

**This guide was prepared using the HarperTrophy edition, © 1997. Other editions may differ.**

#### SYNOPSIS

**Chap. 1:** In this memoir, Jiang Ji-li relives the troubles, struggles, and confusion of her early adolescence as China's Cultural Revolution turns her world upside down. The memoir opens in May 1966, when Ji-li is a 12-year-old sixth-grader and China's Cultural Revolution begins. Ji-li, an outstanding student and a student leader, lives in a large one-room Shanghai apartment with her immediate, loving family: Dad, an actor; Mom, a salesperson and former actress; indulgent Grandma; brother Ji-yong, age 11; and sister Ji-yun, age 10. Their devoted housekeeper Song Po-po lives downstairs. Ji-li is thrilled when she is selected to audition for a place with the Central Liberation Army Arts Academy, which would give her a chance to fulfill her dream of becoming a stage performer. She is stunned when Dad tells her not to audition, because she will not be able to pass the required political background investigation into the class status of her family. Until now, Ji-li had been sure she could achieve anything she wanted in her life; suddenly, she is not so sure, for her family's as-yet-unexplained political problem can clearly hold her back.

**Chap. 2:** Ji-li and her best friend An Yi enthusiastically support the Cultural Revolution launched by "our beloved Chairman Mao," specifically its first campaign, to eradicate the "Four Olds"—old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits. The girls delight in watching a crowd destroy a shop sign with a fourolds name, the Great Prosperity Market. Ji-li gently scolds Grandma for talking about "auspicious signs," since superstition is also fourolds. But Ji-li feels sorry for a young man on the street when student inspectors declare his two-tone shoes and tight pants as fourolds, and ruin them. Disturbingly, at school, classmates verbally attack Ji-li and An Yi for respecting their teachers, which is fourolds, and, in Ji-li's case, for having a family housekeeper, which is capitalist exploitation.

**Chap. 3:** The Cultural Revolution has discovered that Chinese schools are teaching students to be revisionists. All classes are suspended, and students are directed to take part in the movement by creating big posters, *da-zi-bao*, which criticize their teachers. Ji-li has been appropriately enraged by newspaper information about the revisionist educational system, but she finds she can't think of anything really bad to say about her devoted teachers. Then the students turn to writing *da-zi-bao* about "bourgeois" neighborhood people. Ji-li has to accompany a group who force one of her relatives, Aunt Xi-wen, to post a derogatory *da-zi-bao* on her own door. An Yi says many *da-zi-bao* call her own mother, a former Model Teacher, a monster and class enemy.

**Chap. 4:** When Ji-li is nominated to be one of the Red Successors (elementary-school version of Red Guards) for her class, she is asked about her class status. A bullying

classmate, Du Hai, makes a terrible revelation: Ji-li's grandfather was a landlord—the absolute worst category of enemies of Communism. The next day, Dad tells Ji-li the family history. Grandfather was in fact a landlord, but he's been dead and the family wealth has been gone since Dad was a young child. Nevertheless, Ji-li's family is tainted with bad class status because of Grandfather, and the Red Successors in Ji-li's class (including formerly poor student Yin Lan-lan, whom Ji-li used to tutor) frequently attack her and order her to remold her ideology. Why is she being blamed for something she didn't do? Ji-li wonders. Why wasn't she born into a different family?

**Chap. 5:** Ji-li has long counted on getting into Shi-yi, an elite junior high school. Her teachers do in fact appoint Ji-li to the school after the entrance exams are abolished, but then the teacher assignments are canceled. Instead, students are assigned to schools by residential districts, on an equal basis. Ji-li sees another beautiful dream dissipate.

**Chap. 6:** During the summer, the campaign against the Four Olds expands to eliminate personal possessions that are relics of the reactionary past. Red Guards regularly ransack the houses of class enemies to search for and confiscate these hoarded possessions. As the searches move into her neighborhood, Ji-li finds them both inspiring and scary. Her parents feel compelled to dismiss Song Po-po so the Red Guards won't accuse them of exploiting working people. Ji-li is glad her family is no longer exploiting Song Po-po and is happy to take on non-bourgeois tasks like food shopping and cooking. She also approves of the steps her parents take to rid their household of fourolds, by dyeing Grandma's red dowry trunks black and by converting their ancestors' silk gowns and neckties into comforter covers and mops.

**Chap. 7:** The Neighborhood Dictatorship Group monitors the people in Ji-li's neighborhood and forces rightists like Aunt Xi-wen to sweep the alley each day. When the Red Guards come to ransack the home of Old Qian, they treat the elderly man especially brutally, forcing him to kneel on a washboard in the hot sun for hours. A few days later, probably fearing the same harsh treatment because her long-dead husband had been a capitalist, An Yi's grandmother commits suicide, considered a disgraceful crime against the people.

**Chap. 8:** Grandma becomes very fearful of the treatment she will receive, as a landlord's wife, if the Red Guards should raid the family's home. Ji-li's confusion mounts. Of course she hates landlords and rightists. But how could she hate Grandma, even if she is a landlord's wife? Meanwhile, Ji-li's parents burn all the old family photographs that show any pre-Liberation fourolds elements. Finally, the Red Guards arrive, ransack the Jiangs' apartment, take half the family's clothes, and confiscate Ji-li's treasured stamp album.

**Chap. 9:** Everyone around Ji-li seems to be falling victim to the Cultural Revolution and persecution by the Red Guards: An Yi's mother, Teacher Wei, whose father was a

## RED SCARF GIRL

capitalist and whose mother committed suicide; Aunt Xi-wen, whose son has formally denounced and broken with her; Du Hai's mother, the formerly powerful Neighborhood Party Committee Secretary; the fathers of both of Ji-yong's best friends; even 10-year-old Ji-yun, attacked by classmates as a "black whelp" (child of a black family).

**Chap. 10:** After a year, Ji-li's junior high school finally opens, but the classes are not anything like what Ji-li had dreamed of for so long. Instead of learning exciting new things, students study repetitive Communist party history, ideology, and directives. Ji-li's father is ordered to attend political study class, where people who have made very serious mistakes are expected to confess.

**Chap. 11:** Ji-li's father is under great pressure to confess to rightist activities, specifically, listening to foreign radio and establishing counterrevolutionary ties. The day before Chinese New Year, Dad is detained at his workplace for "remolding through labor." Mom is also treated harshly because she refuses to denounce her husband. When Ji-li brings some supplies to her father, the cold-eyed shop foreman offers her a choice: a bright future if she breaks with her parents and follows Chairman Mao, or a bleak future if she remains loyal to her parents.

**Chap. 12:** The Red Guard Committee at Ji-li's school decides to make a Class Education Exhibition to expose the evil of class enemies and the misery of the old society. Ji-li, as an outstanding student, is selected to participate in the exhibition. Teacher Zhang explains that Ji-li is considered to be an "educable child," one who can overcome her family background, and thus worthy of this important political assignment.

**Chap. 13:** In May, Dad is cleared of the charge of listening to foreign radio, but he is still kept in detention. Then an article in the *Workers' Revolt* runs a front-page article on the Jiang family of landlords in Nanjing. The thought of all her teachers and classmates learning and gossiping about her dreadful family history is too much for Ji-li, who declares to her mother, "I hate landlords. I hate this landlord family." Two days later, on an impulse, Ji-li stops at the police station and says she wants to change her family name, but she retreats in confusion when she discovers that this step would include breaking off relations with every member of her black family, including her mother and father. When Ji-li returns home, she finds Song Po-po helping out, still loyal to the family in spite of what everyone else is saying. Ashamed, Ji-li realizes her mother needs her support now more than ever.

**Chap. 14:** Ji-li gives an excellent presentation at a preview of the Class Education Exhibition. But a few days later, a group from her father's work unit comes to the school to conduct a study session with Ji-li. They say they are going to force her father to confess to serious rightist mistakes at an upcoming struggle meeting. The foreman, Thin-Face, presents Ji-li with an ultimatum: She must testify against her father at the meeting or be labeled as an enemy of the people and endure (along with her siblings) continuing study sessions and Red Guard harassment. The group will return at some unspecified future time for Ji-li's decision. The next day, Ji-li is removed as a participant in the Exhibition.

