CULTURAL RESOURCES: CHINA

Culture Shock! A Guide to Customs and Etiquette: China, Times Editions Pte Ltd, Times Centre, 1 New Industrial Road, Singapore 53196 and Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company, PO Box 10306, Portland, Oregon 97210 (503) 226-2402.

In China with Harpo and Karl by Sibyl James
In China with Harpo and Karl is a witty meditation on the social and political reality Sibyl James encountered during a year spent teaching and living in Shanghai. The book is a collection of 56 crisp essays that inform and entertain and that open the reader to a culture far different from that with which most Americans are acquainted. Rachael Zahler, former China Program member, enjoyed this humorous account of China.

Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China by Jung Chang
Three generations of a family--grandmother, mother and daughter (the author)--relate, not only a family history, but also a picture of China from the Boxer Rebellion to Tiananmen Square. Written with a remarkable clarity of vision, the most striking aspect is the picture of what communism, and especially Mao Zedong, did to China and her people. "Wild Swans" is part history, part biography, and wholly educational and entertaining. Gary Gamer, President and CEO, and Todd Kwapisz, Family Recruitment, both highly recommend this book.

Iron and Silk by Mark Salzman
Salzman captures post-cultural revolution China through his adventures as a young American English teacher in China in the early 1980s and his shifu-tudi (master-student) relationship with China's foremost martial arts teacher. Laura Hofer, Director, Post Adoption Services, thoroughly enjoyed this book and recommends it for its examples of how Chinese and Americans misinterpret each other due to their different cultural worldviews.

The Private Life of Chairman Mao: The Memoirs of Mao’s Personal Physician by Dr. Li Zhisui
From 1954 until Mao Zedong's death 22 years later Dr. Li Zhisui was the Chinese ruler's personal physician. For most of these years, Mao was in excellent health; thus, he and the doctor had time to discuss political and personal matters. Dr. Li recorded many of these conversations in his diaries, as well as in his memory. In this book, Dr. Li vividly reconstructs his extraordinary time with Chairman Mao. Gary Gamer, President and CEO, found this book fascinating.

China Wakes: The Struggle for the Soul of a Rising Power by a married couple, Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDun
“Kristof and WuDun were both New York Times correspondents in Asia and seem to understand the culture really well. They also know how to convey it to Westerners. WuDun is Chinese-American, they both speak Chinese, have lived in China. China Wakes is a bit old now, but I think it's still probably a good picture of China's earlier struggles with political and cultural changes.” Lisle Veach,
Manager of International Programs, China. Carole Stiles, Vice President for Programs and Services adds, “The authors (Kristof is originally from Oregon) were Pulizer Prize winning correspondents. It is a pleasure to read and deepened my understanding of China. It is rich in detail and anecdotes.”

Thunder from the East also by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDun
“More recent and focuses on the effect of the recent economic situation in Asia on the society, culture and politics of several Asian countries, including China.”
Lisle Veach

The Lost Daughters of China by Karin Evans
“Written by an adoptive mom who researched why girls are abandoned in China in order to answer her adopted daughter's questions some day. This book is a nice balance between personal narrative and cultural and historic information. I enjoyed the author's clear prose and comprehensive treatment of the subject matter.” Susie Doig, formerly of the China program, now Director of Intake

National Geographic - China's Lost Girls
“A Chinese-American journalist travels to China to explore why so many girls are available for adoption in China. This video has wonderful footage of adoptive families completing the process in China, as well as interviews with local Chinese about the prevalence of girls in orphanages.” Recommended by Susie Doig

Wanting a Daughter, Needing a Son by Kay Johnson, Yeong & Yeong Book Company, ISBN 0-9638472-7-9
Sure to become a classic, the aptly named, Wanting a Daughter, Needing a Son is a collection of the research that Kay Johnson, Professor of Asian Studies and Politics at Hampshire College and adoptive mother, has done with Chinese colleagues about abandonment and adoption in China. Interestingly, although relinquishment was illegal in China and being known to researchers posed legal risks, Johnson and her Chinese colleagues contributed the first published research available in English about birth parents in a third world country. Recommended by Laura Hofer  Lisle Veach adds that the book also provides a scholarly glimpse into the development of orphanage care in China.

Web sites to learn more about China:

http://chineseculture.about.com/
http://www.chineseculture.net/
http://www.gio.gov.tw/info/culture/culture.html
http://www.chinesetapes.com/  Language and culture
http://www.magma.ca/~mtooker/cities/index.htm  Province and city specific information, e.g. local customs, history