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BIOGRAPHIES AND MEMOIRS OF CHINA

Historical Figures



Mao Tse-tung

Dragon lady: the life and legend of the last empress of China

Sterling Seagrave 1992 951.035 **Seagrave**

This biography of the Dowager Empress Tzu Hsi is a revisionist account of her reign from 1861 to 1908, seeking to clarify her historically negative figure by explaining the political conditions she operated under.

Thread of the silkworm

Iris Chang 1995 629.1092 **Chang**

A biography of Tsien Hsue-shen, the Chinese scientist who worked first for the United States in the 1940's and then for China in the the 1950's. Chang tells of McCarthyism anti-communism propaganda which caused Tsien's final expulsion from the U.S.

Chiang Kai shek: China's Generalissimo and the nation he lost

Jonathan Fenby 2004 **B Chiang**

In this biography Fenby, a former editor, provides a detailed account of the Nationalist leader and the complexities of his rise to power in China, his enemies and friends, and his personal life. A balanced treatment which provides new information on this controversial leader, who ruled Taiwan after the Chinese Communist party gained power in Mainland China.

Madame Chiang Kai-Shek: China's eternal first lady

Laura Tyson Li 2006 951.24905 Li

A concise biography of the China's Nationalist Party leader's wife, whose American education and English language skills proved invaluable to her husband in his rise to power.

Dalai Lama: man, monk, mystic

Mayank Chhaya, Bstandzinrgyamtsho 2007 B

A biography of the Tibetan spiritual leader who has been in exile for almost 50 years, by an Indian journalist. The author, who met with the Dalai Lama personally, spends time detailing the geography and history of Tibet and gives revealing personal details about this enigmatic figure.

Mao Zedong

Louise Chiple Slavicsek 2004 B Mao

This book is part of the educational series "Great Military Leaders of the 20th Century" by Chelsea House Publishers. Targeted for middle and high school students, the book traces Mao's military career from start to finish. The text is arranged in sections for greater readability.

The private life of Chairman Mao: the memoirs of Mao's personal physician

Zhisui Li 1994 951.05 Li

The author was trained as a doctor in the West, and returned to China in 1949 to support the revolution. He became Mao's doctor in 1954 and remained so until Mao's death in 1976. This is a frank portrait of Mao with nothing left out.

Mao: the unknown story

Jung Chang and Jon Halliday 2005 B Mao

A controversial denunciation of China's revolutionary leader by the author of "Wild Swans: three daughters of China" and a University of London researcher. Mao's reputation for founding the party and any influence for good are refuted in this lengthy yet engaging biography.

Bitter winds: a memoir of my years in China's Gulag

Hongda Harry Wu 1994 951.05 Wu

Wu was a political prisoner in China for 19 years, and paints a grim picture of work camps and imprisonment. He was released in 1979, and came to the United States six years later. He is now a full-time activist for human rights in China.

Brook Larmer 2005 B Yao

Written by a journalist, this biography of Yao Ming chronicles how the political aims of China worked with the United States' sports interests to mould his life. A sobering account of how players' personal lives and characters are ignored in marketing success.

Witnessing history: one Chinese woman's fight for freedom

Jennifer Zeng 2006 323.44 Zeng

A personal account of China's recent crackdown on participants of Falun Gong, a practice utilizing movement and meditation purporting to improve mental and physical health. The author's year of imprisonment in labor camp describes torture and other brutalities.



Comrade Chiang Ching

Roxane Witke 1977 951.05 W

Chiang Ching, Mao Tse-tung's third wife, had a chequered past. The author had personal access to her subject, which makes this account highly readable. Numerous photographs accompany the text.

The claws of the dragon: Kang Sheng the evil genius behind Mao, and his legacy of terror in People's China

John Byron (pseud.) and Robert Pack 1992 951.05 Byron

This book traces the career of Kang Sheng, who became the Chinese Communist Party's internal security chief and one of the main architect's of policy and intrigue during the Cultural revolution. The main author, Byron, is a Western diplomat stationed in China, who has been studying China for 40 years.

The man who changed China: the life and legacy of Jiang Zemin

Robert Lawrence Kuhn 2004 B Jiang

Written by an investment banker, this is an officially sanctioned biography of the man who led China from 1989 to 2004, when he retired. Overseen by a state propaganda team, the book is contradictory in relating political events, and most effective in its portrayal of his personal life.



Personal Stories

Come watch the sun go home

Chen Chen 1998 B Chen

An unusual story told by the author and her co-writer (both using pseudonyms) about her emigrant Chinese family's experiences of returning to China from the United States after the Revolution of 1949 to participate in the "new China". The horrific experiences undergone by her and her family in China are told with insight and compassion.

A thousand miles of dreams: the journeys of two Chinese sisters

Sasha Su-Ling Welland 2006 979.4 Welland

Biography of the author's grandmother and aunt, born in the upper classes in China, of their quest for fulfillment, one as a doctor and the other as a writer. An re-creation of their lives which sheds light on the cultures they inhabited.

Wild swans : three daughters of China

Jung Chang 1991 951.05 Chang

Chang's memoir tracing three generations of her family has been banned in China, although she is free to travel between China and her home in London. This highly readable story has some breaks in time which are not fully explained. The book is noted for its personal accounts of turbulent Chinese history.

This memoir is of an upper class Chinese family and its inner discord, fueled by ambition and selfishness. The author's stepmother is half Chinese and verbally abusive towards her stepchildren's race. The

Falling leaves: the true story of an unwanted Chinese

daughter

Adeline Yen Mah 1999 305.488951 Mah

story does illuminate parts of China's past as the family moves from Shanghai to Hong Kong to the United States, but it is mostly a portrait of the family and the author's determination to overcome their opposition.

Golden boy: memories of a Hong Kong childhood

Martin Booth 2005 B Booth

A vivid memoir of three years spent as a child in Hong Kong when his father was stationed there as a clerk with the Royal Navy.

The eighth promise: an American son's tribute to his Toisanese mother

William Poy Lee 2007 B Lee

The story of the author's experience growing up in San Francisco's Chinatown, from the 1950's to the present, and of his mother, who came to the United States in an arranged marriage. Her "eighth promise" to her mother back in the area of Toisan in China was to live compassionately. The book portrays the changing culture of the Chinese immigrants in San Francisco after World War II, when they were first allowed to live outside the Chinatown district.

Gang of one: memoirs of a Red Guard

Fan Shen 2004 951.056 Shen

A highly personal account by a man who was only 12 years old in 1968, the last year that the Red Guards were operative in revolutionary China. We follow Shen through his multiple reassignments by the Party and watch his ability to lie and manipulate in order to finally escape China for the United States, where he lives today.

Life and death in Shanghai

Nien Cheng 1987 951.056 C

The account of a middle-aged woman's imprisonment for six and a half years during China's cultural revolution. She and her husband had worked for Shell Corporation in China and she was accused of being a spy. A moving account, but one which fails to provide insight into the actions taken against her.