-no-friend-of-taiwan>

***Wikipedia Finally Designates Taiwan A Country*** – June 15, 2020

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3948149>

***Taiwan and The Fight For Democracy***

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/taiwan/2021-10-05/taiwan-and-fight-democracy>

***The Consequences of Conquest- Why Indo-Pacific Power Hinges on Taiwan***

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2022-06-16/consequences-conquest-taiwan-indo-pacific>

***Is Taiwan Next?*** <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/04/magazine/taiwan-china.html>

***Taiwan's Upcoming Presidential Election Is Key***

<https://www.rand.org/blog/2023/05/upcoming-presidential-election-will-clarify-taiwans.html>

***Moment of Truth For Taiwan and The World***

<https://www.investors.com/news/u-s-china-chip-war-over-taiwan-nears-moment-of-truth/>

***Taiwan Is the New Berlin***

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/taiwan/taiwan-new-berlin-china-cold-war-dmitri-alperovitch?utm>

***Who Is Lai Ching-Te, Taiwan's New President?***

<https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/14/asia/profile-lai-ching-te-taiwan-new-president-intl-hnk/index.html>

## HONG KONG

### BOOKS:

**China Condensed** by Dr. Ong Siew Chey – A solid skeleton upon which to build and flesh out your knowledge of Chinese history.

**China: A Macro History** by Ray Huang. A succinct, conceptually-oriented history of China.

**The Cambridge History of China** – A multi-volume tome for the inveterate Sinophile.

**Cambridge Illustrated History of China**-The "lite" version, enhanced with beautiful photographs.

**The Boxer Rebellion** by Diana Preston. An excellent historical review of this bizarre and grisly event in the twisted history of China's relations with the West during China's "Century of Humiliation." Beautifully written by a friend and colleague of mine who has great ability to tell a story in a scholarly fashion.

**1421** by Gavin Menzies – An overwrought but nevertheless interesting pseudo-history book propounding the theory that the great Admiral Zheng He and his Ming Chinese fleet beat Columbus to the New World. Despite the disingenuous approach and lack of compelling proof of the primary theory expounded, it is a book rich in historical detail which brings the fabulous 15<sup>th</sup> century Ming treasure fleets to life.

**The Opium Wars: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China** by Julia Lovell. An engaging and comprehensive treatment of this emotionally charged era that ushered in China's "century of humiliation."

**Smoke and Ashes: Opium's Hidden Histories** by Amitav Ghosh

**Hong Kong** by Jan Morris. Accomplished travel writer Jan Morris turns her keen eye and wry wit to the dynamic and fascinating history and culture of Hong Kong. Written in 1989, she sets out to characterize the last of the great British colonies in its last years, and she does so, beautifully.

**Art in China** by Craig Clunas- Oxford History of Art Series. The perfect one-volume companion.

**Stillwell and the American Experience In China** by Barbara Tuchman - Pulitzer-winning nonfiction account of the WWII era in China and greater Asia, told via the biography of Gen. "Vinegar Joe" Stillwell.

**Unfree Speech** by Joshua Wong and Jason Ng, with a foreword by Ai Wei Wei

**City on Fire: The Fight for Hong Kong** by Anthony Dapiran

#### ON THE WEB:

***China History: A Timeline*** <https://www.history.com/topics/china/china-timeline>

***How The Opium Trade Shaped The World***  
<https://theconversation.com/how-the-opium-trade-shaped-the-modern-world-227356>

***The Star Ferry's 120-Year History*** <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/star-ferry-hong-kong-history/index.html>

***Follow Joshua Wong on Twitter*** for the real inside scoop on Hong Kong:  
<https://twitter.com/joshuawongcf?lang=en>

***Axios China*** (formerly *Sinocism Newsletter* – <https://www.axios.com/world/china> - Great news digest/blog on all things China-related.

***Publisher Jimmy Lai Faces Communist Justice in Hong Kong***  
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/jimmy-lai-faces-communist-justice>

***Hong Kong Was Not Supposed to Look Like This***  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/06/28/hong-kong-handover-anniversary-china/>

***The End of Hong Kong As We Know It*** – Foreign Affairs- August 2020  
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/review-essay/2020-08-11/one-country-two-systems-no-future?>

***Born Red*** by Evan Osnos – A fascinating *New Yorker* profile of Xi Jinping (aka "Xi DaDa" or "Papa Xi") – rightfully described as "the most authoritarian Chinese leader since Chairman Mao."  
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/04/06/born-red>

