MAXINE HONG KINGSTON

• A Chinese-American author and Professor Emeritus at the University of California.
• A feminist and pacifist who campaigned against the wars in Vietnam and Iraq.
• Born on Oct 27, 1940 in California to first generation Chinese immigrant parents.
• Has written several works of fiction and non-fiction focusing on the experiences of Chinese Americans.

Major works:
- The Woman Warrior: Memoir of a Girlhood Among Ghosts (1976)
- China Men (1980)
- Hawai’i One Summer (1987)
- Through the Black Curtain (1987)
- Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book (1989)
- To Be the Poet (2002)
- Veterans of War, Veterans of Peace (2006)
- I Love a Broad Margin to My Life (2011)

Awards and Recognitions:
- National Book Critics Circle Award for The Woman Warrior (1976)
- Lifetime Achievement Award from the Asian American Literary Awards, 2006.
- Fitzgerald Award for Achievement in American Literature, 2011.

• Her writings are reflective of her cultural heritage and her understanding of both sexual and racial oppression.
• Her works often blend fiction with non-fiction.
**THE WOMAN WARRIOR : MEMOIR OF A GIRLHOOD AMONG GHOSTS  (1976)**

- Maxine Hong Kingston’s first book.
- Published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1976.
- Blend of autobiography and, what Kingston claims to be, old Chinese folktales.
- Won the National Book Critics Circle Award 1976.
- Was named one of Time Magazine’s top non-fiction books of 1970s.
- Has been translated into numerous languages, including Chinese.
- The book examines the struggles of being a woman and a minority.
- The book has five interconnected chapters which integrate Kingston’s lived experience with a series of spoken stories that combine Chinese history, myths and beliefs.
- Five chapters of the book are:
  - ‘No Name Woman’
  - White Tigers
  - Shaman
  - At the Western Palace
  - A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe
- The five chapters of the book focus on the stories of five women – Kingston’s long-dead aunt, “No Name Woman”; a mythical female warrior, Fa Mu Lan; Kingston’s mother, Brave Orchid; Kingston’s aunt, Moon Orchid and Kingston herself.
- Kinston analyzes the female identity of Chinese-American women through criticism of misogyny in Chinese culture and racism towards Chinese-Americans in the US.
- The book focuses on the relationship between mother and daughter, reflecting aspects of Kingston’s life and emphasizing upon the dynamics of female relationships as a whole in a patriarchal social set up.
- Criticism of the book:
  - Though acclaimed by many The Woman Warrior has been criticized by several critics, including playwright and novelist Frank Chin, who accuses Kingston of “liberally adapting traditional stories to collude with white racist stereotypes and invent a “fake” Chinese-American culture that is more palatable to mainstream”.
  - Several Asian female scholars have also severely criticized Kingston’s work. According to Shirley Geok-Lin Lim, a professor of English at the University of California, Kingston’s “representations of patriarchal, abusive Chinese history were playing to a desire to look at Asians as an inferior spectacle”.