**Chap. 15:** Ji-li has asked to be assigned to factory work in Shanghai for the summer so she can stay at home and help care for her ill mother. A sympathetic classmate and Red Guard leader, Chang Hong, instead persuades Ji-li to accept summer labor in the countryside as the only way at this cru-

cial time to secure her political life by washing away the "black stain" of her family with physical labor and proving that she is an educable child capable of remolding. The work of rice harvesting is brutally hard, but Ji-li persists until she loses consciousness one day. That evening, she is ordered to return to Shanghai for study sessions with her father's theater unit.

**Chap. 16:** Ji-li's mother and Uncle Tan write an anonymous letter to the Municipal Party Committee criticizing the illegal excesses of the rebels in charge of the theater group. Acting on a tip, the theater people, led by Thin-Face, come to search the Jiangs' apartment. Ji-li hides the letter in the cat's litter box, but the searchers find it. The vindictive Thin-Face says this ends Ji-li's chances of being treated as an educable child; he will inform her school of her irreversible "firm class stand." Thin-Face also announces that Ji-li's father has been declared a "landlord who has escaped detection." Ji-li's mother will now be treated as a landlord's wife, and Grandma must register with the Neighborhood Dictatorship Group as an old landlord's wife and sweep the alley daily. As a parting gesture, the theater people take away virtually all of the family's remaining possessions. The next morning, looking at the pitiful remains of her home, Ji-li wonders, Should I continue to live at all?

**Chap. 17:** Life is very hard for Ji-li and her family, and the future of each family member is very uncertain. But Ji-li realizes she has made a firm commitment to her family: "I would never do anything to hurt my family, and I would do everything I could to take care of them. My family was too precious to forget, and too rare to replace." While once Ji-li defined her life by her goals, she now defines it by her responsibilities. Every day, she renews her vow to take care of her sick mother, her elderly grandmother, and her two younger siblings, in spite of limited income, study sessions, and neighborhood hostility. "I will do my job. I will," she concludes.

**Epilogue:** Ji-li Jiang explains how the Chinese people had been manipulated not to hate Chairman Mao during the Cultural Revolution, and she briefly notes what happened to herself, members of her family, and some of her friends in the years after 1968, when this memoir closes.

### TIME LINE of China

1839-42

First Opium War

1844

Unequal treaty with U.S.

1850-1864

Taiping Rebellion

1856-1860

Second Opium War

1893

Mao Zedong is born

1894-95

Chino-Japanese war

1900

Boxer Rebellion

1911

Nationalist Revolution; Chinese empire ends

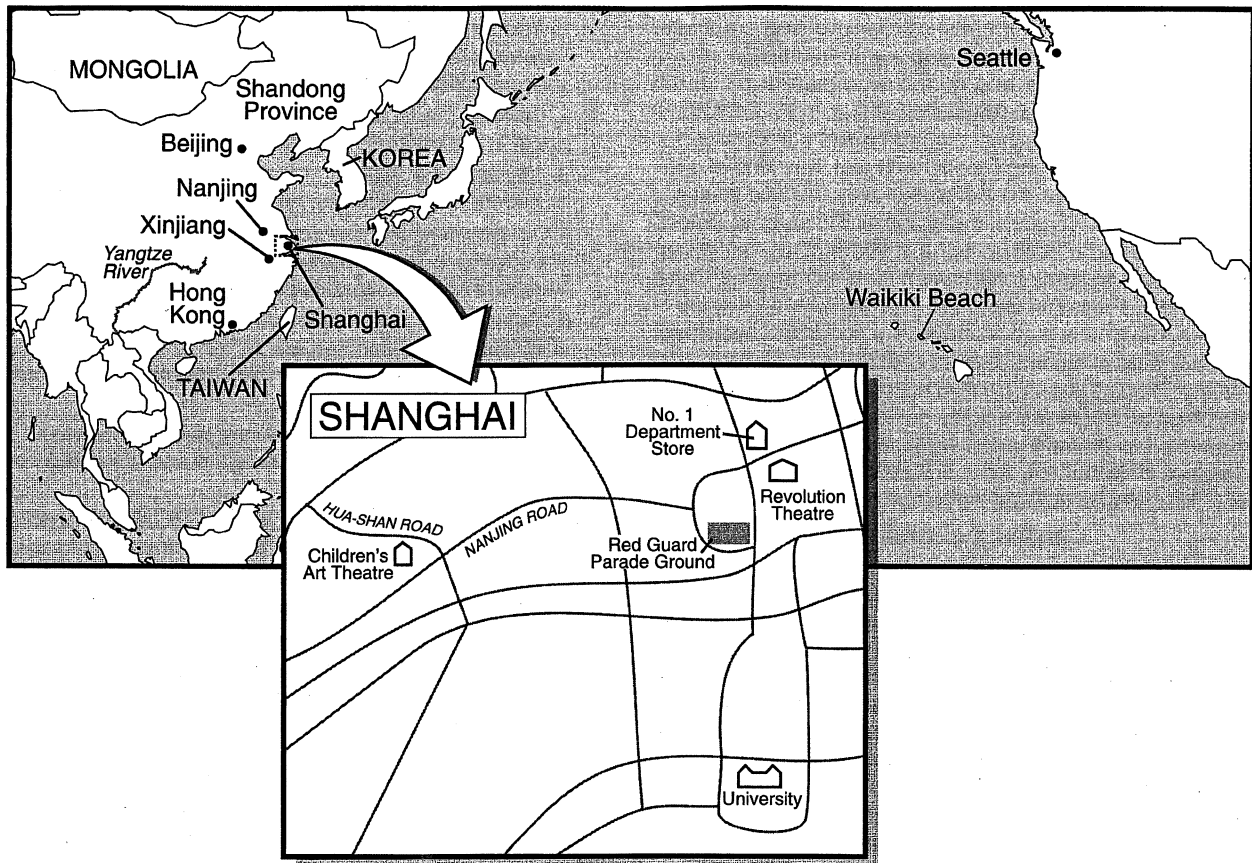
1912

Republic of China established; Sun Yatsen first president

1914-18

World War I; Japan gains German territory in China

## RED SCARF GIRL



- 1921**  
Chinese Communist Party founded in Shanghai
- 1925**  
Sun Yatsen dies; Chiang Kaishek becomes president
- 1927**  
Chiang attacks Communists, sets up Nationalist government
- 1931**  
Japan seizes Manchuria from China
- 1934-35**  
Communists' Long March north
- 1939-45**  
World War II; Japan occupies eastern China
- 1945-49**  
Civil war between Chiang's Nationalists and Mao's Communists
- 1949**  
Chiang defeated; People's Republic of China established, led by Mao
- 1950**  
Chinese Communists occupy Tibet; Sino-Soviet Friendship Pact
- 1950-53**  
Korean War
- 1953**  
First Five-Year Plan
- 1956**  
Hundred Flowers campaign
- 1957**  
Anti-Rightist campaign

- 1958-60**  
Great Leap Forward
- 1960**  
Soviet Union breaks with China
- 1964**  
Chairman Mao's *Little Red Book*; China explodes its first nuclear device
- 1966**  
Cultural Revolution begins
- 1971**  
China takes seat at United Nations
- 1972**  
U.S. President Nixon visits China
- 1975**  
Chiang Kaishek dies on Taiwan
- 1976**  
Mao Zedong dies; Gang of Four stripped of power; Cultural Revolution ends
- 1978**  
Deng Xiaoping launches reforms
- 1979-80**  
U.S. and China normalize relations
- 1989**  
Pro-democracy movement crushed at Tienanmen Square
- 1993**  
Jiang Zemin becomes China's president

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ji-li Jiang was born on February 3, 1954, in Shanghai, China. As we learn from the memoir, her father was an actor

## RED SCARF GIRL

who lost his job during the Cultural Revolution, and her mother was a salesperson and former actress who also suffered job reversals and persecution during the Revolution. As an impressionable young teen, Jiang was caught up in the excitement of the Cultural Revolution at first, but soon discovered that her bad family background barred her from pursuing her dream of an acting career or, in fact, any kind of a fulfilling life. After the Cultural Revolution ended, Jiang was able to attend Shanghai Teacher's College and Shanghai University and become a teacher, but the years of denial, disappointment, and frustration had taken their toll. She left China and moved to Hawaii, earning her B.A. from the University of Hawaii in 1987. She then worked as a corporate operations analyst for a hotel chain and budget director for a health care company. Finding these jobs unfulfilling, Jiang founded her own company, East West Exchange, Inc., based in California and devoted to promoting and facilitating cultural and artistic exchanges between the United States and China, with the goal of helping each country better understand the other.

