



GUTHRIE
THEATER

McGuire Proscenium Stage / Jan 12 - Feb 10, 2018



The Great Leap

by LAUREN YEE

directed by DESDEMONA CHIANG

PLAY GUIDE

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The Guthrie creates transformative theater experiences that ignite the imagination, stir the heart, open the mind and build community through the illumination of our common humanity.

Guthrie Theater Play Guide

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The Guthrie Theater receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts. This activity is made possible in part by the Minnesota State Arts Board, through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature. The Minnesota State Arts Board received additional funds to support this activity from the National Endowment for the Arts.



PHOTO: LEAH ANDERSON, LAWRENCE KAO, LEE SELLARS AND KURT KWAN (COURTESY OF LAWRENCE KAO)

“every game is a second chance.”

- Connie to Manford in *The Great Leap*

About This Guide

This play guide is designed to fuel your curiosity and deepen your understanding of a show’s history, meaning and cultural relevance so you can make the most of your theatergoing experience. You might be reading this because you fell in love with a show you saw at the Guthrie. Maybe you want to read

up on a play before you see it onstage. Or perhaps you’re a fellow theater company doing research for an upcoming production. We’re glad you found your way here, and we encourage you to dig in and mine the depths of this extraordinary story. [G](#)

DIG DEEPER

If you are a theater company and would like more information about this production, contact Dramaturg Jo Holcomb at joh@guthrietheater.org.

PHOTO: LAWRENCE KAO AND KURT KWAN IN *THE GREAT LEAP* (DAN NORMAN)

Synopsis

Not everyone in San Francisco's Chinatown may think that Manford is the best point guard to play the game of basketball, but Manford does. And he is relentless. Not everyone may realize that Saul, the men's basketball coach at the University of San Francisco, is washed up. But Saul can see the writing on the wall, and coaching his team to victory in a rematch of a 1971 game against Beijing University is his last chance to prove himself.

Not everyone in China knows that Wen Chang, a former translator and current coach of the Beijing basketball team, doesn't really want the apartment, the air conditioner or any of the perks associated with a Chinese man of his stature. But Wen Chang knows, and it makes him afraid. And then there's Connie, Manford's pseudo-cousin, who knows enough about the three men's secrets and dreams to tell the whole story.

When Manford, Saul and Wen Chang head to Beijing for the big game in 1989, they discover their meeting is about far more than basketball. As they uncover truths about their past and the magic those revelations conjure, one finds a mother, one finds a son and all of them find courage. 

SETTING

San Francisco, California
(May 1989)
Beijing, China
(summer/fall 1971 and
June 1989)

CHARACTERS

Manford, 17, male, Chinese-American. Intense, scrappy, runs into trouble and attacks the rim with a ruthless crossover. Not tall. More Allen Iverson than Jeremy Lin.

Connie, 25, female, Chinese-American. Manford's "cousin" and UC Berkeley grad student. A level-headed, big-picture thinker and Chris Paul/Klay Thompson type.

Wen Chang, 43, male, Chinese. Coach of Beijing University's men's basketball team. Observant and efficient. Favors three-pointers over aggressive inside shots. Tim Duncan would appreciate his energy. His English is formal, but relatively unaccented.

Saul, 52, male, Jewish. Coach of the University of San Francisco's men's basketball team. A foul-mouthed, shot-blocking, washed-up Larry Bird type.

Zhang Li, ageless, female, Chinese. An athletic, imposing six-foot-two woman of almost mythical abilities. The tallest person in the play. Bill Russell, the 11-time NBA champion, is the closest equivalent. She does not appear in the play, but her absence is felt throughout.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF LAUREN YEE

“The play is about my father, but I wrote it for my younger brothers. In *The Great Leap*, Manford is a Chinese-American kid who keeps bumping up against people who don’t believe in him or see limitations when they look at him. That’s not what I want for my brothers. My wish is that they move through the world unencumbered and be whatever they want to be.”

- Lauren Yee, on why she wrote *The Great Leap*

Playwright Lauren Yee

Lauren Yee was born and raised in San Francisco, and she currently lives in New York City. She received her B.A. from Yale University and her M.F.A. in playwriting from University of California, San Diego, where she studied under Naomi Iizuka. *The Great Leap* has been produced at Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Seattle Repertory Theatre and Atlantic Theater Company, with future productions coming to Arts Club Theatre Company and InterAct Theatre. Yee’s *Cambodian Rock Band*, with music by Dengue Fever, premiered at South Coast Repertory and is currently running at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, followed by La Jolla Playhouse and Victory Gardens Theater. Also upcoming is Yee’s play *The Song of Summer* at Trinity Repertory Company.

Her honors include the Horton Foote Prize, Kesselring Prize, Francesca Primus Prize, a Hodder Fellowship at Princeton and the top two plays on the 2017 Kilroys List. She is a New Dramatists member, Ma-Yi Writers Lab member and an alumni playwright at The Playwrights Realm. She has written for “Mixtape” (Netflix). Current commissions include Geffen Playhouse, La Jolla Playhouse, Lincoln Center Theater/LCT3, Portland Center Stage, Second Stage Theater, South Coast Repertory and Trinity Repertory Company. Learn more at www.laurenyee.com.



