

JAPAN

BOOKS:

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

The Book of Yokai by Michael Dylan Foster

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.

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 Iyeasu by A.I. Sadler

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

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 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.

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.

Silence by Shusaku Endo. A prize-winning 1966 novel set in 17th 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 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 Iyeasu. 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

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

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

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.)

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.

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 anime special

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

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

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.

Shogun - 2024 re-imagining of the 1980 mini-series based on James Clavell's novel. Darker, much 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/>

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

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

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

An Important Statue – on the ‘Comfort Women’ memorial in San Francisco- The New Yorker, 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, 75th 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>

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

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

How To Apologize

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

Farming Behind Barbed Wire- Japanese Americans remember Incarceration

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

The World Is Running Out of Japanese People

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

The US-Japan Trade Deal vs The TTP - in Foreign Affairs, October 2019

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trade-japan/u-s-japan-trade-deal-versus-ttp>

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

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/>

Tokyo Bon 2020 - 'Japanglish' lesson that went viral - 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=-sfkK0XIOrE&feature=youtu.be>

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

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

Toshikoshi Soba- A New Year's Tradition

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

JAPANOLOGY.org – A web magazine on Japanese Culture <https://japanology.org/>

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>

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/>

My ***Sake Primer*** - all about Japan's 'Drink of the Gods' - Note that this and numerous other handouts related to my **JAPAN LECTURE SERIES** can be downloaded from my website: [Scholar At Sea®](https://www.scholaratsea.com/)

THE TWO KOREAS

BOOKS:

A Brief History of Korea by Michael J. Seth - excellent compendium

History of Korea: From Antiquity to the Present also by Professor Seth

The Koreans by Michael Breen. Excellent overview of the history and cultural history of the Korean Peninsula, and what it means for the future.

The Korean War: A History by Bruce Cummings.

The General vs. The President by H.W. Brands

The Two Koreas by Don Oberdorfer. Another good overview of the history of this divided land.

South Korea: The Impossible Country by Daniel Tudor (*The Economist's* Korea correspondent). Impossible in a good way. Excellent review of the two "miracles": economic ascent and democratization.

The Impossible State: North Korea by Victor Cha. Impossible in a bad way. A well-titled exposition looking at the question of how a hereditary dynastic cult ruling over a communist dictatorship warlord prison state can defy all odds and survive for 74 years (and counting...).

North Korea Through the Looking Glass by Kongdan Oh & Ralph Hassig. A disturbing look at life in the "glorious nation" of the DPRK.

A Corpse in the Koryo by James Church. A murder mystery set in North Korea. And it works.

The Orphan Master's Son by Adam Johnson. Like me, Johnson went to North Korea and was never quite the same after. He turned his musings into a fascinating psychological novel about what it must be like to be North Korean and live the lie every day. 2013 Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

The Great Successor: Divinely Perfect Destiny of Brilliant Comrade Kim Jong Un by Anna Fifield

FILM/TV:

Under The Sun – 2016 documentary – a chillingly accurate depiction of life in the DPRK

Inside North Korea – National Geo Special. A hidden camera exposé showing the theocratic dynastic society as it truly is. Accurate (as I can attest, based on my visits) and chilling.

Korea: The Forgotten War – The History Channel – Excellent documentary. Should be “required” viewing for us all, in honor of the 2.5 million soldiers and civilians killed, including over 33,000 US troops.

Brotherhood [Tae Guk Gi] directed by Kang Jy-geu, one of South Korea’s leading filmmakers, 2005. A sweeping Korean War epic. The #1 grossing film ever in South Korea.

Silmido 2003. South Korean. Very disturbing but powerful story about the retaliatory South Korean black ops force (just after the North’s murderous 1968 Blue House raid) that went bizarrely and violently awry.

Crash Landing On You - Hugely popular award-winning South Korean TV mini-series (14 episodes) about a hang-gliding female executive who accidentally (due to a storm) lands in North Korea! (Netflix)

ON THE WEB:

The Korea Society (<http://www.koreasociety.org>). Outstanding website of the Manhattan-based Korea-watching organization, with a wealth of resources to deepen understanding of life on the peninsula.

