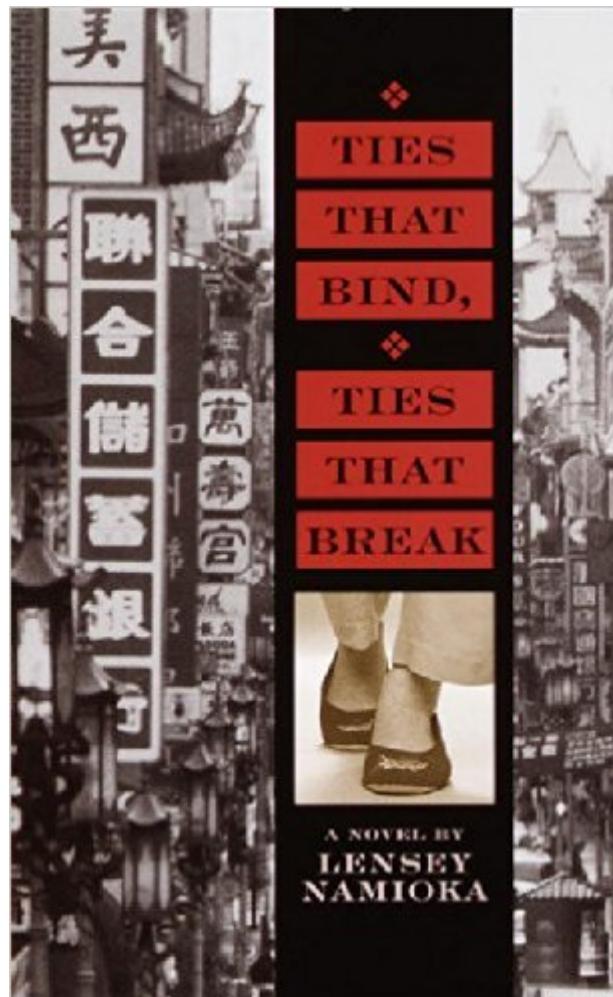


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# Ties That Bind, Ties That Break



## **Synopsis**

Third Sister in the Tao family, Ailin has watched her two older sisters go through the painful process of having their feet bound. In China in 1911, all the women of good families follow this ancient tradition. But Ailin loves to run away from her governess and play games with her male cousins. Knowing she will never run again once her feet are bound, Ailin rebels and refuses to follow this torturous tradition. As a result, however, the family of her intended husband breaks their marriage agreement. And as she enters adolescence, Ailin finds that her family is no longer willing to support her. Chinese society leaves few options for a single woman of good family, but with a bold conviction and an indomitable spirit, Ailin is determined to forge her own destiny. Her story is a tribute to all those women whose courage created new options for the generations who came after them.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 830 (What's this?)

Mass Market Paperback: 154 pages

Publisher: Laurel Leaf (November 14, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0440415993

ISBN-13: 978-0440415992

Product Dimensions: 4.2 x 0.4 x 6.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (111 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #74,417 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #43 inÂ  Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Asian & Asian American #3814 inÂ  Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

This novel begins with a prologue set in San Francisco's Chinatown in 1925. Ailin is the young wife of a Chinese restaurant owner, and someone from her childhood past in China enters the restaurant. They begin to talk, and Ailin thinks back to what has led her to where she is today... In 1911, China was undergoing political and cultural changes. The empire was falling, and outsiders from the West were becoming more common. Namioka skillfully weaves this change through Ailin's

story. Ailin is five, and not docile and quiet as upper-class girls should be. Her mother and grandmother feel it is time for her to have her feet bound, as she is now betrothed to the seven-year-old son of another wealthy family. But when Ailin sees how deformed and painful her older sister's bound feet are, she is shocked. Knowing she will not be able to run or even really walk again, Ailin protests. Her indulgent father allows her to keep her feet unbound, even though it results in the cancellation of her betrothal. Later, he enrolls her in a public school run by missionaries where she learns to speak English, unusual for girls at the time. However, before Ailin can graduate, her loving father dies, leaving her old-fashioned uncle as head of the family. He tells her that he can no longer afford to send her to school, and gives the twelve-year-old three unsuitable options, all remnants of the repressive past. She refuses them all, and is forced to come up with a way to support herself. The rest of the book takes Ailin to a world unknown to her, that of working class China, and later on a voyage to America. The details are realistic and Ailin develops strength of character from her experiences.

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