PHOTO: NATHAN DALE STUDIOS

“Lauren [created] an incredible play about the historical tensions between East and West and the unexpected journey from being an invisible part of a collective to realizing one’s power as an individual — all within the frame of basketball, a beloved sport fraught with complex negotiations between the self and the group.”

- Desdemona Chiang, on the key themes in *The Great Leap*

Director Desdemona Chiang

Desdemona Chiang is a stage director based in Seattle and the San Francisco Bay Area. She is the co-founder and co-artistic director of Azeotrope in Seattle. Her directing credits include Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Baltimore Center Stage, Pittsburgh Public Theater, California Shakespeare Theater, Seattle Repertory Theatre, PlayMakers Repertory Company, Long Wharf Theatre, Seattle Children’s Theatre, A Contemporary Theatre, American Shakespeare Center, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Heritage Theatre Festival, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, Seattle Public Theater, Shotgun Players, Crowded Fire Theater, Azeotrope, Impact Theatre, Playwrights Foundation, Golden Thread Productions, Washington Ensemble Theatre, One-Minute Play Festival, Ohio Northern University, University of Washington and Cornish College of the Arts, among others.

Chiang’s awards and affiliations include the Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Theatre, SDCF Sir John Gielgud Directing Fellowship, Drama League Directing Fellowship, TCG Young Leader of Color, Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab and Directors Lab West and Gregory Award for Outstanding Direction. Chiang received her B.A. from University of California, Berkeley, and her M.F.A. in directing from University of Washington School of Drama. [G](#)

Yee in Her Own Words

This is a play about basketball, but it is also a basketball play. The game is reflected not just in the subject matter but the rhythm, structure, language, and how the characters move through space. We also should have a sense that someone is always watching. We may or may not see any actual basketballs on stage.

Play description from *The Great Leap* script

Growing up, my father played basketball. Every day, all night, on the asphalt courts and rec center floors of San Francisco Chinatown. It was the only thing he was good at.

He was never good enough that he was going to play for the NBA or even at the college level, but for a 6'1" Chinatown kid from the projects, he was good. Really good.

I know this because even today, people still stop him on the street and try to explain to me what a legend he was. They tell me his nickname (Spider), his position (center), and his signature move (the reverse jump shot). Then they will tell me about China.

My dad's first trip to China was in the '80s playing a series of exhibition games against China's top teams. At their first game, my dad and his American teammates faced off against a Beijing team of three hundred-pound seven footers that demolished my dad's team. It was the first of many slaughters.

Today he no longer plays, but his head is still in the game. He will walk up to tall young men at checkout counters, parking lots, and sporting events, and ask them



PHOTO: LEE SELLARS AND KURT KWAN IN *THE GREAT LEAP* (DAN NORMAN)

if they've ever considered playing basketball. And no matter the answer, he proceeds to give them a master class in technique right then and there.

This play is not my father's story.

But it is a story like it.

Author's note in the *The Great Leap* script

Basketball is just an incredibly apt metaphor for I think both politics and diplomacy and also the personal struggles of these characters. Somebody described the philosophy of basketball to me as people trying to create enough personal space around them for them to make the shot. That everyone on the court — every pass, every shot, every everything, is in service of you trying to lose your defender long enough to make the shot. And that feels like it has something in common with the struggles of real life. I think every

day, everyone is hustling to carve out a little world for themselves — like a space in which they can succeed and feel comfortable and thrive.

Excerpted from "Lauren Yee on writing plays about basketball, communism, and Asian Americans," by Andrew Hsieh, *The Slant*, June 1, 2018

PHOTO: LEAH ANDERSON AND LAWRENCE KAO IN *THE GREAT LEAP* (DAN NORMAN)



China's Modern History Through 1989

1912-1925

1912-1916

After the 1911 collapse of the Qing Dynasty, China declares itself a republic in 1912 with Sun Yat-sen as the first president. Sun founds the Nationalist Party, Kuomintang, and later resigns in favor of Yuan Shihkai. Shihkai attempts to reinstate the monarchy but fails, and after his death in 1916, the country is left without a strong central leader and descends into a period of control by warlords.

1921-1935

The Chinese Communist Party is founded in Shanghai. Mao Zedong leads the Long March and establishes revolutionary headquarters in Yanan.

1925

Sun Yat-sen dies and Chiang Kai-shek assumes leadership of Kuomintang, launching the Northern Expedition that reunifies China under Nationalist government.

1925-1950

Traditional arranged marriage continues in both the legal system and local customs. It is marked by complex negotiations of families through matchmakers regarding the bride price and dowry.

December 1937 - March 1938

During the Sino-Japanese War, the four-month Japanese occupation of Nanking (known as the Rape of Nanking) is the cause of an estimated 260,000 Chinese civilian casualties during the invasion.