The Korean War: Fire and Ice <https://watch.historyvault.com/shows/the-korean-war-fire-ice>

Samsung and the South Korean Miracle http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/11/13/samsung-and-the-south-kor...e=mini-moth®ion=top-stories-below&WT.nav=top-stories-below&_r=0

VICE HBO- Basketball Diplomacy in the Hermit Kingdom

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IrcQh1usdzE>

“The King’s Letters” – the story of King Sejong and birth of the Hangul Korean alphabet

<https://www.damninteresting.com/the-kings-letters/>

“Who Is Kim Jung Un?” – by Andrew Nathan in the *New York Review of Books*, August 2016

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2016/08/18/who-is-kim-jong-un/>

38 North (U.S. Korea Institute North Korea information/analysis website): <http://38north.org/>

North Korea’s Caste System in *Foreign Affairs*, June 2016:

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-korea/2016-06-30/north-koreas-caste-system>

Progress in Pyongyang Must Go Through Beijing, in *Foreign Affairs*, Nov 2016

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2016-11-01/china-option>

A Murderous History of Korea in *London Review of Books* May 2017

<https://www.lrb.co.uk/v39/n10/bruce-cummings/a-murderous-history-of-korea>

The Kim Family Missiles- a good infographic, correctly titled

<https://public.tableau.com/en-us/s/gallery/north-korean-missile-tests>

Misunderstanding History Between Beijing and Pyongyang in *The Diplomat*

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/02/on-north-korea-us-policymakers-misunderstand-the-history/>

Undercover in North Korea – Uncommonly - and chillingly - accurate.

<https://theintercept.com/2017/09/04/undercover-in-north-korea-all-paths-lead-to-catastrophe/>

Perception and Misperception on the Korean Peninsula – in *Foreign Affairs* - May 2018

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-korea/2018-04-05/perception-and-misperception>

The Right Way To Coerce North Korea by Victor Cha, in *Foreign Affairs*, May 2018

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-korea/2018-04-01/right-way-coerce-north-korea>

[I put this article in as a *negative example* - one of hundreds written by so-called experts - that I believe show a failure to understand the cult that runs North Korea - leading to 75 years of failed diplomacy.]

North Korea - Will This Time Be Different? – editorial in *The Washington Post* (My answer, regrettably: No – North Korea has violated every denuclearization agreement it has signed on to since 1985).

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/talk-of-peace-

Don’t Let The Korea Summit Hype Fool You- We’ve Been Here Before – by Max Boot

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/dont-let-the-korea-summit-hype-fool-you->

Trump’s Meeting With Kim Will Lead To An Awful Hangover, CNN editorial – more realistic than most

<https://edition.cnn.com/2018/04/22/opinions/trump-kim-meeting-doomed-opinion-metzl/index.html>

Chronology of US-North Korea Missile Diplomacy (Note: Will the DPRK give up its nukes? History says No) <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/dprkchron>

Form North Korea With Dread – Nick Kristof’s video log of his 2017 visit. Accurate depiction.

<https://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/columnists/.html>

Pictures of North Korea – some photos I have taken, on my website:

<http://travelenrichmentservices.com/moretravelphotosforenthusiasts.html>

The Mind-Blowing ‘Mass Games’ (Arirang) of Pyongyang <https://vimeo.com/296373541>

Inside North Korea - Feeling the Drums of War by Nick Kristof, in *The NY Times*, October 2017.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/05/opinion/sunday/nuclear-north-korea.html>

North Korea: The Modern Slave State in *The Washington Post*

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/07/19/north-korea->

How The Kim Cult Came to Dominate North Korean Life

<https://www.nknews.org/2018/12/how-the-kim-cult-of-personality-came-to-dominate-north-korean-life/>

Pyongyang- A Video <https://vimeo.com/300271709>

Why the US-North Korea Hanoi Summit Was Doomed to Fail

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-korea/2019-03-05/hanoi-summit-was-doomed-start>

South Korea's Yoon to Call For response to North Korea Nukes at ASEAN

<https://apnews.com/article/south-korea-yoon-north-nuclear-asean-g20-a2746181735>

Some of my pictures of North Korea can be viewed [here](#)

While the World Is Looking Elsewhere, North Korea Becomes A Bigger Threat

<https://www.wsj.com/world/asia/north-korea-kim-jong-un-military-nuclear-f33ede51>

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 15th 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.”