***China's Bad Old Days Are Back - Why Xi Jinping Is Ramping Up Repression***  
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2018-10-30/chinas-bad-old-days-are-back>

***Engineers of the Soul in Xi Jinping's China***  
<https://nb.sinocism.com/p/engineers-of-the-soul-ideology-in>

***Understanding China's Rise Under Xi Jinping*** by Kevin Rudd – an excellent analysis  
<https://nb.sinocism.com/p/understanding-chinas-rise-under-xi-jinping-by-the-honourable-kevin-rudd>

***China and The World*** – in *Foreign Affairs* magazine– Jan/Feb 2018 issue  
[https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2016-12-12/china-and-world?cid=nlc-fa\\_fatoday-20171124](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2016-12-12/china-and-world?cid=nlc-fa_fatoday-20171124)

***Xi Jinping's Quest to Dominate China*** by Richard MacGregor in *Foreign Affairs*, Nov 2019  
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2019-08-14/party-man>

***The May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement: Why A Student Protest A Century Ago Still Matters***  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/03/world/asia/china-may-4-movement.html?searchResultPosition=6>

***Ten Best Hong Kong Hikes.*** In *Time Out Hong Kong* online, April 2018.  
<https://www.timeout.com/hong-kong/sport-and-fitness/best-hikes-hong-kong>

***Hong Kong Isn't What It Was*** by Benny Tai Yiu-Ting, a founder of the democracy movement  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/18/opinion/china-hong-kong-benny-tai-umbrella-movement-trial.html>

**Hong Kong Protesters Found Guilty** <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-April-9-2019>  
**The Endangered Asian Century: Perils of US-China Confrontation** – by Lee Hsien Loong  
in *Foreign Affairs*, June 2020 <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2020-06-04/lee-hsien-loong>  
**Hong Kong is Part of the Mainland Now** in *Foreign Affairs*, July 2020  
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2020-07-02/hong-kong-part-mainland-now>  
**How China Scammed Hong Kong**  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/01/opinion/hong-kong-security-law-china.html>

## INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

### BOOKS:

**What the Buddha Taught** by Walpola Rahula. If I had to recommend one simple and classic book on Buddhism, this tome by Sri Lankan Theravada Monk Walpola Rahula would be it.  
**Buddhism- A Very Short Introduction** by Damien Keown. A succinct but scholarly short course. Also check out Dr. Keown's quite comprehensive Buddhism Dictionary app for iPhone.  
**Buddhism- A Way of Life and Thought** by Nancy Wilson Ross. A good basic introduction.  
**Buddhism Explained** by Laurence Khantipalo Mills. A very compact and readable introduction to Buddhism with an emphasis of Theravada Buddhism.  
**Siddhartha** by Hermann Hesse. The classic. The Siddhartha of this famous novel is not Siddhartha Gautama himself, but like the Buddha he embarks upon a search for meaning in ancient India which yields new ways of thought which can help one to prevail over suffering.  
**Wherever You Go There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life** by Jon Kabat-Zinn. A seminal work bringing Buddhist mindfulness concepts and practice to Western minds.  
**Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life** and **The Heart of Buddha's Teachings** and **The Art of Mindful Living** (Audio CD's) by Thich Nhat Hanh. The exiled Vietnamese Buddhist monk offers his keen insights in a way that is very accessible to Westerners.  
**The Power of Now** by Eckhart Tolle. Oprah's favorite guru, Tolle combines various spiritual traditions and a dose of pop psychology. Tolle is not a Buddhist himself but his life experience overcoming suffering and his focus on living in the moment are very much aligned with the dharma.  
**Thoughts Without a Thinker: Psychotherapy From a Buddhist Perspective** by Dr. Mark Epstein - Foreword by the Dalai Lama. A good book on the nexus between the dharma & modern psychotherapy.  
**The Religion of the Samurai: A Study of Zen Philosophy and Discipline in China and Japan** by Kaiten Nukariya. A classic, available for free as a Kindle book.  
**The Way of Zen** by Alan Watts. British-born philosopher and writer wrote this in the 1960s and it is still considered the finest concise exposition for Western audiences on the history and philosophy of Zen.  
**Why Buddhism Is True- The Science & Philosophy** by Robert Wright  
**The Jew in the Lotus** by Roger Kamenetz (a dialogue between rabbis and the Dalai Lama)  
**Zen Judaism** by David Bader  
**Sapiens** by Noah Yuval Harari  
For the extensive writings of **Joseph Goldstein** and **David Kornfield** on Zen, search them on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com)

### FILM:

**Little Buddha** directed by Bernardo Bertolucci (a lifelong Asia-phile who also directed the magnificent Academy Award-winning epic *The Last Emperor*) – Interesting 1994 film based on the life of Buddha starring Keanu Reeves. Keanu is not at his best but the film overall succeeds in telling the story of the Buddha's life in an interesting way, with ties into modern Tibetan Lamaism.  
**Life of Buddha** directed by Martin Meissoniere. A recounting of the Buddha's life and how it relates to his teachings, interspersed with interviews with key thinkers and interpreters such as Thich Nhat Hanh.



