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# Veverka Bros.

PRODUCTIONS



“Peaceful rise or potential threat? China’s 21<sup>st</sup> century emergence as a global superpower affects every single one of us.”

### **Brief Synopsis:**

(125 Words)

China’s unprecedented growth has placed it on the verge of overtaking the United States as the world’s preeminent power. But what type of power will China become? In today’s interconnected and globalized world, the answer affects each and every one of us. In Pakistan and Afghanistan, China’s humanitarian activities and investment in infrastructure have won it the hearts and minds of the people. Yet in Tibet and Xinjiang, China is reviled as an imperialistic abuser of human rights. Will China use its strength to dominate its neighbors and become a 21st century empire, or will China’s youth lead the country towards democracy? Whether it’s a peaceful rise or potential threat, China’s 21st century emergence as a great world power will change the lives of everyone.

### **Medium Synopsis:**

(250 Words)

China’s unprecedented growth has placed it on the verge of overtaking the United States as the world’s preeminent power. Meanwhile, Chalmers Johnson, author of *Blowback* and *The Sorrows of Empire*, argues that America’s preoccupation with militarism has all but sealed its fate as a nation in long-term decline. But if China surpasses the United States, what type of power will it become? In today’s interconnected and globalized world, the answer affects each and every one of us.

In Pakistan and Afghanistan, China’s humanitarian activities and investment in infrastructure have won it the hearts and minds of the people. Yet in Tibet and Xinjiang, China is reviled as an imperialistic abuser of human rights. Despite trumpeting its vision of a ethnic unity at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the Chinese government has gone to great lengths to silence dissenting voices such as Rebiya Kadeer, de facto leader of the Uyghur people. Kadeer has replaced the Dalai Lama as Beijing’s number one public adversary.

Will China follow in the footsteps of history’s other great powers and use its strength to dominate its neighbors, trample ethnic and religious minorities, and become a 21st century empire? Or will a wealthy China’s youth lead the country towards democracy, much like Taiwan? The international community shares responsibility in this outcome, but is it too dependent on Chinese trade to care? Whether it’s a peaceful rise or potential threat, China’s 21st century emergence as a great world power will change the lives of everyone.

## Film Festivals and Awards:

1. Central Florida Film Festival, Ocoee, FL, Sep. 3-6, 2010 - Best Documentary
2. Docutah Southern Utah Doc. Film Fest., St. George, UT, Sep. 16-25, 2010 - Official Selection
3. Naperville Independent Film Fest., Naperville, IL, Sep. 18-25 – Official Selection
4. The Clearwater Film Festival, Clearwater, FL Sep. 29 - Oct. 3, 2010 – Official Selection
5. Chagrin Doc. Film Fest.. Chagrin Falls, OH, Oct. 12-16 - Official Selection
6. Astoria/LIC International Film Festival, Queens, NY, Oct. 22-24, 2010 – Official Selection

## Biographies:

### Jesse Veverka

Co-director and Producer

Jesse Veverka is originally from Ithaca, New York and holds a BA economics and MS in engineering from Cornell University. He now resides in Yokohama, Japan where he works as a filmmaker and freelance writer. *China: The Rebirth of an Empire* is the first feature-length film that he has produced and co-directed. His previous films include *Malana: Globalization of a Himalayan Village* (2010, 17 min.), *Useless Suff* (1997, 34 min.), *Dudes with 'Tudes: Assassin* (1996, 5 min.), *Dudes with 'Tudes II* (1995, 6 min.), and *Dudes with 'Tudes* (1994, 7 min.)



### Jeremy Veverka

Co-director, Composer and Producer

Jeremy Veverka is originally from Ithaca, New York, and holds a BA in English from Cornell University. Jeremy has worked in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraqi Kurdistan, Lebanon and India as both a writer and photojournalist. He is also a talented musical producer whose electronic music project, 3jane, created material for such clients as Armani Exchange. Jeremy composed the original scores for the films, *Malana: Globalization of a Himalayan Village*, and *China: The Rebirth of an Empire*.



## Key Interviews:



Chalmers Johnson

Author of *Blowback*, *The Sorrows of Empire*, *Nemesis*, and *Dismantling the Empire*.



Rebiya Kadeer

President of the Uyghur American Association.



Wei Jingsheng

Chinese dissident. His foundation works to promote Chinese democracy and human rights.



Freddy Lim

Pro-democracy activist and lead singer of the Taiwanese heavy metal group ChthoniC.

## Film Stills:

Ding Xi, an economist from Hairbin Institute of Technology, invites us to “come to China and have a look.”



The torch relay, prior to the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, was accompanied by a massive show of Chinese nationalism.

In San Francisco, Paris, Nagano and elsewhere, the torch relay also met with intense protest.



The director of a madrasa in tribal Pakistan explains that, if given a choice, Pakistan will support China over the U.S.