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 – Feb 2020

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>

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 the *Sinocism China Newsletter*) - <https://www.axios.com/axios-china>– Great news digest/blog on all things Chinese. The weekly digest version is free and excellent. Highly recommended.

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

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 4th 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>

Hong China Scammed Hong Kong

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/01/opinion/hong-kong-security-law-china.html>

INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

Note: My 2-page *Buddhism Primer* can be downloaded from my website: ScholarAtSea.com

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 works 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**, search them on [Amazon](#)

FILM:

Little Buddha directed by Bernardo Bertolucci (who is an Asia-phile and 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/>

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 (Click on **Works of Art** on upper right after reading text)

The Swastika: Its Ancient Origins and Modern Misuse

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

My ***Buddhism Primer*** can be downloaded from my website: 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/axios-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>

VIETNAM

BOOKS:

Vietnam: An Epic Tragedy by the eminent journalist/historian Max Hastings- published in 2018 and widely acknowledged as the new 'definitive' history - which indicts both sides in the conflict.

Vietnam: A History by Stanley Karnow. Considered "the classic" tome on Vietnam's 5000-year history. Karnow was a long-time reporter on the scene in Vietnam as well as a scholar and Pulitzer Prize-winning author of a large body of work on Asian history.

The History of Vietnam by Justin Corfield. A succinct and highly readable history of Vietnam, part of the respected *Greenwood Histories* series. Highly recommended by my colleague, mentor, and friend, Ambassador Gordon Longmuir – a man who has exhaustive knowledge of the region on multiple levels.

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

Ho Chi Minh: A Life by William Duiker. The definitive biography of Uncle Ho. Duiker examines and answers the key question of whether Ho was first and foremost a nationalist or a communist.

Fire in the Lake by Frances Fitzgerald – Excellent exposition on why America's hope to prop up South Vietnam was doomed from the start.

Backfire by Loren Baritz – Excellent analysis of how cultural factors and America's powerful mythology about itself caused a tragic failure to see the futility of the Vietnam intervention.

A Bright Shining Lie by Neil Sheehan. This Pulitzer Prize-winner combines biography and history to create a sweeping epic of the Vietnam War - with all its fatal contradictions.

Over The Moat by James Sullivan. A beautiful memoir by a friend and National Geographic colleague of mine, recounting his 1992 cycling trip from Saigon to Hanoi – with a major detour whilst falling in love with his future wife in the old imperial capital of Hue.

A Rumor of War by Philip Caputo. Caputo landed in Danang with the first wave of US ground troops and served on the front line for 16 months before returning home, physically intact but emotionally demolished. Caputo's writing is strong and colorful, and his account poignant.

The March of Folly by Barbara Tuchman. A look at catastrophes of history, and how and why very smart people in power can do very stupid, destructive things. The Vietnam War serves as a prime example, and Tuchman shows the flawed thinking that assured a tragic outcome for American forces.

In Retrospect by Robert McNamara – A much-maligned but truly courageous book by the late former Secretary of Defense, describing in his own words why he concluded "we were wrong, terribly wrong."

Dereliction of Duty by H.R. McMaster - A meticulously-researched rebuttal to McNamara's *In Retrospect* - holding him and LBJ responsible for deep character flaws along with gross errors in judgment.

The Sacred Willow by Duong Van Mai Elliott. A beautiful epic tale chronicling four generations in the life of a Vietnamese family, from 19th-century mandarins to modern Californians.

When Heaven and Hell Changed Places by Le Ly Hayslip – A powerfully-written book from the perspective of a young Vietnamese girl who comes of age during and after the war (the book was the basis for Oliver's Stone's noble miss in his 1993 film, *Heaven and Earth*.)

Rising Dragon by Bill Hayton. A very interesting book by a BBC News correspondent, looking at the ever-present winds of change in contemporary Vietnam.

The Sympathizer by Viet Thanh Nguyen. 2016 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel exploring the contradictions and dualities of the Vietnam conflict on a personal level.

Enduring Vietnam: An American Generation and Its War by James Wright – Highly acclaimed work 2017 work by an eminent historian (and Dartmouth's President Emeritus) which brings to the fore the voices of those who fought in the physical and psychological hell of the Vietnam War.