### CRITICS' CORNER

Ji-li Jiang was inspired to write her memoir by a gift copy of Anne Frank's diary inscribed by friends, "In the hope that some day we will read *The Diary of Ji-li Jiang*." Her purpose in writing, at first, was to make American children appreciate their freedom more. When she saw that free young people often are faced with tough choices, she realized that her story might also inspire readers confronted by hard choices to have the courage to make right decisions. *Red Scarf Girl* was extremely well received after its 1997 publication, making many notable and honor book lists for that year. *School Library Journal* noted Jiang's "lack of self-pity, her naive candor, and the vividness of her writing" and added, "The writing style is lively and the events often have a heart-pounding quality about them....[W]ill be appreciated as a page-turner and as excellent discussion material for social studies curricula." *VOYA* found the memoir to be a vivid portrayal of events and observed that Jiang's "compelling story makes history come alive for teens, much as Anne Frank's diary has done for decades. No reader will be able to put this book down without wondering whether he or she would have had the courage at such a young age to stand up to constant pressure and threats from peers and authorities Ji-li had been taught to obey. All libraries should have this book." *Instructor* concluded, "Jiang's compelling memoir covers unfamiliar territory for American students, and proves unsettling, disturbing, but always fascinating reading."

### GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To become familiar with events and effects of China's Cultural Revolution
2. To learn about details of Chinese culture, both before and after the establishment of a Communist society
3. To analyze the nature of courage and what it might take to stand up to pressure and make a difficult decision
4. To consider the value of political and personal freedom
5. To examine the strength and importance of family ties and family loyalties and consider the possibility of family betrayal
6. To discuss the possible results of the abuse of political power
7. To identify ways in which a totalitarian regime maintains control over its subject people

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the reasons why Ji-li and her family become targets of the Red Guards and others in positions of authority during the Cultural Revolution
2. To note the tactics used against individual Chinese people in the course of carrying out the Cultural Revolution
3. To trace the effects of the Cultural Revolution on Ji-li, members of her family, and friends and neighbors
4. To examine Ji-li's reactions, including changes to and conflicts in those reactions, to the ideology, tactics, and results of the Cultural Revolution
5. To understand the various terms used during the Cultural Revolution, such as black or red family, class status, rightist, struggle meeting, remolding ideology, fourolds, and educable child
6. To analyze the conflict Ji-li struggles with between political expectations and family loyalties and the outcome of that conflict
7. To note the various ways in which political and personal freedom is restricted in the Communist society in which Ji-li lives
8. To examine the effectiveness of the author's choice of voice for this memoir

### LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

To enhance students' appreciation and understanding of the novel, present them with these terms.

**climax:** the moment in a novel when the action reaches its greatest intensity and a crisis is resolved. In this novel, the climax occurs when Ji-li chooses to hide the letter her mother has written just before the search party arrives, thus definitively choosing her family over the offer of political rehabilitation offered her by Thin-Face if she turns against her family.

**conflict:** the opposition of two forces or characters in a literary work. In this memoir, the conflict is between the political expectations and family loyalties that pull Ji-li in different directions.

**epilogue:** a concluding section of a book that briefly outlines the characters' subsequent fates. In the epilogue to this memoir, the author tells what happened after the Cultural Revolution to herself, her family members, and some of the other people she writes about in the memoir. She also briefly explains how and why the Cultural Revolution happened.

**foreword:** an opening section of a longer literary work that deals with the background, scope, and/or purpose of the work that follows. The foreword to this memoir gives background on Communist China and the Cultural Revolution, along with personal thoughts by a Chinese-American man on the effects of the Revolution.

**memoir:** nonfiction in which the author describes the people and events he or she has experienced during his or her life or during a particularly notable portion of that life. (An **autobiography**, in contrast, provides a relatively full account of an author's entire life, usually a continuing narrative of important events and character formation.) In this book, the author describes her experiences during the first few years of China's Cultural Revolution, chronicling the effect of the Revolution on herself, members of her family, and many of the people who form part of her world of school, neighborhood, and parents' workplaces.

**prologue:** an opening section of a longer literary work, often used to establish the situation at the outset of the work

## RED SCARF GIRL

that immediately follows. This book's brief one-page prologue establishes Ji-li's situation and status as the memoir opens in May 1966 and the Cultural Revolution begins.

### SETTINGS

Other than one scene in the countryside, this memoir is entirely set in Shanghai, China, in the years from 1966 to 1968, when the city had a population of about 10 million. The action centers around Ji-li's family apartment and building, her two schools, and her neighborhood. The Jiang family lives in a big one-room apartment on the top floor, with a French window and nice furniture; Ji-li finds it warm, bright, and welcoming. The family has a small kitchen on the landing outside the living room, plus a rare private full-size bathroom. By the end of the memoir, this family room is considerably less inviting, as Red Guard searches have taken away nearly all of the family's possessions.

In 1966, Ji-li attends elementary school, where she and fellow students create *da-zi-bao* posters and Ji-li begins to encounter hostility from classmates once the Cultural Revolution has begun. Scenes in the neighborhood show us the busy shopping street of Nanjing Road, the wonderful book-stall of Grandpa Hong, the busy food market, the bourgeois homes with gates and walls and contents that Red Guards periodically carry out, the alley that old landlords' wives and others in disfavor (including, later, Grandma) must sweep twice daily, the back courtyard where An Li's grandmother's shattered body lies, and the propaganda wall before which victims must gather to chant their mistakes and repentance.

In 1967, Ji-li attends Xin-sha Junior High School, where she finds some acceptance and encouragement, works with classmates to prepare the Class Education Exhibition, and later receives the ultimatum from Thin-Face about testifying against her father.

When her father is detained, Ji-li goes to his workplace, the theater, where Thin-Face the foreman first threatens her with the possibility of having to denounce her parents. Ji-li accepts assignment in the countryside in the summer of 1968, where she participates in the grueling work of harvesting and threshing rice until she collapses and is sent back to Shanghai for study sessions. The memoir's climax takes place in the family apartment when the searching theater group, led by Thin-Face, discovers the incriminating letter Ji-li has hidden.

### CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

#### Books

- David Brownstone, *The Chinese-American Heritage*  
Jeffrey Paul Chan et al., *The Big Aiieeeee!: An Anthology of Chinese American and Japanese American Literature*  
Peggy Ferrera, *China (Cultures of the World)*  
Ina R. Friedman, ed., *The Other Victims: First-Person Stories of Non-Jews Persecuted by the Nazis*  
Jean Fritz, *China's Long March: 6,000 Miles of Danger*  
Human Rights in China Staff, *Children of the Dragon: The Story of Tiananmen Square*  
Don Lawson, *The Long March: Red China Under Chairman Mao*  
Bette Bao Lord, *Legacies: A Chinese Mosaic*  
Ruthanne Lum McCunn, *Chinese American Portraits: Personal Histories 1828-1988*  
Valjean McLenighan, *People's Republic of China (Enchantment of the World)*

- Tim McNeese, *The Great Wall of China*  
Robert Temple, *The Genius of China: 3,000 Years of Science, Discovery, and Invention*

