NCSSM’s 2010-11 Summer Reading Program book is: Leaving Mother Lake: a girlhood at the edge of the world, written by Christine Mathieu. With the help of anthropologist Christine Mathieu, singer Namu describes growing up on the Chinese-Tibetan border in Moso country, “The Country of the Daughters.” This non-fiction book details Namu’s upbringing in the late 1960’s to early 1970s. The lifestyle and cultural norms of the Moso people “one of fifty-six Chinese nationalities” of Tibet are very different from those of most developed countries. Leaving Mother Lake is primarily about a girl having the courage to fulfill her dreams and how these ambitions affect her relationship with her mother. Namu did not allow her past and the expectations of her community to define who she was to become. In that sense, her story is a triumph, and her life is an example to young people everywhere who are faced with similar choices. This fascinating story is a very absorbing book, told in an easy, personable style.

The theme of this year’s SRP book is Diversity, focusing on diverse cultures, diverse roles for people, and diverse teaching and learning environments. Some of the radical adjustments that Namu had to make to pursue her educational goals in an entirely different culture may be similar to the kinds of adjustments that NCSSM Online students will need to make to live comfortably and feel successful by their own standards.

All rising NCSSM Online seniors and incoming juniors are required to acquire and read Leaving Mother Lake. As a NCSSM community building exercise, discussions about the book will take place during residential weekends. Groups will be organized for everyone to participate and will be lead by online faculty and student Link Leaders. Be sure to check online website for updated information about the SRP.

The retail cost of the paperback book is $14.99, which you may purchase from an independent book seller. It will also be available at the discounted price of $12 from the NCSSM School Store during the Summer Symposium and Orientation, July 25 to July 31, 2010. You may use cash, debit or credit cards at the school store. The Study Guide to Leaving Mother Lake will be posted on website or accompany the book if purchased at NCSSM’s school store.

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