Embers of War by Fredrik Logevall

In The Dragon's Shadow by Sebastian Strangio

FILM:

So many to consider! Best known are ***Apocalypse Now***, ***Deer Hunter***, ***Platoon***, ***Good Morning Vietnam***, and ***Born on the Fourth of July*** – all engaging and well worth seeing. ***Apocalypse Now*** is an epic for all time and the Mekong is perhaps its most powerful and certainly its most omnipresent character. The film is renowned as much for its making as for its content – see the documentary ***Heart of Darkness—A Filmmaker's Apocalypse*** about the making of the film. Oliver Stone's ***Platoon*** is his best work and is especially effective in showing the soul-crushing duality of fighting an often unknown and unseen enemy. ***Good Morning Vietnam*** is a very skillful blend of Robin Williams' comedy with poignant human drama. Bruno Kirby's virtuoso comedic performance in that film is also a treat. De Niro's escape scene from a North Vietnamese tiger cage prison in ***Deer Hunter*** is one the most riveting action sequences ever filmed – you'll never forget it. It is one reason why the film won the Oscar for Best Editing. ***Deer Hunter*** and ***Coming Home*** went head-to-head at the 1979 Oscars – very different films, but equally interesting. ***Deer Hunter*** took home Best Picture and Best Director for Michael Cimino. Both Jane Fonda and Jon Voigt won Best Actor awards for the beautiful ***Coming Home***. Certainly Tom Cruise's best performance as a character other than Tom Cruise is in ***Born on The Fourth of July***. The last third of Stanley Kubrick's ***Full Metal Jacket*** provides a stunningly real depiction of the 1968 urban Battle of Hue during the Tet Offensive. The first half of the film has a stellar performance by real-life drill sergeant R. Lee Ermey. In ***Casualties of War***, a young Sean Penn and Michael J. Fox show the contrast between morality and the easy loss of morality that was intrinsic to the conflict. ***Indochine*** (1992) Academy Award winner for best foreign film, starring Catherine Deneuve, depicts 1930s French high life contrasted with the brutal lot of the Vietnamese. ***Dien Bien Phu*** is a 1992 film which is often seen as France's "coming-to-terms" with its great defeat in 1954. The director, Pierre Schoendoerffer, was an on-site combat photographer at this history-altering battle. ***The Fog of War***, an Oscar-winning 2003 documentary, features an extensive interview with the Vietnam War's main architect, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. Largely covering the material in his book (**In Retrospect**, see above), there is an added element when one looks into his eyes. ***Last Days of Vietnam***, a 2014 documentary directed by Rory Kennedy (RFK's youngest child) looks at the complex history, impossible logistics, and wrenching emotions of the dramatic Fall of Saigon in April 1975. "A crazy ending to a crazy war."

NBC News Time Capsule: The Fall of Saigon and ***Vietnam, A Television History*** are award-winning TV documentaries that chronicle the Vietnam War through TV news footage. A bitter nostalgia adds to their power for all who lived through the war on TV in their living rooms. ***NBC News Time Capsule: Turning Point 1968*** takes a chilling look at the psychological impact of the Tet offensive with real-life footage and contemporary newscasts. You will understand why this actual military defeat for the Viet Cong was in the end a psychological win of enormous importance for the North.

Bizarre Foods: Vietnam with the eccentric foodie Andrew Zimmern – Not for the faint of heart. If they can catch it, they eat it– snakes, tarantulas, scorpions, you name it. This show does speak to a greater theme explored by Francis Fitzgerald in **Fire in the Lake** (above): some aspects of American & Vietnamese culture are "untranslatable" to each other.

Mongol (2007) directed by Russian auteur Sergey Bodrov on site in Mongolia & Kazhakstan. In Mongolian (with English subtitles). An interesting look at the origins of Ghenghis Khan and the will to create the largest empire the world has ever known – an empire which conquered China and vassalized Angkor and Champa, but could not overcome the tough Viets.

Alamo Bay directed by Louis Malle. An interesting look at the conflict between Gulf Coast Texas shrimpers and a new Vietnamese refugee fishing community that springs up in the years after the fall of Saigon. A young Ed Harris puts in a solid performance as an embittered Vietnam vet.

The Post (2018) – An excellent if somewhat saccharinized telling of the story of The Pentagon Papers and the heroism of Daniel Ellsberg and the American press.

Dateline Saigon – excellent 2016 documentary on journalism in Vietnam, narrated by Sam Waterston.

