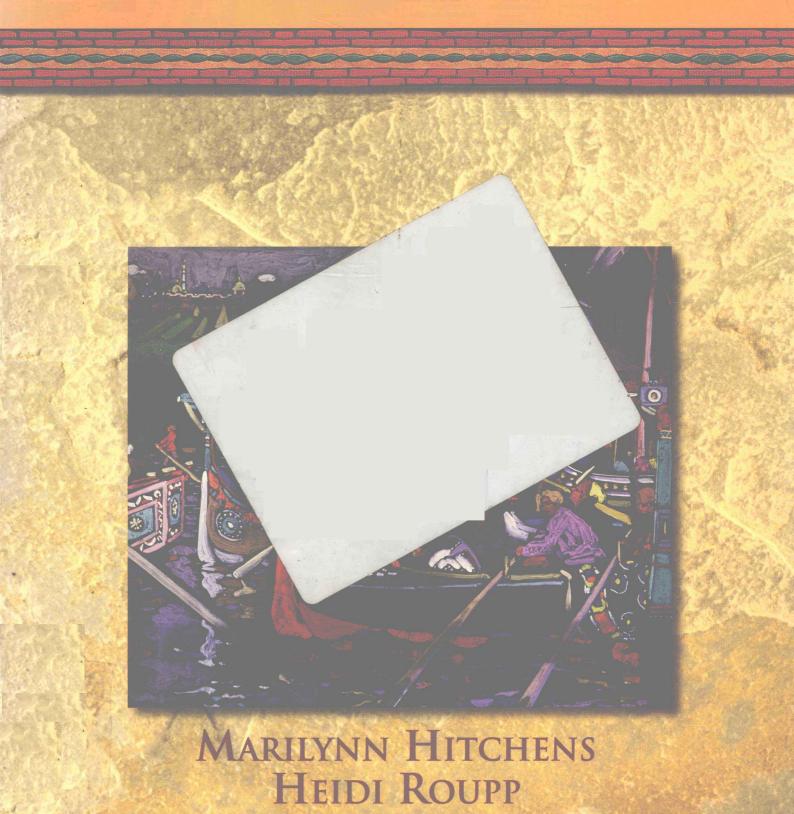
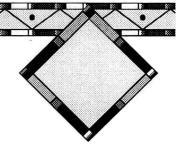
WORLD LITERATURE READINGS





WORLD LITERATURE READINGS

to accompany

WORLD HISTORY The Human Odyssey and MODERN WORLD HISTORY

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By

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INTRODUCTION

Literature is both an art form and an important kind of historical record. As history, literature reveals a more emotional and intimate side of the people who lived it than does documentary evidence. As such, it conveys to us a feeling about history as well as the facts of history.

The readings in this collection were chosen with several things in mind. First, they were chosen for their close connection with important events and themes in world history. In some cases, the literature itself helped to shape events or it simply reflected events of the time, giving us a clearer and richer picture of it. In other cases, the literature is of such quality and beauty that it has become a classic that transcends a particular time and place and has, thereby, taken its place among the core of human achievements in the world.

The readings in this collection also reflect an attempt to represent a variety of types of literature. Readings include poetry, essays, excerpts from novels and plays, songs, funeral orations, speeches, legends and myths, and oral histories.

Finally, the readings were chosen with the student in mind. Selections were made not only to capture the interest of students but to help to enlighten and enrich students, not just in the study of history, but in the living and understanding of their own lives.

This collection is not meant to capture all of the world's literature that is worthy of being included. Some literature is not included because it is so inaccessible that students wanting to read more would have a difficult time obtaining copies for themselves. Also, much American and some European literature has been left out because it is assumed that students have already been introduced to it in their English classes.

Reading literature as history is different than reading it for its literary quality. In this respect, the introductory pieces are intended to direct the student toward thinking of it in its chronological and geographical context, and connecting it with the important themes and events of world history. The questions, likewise, ask the student to think and learn historically from the reading. This should not lessen its emotional impact on the student reader but rather give students a clearer understanding of its meaning and source of inspiration.