1946-1949

Civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists results in a Communist victory. The Nationalist government evacuates to the island of Taiwan.

1949

Mao proclaims the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

1950

A new marriage law bans polygamy and arranged marriages, promoting women's equality and encouraging freedom of choice in selecting a spouse. The Agrarian Reform Law redistributes the land of landlords and wealthy farmers to millions of peasants.

1950-1979

A planned economy demands rationed household goods and food. By national poverty line criteria, people in poverty are estimated at 260 million and the income gap between rural and urban populations grows.

1953

Mao begins Rural Collectivization based on a five-year plan. Individual landownership is abolished and replaced with cooperatives.

1956: The Hundred Flowers Campaign

Motivated by the relaxation of strict communist controls in the Soviet Union that accompanied Nikita Krushchev's denunciation of the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin in February 1956, Mao Zedong invited criticism of the Chinese Communist Party's policies, even by noncommunist intellectuals, with a famous slogan from Chinese classical history: "Let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend."

Criticism was slow in developing, but other party leaders continued to echo Mao's theme in speeches during the next year. Not until the spring of 1957 did members

of society begin to criticize communist policies openly. Within a few weeks, the party became subjected to an ever-increasing volume of criticism. Wall posters denounced every aspect of the government, and students and professors criticized party members.

In June, the party began to signal that the criticism had gone too far. By early July, an anti-rightist campaign was underway, in which the recent critics of the regime were subjected to severe retribution. Most of them lost their jobs and were forced to do manual labor in the country; some were sent to prison.

1957-1958

An anti-rightist campaign is used by Mao to eliminate critical intellectuals. A half-million dissidents are sent to remote labor camps for "reform through labor."

1958-1962: The Great Leap Forward



PHOTO: POSTER DESIGNED BY WU SHAOYUN, ZHANG YUQING AND LU ZEZHI

A propaganda poster for the Great Leap Forward that is translated, "The commune is like a gigantic dragon; production is noticeable and awe-inspiring."

In 1958, Mao launched his largest and most disastrous five-year plan to date: the Great Leap Forward. In the following years, it would cause nearly 46 million deaths from coercion, forced labor and the worst human-made famine

ever seen on earth. Politically and socially, the Great Leap would threaten to bring down the whole revolution. Its radical solution to the country's economic woes — rural collectivization — would be at the heart of the plan.

Collectivized farms would better organize peasant labor, eliminate waste and inefficiency and greatly increase production. It was not until the Great Leap Forward that the people's communes became official government policy. The second part of the plan was the doubling of steel production. As the targets for industrial and agricultural output increased, so too did the pressure on the people's communes. This led commune leaders to inflate production figures, simply to keep pace with other communes. The communes experimented with radical agricultural practices, most of which proved disastrous.

Crop production was also affected by the deployment of farmers in backyard steel production and mass labor projects, such as the construction of roads, large-scale irrigation projects, dam building and even the construction of the massive new Tiananmen Square in Beijing. By 1959 the harvests were insufficient, and the resulting famine devastated the peasant population.

1966

The Great Leap Forward is followed by Mao's 1966 Cultural Revolution, which paralyzes China's jurisdiction, research and educational systems. Student bands of "Red Guards" search and destroy anything considered bourgeois — anything representing capitalism, religion, tradition and the West. Most of China's cultural heritage is destroyed. Mao's rivals within the party are purged, and people with counter-revolutionary backgrounds



PHOTO: PEOPLE'S DAILY

Mourners at Mao Zedong's funeral. The original image (bottom) shows the Gang of Four present. In the digitally retouched image (above), they have disappeared.

are dragged from their homes to endure fatal "struggle sessions," sent to labor camps or detailed to custodial work units.

1971

While the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China are initially allies supporting the same communist ideals, the PRC's strategic approach and implementation of radical movements such as the Great Leap Forward causes Soviet advisors to withdraw their support of the PRC. The tension between the two nations leads to border skirmishes that eventually cause the Soviet Union to replace the United States as the PRC's biggest threat. This shift in dynamics prompts the PRC to consider amending relations with the United States.

1971: Ping-Pong Diplomacy

In April 1971, the People's Republic of China makes the first public move to begin working on the tension between the two nations by inviting the U.S. ping-pong team to visit. The team and the journalists who accompanied them make history as the first Americans to

be invited to mainland China after the political shift that occurred 22 years prior (1949). The PRC's show of diplomacy and the fact that both nations share a common concern considering the Soviet Union encourage then-president Richard Nixon to send his Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, on a covert trip to China to arrange an eventual presidential trip.

1972

Richard Nixon visits China, normalizing the relationship between the United States and China.

1976: The Gang of Four

The Gang of Four was the name given to the ultra-leftist political faction composed of four high Chinese Communist Party officials and led by Mao Zedong's last wife, Jiang Qing. When Mao placed Jiang in charge of the country's cultural apparatus in 1966, she had not taken a public political role. Using her role, she would effectively manage the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and communist China itself. The other three members of the gang were Jiang's close associates, Zhang

Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongwen, who were party leaders in Shanghai. They played leading roles in securing the city for Mao during the Cultural Revolution.