[10 Great Vietnam Films](#) and [10 Notable Movies About the Vietnam War](#) - A couple of 'starter' articles on the Vietnam cinematic oeuvre.

The Vietnam War: A Film By Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, 2017 – This PBS opus on the war was much anticipated, much lauded, and much criticized by both the left and the right due largely to its balanced treatment. Superb job with a tough subject. Amazing rare video footage. Available on Amazon.

ON THE WEB:

The Mighty Mother Mekong- Everything you ever wanted to know about the Mekong (and then some) - a presentation by Yours Truly <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URjYO2banN4>

Vietnam War Timeline <https://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/vietnam-war-timeline>

How 5 US Presidents From Truman to Nixon Ratcheted Up the Vietnam War

<https://www.history.com/news/us-presidents-vietnam-war-escalation>

The War That Killed Trust <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/07/opinion/>

My blog on **Simmering Saigon**: <http://www.travelenrichmentservices.com/checkoutourblogs.php>

Vietnam: Mr. Johnson's War – or Mr. Eisenhower's? - Makes a compelling case that Ike shoulders the key responsibility by violating the Geneva Accords http://www3.nccu.edu.tw/~lorenzo/Cuddy_Vietnam.pdf

Heirs of the Secret War in Laos by Mai Der Vang in The New York Times May 27, 2015

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/28/opinion/heirs-of-the-secret-war-in-laos.html?_r=0

Why The Vietnam War Was Unwinnable – in The New York Times

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/22/opinion/vietnam-was-unwinnable.html?_r=0

The Seismic Year of 1968 - In *Smithsonian* magazine - includes a moving piece on the fratricidal Tet Offensive, written by a survivor. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/issue/januaryfebruary-2018/>

Vietnam: Southeast Asia's Silicon Valley <http://www.dw.com/en/tech>

The Causes and Consequences of Vietnam's Leadership Shake-up

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/the-causes-and-consequences-of-vietnams-leadership-shake-up/>

A New Era is Dawning in US-Vietnam Relations

<https://thediplomat.com/2023/09/a-new-era-is-dawning-in-u-s-vietnam-relations/>

Fact Sheet: The US-Vietnam Comprehensive Agreement of 2023

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheet-comprehensive-strategic-partnership/>

THE MIGHTY MOTHER MEKONG

A River's Tale by Edward Gargan. A superbly written and deeply informative account of the author's year-long journey down the Mekong from its headwaters in Tibet to its destiny in the South China Sea. The book takes you to the heart of the river which both unites and divides the Indochinese peninsula.

Mad About the Mekong by John Keay. A colorful and well-written account of the Mekong Exploration Commission of 1866-67 and its leader, Francois Garnier, who fittingly accepted his monomania and declared himself "mad about the Mekong" (a man after my own heart).

River Road to China by Milton Osborne. An excellent second choice if you can't get your hands on a copy of *Mad About the Mekong*. The new edition is updated and available on Kindle.

Mekong: Turbulent Past, Uncertain Future also by Milton Osborne. A gripping history of the Mekong in all its complexity, with a good discussion of political and environmental realities.

Quagmire : Nation-Building and Nature in the Mekong Delta by David Biggs. A well-written environmental history treatise on the consequences of development in the delta.

FILM:

***Apocalypse Now* (1979)** is, among many other things, a great Mekong movie. The river which carries Willard into the heart of darkness is central to the film. Rent the *Redux* version released in 2001, which is an extended version that has interesting additional footage.

ON THE WEB:

The Mekong Eye – news and data source on Mekong ecology and dam projects

<https://www.mekongeye.com/about/>

MRC (Mekong River Commission) website <http://www.mrcmekong.org/>

Lao's Dam Disaster May Not Be Its Last

<https://thediplomat.com/2018/08/laos-dam-disaster-may-not-be-its-last/>

China Limited the Mekong's Flow - Other Countries Suffered A Drought

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/13/world/asia/china-mekong-drought.html>

The Mighty Mother Mekong - Everything you ever wanted to know about the Mekong (and then some) - a presentation by Yours Truly <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URjYO2banN4>

THE GLORIOUS KINGDOM OF ANGKOR

BOOKS:

Angkor and the Khmer Civilization by Michael Coe. A well-researched historical treatise which probes far beyond the temples to put them into their full context. It reaches back to the pre-Angkorean period.