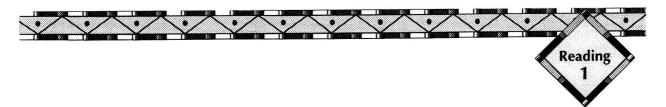


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^{*} These selections, or portions thereof, are available on the *Listening to Literature* audiocassettes and CDs, in English and Spanish versions.



THE FIRST STORYTELLERS

In September of 1940, four teenaged boys climbed to a cave opening above the town of Montignac to explore what they thought was a secret tunnel to the old Lascaux manor. They cleared away the underbrush and one by one pushed their way beyond the opening down into the cave. Flickering rays of the oil lamp revealed paintings of Paleolithic animals 17,000 years old. These paintings were similar to ones discovered in Altamira, Spain in 1868 when hunters were looking for a lost dog. These cave paintings and the ones in Spain were painted by artists who must have built scaffolding to apply mixed pigments to the rocky surface of the cave walls and ceilings. Since then, discoveries of early human paintings in caves and on protected rock cliffs have been found from Europe, Africa, and China to the Americas.

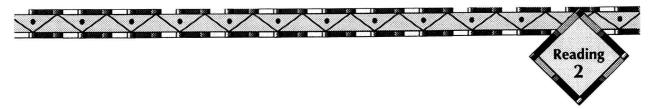
Text reference: Chapter 1, World History, The Human Odyssey; Chapter 1, Modern World History

The animal envoys of the Unseen Power no longer serve, as in primeval times, to teach and to guide mankind. Bears, lions, elephants, ibexes, and gazelles are in cages in our zoos. Man is no longer the newcomer in a world of unexplored plains and forests, and our immediate neighbors are not wild beasts but other human beings, contending for goods and space on a planet that is whirling without end around the fireball of a star. Neither in body nor in mind do we inhabit the world of those hunting races of the Paleolithic millennia, to whose lives and life ways we nevertheless owe the very forms of our bodies and structures of our minds. Memories of their animal envoys still must sleep, somehow, within us: for they wake a little and stir when we venture into wilderness. They wake in terror to thunder. And again they wake, with a sense of recognition, when we enter any one of those great painted caves. Whatever the inward darkness may have been to which the shamans of those caves descended in their trances, the same must lie within ourselves, nightly visited in sleep.

—Joseph Campbell, The Way of the Animal Powers

Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), p. 69.

- 1. Who are the first storytellers? Why would the subjects of this early cave art be animals?
- 2. Explain what Campbell means by the term "animal envoys of the Unseen Power" and why he contrasts that image with "bears, lions, elephants, ibexes and gazelles" in cages.
- 3. What does Campbell mean by "Neither in body nor in mind do we inhabit the world of those hunting races of the Paleolithic millennia, to whose lives and life ways we nevertheless owe the very forms of our bodies and structures of our minds"?
- 4. Why are humans still fascinated with the cave paintings in Spain and France?
- 5. What is the meaning of the reading's last sentence?



LOVE SONGS OF A WOMAN FROM THE NEW KINGDOM

The Egyptians were less pessimistic about the finality of death than were the Mesopotamians. They believed death was not an end to life, and that life could be celebrated in the afterlife as it had been in life itself. In funerary procedures, objects of life were sent with the departed to the afterlife so that life could continue as before. Both the art and literature of Egypt were reflective of this attitude in the celebration of the beauty of nature and the joys of love. These love poems were meant to be sung by a woman and may have been composed by a woman. (Use of the word brother or sister to refer to a beloved was a common practice at the time.)