#### Memoirs/Autobiographies

- Pang-Mei Natasha Chang, *Bound Feet & Western Dress*  
Jack Chen, *A Year in Upper Felicity: Life in a Chinese Village During the Cultural Revolution*  
Yuan-trung Chen, *The Dragon's Village*  
Anne Frank, *Diary of a Young Girl*  
Jean Fritz, *Homecoming and Homesick: My Own Story*  
Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro, *Son of the Revolution*  
Quang Nhuong Huynh, *The Land I Lost: Adventures of a Boy in Vietnam and Water Buffalo Days: Growing Up in Vietnam*  
Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*  
Ilse Koehn, *Mischling, Second Degree: My Childhood in Nazi Germany*  
Steven W. Mosher, *A Mother's Ordeal: One Woman's Fight Against China's One-Child Policy*  
Shen Tong with Marianne Yen, *Almost a Revolution*  
Yoshiko Uchida, *The Invisible Thread*  
Harry Wu and Carolyn Wakeman, *Bitter Winds: A Memoir of My Years in China's Gulag*  
Laurence Yep, *The Lost Garden*

#### Computer Software

- American Journey: The Asian-American Experience* (Primary Source Media)  
*The First Emperor of China* (Voyager)  
*History and Culture of China* (Queue)  
*Qin: The Tomb of the Middle Kingdom* (Time-Warner)  
*The Silk Road (World History & Cultures)* (DNA Multimedia)

#### Internet

- "Animated Chinese Characters"  
<[www.ocrat.com/ocrat/chargif/indfram.html](http://www.ocrat.com/ocrat/chargif/indfram.html)>  
"Artifacts from the Cultural Revolution"  
<[www.culturalbridge.com/cnadd.htm](http://www.culturalbridge.com/cnadd.htm)>  
"Chinese History Timeline"  
<[www.chaos.umd.edu/history/time\\_line.html](http://www.chaos.umd.edu/history/time_line.html)>  
"Chinese Posters" <[www.iisg.nl/exhibitions/chairman/chnintro.html](http://www.iisg.nl/exhibitions/chairman/chnintro.html)>  
"CulturArtwork" (artwork of the Cultural Revolution and poetry by Mao) <[www.ezlink.com/~culturev/CulturArt.htm](http://www.ezlink.com/~culturev/CulturArt.htm)>  
"The Forbidden City: A Virtual Tour"  
<[www.chinavista.com/beijing/gugong!/start.html](http://www.chinavista.com/beijing/gugong!/start.html)>  
"The Many Faces of Mao"  
<[www.sirius.com/~ccc/maospoof.htm](http://www.sirius.com/~ccc/maospoof.htm)>  
Pacific Bell Knowledge Explorer China sites:  
"Exploring China: A Multimedia Scrapbook Activity"  
<[www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/China/scrapbook.html](http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/China/scrapbook.html)>  
"Searching for China WebQuest"  
<[www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/China/ChinaQuest.html](http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/China/ChinaQuest.html)>  
"The Treasures of China: An Internet-Based Treasure Hunt on China"  
<[www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/China/chinahunt.html](http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/China/chinahunt.html)>

#### Videos

- Art in the Cultural Revolution* (Cinema Guild)  
*Assignment: China* (Christian Science Monitor/Benchmark)  
*China Rising: The Epic History of 20th Century China* (A&E)  
*Communism—The Promise and the Reality* (6 videos; the one on China is *Great Leap*) (WGBH)

## RED SCARF GIRL

*Emerging Powers: China* (Wall Street Journal Video)

*The Good Earth*

*History's Turning Points: The Incredible March* (Ambrose)

*The Joy Luck Club*

*Moving the Mountain* (Tiananmen Square; features some violence) (Xingu Films)

*Multicultural Peoples of North America: Chinese Americans* (Library Video, based on Chelsea House series *The Immigrant Experience*)

*When Cultures Collide: China and the U.S.: In the 21st Century* (Newsmatters Series, Knowledge Unlimited)

### THEMES AND MOTIFS

A study of the central issues and situations in *Red Scarf Girl* should include these aspects.

#### Themes

- courage to stand up to pressure and make a difficult decision
- value of personal and political freedom
- loyalty to family and possibility of family betrayal
- results of abuse of political power
- positive and negative aspects of Communist society

#### Motifs

- details of everyday Chinese life and culture
- suicide
- red vs. black symbolism
- superstition
- reversals of fortune
- totalitarian control techniques
- sayings of Chairman Mao

### MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, or sentences that have a particular meaning in the memoir. Explain each as it relates to the book. Use the page numbers given in parentheses to reread the term in context if you wish. (Other terms used in the memoir are defined in the book's Glossary.)

1. They called these gatherings "Jiang's salon."

(Chap. 1, p. 16)

*(Salon refers to a gathering of guests who are prominent socially, artistically, and/or politically; such gatherings, in a drawing or reception room, were common during the 17th and 18th centuries. The Sunday evening gatherings of Dad's theater colleagues at the Jiang apartment were full of lively talk about the arts and other topics, so the participants liked to call the get-togethers salons.)*

2. Grandma's four prized red-and-gold dowry trunks

(Chap. 1, p. 16)

*(In pre-Communist China, it was customary for a bride to bring things of value with her to her new husband and home when she married. The dowry might consist of money, goods, and/or land. In Grandma's case, her dowry included four trunks made of rich red leather with brass fittings, which had been filled with gifts her mother had sent from Tianjin to Shanghai for the wedding. Grandma loves her dowry trunks, but after the Red Guards begin searching homes for fourolds items from the past, Dad dyes the red trunks black so they won't appear conspicuous in case of a Red Guard search of their own home.)*

3. "Jiang Ji-li, your aunt really lost face today, didn't she?" (Chap. 3, p. 48)

*I would do an excellent job to prove myself. I had to win my honor back. (Chap. 14, p. 219)*

*(To lose face is to suffer embarrassment, humiliation, or disgrace, and losing face has long been considered a very bad thing in Chinese culture. Having to post the derogatory da-zi-bao on her door and then read its statements aloud to the students has been a severe loss of face for Aunt Xi-wen. Similarly, Ji-li has lost her honor by having everyone gossiping about her family and its landlord antecedents. She hopes to regain her honor by doing an outstanding job of narrating at the Exhibition.)*

4. Landlord! One of the bloodsuckers who exploited the farmers! (Chap. 4, p. 58)

*(A landlord is a person who owns land and rents it out to others. In traditional Chinese society, landlords owned vast amounts of farmlands and rented out tracts at often oppressive rates to peasants, who could become locked into a never-ending spiral of debt and poverty as they had to give up as much as two thirds of their harvest to their landlord. Landlords became the number-one enemy of Communism, as officially designated by Chairman Mao and the Communist Party. Ji-li is so horrified at the accusation that her own grandfather was a landlord that she simply cannot believe it. But it's true, and it will fatally taint Ji-li's family as "black.")*

5. ...a huge mahogany four-poster bed. (Chap. 6, p. 85)

*(Mahogany is the wood of a tropical American or African tree used for furniture making. The fact that Ji-li's parents and grandmother have some mahogany furniture shows that the family is better off than many of the country people, or at least was at one time. Ji-li supports the Red Guards and finds their searches exciting, but the searches make her nervous, too. She's not quite sure what to think when she sees that the Red Guards are removing a fourolds mahogany bed from the Rong house that's just like her parents' bed. She blushes to think that her family has capitalist furniture. Will that make her family the target of searches too?)*

6. Right at the entrance to our alley...stood the propaganda wall. (Chap. 7, p. 100)

*(After the Communist revolution, some city walls in China became billboards filled with directives, pictures, and information about the latest campaign to promote certain beliefs or actions. The propaganda wall at the entrance to the alley where Ji-li's family lives now features a large picture of Chairman Mao, and people whom the Neighborhood Dictatorship Group has identified as members of one of the Five Black Categories have to gather morning and evening before the picture on the wall to chant their support of Mao.)*

7. I practiced calligraphy. (Chap. 9, p. 140)

*(Written Chinese consists of sometimes complicated characters made of multiple strokes. Ji-li practices calligraphy, the art of writing these characters in a beautiful way, probably with brush strokes. Ji-li's beautiful handwriting draws praise from school officials.)*

8. "The wheel of fate makes a full turn every sixty years." (Chap. 9, p. 146)

*(An Yi and Ji-li discuss the concept of fate, a determining force that causes things to come to be as they are or events to occur as they do. They feel that fate has caused them to be born into black families, to be wounded by the Cultural Revolution, that there is really nothing they could have done to avoid being caught in this situa-*

## RED SCARF GIRL

tion. They also think that fortunes change, that after fate has held you in a cycle of adverse events and outcomes for a period of time, things will improve for the better, while those who have been favored by fate during the same cycle will now suffer reserves and ill fortune.)