The Civilization of Angkor by Charles Higham. For the more academically inclined, this book charts the history of Angkor through archaeological research – largely through inscriptions on temples and stelae.

Customs of Cambodia by Zhou Daguan. In this unique memoir and travelogue by a 13th-century Chinese emissary to the great Khmer capital of Angkor, young Zhou Daguan describes his first-hand impressions of Khmer civilization at its peak. This 2009 edition is the first-ever English translation.

Angkor: Cambodia's Wondrous Khmer Temples by Dawn Rooney. This book straddles two intersecting realms: scholarly history and practical travel guide. Dawn Rooney is an American-born expat art historian who lived and studied in southeast Asia for decades.

Focusing on the Angkor Temples by Michel Petrotchenko. An extraordinarily comprehensive and richly illustrated guide to the temples for the serious Angkor enthusiast. Author Michel Petrotchenko is an Angkor-obsessed dedicated researcher who is also a fine writer and master graphic artist.

Travels in Siam, Cambodia and Laos by Henri Mouhot. The original journals of the French naturalist-artist-explorer who 'discovered' the temples of Angkor in 1860 and lovingly documented his findings.

The Art of Southeast Asia by Philip Rawson. Part of the excellent *World of Art* series, this compact book covers the art history of the region. This helps put Angkorean art and architecture in context.

Art and Architecture of Cambodia by Helen Ibbetson Jessup. Nice compendium.

Guide to the Angkor Monuments by Maruce Glaize. The classic, 1944.

[free pdf download available at: <http://www.theangkorguide.com/images/download/Angkor.pdf>]

A History of Cambodia by David Chandler. Angkor and the bigger picture of Cambodian history.

A Woman of Angkor by John Burgess. Historical fiction set in the courts & temples of ancient Angkor.

ON THE WEB

The Glorious History and Temples of Angkor - lecture by Dr. John Freedman

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mr6E--m0nwc>

Ancient Megastructures: Angkor Wat. From Nat Geo's "*Engineering The Impossible*" series. This will take you back to the actual building of the spectacular structure.

<http://www.infocobuild.com/books-and-films/social-science/AncientMegastructures/angkor-wat.html>

To Angkor With Love - Traveler's Guide to Angkor <https://angkorguide.net/en/>

Spectacular Angkor by Dr. John Freedman <http://travelenrichmentservices.com/checkoutourblogs.php>

Angkor Wat: Cambodia's Iconic Temple

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/cambodia-famous-temple-angkor-wat-info>

Interactive Guide to Angkor – Click to see the temples as they looked in Angkorian times vs. today

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/asia/cambodia/articles/Angkor-Wat-an-interactive-guide-to-the-must-see-temples/>

Map of Angkor – Hi-res downloadable map of Greater Angkor

<https://angkorguide.net/en/the-matchless-angkor-map/>

Google Maps of Angkor Temples in Street View

<https://www.google.com/maps/about/behind-the-scenes/streetview/treks/angkor/>

In the Footsteps of Henri Mouhot by Dawn Rooney

<http://rooneyarchive.net/articles/mouhot/mouhot.htm>

'Recycling' Monuments- Archaeological Palimpsests

<https://cyark.org/about/recycling-monuments-the-hinduism-buddhism-switch-at-angkor>

The Surprising New Discoveries At Angkor Wat

<http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20170309-the-mystery-of-angkor-wat>

Laser Scans Unveil an Ancient Network of Cities

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/20/science/angkor-wat-cambodia-archaeology.html>

SINGAPORE - THE DYNAMIC ISLAND-NATION-CITY-STATE

BOOKS:

From Third World to First by Singapore's founding father, Lee Kuan Yew. A bird's-eye-view of Singapore's spectacular rise to become one of the richest countries in the world (per capita).

Singapore: A Biography by Mark Ravinder Frost. An excellent overview of Singapore's variegated history, told through eyewitness accounts which lend color and humanity to the story.