As China continues to grow, how will it wield its power?



## Production Photos:



## Photo Descriptions:

(From left to right, top to bottom)

1. **Jeremy Veverka** at the Great Wall of China, Summer 2008.
2. **Jesse Veverka** in Kabul, Afghanistan, Summer 2008.
3. **Jesse Veverka** in Kashgar, China, Summer 2008.
4. The crew's baggage and production equipment at the Wagah border crossing in India, Summer 2008.
5. **Jesse Veverka** in Hong Kong, Summer 2008.

**Quarter-page Flier:**

**CHINA**  
THE REBIRTH OF AN EMPIRE

*Peaceful rise or potential threat?  
China's 21st century emergence as a global  
superpower affects every single one of us.*

China's unprecedented growth has placed it on the verge of overtaking the United States as the world's preeminent power. But what type of power will China become?

Will China use its strength to dominate its neighbors and become a 21st century empire, or will China's youth lead the country towards democracy? In today's interconnected and globalized world, the answer affects every single one of us.

CHINA: THE REBIRTH OF AN EMPIRE

A DOCUMENTARY FILM BY  
JESSE AND JEREMY VEVERKA

FEATURING  
CHALMERS JOHNSON

Johnson is the best-selling author of the Bloodsuck trilogy and Demanding the Empire.

Website: [www.ChinaRebirth.com](http://www.ChinaRebirth.com)  
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## Press Release:

### *China to be New Global Empire?*

#### *Documentary Tackles Thorny Question*

Peaceful rise or potential threat? When it comes to China, that's the question on everyone's mind. The country's unprecedented growth has raised the possibility of it overtaking the United States as the world's biggest economy within the next 15-20 years. But what type of superpower will China become? In today's interconnected and globalized world, the answer affects each and every one of us.

A new documentary produced by brothers Jesse and Jeremy Veverka, tackles this issue head-on. *China: The Rebirth of an Empire* weaves together such diverse issues as free trade, Islamic fundamentalism, North Korea's nuclear program and the Pro-Tibet movement under the umbrella of the national aspirations of an increasingly wealthy China. The documentary is the first of its kind to reconcile American economic decline with China's blistering growth, changing political climate and treatment of ethnic and religious minorities such as the Uyghurs and the Falun Gong.

The film suggests that while America's current economic problems may be a direct result of the recent financial crisis, their seeds were planted long ago by the confluence of US militarism and an economic doctrine that champions free trade above national wellbeing. As a result, the US has relied on cheap imports from a stream of Asian countries, starting with Japan in the 1970s, to the "Asian Tigers" (South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong) in the 80s and 90s, and now China, to prop up its living standard, while spending increasing sums on its global empire of military bases. While the economists keep expounding the virtues of offshoring, and Wall Street rallies around loose monetary policy, people on Main Street know things are amiss: America's real economy is in unrelenting decline, and it might just be enough to put China on top. "China seems to understand that the most important asset a nation can possess is its economy, this is something that we in the United States should keep in mind," says director Jesse Veverka. The film interviews East Asia expert and author of the bestsellers *Blowback*, *The Sorrows of Empire* and *Nemesis*, Chalmers Johnson on this topic.

Meanwhile, exiled Uyghur spokeswoman Rebiya Kadeer, labeled as a "separatist" by the Chinese government for her alleged role in inciting riots in Muslim populated Xinjiang in western China, suggests that China has a long way to go if it wants to become a mature member of the international community. The Chinese government has gone to great lengths to censor media that mention Kadeer. The Hollywood Reporter named *China: The Rebirth of an Empire* as one of two films that resulted in China blocking access to the online movie database IMDb in January 2010, because Kadeer is listed as a credit. Other interviews include exiled political dissident and former Chinese Communist Party member Wei Jingsheng, former Afghan prime minister Ahmad Shah Ahmadzai, and Freddie Lim, pro-democracy activist and lead singer of the Taiwanese heavy metal band ChthoniC. The film is slated for release in the second half of 2010.



## **In the News:**

*The Hollywood Reporter*, Jan 8, 2010:

### **China blocks access to movie site**

#### **IMDb.com unavailable since Wednesday, cause unknown**

By Jonathan Landreth

Jan 8, 2010, 06:37 AM ET

BEIJING -- Access to IMDb.com was blocked in China this week, adding the movie business Internet portal to a fast-growing list of banned Web sites featuring user-generated content, including YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

The site, fully named the Internet Movie Database, is owned by online bookselling giant Amazon.com, and claims over 57 million monthly visitors.

Readers looking for everything from movie trivia to settle bets to job opportunities on projects in development can access the site in English, German, French, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese.

But there's no Chinese-language edition of IMDb and industry insiders here say they can't understand why it's been shut down for since Wednesday.

One Hollywood executive here, speaking on condition of anonymity, noted in disbelief that her friends at the state-run China Film Group rely on IMDb all the time.

