

Asian / Asian-American Fiction

The following titles attempt to help form an understanding of Asian and Asian American experiences, their history and their culture, from homeland to adopted country.

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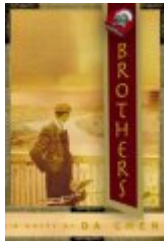
Chinese

[Chinatown Beat](#) by Henry Chang



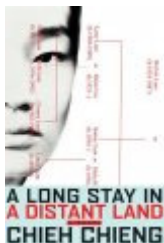
Here's a dark slice of New York's Chinatown that most of us...have probably never seen. Henry Chang takes us on an unforgettable guided tour of its lower depths. In a field awash with pallid noir thrillers, this one is the real thing. A genuine winner. For readers who relish noir suspense, it doesn't get much better than this stunning novel.

[Brothers](#) by Da Chen



From Shaolin to the sugarloaf mountains of Gwangdong to Tiananmen Square and the skyscrapers of New York: an epic novel that neatly distills modern Chinese history. Da Chen's elegantly written novel ends on the promise of redemption.

[Long Stay in a Distant Land](#) by Chieh Chieng



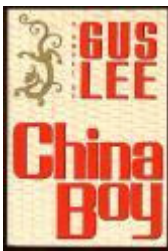
Chieh Chieng's hilarious and inventive first novel traces three generations of a death-stalked Chinese-American family in Orange County, California. Charmingly eccentric and refreshingly unsterotypical.

Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress by Dai Sijie



During the Chinese Cultural Revolution, two boys are sent to the country for reeducation, where their lives take an unexpected turn when they meet the beautiful daughter of a local tailor and stumble upon a forbidden stash of Western literature.

China Boy by Gus Lee



An American-born son of an aristocratic Chinese family struggles with the uncertainties of growing up torn between two cultures in a tough San Francisco neighborhood during the 1950s.

Love in a Fallen City by Eileen Chang



With language as sharp as a knife edge, Eileen Chang cut open a huge divide in Chinese culture, between the classical patriarchy and our troubled modernity. She was one of the very few able truly to connect that divide, just as her heroines often disappeared inside it. She is the fallen angel of Chinese literature, and now, with these excellent new translations, English readers can discover why she is so revered by Chinese readers everywhere.

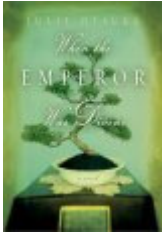
Japanese

Kafka on the Shore by Haruki Murakami



An insistently metaphysical mind-bender. If he has not achieved that status already, Haruki Murakami is on course to becoming the most widely read Japanese writer outside Japan, past or present.

When the Emperor was Divine by Julie Otsuka



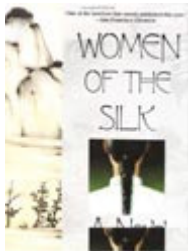
A story told from five different points of view, chronicles the experiences of Japanese Americans caught up in the nightmare of the World War II internment camps.

My Year of Meats by Ruth Ozeki



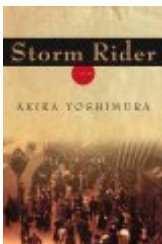
A much-hyped debut from documentary filmmaker Ozeki proves well worth the fuss, as a tale both heartwarming and horrific of two women one American, one Japanese curiously allied in a struggle against the determination of the meat industry to make the world safe for hormone-laced American beef. Ozeki skillfully tackles hard-pressing issues such as the use and effects of hormones in the beef industry and topics such as cultural differences, gender roles, and sexual exploitation. Her work is unique in presentation yet moving and entertaining. Highly recommended for general fiction collections.

Women of the Silk by Gail Tsukiyama



An auspicious debut, this sensitively written, impressively researched novel covers 20 years in the life of Pei, a Chinese girl sent to work in a silk factory during the first decades of the 20th century. Details of the process of spinning silk, the close bonds among the sisterhood, and contrasts between the tradition-steeped existence the young women enjoy and the upheaval attending the new communist regime create a compelling narrative. Tsukiyama's simple, elegant and fluid prose weaves a vivid picture of rural China. In delicately evoking the silk workers' world, she has opened a window onto an aspect of China few outsiders ever see.

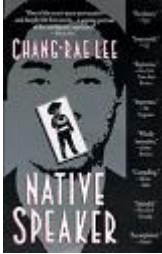
Storm Rider by Akira Yoshimura



Yoshimura brings us to the mid-1800s, where he tracks the real life of Hizoko, a Japanese boy orphaned by his mother at 13. When Hizoko follows in his stepfather's and stepbrother's footsteps and becomes a sailor, he is caught in a violent storm and shipwrecked. As a castaway, Hizoko is found and brought to America, where he is baptized as Joseph Heco. When he takes a difficult journey back to his homeland some nine years later, he experiences the loneliness of a man caught between two separate cultures who has to face the disappointment of not fitting into either one.