With Mao's health faltering, the group slowly lost their influence. A power struggle inside the Communist Party ensued, and a propaganda campaign was launched against the Gang of Four. ("Four" has the same sound as "death" in Chinese and is viewed as an unlucky number).

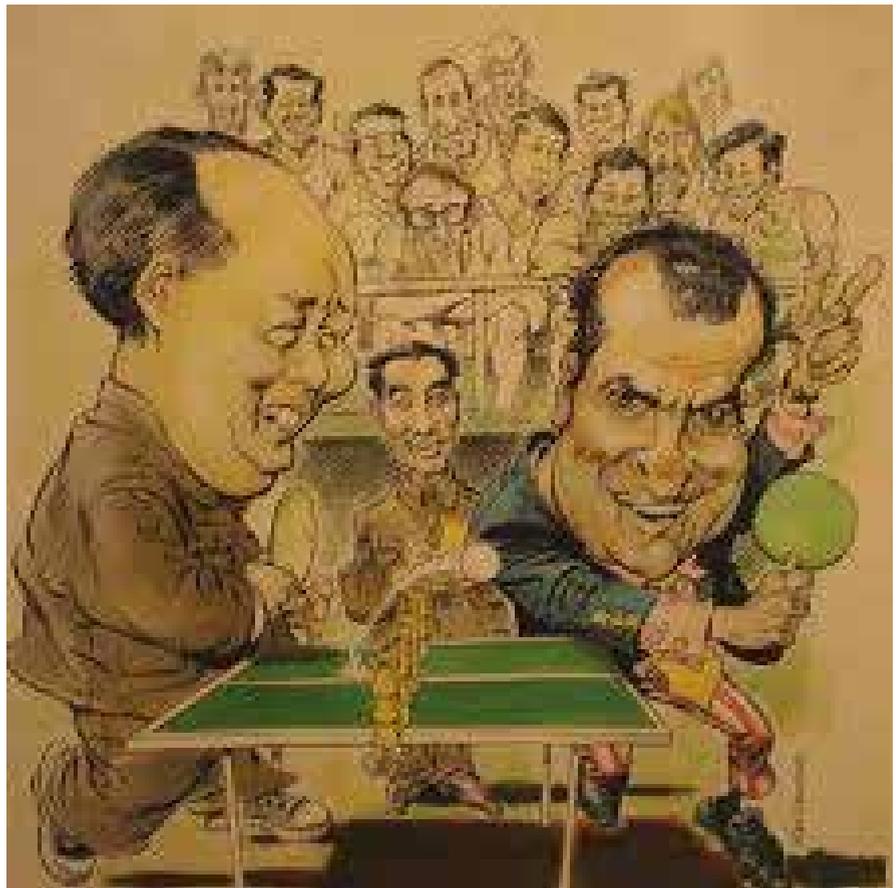
On October 6, 1976, a month after Mao's death, the gang was finally arrested. Blamed for the excesses of the Cultural Revolution, they were dragged in front of a show trial in 1981. Jiang, the former Shanghai starlet now dubbed a witch by state media, remained defiant and theatrical to the last, protesting loudly and bursting into tears at some points. As the only member of the Gang of Four who bothered to argue, she insisted that she obeyed Mao's orders at all times. Zhang refused to admit any wrong. They would receive death sentences that were later converted to life imprisonments. Yao and Wang, who confessed to their alleged crimes, received 20 years in prison. Jiang, who never repented, hanged herself in May 1991 after a debilitating struggle with cancer.

1976

Mao Zedong dies at the age of 82 on September 9.

1977

After the Cultural Revolution, the National Higher Education Entrance Examination is reintroduced, which ends the policy of only admitting people into higher education with farming, factory and military experience.



"Ping-Pong Diplomacy" illustration by Mort Drucker, July 26, 1971.

1978

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China, Article 46, guarantees freedom of religion but with a number of restrictions. Deng Xiaoping begins his Four Modernizations program (agriculture, industry, defense and science), which is instituted as a form of Chinese socialism.

1979

Continuing China's "Open Door Policy," diplomatic relations are established between the United States and China.

1980-1990

The Chinese government begins a series of economic reforms that lead to less government control of business and landownership. A new household responsibility system replaces a collective system, and the privatization of state enterprises contributes to China's economic growth.

1987

Western-style fast food is introduced in China. Kentucky Fried Chicken opens its first store, with McDonald's to follow in 1991.

1989

Tiananmen Square protests conducted largely by students bring international attention to China. Military clashes with the protesters, who demand freedom and democracy, result in multiple deaths.



1989

The iconic photo of Tank Man
in Tiananmen Square.