9. "They called me a black whelp." (Chap. 9, p. 148)  
(A whelp is the young offspring of a carnivore, especially of a dog. By extension, the term is used to refer to a boy or girl. The term can also be applied to a despised or scorned person or to that person's offspring—as in this case, where Ji-yun's classmates call her a black whelp, or the offspring of a black family, a family whose members' loyalty to Communism is suspect.)
10. foreign radio...short-wave radio (Chap. 11, p. 182)  
transistor radio (Chap. 13, p. 206)  
(Ji-li's father is accused of listening to radio broadcasts that originate in foreign countries, something the Communists forbid because they strictly control all information that is available to the Chinese people. Anyone who listens to foreign radio broadcasts could hear about different versions of current events and about events and ideas the Communists don't want any Chinese people to know about. Short-wave radio is a type of radio that can pick up and receive signals over long distances; it is a type of radio that could pick up foreign broadcasts. A transistor radio is operated by means of a semiconductor device and could also be used to pick up foreign broadcasts. Uncle Zhu has lied to the authorities and told them that Ji-li's father and he used a transistor radio to listen to the forbidden broadcasts.)

### COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important, and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

#### Questions 1-4 (Literal Level)

1. Why do Ji-li and members of her family become targets of the Red Guards and the Cultural Revolution? What are the results for Ji-li and her family members?  
(Ji-li's grandfather was a landlord [although he never actively took part in managing the family's real estate holdings and has been dead for over 30 years], and landlords are the worst of the Communist enemies identified as the Five Black Categories. Although Ji-li's father and mother are officially classified as office workers, having a landlord ancestor makes Ji-li's family "black" and the thinking of each family member suspect. The Jiangs' bad class status and family background naturally catch the attention of the Red Guards. As a result, Ji-li cannot attend the arts academy or excel in special projects like the Class Exhibition at school; Ji-li's father is put under detention and loses his salary; Ji-li's mother is harassed severely at work and has her salary cut; the children are all harassed and held back from full participation at school; and Grandma is classified as a landlord's wife and forced to sweep the alley twice a day. The family also loses almost all its possessions to Red Guard searches and confiscations.)
2. What are the Four Olds? Explain, and give some examples of them being eradicated, as described in the memoir.  
(The Four Olds are old culture, old ideas, old customs, and old habits. These old remnants of pre-Communist days in China exert an "evil and pernicious" influence on current society and undermine the building of a strong socialist country. Examples will vary, but may include the following: Old shop signs reflect old cultural ideas about profits and making lots of money, so signs like "Great Prosperity Market" and "Good Fortune Photo Studio" must change. Holding onto superstitions is an example of fourolds culture and habit and so must be eliminated, as Ji-yong advises Grandma when she speaks of an "auspicious" date. Western-style clothing and any household goods that are "bourgeois" or belong to China's old culture are also fourolds and must go.)
3. In what ways does Ji-li's world turn upside down during the Cultural Revolution? That is, what former values are now bad? What people who were once respected are now reviled?  
(Ji-li was once a top student because she got excellent grades, worked hard, and behaved with great respect toward her teachers. Under the Cultural Revolution, good grades become a sign of elitism and teacher favoritism; teachers who require their students to work hard are exploiting the young people in their charge, probably on a class basis; treating teachers with respect promotes the nonsensical concept of "teachers' dignity." Former Model Teachers become "monsters" and "class enemies." Ji-li was once a student leader but is now persecuted by the Red Guards who rule her school. Well-off, stylish people in the neighborhood are stripped of their possessions and publicly humiliated, like the Widow Rong and Aunt Xi-wen, while ne'er-do-wells such as Six-Fingers rise to positions of power as members of the Neighborhood Dictatorship Group. Xiao-cheng's father had been District Superintendent and is suspended, accused of being a capitalist follower. Ming-ming's father had been Party Secretary at the Shanghai Institute and is arrested, accused of being a traitor. Fortunes can shift, though; Du Hai's mother at first plays a powerful role in the Cultural Revolution as secretary of the Neighborhood Party Committee, but is then disgraced and publicly attacked as "oppressor of the young" and "black executioner.")
4. What tactics do the Red Guards and others in positions of authority use to attack and intimidate people while promoting the Cultural Revolution?  
(The Red Guards begin by writing and pasting up da-zi-bao, posters attacking revisionist systems and influences in general and then teachers and "bourgeois" neighbors in particular. They have a free hand to force the targets of the da-zi-bao to paste up the posters on their own doors and read aloud the derogatory comments. Student inspectors can stop people on the street and strip them of offensive "bourgeois" clothing. Soon, Red Guards are authorized to conduct searches of people's homes and confiscate any household goods and personal possessions that are relics of the reactionary past, including such things as stamp albums, family photographs, and wedding china. The Guards force elderly people they consider rightists to kneel for hours in the hot sun, or sweep the neighborhood alleys and confess their mistakes aloud twice a day. Suspect people must endure

## RED SCARF GIRL

struggle meetings at their workplace on a daily basis, where their fellow workers criticize them harshly and even beat and whip them. Other victims are marched through the streets with insulting signs hung around their necks and dunce caps on their heads, forced to shout out the error of their ways and their support for Chairman Mao. Those who resist confessing, and even those who do admit to wrongdoing, must "remold" themselves through physical labor.)

### Questions 5-8 (Interpretive Level)

5. Using what you have learned from this memoir, explain how a totalitarian regime keeps its people under control. (First, the people have no individual rights. They have no freedom of speech, they are not protected against unreasonable searches and seizures, they can be detained without specific charges, they have no right to confront their accusers or have a trial by a jury of their peers or a speedy and public trial. So the Red Guards can do whatever they want to people so long as the higher-up authorities allow it, and the people have no recourse and have to submit. For example, when the Red Guards confront Aunt Xi-wen at the door of her home, she is alarmed, frightened, and distressed at their demands, but she has to do whatever the Guards demand of her because "She knew that no one would challenge anything we revolutionaries did to her." Another important tool of totalitarian control is strict control of access to information. Ji-li and her friends accept everything they read in the newspapers, because they never read or hear any contrary opinions or facts. Chairman Mao is beloved and can do no wrong; the campaign against the fourolds and the revisionist educational system is admirable and necessary. As Ji-li explains in the Epilogue, Mao and the Communist Party have completely molded the new generations of Chinese people: "He controlled everything we read, everything we heard, and everything we learned in school. We believed everything he said." Not knowing anything different, the people accept and support the system that is. This is why the charge of listening to foreign radio is so serious; foreign broadcasts could infect people with beliefs and information counter to what the Party disseminates.)
6. Initially, what attitude does Ji-li have about Communist society and then about the goals of the Cultural Revolution? (Ji-li is a loyal and fervent supporter of Communist society and beloved Chairman Mao. Soldiers in the Liberation Army are heroes who helped Chairman Mao liberate China from oppression. The prospect of being chosen for the Liberation Army Arts Academy thrills Ji-li, as it would give her a chance to tour the country and the world telling everyone about the strong, wonderful New China that Mao has been building. When the Cultural Revolution begins, Ji-li fervently supports that as well, since "our beloved Chairman Mao" had started it. She completely agrees that the fourolds must go in order to keep the socialist society strong, even telling Grandma when they have to destroy treasured family clothes, "It is pretty, Grandma, but it is fourolds. Don't feel bad about it." And when the newspapers reveal the terrible problems with China's schools, Ji-li is "enraged by the revisionist educational system that had been poisoning our

youth for so many years.")