Text reference: Chapter 2, World History, The Human Odyssey; Chapter 1, Modern World History

y brother, my beloved, My heart pursues the love of thee, All that thou has brought into being. I say to thee: "See what I am doing!" I have come from setting my trap with my (own) hand; In my hand are my bait and my snare. All the birds of Punt, they alight in Egypt, Anointed with myrrh. The first one comes and takes my worm. Its fragrance is brought from Punt, And its talons are full of resin. My wish for thee is that we loose them together, When I am alone with thee, That I might let thee hear the cry Of the one anointed with myrrh. How good it would be If thou wert there with me When I set the trap! The best is to go to the fields, To the one who is beloved!

he voice of the swallow speaks and says:
"The land has brightened—What is thy road?"
Thou shalt not, O bird, disturb me!
I have found my brother...,
And my heart is still more glad,
(When he) said to me:
"I shall not go afar off.

My hand is in thy hand, I shall stroll about, And I shall be with thee in every pleasant place." He makes me the foremost of maidens. He injures not my heart.

Like a horse of the king,
Picked from a thousand of all steeds,
The foremost of the stables!
It is distinguished in its food,
And its master knows its paces.
If it hears the sound of the whip,
It knows no delay,
And there is no foremost of the chasseurs
Who can stay before it (to hold it).
How well the sister's heart knows
That he is not far from the sister!

Alfred J. Andrea and James H. Overfield, *The Human Record: Sources of Global History, Volume 1: to 1700* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972), pp. 25-26.

- 1. In the first poem, what picture of nature does the author paint? What is myrrh?
- 2. In the second poem, what did "he" say that made her so happy?
- 3. In the third poem, for what does the woman wish?
- 4. What conclusion(s) can you draw about the status and freedom enjoyed by women of the New Kingdom?



THE BHAGAVADGITA

The two greatest epics of Indian literature, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, probably began to take form about 100 B.C. The Mahabharata is the longest epic poem in world literature. It describes an eighteen-day struggle between rival families for the throne of a kingdom in northern India. The most famous section is called the Bhagavadgita or "Song of the Lord." Its message is a religious one—that life is a never-ending journey toward perfection, a perfection that can be attained only by following the code of conduct of one's caste. In this selection Arjuna, the leader of an army preparing for battle, hesitates, fearing that the killing of his kinsmen for a worldly end must be sinful. The Hindu god, Krishna, who is serving as Arjuna's charioteer, assures him otherwise.

Text reference: Chapter 3, World History, The Human Odyssey; Chapter 1, Modern World History

he Blessed Lord said:

You grieve for those who should not be mourned, and yet you speak words of wisdom! The learned do not grieve for the dead or for the living.

Never, indeed, was there a time when I was not, nor when you were not, nor these lords of men. Never, too, will there be a time, hereafter, when we shall not be.

As in this body, there are for the embodied one [i.e., the soul] childhood, youth, and old age, even so there is the taking on of another body. The wise sage is not perplexed thereby.

These bodies of the eternal embodied one, who is indestructible and incomprehensible, are said to have an end. Therefore fight, O Bharata.

He who regards him [i.e., the soul] as a slayer, and he who regards him as slain—both of them do no know the truth; for this one neither slays nor is slain.

He is born, nor does he die at any time; nor, having once come to be will he again come not to be. He is unborn, eternal, permanent, and primeval; he is not slain when the body is slain.

Whoever knows him to be indestructible and eternal, unborn and immutable—how and whom can such a man, O son of Pritha, cause to be slain or slay?

The embodied one within the body of everyone, O Bharata, is ever unslayable. Therefore, you should not grieve for any being.

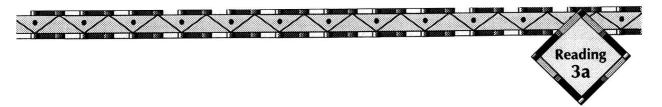
Further, having regard to your dharma [duty] you should not falter. For a kshatriya there does not exist another greater good than war enjoined by dharma.

Blessed are the kshatriyas, O son of Pritha, who get such a war, which being, as it were, the open gate to heaven, comes to them of its own accord.

