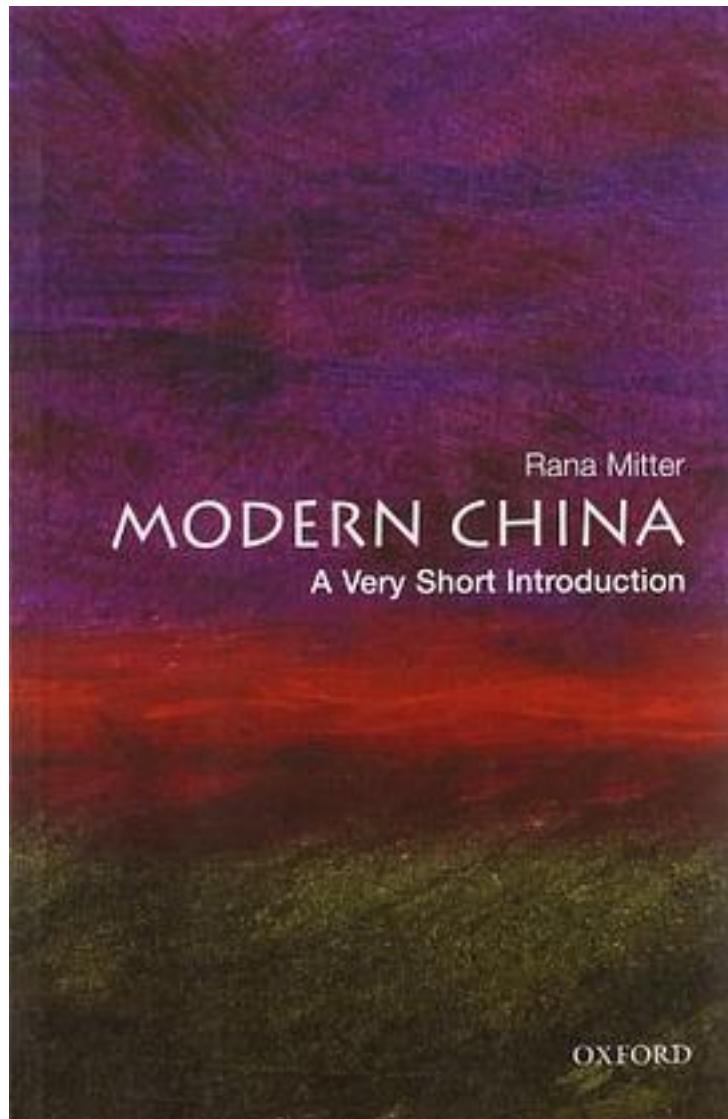


# Modern China



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Why another book on China? Four reasons: This book places a special emphasis on China's culture, warfare, and immediate neighbors, while its organization provides structural convenience not found in other surveys of modern Chinese history.

First, this book uses a comparative approach to bridge the cultural divide separating Chinese history from Western readers trying to understand it. It compares the embedded assumptions, patterns of analysis, and primary values that distinguish these two great civilizations, not to suggest the superiority of either; but rather, to reach a Western audience, who may be unaware that many of their core assumptions and values are not shared by others. This is not an attempt to understand China in its own terms, but in comparison to the West so as to bridge the cultural divide.

Second, this book emphasizes the tragic role of warfare in Chinese history. Far more so than in most other countries, warfare has wracked Chinese society for the last two centuries: A cascade of internal rebellions, secession movements, and civil and foreign wars continued with only short interruptions from 1800 until the death of Mao Zedong in 1976. On a human level, it is incumbent on this and succeeding generations not to forget the holocaust that has been a hallmark of modern Chinese history.

Third, all too often the study of China has been done in semi-isolation from its neighbors. The authors of this book have spent years living not only in China and Taiwan, but also in Russia and Japan, and have visited South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Modern Chinese history cannot be understood without a deep appreciation of the foreign influence that has bombarded China from all sides. Western texts generally give due attention to the Western European powers and to the United States. Some devote time to discussing the Japanese influence. None gives adequate attention to the activities of Russia. Most Western Sinologists do not read Russian, nor do most Chinese secondary sources emphasize Russia's extensive influence because Russian diplomats from the 19th century onward consistently succeeded in promoting their country's national interests at Chinese expense. On a human level, this is not a story many Chinese want to tell. On a national level, Sino-Russian relations are so central to China's national security that the topic is generally classified. The authors learned about Russo-Chinese relations from years of research in the archives of Russia, China, Taiwan, Japan, and the United States reading materials covering Russo-Chinese diplomatic relations from the 18th through the 20th centuries.

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Bruce A. Elleman is a Research Professor in the Maritime History Department, Center for Naval Warfare Studies, at the US Naval War College, and author of *Diplomacy and Deception: The Secret History of Sino-Soviet Diplomatic Relations, 1917–1927* (Armonk NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997); *Modern Chinese Warfare, 1795–1989* (London: Routledge, 2001, translated into Chinese); *Japanese-American Civilian Prisoner Exchanges and Detention Camps, 1941–45* (London: Routledge, 2006); and *Moscow and the Emergence of Communist Power in China, 1925–30: The Nanchang Uprising and the Birth of the Red Army* (London: Routledge, 2009).

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