PHOTO: STUART FRANKLIN/MAGNUM PHOTOS

Tiananmen Square Protests, Crackdown and Aftermath

Facts

- Tiananmen Square is located in the center of Beijing, the capital of China.
- Tiananmen means “gate of heavenly peace.”
- In 1989, after several weeks of demonstrations, Chinese troops entered Tiananmen Square on June 4 and fired on civilians.
- Death toll estimates range from hundreds to thousands.
- As many as 10,000 people were arrested during and after the protests.
- Several dozen people were executed for participating in the demonstrations.



PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

The Goddess of Democracy statue.



PHOTO: STUART FRANKLIN/MAGNUM PHOTOS

A mass protest around the Goddess of Democracy, June 2, 1989.

May 30, 1989: Students from the Central Academy of Fine Arts create a 10-meter statue of the Goddess of Democracy to boost morale among student protestors in Tiananmen Square. Erected in just four days, the statue is unveiled in front of the Monument to the People's Heroes.

June 1, 1989: China halts live American news telecasts in Beijing. Reporters are prohibited from photographing or videotaping any demonstrations or Chinese troops.

June 2, 1989: A reported 100,000 people attend a concert in Tiananmen Square by singer Hou Dejian in support of the demonstrators.

June 4, 1989: At 1 a.m., Chinese troops reach Tiananmen Square. Throughout the day, Chinese troops fire on civilians and students, ending the demonstrations. An official death toll has never been released.

June 5, 1989: An unidentified man stands alone in the street, blocking a column of Chinese tanks. He remains there for several minutes before being pulled away by onlookers. [G](#)

Timeline

April 15, 1989: Hu Yaobang, a former Communist Party leader, dies. Hu had worked to move China toward a more open political system and become a symbol of democratic reform.

April 18, 1989: Thousands of mourning students march through the capital to Tiananmen Square, calling for a more democratic government. In the weeks that follow, thousands of people join the students in the square to protest against China's communist rulers.

May 13, 1989: More than 100 students begin a hunger strike in Tiananmen Square. The number increases to several thousand over the next few days.

May 19, 1989: A rally at Tiananmen Square draws an estimated 1.2 million people. The General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, Zhao Ziyang, appears at the rally and pleads for an end to the demonstrations. Premier Li Peng imposes martial law.

SOURCE: CNN LIBRARY

Basketball in China

China's roots in the "American game" run deep. Basketball was brought to China in the 1890s by YMCA missionaries who participated in some of the first peach-basket games in Springfield, Massachusetts, where the sport was invented.

Basketball caught on quickly in the Shanghai area, where it was linked with some revolutionary activities.

In the 1920s, the game was very popular among urban students, and by 1935, basketball was declared a national pastime, followed by the formation of a Chinese Olympic team in 1936. It remained popular throughout the Mao era, when it was played under the slogan "Friendship First and Competition Second" and players apologized after making fouls.

The sport of basketball was one of the few forms of Western entertainment that was not condemned during the Cultural Revolution, and today's members of the People's Liberation Army are encouraged to play basketball for exercise. [G](#)

People, Places and Things in the Play

13th-Century Nomadic Invaders

A reference to the Mongol conquest of China, which was a series of major military efforts by the Mongol Empire to invade China proper. It spanned six decades in the 13th century and involved the defeat of the Jin dynasty, Western Xia, the Dali Kingdom and the Southern Song.

The Mongol Empire under Genghis Khan started the conquest with small-scale raids into Western Xia in 1205 and 1207. By 1279, the Mongol leader Kublai Khan had established the Yuan dynasty in China and crushed the last Song resistance, which marked the onset of China under the Mongol Yuan rule. This was the first time in history that the whole of China was conquered and subsequently ruled by a foreign or non-native ruler.

Bulls and Cavs, Game Five

The May 7 game between the Chicago Bulls and the Cleveland Cavaliers during the 1989 Eastern Conference when Michael Jordan made “The Shot” — a series-winning basket considered one of the greatest moments in basketball.

Cabbage Patch Kids

A Chinese racial slur based on the line of soft-sculptured toy dolls by Xavier Roberts. The doll brand was one of the most popular toy fads of the 1980s and one of the longest-running doll franchises in the United States.

Calvin Murphy

Calvin Jerome Murphy (5'9") is an American retired professional basketball player who played as a guard for the NBA's San Diego/Houston Rockets from 1970 to 1983. He is a current member of the

Houston Rockets' AT&T Sportsnet TV broadcast team.

Capitalist Roader

A person or group who demonstrates a marked tendency to bow to pressure from bourgeois forces and subsequently attempts to pull the Revolution in a capitalist direction.