- But if you do not fight this battle which is enjoined by dharma, then you will have given up your own dharma as well as glory, and you will incur sin.
- Moreover, all beings will recount your eternal infamy. And for one who has been honored, infamy is worse than death.
- The great car warriors will think of you as one who has refrained from battle through fear; having been once greatly respected by them, you will be reduced to pettiness.
- Those who are not favorably inclined toward you will speak many unutterable words, slandering your might. What, indeed, can be more painful than that?
- Either, being slain, you will attain heaven; or being victorious, you will enjoy [i.e., rule] the earth. Therefore arise, O son of Kunti, intent on battle.

William Theodore de Bary, ed., Sources of Indian Tradition, Volume I (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 279-281.

- 1. How does Kirshna argue that it is impossible to kill or be killed?
- 2. Who are Kshatriyas? Why are they blessed?
- 3. Why does Krishna believe that Arjuna must fight? What is your reaction to Krishna's advice?



THE EDICTS OF ASOKA

Emperor Asoka ruled India from 269-232 B.C. Upon his conversion to Buddhism, the emperor was determined to spread the religion's message throughout India and beyond. He can be compared to the Roman emperor Constantine and the Islamic caliph Abu Bakr, who both turned small indigenous religions (Christianity and Islam, respectively) into state religions. Asoka, Constantine, and Bakr all used religion to centralize and legitimize rule, give expansionist efforts a religious sanctity, and support the arts. After Asoka's death, Buddhism gradually blended into Hinduism, though outside of India it gained tremendous power and popularity.

In this excerpt, Asoka recounts the story of his conversion to Buddhism after a brutal battle for control of the eastern Indian state of Kalinga. Note that the term dharma, used by Hindus and Buddhists, means divine law and involves ideas about duty, piety, and ethics.

Text reference: Chapter 3, World History, The Human Odyssey; Chapter 1, Modern World History

he Kalinga country was conquered by King Priyadarsi [Asoka], Beloved of the Gods, in the eighth year of his reign. One hundred and fifty thousand persons were carried away captive, one hundred thousand were slain, and many times that number died.

Immediately after the Kalingas had been conquered, King Priyadarsi became intensely devoted to the study of Dharma, to the love of Dharma, and to the inculcation of Dharma.

The Beloved of the Gods, conqueror of the Kalingas, is moved to remorse now. For he has felt profound sorrow and regret because the conquest of a people previously unconquered involves slaughter, death, and deportation.

But there is a more important reason for the King's remorse. The Brahmanas and Sramanas [the priestly and ascetic orders] as well as the followers of other religions and the householders—who all practiced obedience to superiors, parents, and teachers, and proper courtesy and firm devotion to friends, acquaintances, companions, relatives, slaves, and servants—all suffer from the injury, slaughter, and deportation inflicted on their loved ones. Even those who escaped calamity themselves are deeply afflicted by the misfortunes suffered by those friends, acquaintances, companions, and relatives for whom they feel an undiminished affection. Thus all men share in the misfortune, and this weighs on King Priyadarsi's mind.

...even if the number of people who were killed or who died or who were carried away in the Kalinga war had been only one one-hundredth or one one-thousandth of what actually was, this would still have weighed on the King's mind.

King Priyadarsi now thinks that even a person who wrongs him must be forgiven for wrongs that can be forgiven.

King Priyadarsi seeks to induce even the forest peoples who have come under his dominion [that is, primitive peoples in the remote sections of the conquered territory] to

adopt this way of life and this ideal. He reminds them, however, that he exercises the power to punish, despite his repentance, in order to induce them to desist from their crimes and escape execution.

For King Priyadarsi desires security, self-control, impartiality, and cheerfulness for all living creatures.

King Priyadarsi considers moral conquest [that is, conquest by Dharma, *Dharma-vijaya*] the most important conquest. He has achieved this moral conquest repeatedly both here and among the peoples living beyond the borders of his kingdom....

This edict on Dharma has been inscribed so that my sons and great-grandsons who may come after me should not think new conquests worth achieving. If they do conquer, let them take pleasure in moderation and mild punishments. Let them consider moral conquest the only true conquest.

