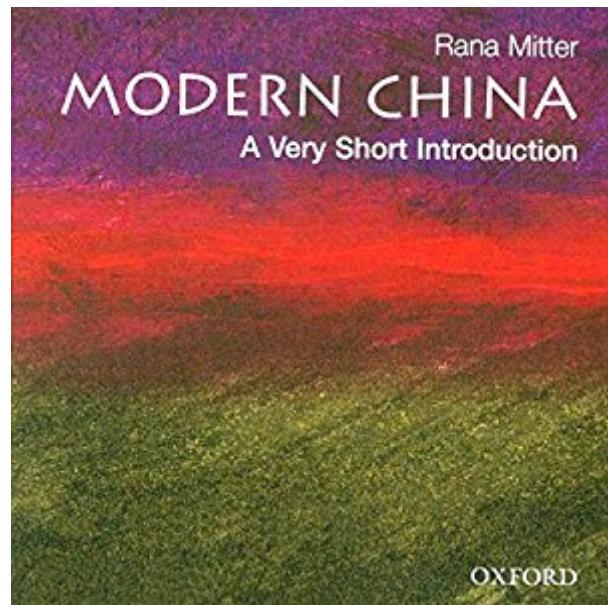


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# Modern China: A Very Short Introduction



## Synopsis

China today is never out of the news: from human rights controversies and the continued legacy of Tiananmen Square, to global coverage of the Beijing Olympics, and the Chinese "economic miracle." It is a country of contradictions and transitions: a peasant society with some of the world's most futuristic cities, an ancient civilization that is modernizing as rapidly as possible, a walled-off nation that is increasingly at the center of world trade. This Very Short Introduction offers an indispensable starting point for anyone who needs to quickly know the themes and controversies that have shaped modern China. Prize-winning author and scholar Rana Mitter examines the modern history, politics, economy, and thriving cultural scene of contemporary China, and its relations with the wider world. This lively guide covers a range of social issues from the decline of footbinding and the position of women in society, to the influence of television and film, and the role of the overseas Chinese diaspora. It covers many prominent figures as well, such as the Communist leaders, the last emperors, and prominent writers and artists throughout China's history.

**About the Series:** Combining authority with wit, accessibility, and style, Very Short Introductions offer an introduction to some of life's most interesting topics. Written by experts for the newcomer, they demonstrate the finest contemporary thinking about the central problems and issues in hundreds of key topics, from philosophy to Freud, quantum theory to Islam --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

China is a key player in today's world, and it is important to understand its background. I've tried

other sources, and unfortunately gotten lost in a maze of different dynasties that have come and gone in its 3,000+ year history. The good news about "Modern China" is that it doesn't get bogged down in that very old history. Just learning that while the last (Ming) dynasty fell in 1912, and the subsequent government collapsed again less than 40 years later - after involvement in WWI (intent was to get Allies' support for forcing Germany out of China - instead, got Japan forced in), being dominated by Japan for decades, the Sino-Japanese War (1937-45), and the Civil War (1946-49) helps one understand why today's government is quite leery of losing control and possibly repeating some of those tragic happenings. Resentment over being taken advantage of by various nations contributed to the Ming collapse - especially the British wanting a market for opium (banned within China) produced in Bengal, leading to the first Opium War (1839-1942), followed by unfair treaties, the forced introduction of disruptive influences (eg. Christian missionaries) - it's a wonder China got over its xenophobia and effort to be self-sufficient. Then there was the loss of Taiwan to Japan, the brutally put down Boxer Rebellion (U.S. participated), and monstrous reparations imposed (\$333 million, over 39 years). Confucianism is also briefly addressed - more of an ethical system than religion, stressing mutual obligations, hierarchies, self-development (education and improvement), and an ordered society that abhors violence and tends to look down on profit-making.

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