Crossroads: The Popular History of Malaysia and Singapore by Jim Baker

Strait of Malacca: Gateway or Gauntlet by Donald Freeman

The Fall of Singapore by Robin & Justin Corfield

Singapore Burning by Colin Smith

Descent Into Hell: The Fall of Singapore and the Thai-Burma Railway by Peter Brune

Secrets of the Battle Box by Romen Bose

The Story of Changi by David Nelson

In The Dragon's Shadow by Sebastian Strangio (2020)

FILM:

King Rat (1965) directed by Bryan Forbes, starring young George Segal, based on the James Clavell novel. A beautifully filmed tale of life in Singapore's infamous Changi Prison during the Japanese occupation. As much allegory as history. Clavell was an actual prisoner in Changi.

Crazy Rich Asians (2018) directed by Jon Chu - Soap opera plot and characters- but worth seeing as a cinematic paean to Singapore.

ON THE WEB:

The Battle of Singapore - Yamashita's Great Bluff Takes Britain's 'Impregnable Fortress'

<https://warfarehistorynetwork.com/article/yamashitas-bluff-takes-singapore/>

Singapore's Economic Development

<https://www.thoughtco.com/singapores-economic-development-1434565>

Lee Kuan Yew's Enduring Legacy <https://thediplomat.com/2015/04/lee-kuan-yews-enduring-legacy/>

The Crazy Rich Asians Guide to Singapore- Sightseeing guide based on the movie's venues

<https://www.vogue.com/article/crazy-rich-asians-movie-singapore-travel-guide>

Lord of the Ocean – Chola attack Srivijaya 1025 CE

<https://www.theweek.in/theweek/cover/2020/12/17/lord-of-the-ocean.html>

TPP-Behind The Trade Deal That Died- in The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/business/tpp-explained-what-is-trans-pacific-partnership.html>

TPP- Pros & Cons <https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-the-trans-pacific-partnership-3305581>

TPP 5 Years Later

<https://www.cato.org/blog/5-years-later-united-states-still-paying-tpp-blunder>

World Press Freedom Index <https://rsf.org/en/ranking?>

Singapore Deal With Taylor Swift Causes Bad Blood With Neighbors

<https://www.wsj.com/arts-culture/music/singapore-to-taylor-swift-you-belong-with-me-39f271ac>

Singapore President Defends Taylor Swift Deal <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oCIQmweAorU>

SOME GENERAL REFERENCES:

“**Why We Travel**” by Pico Iyer. Originally published on March 18, 2000 in *Salon* magazine, this classic piece on the joys of traveling by one of the world’s foremost travel writers is one of the best ever written. <http://www.worldhum.com/features/travel-stories/why-we-travel-20081213/>

The Complete National Geographic Archive Every issue of *National Geographic* published since 1888 – Amazing as a research tool or just for armchair traveling.

[https://archive.nationalgeographic.com/dynamic/National Geographic Society/National Geographic/Landing.aspx](https://archive.nationalgeographic.com/dynamic/National%20Geographic%20Society/National%20Geographic/Landing.aspx)

A History of the World Map by Map - Outstanding joint effort by London’s DK books and The Smithsonian. Each customized map is a rich infographic with extensive information on an age, civilization, or historical phenomenon. A history buff’s coffee table dream come true.

When Asia Was the World by Stewart Gordon

Timeline of Asian History <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHvGc2RVGNg>

The Metropolitan Museum of Art Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History – Encyclopedic overview of art history based on the museum’s collection. Enter any topic in the Search box (such as “wabi sabi” or “Edo Period”) to see images and descriptions of relevant works of art. <https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/>

UN Human Development Index – The United Nations Development Program’s comprehensive metric for assessing a country’s composite level of achievement in key areas of health, wealth, and education.

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries>

The CIA World Factbook – All the stats you could ever want to know, from a (hopefully) reliable source.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

UNICEF “Info by Country” website – Similar to The CIA Factbook but presented in a succinct tabular format with emphasis on indices of health and development. <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/>

Reporters Without Borders PRESS FREEDOM INDEX: <https://rsf.org/en/ranking>

Transparency International CORRUPTION INDEX:

https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/corruption_perceptions_index_2018

GINI Index by Country (Scale 0-100, lower = more income equality, higher = greater inequality)

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2172.html>

“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 companionship and for sharing your time with me on board the beautiful *Silver Moon*.

Please feel free to share any thoughts, feedback, suggestions, and any tips on interesting books, films, websites, apps or podcasts with me by emailing at: ScholarAtSea@gmail.com