7. How and why does Ji-li gradually turn to questioning the goodness and rightness of the Cultural Revolution? (Ji-li is a decent, caring young woman, and even in the early days of the Cultural Revolution she has some sympathetic feelings for individual people who become targets of the Red Guards and the Revolution. For example, she feels bad about the humiliation suffered by the young man on the street wearing bourgeois clothes and by Aunt Xi-wen when the Red Guards visit, even though Ji-li supports both cases of revolutionary action. But Ji-li has serious doubts about denouncing her teachers as revisionist monsters; they all seem devoted to both their students and Communist society. Ji-li definitely agrees that all landlords, including her grandfather, are evil, but she constantly questions why she must be held responsible for his actions—after all, it's not her fault, and she's a loyal supporter of the Communist system. Once the Red Guards start their campaign of household searches and confiscations, Ji-li has further doubts. The searches to root out fourold possessions are inspiring, but they're scary, too—the Red Guards callously mistreat the people being searched, and everyone worries that their household may be next. Ji-li's wholehearted support of the Revolution erodes as she observes the personal misery it creates around her: An Yi's grandmother commits suicide, An Yi's mother is mercilessly harassed and beaten, Du Hai's mother is disgraced, Ji-yong's friends' fathers are brutalized, and finally Ji-li and her family are severely affected.)
8. What conflicts does Ji-li experience between supporting Communism and the Cultural Revolution and being loyal to her family? (This proves to be Ji-li's ultimate conflict. She may have doubts about the way the Cultural Revolution is being carried out and how it's affecting the people around her, but she is still loyal to Chairman Mao and Communism. She feels no connection to or loyalty toward the old landlord generations of her family, none of whom she ever knew. In fact, she deeply resents them and wishes she could have been born into a red rather than a black family so her loyalty to the system would not be questioned and she could make valuable contributions to the advancement of her socialist country. But when Ji-li inquires about changing her family name, she discovers this would include making a break with her living family—her parents and her grandmother. She knows she doesn't want to do this, and she realizes that even if Grandma is classified as a landlord's wife, she'll still love her. When faced with ultimate choices between support of the Revolution or of her family, Ji-li chooses family: she refuses to testify against her father, and she hides the letter her mother had planned to send against the theater group. This confirms Ji-li's black class status for the duration of the Revolution; she turns from striving to contribute to socialist society to taking care of her family instead.)
- ### Questions 9-10 (Critical Level)
9. What type of people emerge as leaders in the schools, neighborhoods, and workplaces during the Cultural Revolution? (At Ji-li's school, the students who become Red Guards



## RED SCARF GIRL

are the former slackers, mischief-makers, and followers. Du Hai is a terrible student, a goof-off, with a sly look and a talent for argument. Yin Lan-lan is a failing student, hesitant and clumsy; achieving power as a Red Guard makes her aggressive, vocal, and confident. Power in the neighborhoods goes to people like Six-Fingers, who's been supposedly too sick to work at the factory but feels well enough to help with every search and relishes monitoring and bullying the neighbors as a prominent member of the Neighborhood Dictatorship Group. People who gain power at the workplace are represented by the theater foreman, whom Ji-li calls Thin-Face—a cold, calculating man with fierce eyes, hard, uncompromising, and angrily eager to destroy anyone who opposes him.)

10. How would you describe the author's voice in this memoir? What does this add to the narration?  
(The author could have written this memoir as an adult looking back on events in her childhood, filtering the events through her mature, adult understanding. Instead, she writes in the voice of herself as a 12- to 14-year-old. She describes the events as she, the young teen Ji-li, is living and experiencing them, complete with her at-first unquestioning adolescent enthusiasm for her Communist society and the Cultural Revolution and then with the confusion infused by her limited adolescent understanding of events and human nature. Use of this voice gives the narration an immediacy that grabs the readers. We're caught up in Ji-li's confusion and fears and hopes, and we're just as anxious as Ji-li is to find out what's going to happen next as the Revolution continues to unfold.)

### Questions 11-13 (Creative Level)

11. Write the letter from Ji-li's mother and Uncle Tian to the Municipal Party Committee complaining about the illegal actions of the theater group.
12. Create a *da-zi-bao* praising some aspect of your school or educational system.
13. Acting as Ji-li, write a "politically correct" history of your family that you will read aloud to your classmates to show your understanding of the "black" aspects of your family background.

### ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

#### Art

1. Practice the art of calligraphy, either in creating beautiful English script or beautiful Chinese characters.
2. Create a series of traditional Chinese gowns and robes and dress dolls in them, or create a series of illustrations of this clothing. Explain who would have worn each costume.
3. Create a concept drawing or painting for a mural that would promote a particular political cause.

#### History and Social Studies

1. As part of a class project, develop a list of Chinese leaders of the 20th century and then assign various class members or small groups to report on individual leaders from your list.
2. On a map of China, trace the changing parameters of the Nationalist-Communist conflict, including the Long March of Mao Zedong's forces.

3. Give presentations on aspects of China since 1949 such as the establishment of the People's Republic, the Hundred Flowers campaign, the Great Leap Forward, the Soviet-China rapprochement and break, the Cultural Revolution, establishment of relations with the United States, the Gang of Four, the death of Mao, Tienanmen Square, and other topics.
4. On a map of China, locate the various places Ji-li Jiang mentions in her memoir.
5. Create an illustrated, perhaps multimedia report on the amazing explorations of China's Zheng He in the 15th century.
6. With classmates, evaluate the Cultural Revolution in China in the form of a chart noting effects on different aspects of life, such as society, politics, economics, education, and home life. You could then have a debate on the overall positive and/or negative result of the Revolution.
7. Ji-li mentions that the Chinese "defeated the Americans in Korea." Evaluate this statement using historical evidence.
8. Ji-li's parents had three children. Explain why current Chinese government policy would make such a family very unusual today.
9. Present a multimedia report on the Tienanmen Square event.
10. Report on the unique status of Hong Kong vis-à-vis China historically and today.

#### Language Arts

1. Read other narrative memoirs by young people who lived during China's Cultural Revolution and compare them with Ji-li Jiang's memoir. What common experiences and emotions did these young people share? What differences do you find in their narratives? In what ways do you relate to these narratives and their authors?
2. Ji-li creates some striking metaphors about herself, for example as the hurt cat Little White (p. 17), a wildflower (pp. 70-71), and a trapped animal (p. 227). Create some more metaphors about Ji-li in various situations she finds herself in, or about yourself in significant situations.
3. As you read, create a glossary of terms related to Chinese culture and everyday life. Explain each term, and then alphabetize your list to create a glossary that other readers of this memoir could use.
4. Create a picture book with narrative of a Chinese folk tale that Ji-li might have heard from her Grandma or read in one of the rented picture books in Grandpa Hong's bookstall.
5. Study the Chinese language and teach classmates how to read and write some basic Chinese characters and words.
6. Read the *Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck and note how the life story of Wang Lung and his family seems to parallel the experiences of Ji-li's landlord ancestors.

#### Mathematics

1. Construct a chart of exchange rates between U.S. currency and various Asian currencies over a recent period of years.
2. Determine what you could have bought for the equivalent of thirty Chinese fen in U.S. money in 1966 in the

## RED SCARF GIRL

United States.

3. The husband of Ji-li's cousin You-mei lives in another city and is allowed to visit Shanghai only twice a year. Suppose that other city is Nanjing, Tianjin, Shandong, or Beijing. How far would You-mei's husband have to travel one way and round trip to get to Shanghai? How long might this trip take him?
4. Ji-li helps her family survive on an income of sixty yuan a month. How much would this be in U.S. money in 1967 terms and in today's terms? Try to figure out a budget for yourself or your family to get along on this monthly income.

### Music

Play recordings of traditional Chinese music of the theater and/or opera. In contrast, play music promoted by the Cultural Revolution. What differences do you notice between the two types of music?