Korean

[Native Speaker](#) by Chang-Rae Lee



In a first novel of impressive poetic and psychological accomplishment, Lee offers his readers first-generation Korean American and spy Henry Park, a compelling, clever, but vulnerable narrator. On assignment as a mole in the office of councilman and New York mayoral hopeful John Kwang, Henry finds himself deeply affected by his nominal boss's charisma and the cultural memory he triggers. At once reflective and suspenseful, Henry's story pulls together the elusiveness of languages; the beauty and harm of Henry's heritage; the bizarre, unanticipatable death of his young son; and the constant dance of estrangement and love between Henry and his complicated American wife, Lelia. His story is a genuine page-turner.

[A Gesture Life](#) by Chang-Rae Lee



Lee follows up his award-winning *Native Speaker* with the story of Franklin Hata, Korean born, of Japanese heritage, and now living in the New York suburbs. As he recalls painful memories of his involvement with a Korean comfort woman during World War II, Franklin's carefully constructed world starts to crumble.

[Country of Origin](#) by Don Lee



When a young American woman goes missing in 1980 Tokyo's sexual underworld, a young U.S. Embassy official considers his prospects for finding her and enlists the help of a neurotic and unpopular Japanese police officer.

[Comfort Woman](#) by Nora Okja Keller



In her stunning literary debut, Nora Okja Keller tells the hidden story of Akiko - sold into sexual slavery as a 'comfort woman' during World War II - and her American-born daughter, Beccah, unaware of her mother's history until after Akiko's death. *Comfort Woman* is a novel both brutally vivid and eloquently lyrical. It is a story of war, suffering and adolescent angst. Keller deftly, at times humorously, explores the complications caused by clashes of culture and generations. Yet at its heart it is a story of survival and the inescapable bond between a mother and her daughter.

[The Guest](#) by Hwang Sok-Yong



The Guest is worthwhile not only for its heterodox version of Korean history and its intriguing portrait of North Korean society. It is a finely rendered work of fiction -- disturbing yet somehow beautiful. Hwang's achievement should resonate long after the controversies over its illumination of one dark corner of the Korean War subside.

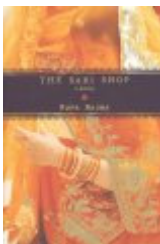
[Translations of Beauty](#) by Mia Yun



A deeply affecting and emotionally charged novel that explores the true meaning of beauty, family, home, and race, *Translations of Beauty* radiates with raw wit, heartache, and universal truths.

South Asian

[The Sari Shop](#) by Rupa Bajwa



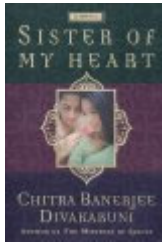
Spending unfulfilling days working in a fabric shop in Amritsar, Ramchand is sent to a new part of the city to show samples to a wealthy family, an experience that introduces him to a different way of life and compels him to pursue the hopeful dreams of his childhood. Biting humor, perceptive social commentary, and the poetic telling of a poignant tale combine for an exceptional debut.

[English, August: An Indian Story](#) by Upamanyu Chatterjee



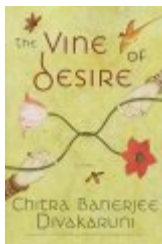
When New York Review Books Classics published Upamanyu Chatterjee's 1988 debut novel, *English, August*, for the first time in the U.S., Americans finally had the chance to be in on what readers in England and India had known for years: that the great outpouring of Indian lit over the past decade and a half owes as much to this irreverent, acid-witted book as it does to Salman Rushdie's magnum opus, *Midnight's Children*. It's also a novel with resonating concerns about the meaning of maturity in the modern era.

[Sister of my Heart](#) by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni



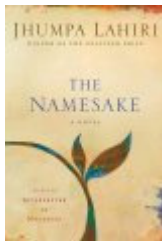
Born on the same day their fathers die in a mysterious accident, Sudha and Anju are more than just cousins; although Anju is the daughter of an upper-caste Calcutta family and Sudha the daughter of a black-sheep renegade, they are sisters of the heart, bound by a deep love. Narrated by Sudha and Anju in alternate chapters, this is the tale of their relationship over the years, a friendship that is almost destroyed by jealousy and family secrets. An engaging read, filled with tender, moving moments.

[Vine of Desire](#) by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni



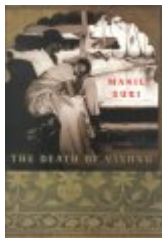
In a moving and satisfying sequel to *Sister of My Heart*, after a year of living separate lives, Anju and Sudha are reunited and rekindle their friendship in America, a link that helps both women deal with the problems of their lives as they establish new relationships with their families in India and with men and women outside the Indian immigrant community.

[The Namesake](#) by Jhumpa Lahiri



An incisive portrait of the immigrant experience follows the Ganguli family from their traditional life in India through their arrival in Massachusetts in the late 1960s and their difficult melding into an American way of life, in a debut novel that spans three decades, two continents, and two generations. By the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Interpreter of Maladies*.

[The Death of Vishnu](#) by Manil Suri



A Bombay apartment building provides the basic structure of the novel; the whole of India is embodied in its residents and their lively interactions. We see in the characters the fantastic Hindu mythology, ethnic rivalries, caste divisions and clashes between modern and traditional ways of life that characterize contemporary India.

Websites for Asian/Asian American Fiction

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Last Update: February 18, 2008