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Media Advisory : Lecture by noted China specialist William Hinton

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News Media Advisory

Editor's Note: *The People's Republic of China will mark the 50th anniversary of its communist revolution led by Mao Zedong on Oct. 1.*

- Event:** Lecture by noted China specialist William Hinton
- Topic:** The People's Republic of China: 50 Years of Contradiction and Transformation
- Date:** Oct. 4 (Monday)
- Time:** 7:30 p.m.
- Location:** Illinois Wesleyan University, Center for Natural Sciences, C-101, 201 E. Beecher St., Bloomington
- Admission:** Free
- Sponsors:** IWU's International Studies Program, Asian Studies Team, History Department, Asian Studies Student Programming Committee
- Background:** Hinton has been an eyewitness to the Chinese Revolution since the waning days of World War II. He has been an eyewitness to pre-revolutionary China, the Chinese revolution, the Cultural Revolution, the Tiananmen Square protests, and now China's drive to a market economy. He has fashioned friendships with farmers in small Chinese villages to high-ranking Beijing officials.
- He has authored several books about China, including: "Fanshen," "Iron Oxen," "The Great Reversal," "The Turning Point in China," and "Shenfan."
- (more)

China Hand to Visit IWU/2

Hinton was a propaganda analyst with the U.S. Army Office of War Information in 1945 in Kunming, Chongqing, Hankou, and Shanghai.

He returned to China in 1947 initially with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Association (UNRRA) and then served as an English teacher at rural provincial university.

As the communist revolution unfolded in the late 1940s, Hinton accompanied a communist party work team to a village, Long Bow, where he observed peasant farmers seizing land from the landlord-gentry class.

His book recounting village life in the midst of revolution--"Fanshen"--was finally published in 1966. Fanshen is the Chinese term for "turning over." "Fanshen" greatly influenced U.S. social activists during the 1960s.

"Fanshen" was the target of a sharp and protracted legal battle. Hinton returned to the U.S. from China in the early 1950s during the heyday of McCarthyism, an era named for Sen. Joseph McCarthy (R-Wis.), who led a controversial anti-communist crusade which led to his censure by his Senate colleagues. Hinton was forced to surrender his copious notes for the book to U.S. government agents. The papers were released after a three-year wrangle. However, they were seized again by the U.S. Senate Internal Security Committee. Hinton testified several times before the Senate panel. Finally, the notes were returned to him, and the book was written.

Hinton returned to China in 1971, when the country was engulfed in the Cultural Revolution. At that time, Hinton conducted an interview with legendary Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai. "Turning Point in China" deals with the Cultural Revolution, Mao's attack on the communist party and country.

In the mid-1970s, Hinton returned to Long Bow to write a sequel to "Fanshen," documenting three decades of
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China Hand to Visit IWU/3

political and social change in the village. "Shenfan" was published in 1983. "Shenfan" is the Chinese term for "digging deep."

A close observer of changes in the Chinese countryside, Hinton spent much of his time during the 1980s monitoring the effects of rural reforms initiated by the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping in 1978, resulting in the decollectivization of agriculture, a key reversal of communist policy. "The Great Reversal" was published in 1990.

Hinton, 80, lives on a Pennsylvania farm. He regularly visits China to visit his sister and brother-in-law, who have lived in the PRC since 1947. Hinton and his wife, Katherine, maintain a second residence in Inner Mongolia, where she continues to work for the United Nations.

Hinton's daughter, Carma, was born in China. She assisted him on his return to Long Bow. She also produced a widely acclaimed trilogy of films on contemporary Chinese village life.

Hinton's current research focuses on ecological problems of Inner Mongolia.

Hinton's Chinese name is Han Ding.