Carpe Diem

A shortened version of the original Latin phrase, “Carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero,” which means “Seize the day, trusting as little as possible in the future.” It is commonly used to justify spontaneous behavior, because one doesn't know if they'll live to see tomorrow. However, the actual phrase is not saying to ignore the future, but rather to do as much as you can today because you won't know if everything will fall into place in the long run. (Source: Urban Dictionary)

CCTV

China Central Television, which is the predominant state television broadcaster in the People's Republic of China. CCTV has a network of 50 channels broadcasting different programs

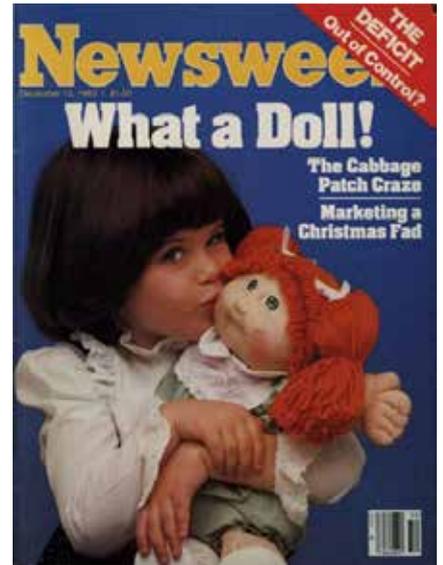


PHOTO: CABBAGE PATCH KIDS (NEWSWEEK)

and is accessible to more than one billion viewers.

Chang'an Avenue

A major route in Beijing that runs through the heart of the city.

“China has always had basketball”

An estimated 300 million Chinese people play basketball — roughly equivalent to the entire population of the United States, according to the Chinese Basketball Association. Many Americans are just now learning of China's enthusiasm for the sport as the success of Jeremy



PHOTO: CALVIN MURPHY (NBA.COM)



PHOTO: THE CITY OF COLMA (JIM WATSON, THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Lin, a California-born Knicks player of Chinese heritage, has become an international phenomenon. But the sport is almost as old in the land of Lin’s ancestors, and maybe even more popular, than it is in the U.S.

Introduced to China over a century ago by YMCA missionaries, basketball has seeped into the fabric of Chinese lives. Until the NBA arrived in early 1990s, basketball felt so intrinsically Chinese that most people didn’t associate it with America. In China, basketball is perhaps the only true national sport that brings together people of all backgrounds and kindles the nation.

During the Cultural Revolution, Mao declared war against almost all Western bourgeois affections, from classical music to novels, but he never wavered in support of basketball. Deprived of all forms of cultural enrichment and lacking the most basic athletic equipment, children and young adults roamed around their neighborhoods, setting up boards and hoops in alleys and courtyards and pouring their energy into the simple game of shooting the hoops. (Source: *The Atlantic*)

Colma

A small incorporated town in San Mateo County, California, on the San Francisco Peninsula in the San Francisco Bay Area. The town was founded as a necropolis in 1924 to

protect graveyards from capricious acts of government. Many graveyards had been disrupted a decade earlier when the city of San Francisco evicted all but a few of the 26 cemeteries along with the thousands of bodies they held.

The city’s politicians argued that cemeteries spread disease, but the true reason for the eviction was the rising value of real estate. With most of Colma’s land dedicated to cemeteries, the population of the dead — about 1.5 million as of 2006 — outnumbers the living by nearly a thousand to one. This is why Colma is called The City of the Silent and has a humorous motto: “It’s great to be alive in Colma.” (Source: *The New York Times*)

“Columbo”

An American TV series starring Peter Falk as Columbo — a homicide detective with the LAPD. The character and show popularized the inverted detective story format, which begins by showing the crime and its perpetrator, removes the “whodunit” element and revolves around how a known perpetrator will be caught and exposed.

Deng Xiaoping

A Chinese politician who was the paramount leader of the People’s Republic of China from 1978 until his retirement in 1989. After Chairman Mao Zedong’s death in

1976, Deng led China through far-reaching, market-economy reforms.

“Drive it to the hole”

A basketball term that means to drive to the basket and make a layup instead of shooting from outside. The intent of driving is not always just to score — it may be to cause a foul, draw the defense in or create movement. Whatever the reason, it is one of the best and safest forms of offensive attack.

Duracell Bunny

An anthropomorphic pink rabbit powered by batteries who promotes Duracell-brand batteries. The ads are based on the concept that the bunny, when powered by a Duracell alkaline battery, can function longer than an identical device, and they usually feature the bunnies competing in a game of football, drumming competition or race. The Duracell Bunny campaign was launched in 1973 and predates the Energizer Bunny, who was created in 1989 and wears



PHOTO: DURACELL AND ENERGIIZER BUNNIES (THE GUARDIAN)

sunglasses, has larger ears, is a different shade of pink and has a different body shape.

Eleanor Rigby

The name of a Beatles song written by Paul McCartney and named after actress Eleanor Bron, who appeared in their 1965 film *Help!*. “Rigby” came to him when he was in Bristol, England, and spotted a store named Rigby and Evens Ltd Wine and Spirit Shippers. He liked the name “Eleanor Rigby” because it sounded natural and matched the rhythm he wrote.

Full Court Press

A basketball term for a defensive style in which the defense applies pressure to the offensive team the entire length of the court before and after the inbound pass. Pressure may be applied man-to-man or zone-to-zone.

