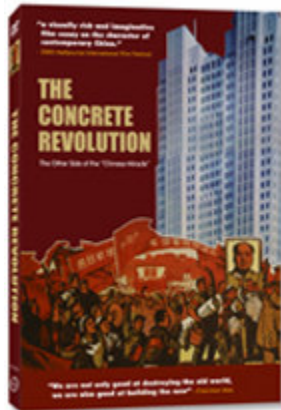




THE CONCRETE REVOLUTION

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE “CHINESE MIRACLE”

Guidebook



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The Concrete Revolution – Introduction

Located on the west coast of the Pacific Ocean, China is famous for its vast territory and its staggering amount of population (around 1.3 billion people). China is regarded as the third biggest country in the world (after Russia and Canada) with an area of 9,596,960 square kilometers. It stretches from the main channel of the Heilongjiang River of Mohe, Heilongjiang Province in the north to the Zeng-mu Reef of the Nansha Islands in the south, and from the confluence of the Heilongjiang and Wusuli rivers in the east to the Pamir Plateau in the west. China has a varied topography: mountainous regions make up 33 percent, plateaus 26 percent, basins 19 percent, plains 12 percent, and hill 10 percent.

Along with its varied topography, the climate in China is also very diverse and its temperatures range from tropical to temperate to frigid. While in summer the highest temperature in the northwest can reach 49.6°C, in winter the lowest temperature can reach -52.3°C in the far north.

China also stands out in the world for its long history of civilization, which can be traced back to around 5,000 years ago. Yellow River and Yang-tze River are the two most famous rivers in China, both of which are cradles of early Chinese civilization. China had been ruled by different dynasties for a very long period. The first dynasty with the proof of written records is Shang dynasty which was established around 1766 BC. The last dynasty in Chinese history, Qing dynasty, was overthrown in 1911. After World War II, the Communist Party managed to force the Nationalist Party to flee to Taiwan and occupied the mainland of China. In 1949, Mao Zedong proclaimed the creation of the People's Republic of China and became the first president (or chairman) of China. In 1958, Mao launched the Great Leap Forward aiming to increase crop production by collectivizing farms and use the excess labor to produce steel. Unfortunately, however, poor planning and management caused a great disaster resulting in 30 million people starving to death in three years (1958-1960). In 1966, Mao launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, a catastrophe to the development of Chinese economy and culture. Since 1978, his successors Deng Xiaoping and other leaders such as Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao have focused on market-oriented economic development. In recent years, the Chinese economy has made great accomplishments, but at the same time, the economic gap between the urban and rural areas has increased.

The documentary mainly focuses on Beijing, the capital city of China which lies at the northwestern end of the North China Plain. With the population of 14,927,000, Beijing is one of the largest cities in China and covers 16,410 square kilometers. Beijing has a long history as a capital city (more than 600 years) and possesses a lot of famous historical sites such as the Forbidden City and the Great Wall. On July 13, 2001, Beijing was chosen as the host city for the 2008 Summer Games by the International Olympic Committee. To accelerate the progress of building an international metropolitan and greet 2008 Olympics, the Beijing government put forward an announcement of “New Beijing, Great Olympics” and launched the project of city reform. As we see from the documentary, lots of peasants from poor regions rushed into Beijing as construction

workers and many old houses and alleys have been demolished to give space to new buildings and constructions. Old house owners are given some compensation based on the area of their houses, a certain amount of money which is often not enough for these people to buy new houses. In addition, the construction of new Beijing also results in the deterioration of the environment.

Finally, one aspect worthy of attention in Chinese culture is the Chinese calendar. The Chinese lunar calendar is based on the cycles of the moon and is constructed in a different fashion than the Western solar calendar. The Chinese have adopted the Western calendar since 1911, but the lunar calendar is still used for traditional festivals such as the Chinese New Year which usually falls somewhere between late January and early February. Furthermore, Twelve Animal Signs is a popular folk method of recording the year in which every year is assigned an animal name or "sign" according to a repeating cycle: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Boar. Therefore every twelve years the same animal name or "sign" would reappear. The year of monkey nearest to 2006 is 2004 as shown in the movie.

Internet resources for additional information on China and Beijing:

<http://en.beijing2008.com/>

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

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/worldref/country/china.htm>

<http://www.einnews.com/china/>

<http://blue.butler.edu/~jfmcgrat/china/china01.htm>

Books for reference:

Globalization and the Chinese city, ed. Fulong Wu. London; New York: Routledge, 2006.