### Science & Health

1. Prepare an illustrated report on the culture of silkworms and mulberry plants, explaining the relationship between the two living entities and how silk is made from the silkworm product.
2. Report orally or in writing on asthma, Meniere's disease, or epilepsy. Include information on symptoms, causes, and treatments.
3. Report orally on acupuncture—its history in Chinese medicine, how it works, and its use in Western culture today. Perhaps you could invite an acupuncturist to class to demonstrate this form of medical treatment.
4. Create a class display that shows the techniques of rice cultivation in different areas of the world, noting required climate, soil, and water conditions and various means of harvesting.
5. Demonstrate recommended first aid techniques for an injury like the gash Ji-li inflicts on herself with the sickle, as well as first aid for other types of injuries.
6. Explain the physiological and psychological reasons why brainwashing techniques can be effective.

### STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. With classmates, celebrate the Chinese New Year in traditional ways. Explain the meaning of the different living creatures associated with each year.
2. As the memoir opens, Ji-li experiences sounds and smells wafting into her classroom from outdoors. Put yourself into a similar situation and describe what the sounds and smells you experience tell you about what is happening outside the room you are in.
3. If you are a student of traditional Chinese martial arts, tai chi, or something similar, demonstrate some of your skills to classmates.
4. Act out a scene that you create dramatizing problems involving you and your family members in the one-room apartment you all live in.
5. What would be the targets of a Four Olds eradication campaign in your culture (old ideas, old culture, old customs, old habits)? Would you think any of these things would be worthy of being eradicated?
6. With some friends, learn how to play mah jongg and teach classmates about it, while also explaining its origins and place in Chinese culture.

7. Experiment with friends transporting each other around via pedicab. How hard is it for the peddler to make headway? Is this a good alternative for crowded, polluted cities?
8. Investigate the various ways different cultures have developed to predict the future. Do any of these approaches seem to be valid in any sense?
9. Research the sayings of Mao Zedong. Then create your own inspirational sayings that relate to your own local culture.
10. Prepare a meal of traditional Chinese dishes, including some that are mentioned in the memoir.

### ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. Draw up a list of characters in the memoir. Beside each name, note that person's class status and place in Chinese society, and describe the way in which that person is involved in and/or affected by the Cultural Revolution.
2. Describe what you learn about everyday Chinese life and customs from this memoir. Be specific.
3. Compose a scene in which Ji-li and her family members are confronted in a struggle meeting by people from Ji-li's father's theater group, led by Thin-Face, or a scene in which Ji-li and An Yi are confronted in a struggle meeting by classmates.
4. Compile a list of incidents that cause Ji-li to question the Cultural Revolution.

### RELATED READING

Lyll Becerra de Jenkins, *The Honorable Prison*  
Pearl Buck, *The Good Earth*  
Lori M. Carlson, ed., *American Eyes: New Asian-American Short Stories for Young People*  
Margaret and Raymond Chang, *In the Eye of War*  
Sook Nyui Choi, *Year of Impossible Goodbyes*  
Linda Crew, *Children of the River*  
Sherry Garland, *Song of the Buffalo Boy*  
Evert Hartman, *War Without Friends*  
Minfong Ho, *Rice Without Rain*  
Garrett Hongo, ed., *The Open Boat: Poems from Asian Americans*  
Elizabeth Foreman Lewis, *Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze*  
Helen Kim, *Long Season of Rain*  
Bette Bao Lord, *Spring Moon*  
Kamala Markandaya, *Nectar in a Sieve*  
Kyoko Mori, *Shizuko's Daughter*  
Doris Orgel, *The Devil in Vienna*  
Katherine Paterson, *Rebels of the Heavenly Kingdom*  
Hans Peter Richter, *Friedrich*  
Suzanne Fisher Staples, *Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind*  
Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club*  
Yoshiko Uchida, *A Jar of Dreams*  
Betty Vander Els, *The Bomber's Moon and Leaving Point*  
Colette Vivier, *House of the Four Winds*  
Yoko Kawashima Watkins, *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*  
Paul Yee, *Breakaway* and *Tales from Gold Mountain*  
Laurence Yep, *Child of the Owl*, *Mountain Light*, *The Rainbow People*, *The Serpent's Children*, and *Tongues of Jade*

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Booklist*, October 1, 1997, p. 331  
*The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, February 1998, pp. 207-08

## RED SCARF GIRL

Comerford, Lynda Brill. "The Story of a Red Scarf Girl: A Talk with Ji-Li Jiang." *Publishers Weekly*, November 10, 1997, p. 28

*Contemporary Authors*, Vol. 168. Detroit: Gale, 1999

*Horn Book*, January/February 1998, p. 76

*Instructor*, October 1997, p. 48

*Publishers Weekly*, July 28, 1997, p. 75

*School Library Journal*, December 1997, p. 139

*Something About the Author*, Vol. 101. Detroit: Gale

VOYA, February 1998, p. 365; June 1998, p. 145

### Internet

East West Exchange, Inc.,

<members.aol.com/medchina/group.htm>

"An Interview with Ji-li Jiang"

<www.harperchildrens.com/schoolhouse/

TeachersGuide/redscarf.htm#interview>

"Ji-li Jiang Responds" <www.scils.rutgers.edu/childlit/oct98/0647.html>

## ANSWER KEY

### VOCABULARY TEST

- |      |       |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. t | 6. i  | 11. h | 16. g |
| 2. j | 7. s  | 12. a | 17. b |
| 3. q | 8. n  | 13. e | 18. r |
| 4. f | 9. p  | 14. o | 19. m |
| 5. k | 10. d | 15. l | 20. c |

### COMPREHENSION TEST A

#### Part I: Matching (20 points)

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. d | 6. c  |
| 2. i | 7. h  |
| 3. b | 8. e  |
| 4. j | 9. a  |
| 5. g | 10. f |

#### Part II: Short Answer (20 points)

- class status — a person's classification based on economic situation, occupation, or family background. Family class status is supposed to determine a person's behavior and thinking, so if your father or grandfather had a bad class status, you would, too.
- struggle meeting — a meeting within a work unit at which fellow workers criticize an individual who is accused of not supporting the revolution wholeheartedly; struggle meetings usually involve humiliation and even physical assault.
- bourgeois — middle class, or a middle class person; in China, this is a derogatory term applied to people who seem to enjoy the trappings of a "capitalist" lifestyle.
- fourolds — anything connected to the Four Olds that the Cultural Revolution aims to eradicate: old customs, old habits, old culture, and old ideas, all of which are supposed to interfere with the creation of a modern socialist society.

#### Part III: Multiple Choice (30 points)

- |                     |                             |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. New Year         | 9. Model Teacher            |
| 2. Shanghai         | 10. black whelp             |
| 3. housekeeper      | 11. in the cat's litter box |
| 4. <i>da-zi-bao</i> | 12. harvest ride            |
| 5. pedicab          | 13. Grandpa Hong's          |
| 6. dowry trunks     | 14. Dictatorship            |
| 7. stamp album      | 15. change her family name  |
| 8. Chairman Mao     |                             |

#### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

### COMPREHENSION TEST B

#### Part I: Matching (20 points)

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. c | 6. a  |
| 2. i | 7. j  |
| 3. d | 8. g  |
| 4. f | 9. b  |
| 5. h | 10. e |

#### Part II: Short Answer (20 points)

- remold one's ideology — deliberately alter a way of thinking to bring it in line with accepted Communist doctrine; this is required of people who have made serious political mistakes.
- educable child — a young person from a "black" family whom authorities encourage to reject that family in favor of total loyalty to the Communist Party.
- black family, black whelp — black denotes opposition to or questionable support of the Communist Party and its goals for society. A black family's loyalty to Communism is suspect; children of a black family are commonly referred to by the insulting term "black whelp." A person from a black family will find it impossible to achieve a lot at school or in the workplace.
- da-zi-bao* — a large handwritten poster containing slogans and statements about political issues; *da-zi-bao* always reflect current Communist thinking and policies, and often viciously attack targeted individuals.