**The Lady** directed by Luc Besson. An inspirational if hagiographic look at the life of Burmese freedom fighter Ang San Suu Kyy. Her life exemplifying the Buddha's teaching of fearlessness and compassion led some to see her as a modern-day *bodhisatva* - but her recent failings are painfully disappointing.

#### ON THE WEB:

**GRATITUDE, or HAPPINESS REVEALED** – <https://www.youtube.com/embed/gXDMoiEkyuQ>

A particularly moving TED talk which beautifully captures the concept and practice of mindfulness in a way that is very accessible to the Western mind.

**Buddhanet: Worldwide Buddhist Information and Education Network**

<http://www.buddhanet.net/>

**Introduction to Buddhism in 8 Quotes**

<https://bigthink.com/thinking/essential-introduction-buddhism-8-profound-quotes/>

**The Mudras of The Buddha** <https://web.stanford.edu/class/history11sc/pdfs/mudras.pdf>

**Neuroscience Has A Lot to Learn From Buddhism** in *The Atlantic* - Dec 17, 2017

<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/12/buddhism-and-neuroscience/548120/>

**The Metropolitan Museum of Art Timeline of Art History - Life of Buddha**

[https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/buda/hd\\_buda.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/buda/hd_buda.htm) (Click on **Works of Art** on upper right after reading text)

**A 6-Step Guide to Zen**

<https://twitter.com/bigthink/status/1740810918144209246>

**The Swastika: Its Ancient Origins and Modern Misuse**

<http://norse-mythology.org/symbols/swastika-ancient-origins-modern-misuse/>

**Glossary of Japanese Buddhism** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary\\_of\\_Japanese\\_Buddhism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_Japanese_Buddhism)

Note: My **Buddhism Primer** and **Buddhist Iconography** monograph can be downloaded from my website: [ScholarAtSea.com](http://www.scholaratsea.com)

( <https://www.scholaratsea.com> )

## THE SOUTH CHINA SEA CONFLICT

#### BOOKS:

**The South China Sea: Struggle For Power in Asia**, by Bill Hayton. Excellent review and analysis of the past and present conflicts in this great shipping lane and geopolitical vortex.

**Asia's Cauldron**, by Robert Kaplan. Another well-researched book looking at this "flashpoint" of global power politics.

**Destined For War? Can America and China Escape Thucydides' Trap?** by Graham Ellison

#### ON THE WEB:

**The World's Most Important Body of Water**

<https://www.theatlantic.com/south-china-sea-us-ghosts-strategic-tensions/617380/>

**Axios China** (formerly *Sinocism Newsletter* – <https://www.axios.com/world/china> - Great news digest/blog on all things China-related.

**America's Pacific Century** by then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton – in *Foreign Policy* magazine, October 11, 2011. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/americas-pacific-century/>

**Who Occupies What in the South China Sea** - in *The Diplomat* May 2016.

<https://thediplomat.com/2016/05/south-china-sea-who-claims-what-in-the-spratlys/>

**How The Nine-Dash Line Fuels Tensions in the South China Sea**

<https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2023/02/10/how-the-nine-dash-line-fuels-tensions-in-the-south-china-sea>

**Avoiding War in the South China Sea**

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/avoiding-war-south-china-sea>

**China's Maritime Militia** (a paramilitary fishing fleet - the eyes and ears of the PRC Navy)  
<https://www.theguardian.com/china-maritime-militia-explainer-south-china-sea-scarborough-shoal>

***“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness.”***

- Mark Twain in The Innocents Abroad

And my own personal motto:

***“TRAVEL IS THE PASSPORT TO PEACE”***

Thank you for your interest in my lecture material and your wonderful companionship onboard the beautiful *Viking Orion* in Asia.

Please feel free to share any thoughts, feedback, suggestions, and any tips on interesting books, films, online references, apps or podcasts with me by emailing me at:

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