Fuzhou

The capital and one of the largest cities in the Fujian province of China. During the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the Communist Party built and utilized “re-education” camps in the province, which were essentially prisons and work camps. The Communist Party believed that anyone who was against the Revolution — a category that included most intellectuals — was considered bourgeois and needed the tough labor of the camps to develop empathy for the common worker.

“Help me, Connie Fong, you are my only hope”

A reference to *Star Wars Episode IV - A New Hope* where Princess Leia says, “Help me, Obi-Wan Kenobi, you are my only hope,” in an attempt to convince Obi-Wan to aid her father’s struggle against the Empire.

“Ich bin ein Beijinger”

A reference to the famous quote (“Ich bin ein Berliner”) from a speech John F. Kennedy gave on June 26, 1963, in West Berlin. It is widely regarded as the best-known speech of the Cold War and the most famous anti-communist speech. Kennedy aimed to underline the support of the United States for West Germany 22 months after Soviet-occupied East Germany erected the Berlin Wall to prevent mass emigration to the West. The message was aimed as much at the Soviets as it was at Berliners — a clear statement of

U.S. policy in the wake of the Berlin Wall’s construction.

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times”

The opening line of Charles Dickens’ French Revolution novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*.

Kato

A fictional character from “The Green Hornet” TV series. Kato was the Green Hornet’s valet, who doubled as his masked driver and partner-in-crime.

Key

The rectangular area under the basket and free throw circle. Originally referred to as the “key” because the lane lines were closer together than the width of the free throw circle, which created the appearance of a key hole.

Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing

Two giant pandas given to the United States as gifts by the government of China following President Richard Nixon’s visit in 1972. The U.S. government sent

China a pair of musk oxen in return. The pandas were captured in the wild in June and December 1971.

Macher

A Yiddish slang term for a big shot or important person, derived from the German word “macher” which means “maker.” It is used to describe a man who has produced a lot of himself and others. (Source: Yiddish Slang Dictionary)

Mickey Gorbachev

A nickname for the Russian and formerly Soviet politician Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev, who was the eighth and last leader of the Soviet Union. One of his physical attributes was a port-wine stain, commonly called a fire mark, on his upper forehead — a discoloration of the skin caused by a capillary malformation.

In May 1989, Gorbachev ended 30 years of formal and often bitter estrangement between the world’s two largest communist nations (U.S.S.R. and China) when he arrived to a 21-gun salute at

PHOTO: LING-LING AND HSING-HSING (JESSE COHEN)





PHOTO: MIKHAIL GORBACHEV VISITING CHINA (CATHERINE HENRIETTE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES)

the Beijing airport. The visit was clouded by thousands of student protesters whose presence in Tiananmen Square prompted the Chinese government to switch the welcoming ceremony from the square to the airport. Students said they would continue to occupy Tiananmen Square, which is the symbolic heart of China, until the police forced them out.

Mishpucha

A Yiddish term for family.

Muggsy Bogues

Tyrone Curtis “Muggsy” Bogues (5’3”) is an American retired basketball player. He is the shortest player ever to play in the NBA, and he played point guard for four teams during his 14-season career.

PHOTO: MUGGSY BOGUES (NATHANIEL S. BUTLER/NBAE VIA GETTY IMAGES)



Ping-Pong Diplomacy

A breakthrough in U.S. and China relations that came through a public encounter between two ping-pong players. During the 1971 World Table Tennis Championships in Nagoya, Japan, U.S. player Glenn Cowan hopped on a shuttle bus carrying the Chinese national team. Zhuang Zedong, the team’s greatest player, stepped forward to shake Cowan’s hand and speak to him through an interpreter. He even presented a gift: a silk-screen picture of China’s Huangshan mountains. Cowan returned the gesture the following day by giving Zhuang a T-shirt emblazoned with a peace symbol and the Beatles’ lyric “Let it be.” Photographers caught the incident on film, and the unexpected good will between the United States and Chinese teams soon became the talk of the tournament. ...



PHOTO: U.S. AND CHINA PING-PONG TEAMS (AFP/GETTY IMAGES)

A few days later, as the U.S. team was preparing to leave Nagoya, Mao shocked the world by inviting

them to make an all-expense-paid visit to China. “I was as surprised as I was pleased,” President Nixon later wrote in his memoirs. “I had never expected that the China initiative would come to fruition in the form of a ping-pong team.” ...

The American team left China on April 17, arriving back in Hong Kong to a sea of reporters and news photographers. By then, the “ping heard round the world,” as *TIME* magazine had called it, was already bearing diplomatic fruit. On April 14, President Nixon announced that the United States was easing its travel bans and trade embargos against China. ...

