

2011

## Reading Round-Up, 2/20/11

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February 20, 2011 in [The Five-List Plan](#) by [The China Beat](#) | [Permalink](#)

- If you're looking for a few China book recommendations, check out these two recent interviews at The Browser's "Five Books" feature: the *New Yorker's* [Evan Osnos](#) suggests five books that first-time visitors to China should read before they go, and [Victor Shih](#) of Northwestern University shares his favorite titles dealing with the Chinese economy.

- Osnos also writes about "[China's Education Binge](#)" at his "Letters from China" blog on the *New Yorker's* site.

- China Beatniks around the web: at the *International Herald Tribune*, Daniel A. Bell evaluates the chances of protests in the Middle East being replicated in China. For a comparative look at how the Chinese and North Korean governments have been reacting to the ousting of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, see [this article](#) at the *Korea Times*, where *China Beat* consulting editor Jeff Wasserstrom is quoted on the parallels between present-day protests and the anti-Chiang Kai-shek demonstrations of the 1940s in China. And at the *Business Standard*, Pallavi Aiyar writes about why the Egyptian protests could be a warning for China.

- Jottings from the Granite Studio guest-blogger Yajun analyzes "[Why Groupon is Flailing in China](#)":

I argue that Groupon's problem is its arrogant attitude. It had no sense of political sensitivity of certain issues for Chinese consumers. Its inefficient internal coordination and its lack of effective communication with its Chinese partner put them in an embarrassing situation. It ignores advice from Tencent, and their management team doesn't seem to have the experience necessary to really get in touch with Chinese consumers.

As a Chinese *tuangou* veteran, I suggest that rather than paying expensive salaries to MBAs, they should listen to what their partner say about Chinese market. They should find out what young urban people with money to burn wish to burn it on.

Have you ever seen an old Chinese woman buy vegetables at a morning market? Consumers in China are tough and persistent. We like to bargain and we are good at it. Most of us don't care about the background of the company. (Even though Groupon is well-known abroad, for Chinese consumers, it is just another group buy website). I personally only care about the best value and reliable service.

- If you're a polo fan, see Lara Farrar's article at the *Wall Street Journal* discussing the sport's rising popularity among the very rich in China.

- Finally, for a glimpse at how food moves from the farm to the dining tables of Beijing's residents, see [this slideshow](#) by Jonah Kessel. Kessel visited one of the city's major food markets, the Xinfadi Agri-product Wholesale Market, to see how the operation worked.