



Out of Mao's Shadow: The Struggle for the Soul of a New China

By Philip P. Pan

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Now in paperback, an intimate, elegant account of a society in turmoil: the most important book in a generation about the Chinese people and their long, heartbreaking battle for political freedom.

Out of Mao's Shadow offers a startling perspective on China and its remarkable transformation, challenging conventional wisdom about the political apathy of the Chinese people and the notion that prosperity leads automatically to freedom. Like David Remnick's *Lenin's Tomb*, this is a moving story of a nation in transition, of a people coming to terms with their past and struggling to take control of their future.

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Editorial Review

From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

“What freedom the Chinese people now enjoy has come only because individuals have demanded and fought for it, and because the party has retreated in the face of such pressure,” Pan writes. The dream of a completely free society, however, has not yet accompanied a free market “despite the growing efforts of everyday men and women fighting the system. Through detailed and illuminating interviews with artists, journalists, entrepreneurs, and peasants, Pan reveals a country filled with local government corruption, human rights violations, and collusion between the Party and the private sector. While Pan’s exposé on China left a few critics feeling hopeless, most took away a more optimistic message about China’s future. In either event, they agreed that *Out of Mao’s Shadow* achieves “the immediacy of first-rate reportage and the emotional depth of field of a novel” (*New York Times*).

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From [Booklist](#)

How is the world’s most populous and emerging global power managing to counterbalance the freedoms of capitalism—and the Internet age—against the continued restrictions of authoritarianism? For seven years, Pan, former Beijing bureau chief for the Washington Post, traveled China and talked to officials, journalists, artists, entrepreneurs, and ordinary citizens to get a portrait of an extraordinary time in that nation’s—and the world’s—history. Pan begins by examining how the Chinese are preserving their most recent history of fighting resistance to authoritarianism, including a young entrepreneur’s account of openly defying the police by attending the funeral of Chinese official Zhao Ziyang, who was sympathetic to the Tiananmen Square protest 15 years earlier. Pan goes on to explore how the Communist Party has evolved since the death of Mao, including recollections of factory workers who have not benefited from the new emphasis on capitalism and tycoons who are thriving. Finally, Pan presents the perspective of Chinese with hopes for a democratic future in China, even as that nation struggles to reconcile its past and future ambitions and its place in the broader world. --Vanessa Bush

Review

"Phil Pan is one of the finest American correspondents to have worked in China, a penetrating reporter who works from the ground up. This is an extraordinarily important book about China's unfinished politics." -- Steve Coll, author of *The Bin Ladens: An Arabian Family in the American Century*

"*Out of Mao's Shadow* is a stunningly researched and crafted book, filled with tales of individual heroism, triumph, and heartbreak. Pan shares his subjects' relentless curiosity and drive to find truth; the result is a book that's immediate, moving, and ultimately thrilling." -- Rachel DeWoskin, author of *Foreign Babes in Beijing: Behind the Scenes of a New China*

"As correspondent for *The Washington Post*, Philip Pan covered China like no one else, using his fluency in the language to penetrate Chinese society. He goes beyond his newspaper reporting to tell the story of Chinese people pressing unsuccessfully for political change. Pan's book gives lie to the notion that China is inevitably heading toward democratization." -- James Mann, author of *Rise of the Vulcans* and *The China Fantasy*

"Philip Pan's book is a masterpiece of reportage, revealing the layers of dirt and pain that lurk just beneath the shiny surface of modern China." -- Rob Gifford, National Public Radio correspondent and author of

China Road: A Journey into the Future of a Rising Power

"Philip Pan has brought great patience and a rare sensitivity to political reporting in China. This is the story of how power actually works there." -- Peter Hessler, author of *Oracle Bones: A Journey Through Time in China*

Users Review

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Joann Hamilton:

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