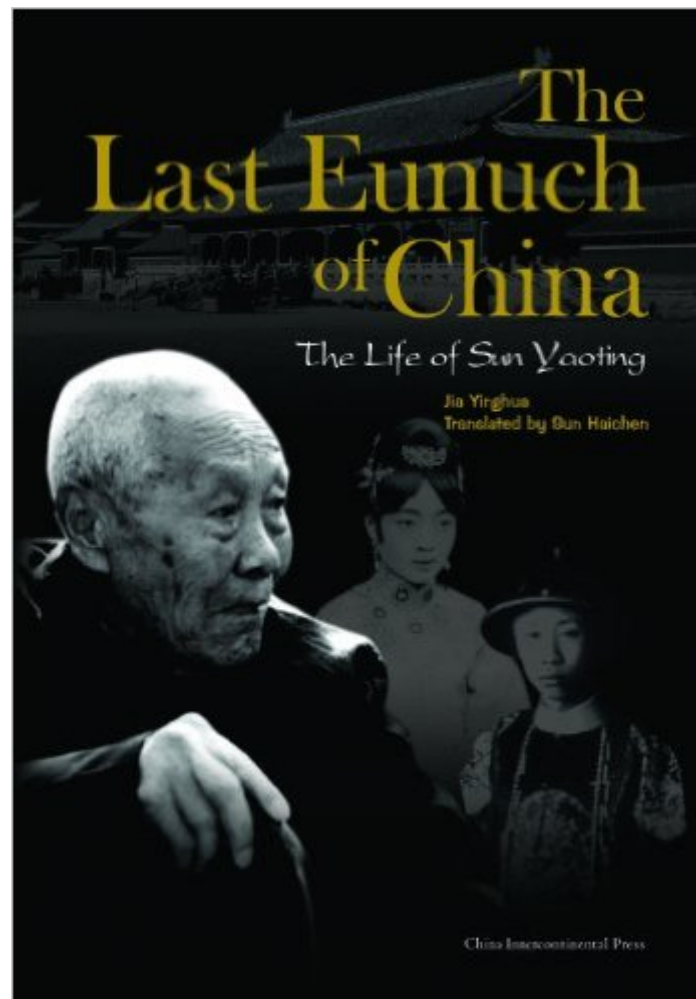


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The Last Eunuch Of China-The Life Of Sun Yaoting (Classical Modern Chinese Literature Series)(English Edition)



Synopsis

China's last eunuch Sun Yaoting died in December 1996 at age 94. He took with him intimate stories of the last vestiges of Imperial China and was himself the last in the line of eunuchs who had served the royal family for more than 2,000 years. His personal journey from poor farmboy to revered servant to Pu Yi and Wanrong, China's last emperor and empress, is an amazing journey which also chronicles nearly one century of turbulence and upheaval in Chinese history and culture. This engrossing biography by Chinese historian Jia Yinghua features first-hand accounts by Sun Yaoting of his adventures in the Forbidden City, his reunion with Pu Yi in Japanese-held Manchukuo in the 1930s, his return to "normal" life as a community organizer in the Buddhist temple where he lived out the rest of his life. Beginning in the early 1900s, Sun's story follows events in China such as Pu Yi's abdication of Imperial rule, the Japanese occupation of China which ended with the conclusion of World War II, China's civil war and the eventual victory of the Communist Party in 1949, the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and the subsequent "opening up" policy from which China has emerged as a leading economic and political power worldwide. *The Last Eunuch of China: The Life of Sun Yaoting* is a unique glimpse into China's storied past from the perspective of a man who faithfully served China's Imperial Family in the Forbidden City but was later forced to maneuver himself among the tremendous and often turbulent events that became the history of 20th century China. As Sun Yaoting recalls his experiences, he also recounts the life of the dwindling eunuch community in China.

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Customer Reviews

If you are a student of history you naturally want every detail of a story. If you have an "inquiring mind" you will be propelled forward by Sun Yaoting's sometimes harrowing story. If you are are merely intrigued by stories of the interactions among the various inhabitants of the Forbidden City - perhaps you've read Alice Roosevelt's amusing account of her 1906 visit there - this book will give you hours of satisfying reading. You thought the eunuchs in the Forbidden City merely lived the rich life and pillaged (being spared by their anatomy the rape parts) and perhaps ultimately retired to enjoy their loot, didn't you? No fear! It seems it was seldom so idyllic. But there's much more in Sun Yaoting's story. Did you ever wonder why families all over China, in the centuries before the creation of the People's Republic, dreamed of having one son become a eunuch to the imperial family or by what procedure the hapless little boy was "eunuchized"? Well, the answer to the first part was in the hope that the son might be able to help his family lessen the desperate starvation-level poverty that was the constant companion of the masses of Chinese. If you've read Pearl Buck's China books, such as The Good Earth trilogy, you already have some sense of that. The saddest part was that the overwhelming number of those mutilated boys were never able to send much help, and what they did send was often wasted by relatives with no concept of thrift or financial management. To address the second part, little boys were turned into eunuchs usually by fathers who had no anesthetics nor methods to sterilize their instruments - a sometimes rusty, dull knife or razor.

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