Typically the government's censorship efforts focus on trying to block China's 338 million Web users from accessing online pornography and violence. The government seldom reacts to queries about blocking foreign Web sites or gives any official notice when such action is taken.

For clues to Beijing's beef with IMDb, a quick scan of the site turned up plenty of information relating to politically sensitive search terms such as "Dalai Lama" and "Rebiya Kadeer" -- the names of members of two exiled ethnic minorities considered separatists by China's one-party government.

For instance, IMDb lists "The Sun Behind the Clouds: Tibet's Struggle for Freedom," a 2009 documentary whose planned screening this week at the Palm Springs International Film Festival caused the state-run China Film Group to pull two of its films from competition in protest.

Likewise, typing "Kadeer"-- persona non-grata for her alleged masterminding of recent violence in western China's Xinjiang region -- turns up the IMDb listing for "China: Rebirth of an Empire," a 2009 documentary featuring Kadeer and exiled Chinese dissident Wei Jingsheng.

Neither film's IMDb listings has any comments at all. But Web watchers in China say that increasingly it's the potential to display offending user-generated content that matters.

"China's censors are most interested in blocking sites with user-generated content and comments," said Jeremy Goldkorn, founder of Danwei.org, a Beijing-based media-watching Web site that itself was blocked on July 3, two days before ethnic tensions in Xinjiang boiled over in to a bloody riot.

Social networking site Facebook was shut in China on July 8 because it was disseminating Kadeer's separatist propaganda, according to Dong Guangpeng, a media adviser to China's cabinet based at Tsinghua University.

Facebook remains blocked, as do YouTube and Twitter. Meanwhile, plenty of information about Tibet and Xinjiang -- and other potentially sensitive topics -- is readily available on any number of other sites such as iTunes, Google and IMDB-owned Amazon, whose representatives in China could not be reached for comment.

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*Metropolis Magazine*, Tokyo, Japan, May 6, 2010:

## Q & A

### Jeremy & Jesse Veverka

#### Film producer and photographer & Film producer and writer

By: Steve Trautlein | May 6, 2010 | Issue: 841

#### Tell us about your background.

(Jeremy) We're a brother team, born in Ithaca, New York, but our family is originally Czech, by way of Canada. We've been working with film, music and photography in various capacities for at least half our lives. Recently we formed a production company called Veverka Bros. Productions LLC.

#### Veverka is an unusual name...

(Jeremy) Yeah, it actually means "squirrel" in Czech.

#### What brought you to Japan?

(Jesse) Laughs. For me, I guess it was originally Japanese animation. I was a big otaku in high school and started learning Japanese when I was 15. It was always a goal to go study in Japan, so I moved here in 2007 and then did the IUC language program in Yokohama in 2008, while working on film.

#### Tell us about some of your projects.

(Jesse) We just finished our first feature-length documentary, *China: The Rebirth of an Empire*. It deals with a question that I think is on everyone's minds, but doesn't get talked about enough: what type of superpower is China becoming? The world is so

interconnected now that the answer will have a profound effect on everyone. That's a pretty broad question.

(Jeremy) Well, we wanted to look at the big picture and show that a whole range of issues such as free trade, Islamic fundamentalism, North Korea's nuclear program, the pro-Tibet movement and even American militarism relate to what is going on with China.

We interview Chalmers Johnson, author of the Blowback trilogy, and he does a brilliant job tying things together.

### **When can we see it?**

(Jesse) We are currently submitting to film festivals and plan to release it publicly later this year. In the meantime, you can check out our recent documentary short, Malana: Globalization of a Himalayan Village, available on Amazon.

### **What have you got coming up?**

(Jeremy) In June we are going to India to shoot a fictional short called Bus to Somewhere.

### **What challenges have you found working on documentaries in Asia?**

(Jesse) Japan can be a bit tough because society is very reserved, which makes everything from securing permissions to finding subjects more difficult. On the other hand, there is relatively good freedom of the press here, especially compared to China. For example, some of the issues we deal with, like the Falun Gong, [activist] Rebiya Kadeer and Uyghur independence, would not be possible to cover openly in China.

### **What's one thing everyone should do in Tokyo before they leave?**

(Jesse) Go visit the Yushukan museum at Yasukuni Jinja. It commemorates imperial Japan's militaristic activities leading up to and during World War II. It's a real reminder of the horrors that humans are capable of inflicting on other humans and an eye-opening contrast to Japan's plastic pop-culture cuteness.

For more info about China: The Rebirth of an Empire, see [www.chinarebirth.com](http://www.chinarebirth.com) and [www.facebook.com/chinarebirth](http://www.facebook.com/chinarebirth). For more information about Malana: Globalization of a Himalayan Village, see [www.facebook.com/malanadoc](http://www.facebook.com/malanadoc).

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