

**Jessica Milner Davis** researches cross-cultural humour and comedy and **Jocelyn Chey** is a Visiting Professor in Chinese Studies, both at the University of Sydney.

*"Humour in Chinese Life and Culture* takes the analysis of Chinese humour in its highly informative companion volume *Humour in Chinese Life and Letters: Classical and Traditional Approaches* into the modern era. It is well known that humour is extremely difficult to appreciate cross-culturally, especially when one of the cultures (Chinese) is so rich in linguistic puns and socio-political contexts. This is especially true of the modern era, when joking one day can the following day be interpreted as political subversion and the joker punished. It is simply impossible for one person or one approach to analyze modern Chinese humour successfully. The editors have wisely commissioned a group of scholars from diverse geographical and disciplinary backgrounds to write about significant aspects relating to the topic. The result is another book that should be both fun and enlightening to read."

—Kam Louie, The University of Hong Kong

"With colourful description of political and social currents and intellectual life in Chinese society providing essential context to the explication of Chinese humour in different decades, settings and modes, *Humour in Chinese Life and Culture* becomes, almost, an unintended short history of China since the 1920s, and one marvelously accessible, readable and enjoyable. Its revelatory historical gems are many, for example Barak Kushner's important piece on Japan in twentieth-century Chinese humour, explaining much about how the World War II victory over Japan is an essential part of the sense of identity and the idea of "we Chinese" in today's China. And on questions that so puzzle the West—what are people in China, now, thinking about, concerned with, debating, and what's the nature of their discourse—there are wonderful, and some wonderfully funny, insights on today's Chinese internet and social media, for example Christopher Rea on spoofing culture on the internet and X. L. Ding on the social meaning of freedom and political humour."

—Stephen FitzGerald, Former Australian Ambassador to China

"Highlights how well humour works as an 'entry point' into Chinese culture: making visible deeply rooted cultural patterns, as well as novel developments as a result of economic progress, technological changes, and increasing cultural exchange."

—Giseline Kuipers, University of Amsterdam

"This book is a fascinating tour of Chinese humour, its contexts and history, and its contemporary manifestations on- and off-line."

—Jeremy Goldkorn, Founder of Danwei.com

**Cover image:**

"A-maze-ing laughter", bronze sculptures by Yue Minjun 岳敏君 in the Vancouver Biennale 2009–2010. Photography by Dan Fairchild, with kind permission of the Biennale and the artist.



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**Humour in Chinese Life and Culture**  
Resistance and Control in Modern Times

Edited by  
Jessica Milner Davis and Jocelyn Chey

# Humour in Chinese Life and Culture

## Resistance and Control in Modern Times



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Jessica Milner Davis  
and Jocelyn Chey

This volume covers modern and contemporary forms of humour in China's public and private spheres, including comic films and novels, cartooning, pop songs, internet jokes, and advertising and educational humour. The second of two multidisciplinary volumes on humour in Chinese life and letters, this text also explores the relationship between the political control and popular expression of humour, such as China and Japan's exchange of comic stereotypes. It advances the methodology of cross-cultural and psychological studies of humour and underlines the economic and personal significance of humour in modern times.