The ripple effects of what had become known as “Ping-Pong Diplomacy” only continued the following year. In response to the American trip, the Chinese sent their table tennis team to the United States for an eight-city tour. Even more earth shattering was Richard Nixon’s February 1972 visit to the People’s Republic, which marked the first time in history that an American president had traveled to the Chinese mainland. (Source: History.com)

PHOTO: NIXON AND MAO TSE-TUNG (PUBLIC DOMAIN)



Rain Man

A reference to the 1988 film *Rain Man* starring Tom Cruise and Dustin Hoffman. The phrase is often used in contemporary slang to refer to a person who has an autism spectrum disorder or is mentally and/or socially impaired.

Rick Barry

Richard Francis Dennis Barry III (6'7") is an American retired professional basketball player who is the only player ever to lead the NCAA, NBA and ABA in scoring. His name appears near the top of every all-time offensive list. He scored more than 25,000 points in his professional career and was a nearly unstoppable offensive juggernaut and a passionate competitor with an untempered desire to win. (Source: Nba.com)

Rock

A slang term for a basketball.

Screen

A basketball play where a player sets a stationary block on their teammate's defender. The goal of a screen is to give their teammate space that may lead to an open shot or pass.

Spud Webb

Anthony Jerome "Spud" Webb (5'7") is an American retired professional basketball point guard who played in the NBA. He is known for winning a slam dunk contest despite being one of the shortest players in NBA history.

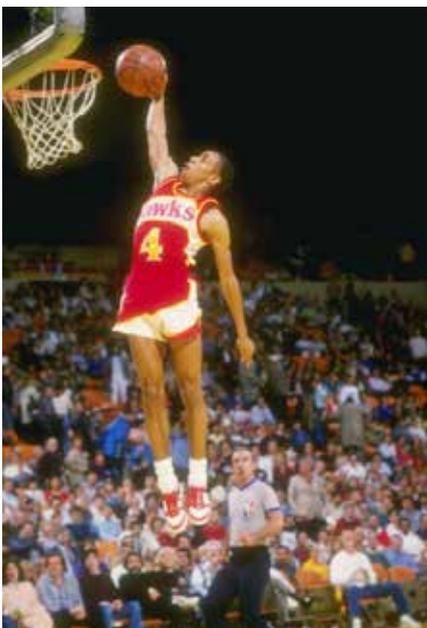


PHOTO: SPUD WEBB (STEPHEN DUNN/ALLSPORT VIA GETTY IMAGES)

Suicides

A type of grueling running drill in American sports, usually performed on a basketball court. Athletes run suicides by repeatedly sprinting from a starting point to a series of lines across the court and back again. The drill is intended to improve speed and agility; its gruesome name reflects the intensity of the physical effort it requires. (Source: Oxford English Dictionary)

Suzie Wong

A reference to the 1957 novel, *The World of Suzie Wong*, by Richard Mason. The main characters are Robert Lomax, a young British artist living in Hong Kong, and Suzie Wong, a Chinese woman who works as a prostitute.

"They say you want a revolution?"

A line from "Revolution," a song recorded by the Beatles in 1968 as part of "The White Album." Inspired by political protests in early 1968, Lennon's lyrics expressed sympathy with the need for change but doubt in regard to some of the tactics. When the single version was released in August, the political left viewed it as betraying their cause. The release of the album version in November indicated Lennon's uncertainty about destructive change, with the phrase "count me out" recorded differently as "count me out, in."

Title IX

Part of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 which states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Tourette Syndrome

A neurological disorder characterized by repetitive, stereotyped, involuntary movements and vocalizations called tics. The disorder is named for Dr. Georges Gilles de la Tourette, the pioneering French neurologist who first diagnosed the condition in an 86-year-old French noblewoman in 1885.

Zone Defense

Unlike man-to-man defense, where each player guards a member of the opposing team, each zone defender is responsible for guarding an area of the floor or "zone" and any offensive player who comes into that area. Zone defenders move their position on the floor in relationship to where the ball moves.

For Further Reading and Understanding

BOOKS

Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth, and Faith in the New China by Evan Osnos, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, May 5, 2015 (reprint edition).

Basketball Basics by Howard Marcus, McGraw-Hill, 1991.

Brave Dragons: A Chinese Basketball Team, an American Coach, and Two Cultures Clashing by Jim Yardley, Vintage, 2013.

Oracle Bones: A Journey Through Time in China by Peter Hessler, Harper Perennial, May 8, 2007 (reprint edition).

The Penguin History of Modern China: The Fall and Rise of a Great Power, 1850 to the Present by Jonathan Fenby, Penguin UK, 2013 (second edition).

The Tiananmen Square Massacre: The History and Legacy of the Chinese Government's Crackdown on the 1989 Protests, Charles River Editors, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017

Who Will Shout If Not Us?: Student Activists and the Tiananmen Square Protest, China, 1989 by Ann Kerns, Twenty-First Century Books, 2010.

FILM

The Tank Man, Frontline/PBS videos, April 11, 2006.
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/tankman/>.



PHOTO: LEE SELLARS AND LEAH ANDERSON IN *THE GREAT LEAP* (DAN NORMAN)



PHOTO: LAWRENCE KAO IN *THE GREAT LEAP* (DAN NORMAN)