#### Part III: Multiple Choice (30 points)

- |                        |                               |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. one                 | 9. listening to foreign radio |
| 2. theater             | 10. arts academy              |
| 3. Ancestors' clothing | 11. letter                    |
| 4. Red Guards          | 12. sweep the alley           |
| 5. Mao Zedong          | 13. Thin-Face                 |
| 6. landlord            | 14. bourgeois                 |
| 7. old family photos   | 15. suicide                   |
| 8. struggle meeting    |                               |

#### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

## RED SCARF GIRL

### VOCABULARY TEST

Match each underlined word with its meaning listed below. Write the letter of the correct answer in the space next to the sentence number.

- |                  |                            |                     |               |
|------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| a. song of grief | f. laughed in satisfaction | k. without energy   | p. harmful    |
| b. disordered    | g. thoroughly searched     | l. gentle tolerance | q. favorable  |
| c. injustices    | h. regret for wrongdoing   | m. do away with     | r. shocked    |
| d. embarrassed   | i. special & superior      | n. seize property   | s. stubbornly |
| e. associates    | j. try-out performance     | o. sharp & harsh    | t. symbol     |

- \_\_\_ 1. With my red scarf, the emblem of the Young Pioneers, tied around my neck, I achieved and grew every day.
- \_\_\_ 2. "She is recruiting students for the dance training class. She selected you four for an audition."
- \_\_\_ 3. "They always said that since an especially auspicious date was chosen to hang the sign, the store has been prosperous for more than thirty years."
- \_\_\_ 4. Someone chortled. "He'll have holes in his socks when he gets home."
- \_\_\_ 5. Ji-yong and Ji-yun each took one of Dad's hands, while I listlessly followed.
- \_\_\_ 6. In a few weeks I would graduate. I would enter an elite school and study even harder.
- \_\_\_ 7. "Your father still obstinately refuses to confess."
- \_\_\_ 8. The Red Guards were ransacking the houses of class enemies to find and confiscate their hoarded possessions.
- \_\_\_ 9. "The Red Guards have determined to eradicate the roots of this noxious weed in order to promote Chairman Mao's revolutionary cause."
- \_\_\_ 10. "Ji-yong has already promised me to be more careful," Grandma said with a stern glance at Ji-yong's back. From his sheepish smile I knew that she had given him a real scolding.
- \_\_\_ 11. As soon as the painting was finished, two new rituals, Morning Repentance and Evening Report, began.
- \_\_\_ 12. I heard the slow music of the dirge, louder for a moment, and then soft again.
- \_\_\_ 13. It was already past eight o'clock when Dad's colleagues Uncle Tian and his wife, Aunt Wu, came to visit.
- \_\_\_ 14. As we entered the apartment, I smelled smoke, acrid and choking.
- \_\_\_ 15. "Leniency for confession, severity for resistance!"
- \_\_\_ 16. An Yi came in, leaned against a chest, and looked around our ransacked room.
- \_\_\_ 17. Du Hai's mother's disheveled hair dangled around her shocked, gray face.
- \_\_\_ 18. "Climb the chimney?" I was aghast. "What kind of remodeling is that?"
- \_\_\_ 19. "We must eradicate these relics of the past....We must not allow the reactionary forces to hoard their treasures."
- \_\_\_ 20. I only cried harder. I felt as if I were pouring out the whole year's grievances.



## RED SCARF GIRL

### Part III: Multiple Choice (30 points)

Underline the choice that correctly completes each of these sentences.

1. Ji-li was born on the Chinese holiday of (New Year, Yom Kippur, May Day, Halloween).
2. The events of the memoir take place in the Chinese city of (Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai, Hong Kong).
3. Song Po-po is the (landlord, housekeeper, cook, grandmother) for Ji-li's family.
4. Posters that criticize teachers and other individuals are called (*tai chi*, *yang fen*, *xiao cheng*, *da-zi-bao*).
5. The children take Grandma to the clinic on/in a (bicycle, pedicab, streetcar, bus).
6. Grandma is sad when Ji-li's father has to dye her beloved (braid, silk gown, quilt, dowry trunks) black.
7. Ji-li is heartbroken when the Red Guards confiscate her treasured (army cap, stamp album, picture books, travel posters).
8. The *Precious Red Book* contains the sayings of (Chairman Mao, Liu Shaoqi, Confucius, Buddha).
9. Before she was labeled a Reactionary Monster, An Yi's mother was labeled a(n) (Anti-rightist, Old Landlord's Wife, Capitalist Exploiter, Model Teacher).
10. A child from a family with bad class status is often called a (red pup, yellow dog, black whelp, white dragon).
11. Ji-li hides the incriminating letter that denounces the theater group (under her mattress, with the tea leaves, in the cat's litter box, in the flower pot).
12. Ji-li goes to the countryside one summer to (plant wheat, dig drainage ditches, raise chickens, harvest rice).
13. The Jiang children can't rent picture books any more after (Ming-ming's, Grandpa Hong's, Yin Lan-lan's, Teacher Zhang's ) bookstall is closed down.
14. Six-Fingers harasses the neighbors in his role as a leader of the Neighborhood (Dictatorship, Liberation, Anti-rightist, Struggle) Group.
15. Ji-li stops at the police station one day to (denounce her father, inform on her teacher, change her family name, give herself up for arrest).

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Describe the various members of Ji-li's family and their changing status in Chinese society during the Cultural Revolution.
2. Why does Ji-li's attitude about the Cultural Revolution change over time?
3. What is the significance of "red" and "black" in the context of China's Cultural Revolution?



## RED SCARF GIRL

### Part III: Multiple Choice (30 points)

Underline the choice that correctly completes each of these sentences.

1. Ji-li's family apartment has (one, two, three, four) room(s) plus a kitchen and a bathroom.
2. Ji-li's father works at a (bookstall, factory, school, theater).
3. (Red scarves, Ancestors' clothing, Green tea, Chairman Mao's sayings) are considered fourolds during the Cultural Revolution.
4. Junior high and high school students who carry out the Cultural Revolution are called (Red Successors, Ninjas, Mandarins, Red Guards).
5. China's leader during the Cultural Revolution is (Chiang Kaishek, Lei Feng, Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping).
6. Ji-li is horrified when she discovers that her grandfather was a(n) (factory owner, actor, landlord, peasant farmer).
7. Ji-li's parents feel they must burn their (old clothes, old family photos, love letters, books).
8. A meeting where fellow workers criticize and often beat a suspect person is called a (struggle meeting, liberation mar ch, citizens' trial, purge).
9. Ji-li's father is accused of the crime of (denouncing Chairman Mao, spying, reading books, listening to foreign radio).
10. Ji-li hopes she will be chosen to attend the Central Liberation Army (arts academy, boot camp, martial arts troop, Red Guard training center).
11. The people from the theater group search Ji-li's family's apartment trying to find a (radio, letter, silk robe, bicycle).
12. Because her husband was a member of the Five Black Categories, Grandma has to (sweep the alley, pray for forgiveness, climb the chimney, paste up posters) twice each day.
13. Ji-li's nickname for the cold, scary shop foreman at her father's work unit is (Little White, Chairman Lao, Fang Fang, Thin-Face).
14. The Red Guards attack Aunt Xi-wen for being a(n) (bad teacher, old landlord, bourgeois, Red Successor).
15. An Yi's grandmother commits the crime of (spying, suicide, denouncing Chairman Mao, listening to foreign radio).

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. What dreams for her future does Ji-li see ruined by the Cultural Revolution?
2. What things are attacked during the Cultural Revolution as "fourolds"?
3. What tactics do the people carrying out the Cultural Revolution use against their fellow Chinese citizens, as related in this memoir?



**THE STRONGEST BOOKS YOU CAN BUY**

PERMA-BOUND BOOKS • 617 East Vandalia Road • Jacksonville, Illinois 62650  
Toll Free 1-800-637-6581 • Fax 1-800-551-1169  
E-mail: books@perma-bound.com

PERMA-BOUND CANADA • Box 517, Station A • Willowdale, Ontario M2N 5T1  
Toll Free 1-800-461-1999 • Fax 1-888-250-3811  
E-mail: perma-bound.ca@sympatico.ca

VISIT OUR WEB SITE: <http://www.perma-bound.com>