China: boom and its discontents, eds. Ross Garnaut and Ligang Song, Canberra: Asia Pacific Press at the Australian National University, 2005.

China in a globalizing world. New York; Geneva: United Nations, 2005

Memoirs of China, William Craig, Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2005

The changing face of China: from Mao to market, John Gittings, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005

Contagious capitalism: globalization and the politics of labor in China, Mary Elizabeth Gallagher. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005

The Concrete Revolution - Lesson Plan

Lesson Title: Behind the Halo of New Beijing

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to understand the real life of construction workers who play a vital role in building new Beijing.
2. Students will be able to consider the issue of the price paid for building new Beijing.
3. Students will participate in a class debate examining the advantages and disadvantages of Beijing's modernization.
4. Students will be able to compare and contrast labor issues in U.S. and China.

Materials:

The class will need the following:

1. DVD *The Concrete Revolution*
2. Computer with Internet access for students' research and supplementary readings or printouts of these articles and photos in the following website:
<http://transcripts.cnn.com/2000/FOOD/news/11/29/forbidden.city.frapp.ap/>
<http://www.photo.net/china/beijing>
3. Printouts of the Map of China from the website:
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/china_pol01.pdf
4. Copies of Classroom Activity Sheet as below:

	Before the video	After the video
What price has Beijing paid for its rapid development? What are the negative short-term and long-term effects along with Beijing's modernization?		
What is the real life of construction workers in Beijing like? What is their relationship with Beijing?		

Schedule

Lesson 1

Procedure:

1. Ask students which city has won the bid to host 2008 summer Olympics. Give each student a copy of the map of China and let students locate Beijing in the map of China.

2. Ask students what their opinions of China and especially Beijing are in their minds. Make a list of their main points. You can also divide them by positive and negative images. Discuss their ideas.

3. Distribute the reading materials from the internet. The materials can be printed out from the following web sites:

<http://transcripts.cnn.com/2000/FOOD/news/11/29/forbidden.city.frapp.ap/>

<http://www.photo.net/china/beijing>

Tell students that they will read them in 5 minutes.

4. Show the first part of DVD (or just show some clips). Ask them to work in groups to discuss the following question: To what aspects can Beijing be regarded as a traditional city and to what aspects it can be said as a modern one? Is there any conflict between its traditions and its modern development? How do the Chinese deal with that conflict?

Lesson 2

Procedure:

1. Preparing for the Video. Distribute one copy of Classroom Activity Sheet to each student. Let them write notes that predict the content to be covered under the column of “before the video.”

2. After viewing the second part of the DVD (or just show some clips), ask student to fill out the column of “after the video.”

3. Introduce the debate topic: “New Beijing: Advantages Vs Disadvantages.” Divide students into two groups and assign each group a position. Give students time in class to discuss their position with their group members.

4. After their discussion, choose 3 team leaders from each side and have each side present an opening statement. Then let them debate with each other for a few minutes. Have each side present a closing argument to conclude the debate.

Lesson 3

Procedure:

1. Introduce the topic of labor issues by showing some relevant clips in the DVD *The Concrete Revolution*. Ask students to summarize labor issues reflected in the documentary. Discuss them briefly.

2. Tell students that they will compare and contrast labor issues in the U.S. and China. Ask students to do some research on this topic. If students have trouble doing that, they can refer to the following websites for further information:

http://www.photius.com/countries/china/society/china_society_labor_force.html

<http://www.asria.org/publications/lib/LabourSummary.pdf>

<http://www.amrc.org.hk/archive.htm>

<http://www.laborrightsnow.org/>

<http://www.chinalaborwatch.org/>

<http://library.thinkquest.org/03oct/01908/800/chinarussia.htm>

<http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive/2005/Mar/29-848102.html>

<http://www.hrw.org/editorials/2000/farmwrk1012.htm>

<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2002/06/11/global4035.htm>

3. After students complete their research, ask them to work in groups to compare and contrast labor issues such as labor rights, health conditions, and education levels in the U.S. and China.

4. Choose one student from each group to make a presentation on this topic, and then discuss them.

Vocabulary:

Demolish: tear down.

Pirate: to take or appropriate by piracy as to reproduce without authorization especially in infringement of copyright.

Hutong: an ancient city alley or lane typical in Beijing.

Collectivism: a political or economic theory advocating collective control especially over production and distribution; also a system marked by such control.

Censorship: the actions or practices of censor especially censorial control exercised repressively.