My highest officials, who have authority over large numbers of people, will expound and spread the precepts of Dharma. I have instructed the provincial governors, too, who are in charge of many hundred thousand people, concerning how to guide people devoted to Dharma.

King Priyadarsi says:

Having come to this conclusion, therefore, I have erected pillars proclaiming Dharma. I have appointed officers charged with the spread of Dharma....I have issued proclamations on Dharma....

Asoka [Ashoka], Beloved of the Gods, issues the following proclamation:

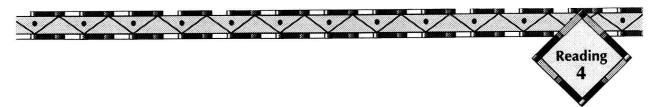
For more than two and a half years, I have been a lay disciple [*upasaka*] of the Buddha. More than a year ago, I visited the Samgha [the Buddhist religious orders], and since then I have been energetic in my efforts....

Everywhere in my dominions local, provincial, and state officials shall make a tour of their districts every five years to proclaim the following precepts of Dharma as well as to transact other business:

Obedience to mother and father; liberality to friends, acquaintances, relatives, priests, and ascetics; abstention from killing living creatures; and moderation in spending money and acquiring possessions are all meritorious.

Merry E. Wiesner, et al., *Discovering the Global Past: A Look at the Evidence*, Volume I: To 1600 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), pp. 168-170.

- 1. According to Asoka (King Priyadarsi), what was the human cost of the Kalinga battle?
- 2. Why is Asoka remorseful? How did his regrets change his thinking?
- 3. What does Asoka desire for all living creatures?
- 4. Explain Asoka's ideas about true conquest.
- 5. How does Asoka plan to spread Dharma?



THE WISDOM OF CONFUCIUS

Confucius (551-479 B.C.) was China's most famous teacher and philosopher. The second son of a family that had lost its social position as aristocrats, Confucius was orphaned at an early age. He managed to educate himself and became a teacher for the sons of gentlemen. When the Zhou Dynasty disintegrated into small competing kingdoms, Confucius sought to become an advisor to one of the competing rulers, but was never successful. He did develop a following of devoted students who recorded his ideas in the Analects (excerpted below). Confucius taught his students to develop an understanding of life and human relationships and to improve human life in this world. His teachings significantly influenced the development of social and political thought not only in China, but also in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. Even today his birthday is celebrated in Taiwan as a national holiday.

Text reference: Chapter 3, World History, The Human Odyssey; Chapter 1, Modern World History

His Love of Learning

onfucius said: "Sometimes I have gone a whole day without food and a whole night without sleep, giving myself to thought. It was no use. It is better to learn." [XV:30]

Confucius as a Teacher

- 23. Confucius said: "By nature men are pretty much alike; it is learning and practice that set them apart." [XVII:2]
- 22. Confucius said: "In education there are no class distinctions." [XV:38]
- 24. Confucius said: "The young are to be respected. How do we know that the next generation will not measure up to the present one? But if a man has reached forty or fifty and nothing has been heard of him, then I grant that he is not worthy of respect." [IX:22]
- 26. Confucius said: "Those who are born wise are the highest type of people; those who become wise through learning come next; those who learn by overcoming dullness come after that. Those who are dull but still won't learn are the lowest type of people." [XVI:9]
- 27. Confucius said: "I won't teach a man who is not anxious to learn, and will not explain to one who is not trying to make things clear to himself. If I hold up one corner of a square and a man cannot come back to me with the other three, I won't bother to go over the point again." [VII:8]
- 28. Confucius said: "Learning without thinking is labor lost; thinking without learning is perilous." [II:15]
- 29. Confucius said: "Yu, shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, say that you know it; when you do not know a thing, admit that you do not know it. That is knowledge." [II:17]

34. Confucius said: "Personal cultivation begins with poetry, is made firm by rules of decorum (*li*), and is perfected by music." [VIII:8]

The Unitary Principle: Reciprocity or Humanity

- 40. Tzu Kung asked: "Is there any one word that can serve as a principle for the conduct of life?" Confucius said: "Perhaps the world 'reciprocity': Do not do to others what you would not want others to do to you." [XV:23]
- 43. Chung-kung asked about humanity. Confucius said: "Behave when away from home as though you were in the presence of an important guest. Deal with the common people as though you were officiating at an important sacrifice. Do not do to others what you would not want others to do to you. Then there will be no dissatisfaction either in the state or at home." [XII:2] 44. Confucius said:..."The humane man, desiring to be established himself, seeks to establish others; desiring himself to succeed, he helps others to succeed. To judge others by what one knows of oneself is the method of achieving humanity." [VI:28]

Humanity (jen)

46. Tzu Chang asked Confucius about humanity. Confucius said: "To be able to practice five virtues everywhere in the world constitutes humanity." Tsu Chang begged to know what these were. Confucius said: "Courtesy, magnanimity, good faith, diligence, and kindness. He who is courteous is not humiliated, he who is magnanimous wins the multitude, he who is of good faith is trusted by the people, he who is diligent attains his objective, and he who is kind can get service from the people." [XVII:6]

Religious Sentiment

67. Tzu Lu asked about the worship of ghosts and spirits. Confucius said: "We don't know yet how to serve men, how can we know about serving the spirits?" "What about death," was the next question. Confucius said: "We don't know yet about life, how can we know about death?" [XI:11]

The Gentleman

- 78. Confucius said: "When nature exceeds art you have the rustic. When art exceeds nature you have the clerk. It is only when art and nature are harmoniously blended that you have the gentleman." [VI:16]
- 79. Confucius said:..."If a gentleman departs from humanity, how can he bear the name? Not even for the lapse of a single meal does a gentleman ignore humanity. In moments of haste he cleaves to it; in seasons of peril he cleaves to it." [IV:5]
- 83. Confucius said: "You may be able to carry off from a whole army its commander-in-chief, but you cannot deprive the humblest individual of his will." [IX:25]
- 89. Confucius said: "The gentleman makes demands on himself; the inferior man makes demands on others." [XV:20]

Government by Personal Virtue

- 94. Chi K'ang Tzu asked Confucius about government. Confucius said: "To govern (*cheng*) is to set things right (*cheng*). If you begin by setting yourself right, who will dare to deviate from the right?" [XII:17]
- 95. Confucius said: "If a ruler himself is upright, all will go well without orders. But if he himself is not upright, even though he gives orders they will not be obeyed." [XIII:6]
- 97. Confucius said: "Lead the people by laws and regulate them by penalties, and the people will try to keep out of jail, but will have no sense of shame. Lead the people by virtue and restrain them by the rules of decorum, and the people will have a sense of shame, and moreover will become good." [II:3]
- 99. The Duke of She asked about good government. Confucius said: "[A government is good when] those near are happy and those far off are attracted." [XIII:16]
- 100. When Confucius was traveling to Wei, Jan Yu drove him. Confucius observed: "What a dense population!" Jan Yu said: "The people having grown so numerous, what next should be done for them?" "Enrich them," was the reply. "And when one has enriched them, what next should be done?" Confucius said: "Educate them." [XIII:9]
- 101. Tzu Kung asked above[sic] government. Confucius said: "The essentials are sufficient food, sufficient troops, and the confidence of the people." Tzu Kung said: "Suppose you were forced to give up one of these three, which would you let go first?" Confucius said: "The troops." Tzu Kung asked again: "If you are forced to give up one of the two remaining, which would you let go?" Confucius said: "Food. For from of old, death has been the lot of all men, but a people without faith cannot survive." [XII:7]

William Theodore de Bary, ed., Sources of Chinese Tradition Volume I (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), pp. 23-26, 29-33.

- 1. Rewrite three of these teachings of Confucius in your own words.
- 2. Do any of these teachings apply to modern life? Which ones? How?
- 3. Which of these teachings would you regard as the most valuable advice for leading a good life? Why?
- 4. Write a story to illustrate one of the teachings of Confucius and read it to the class.