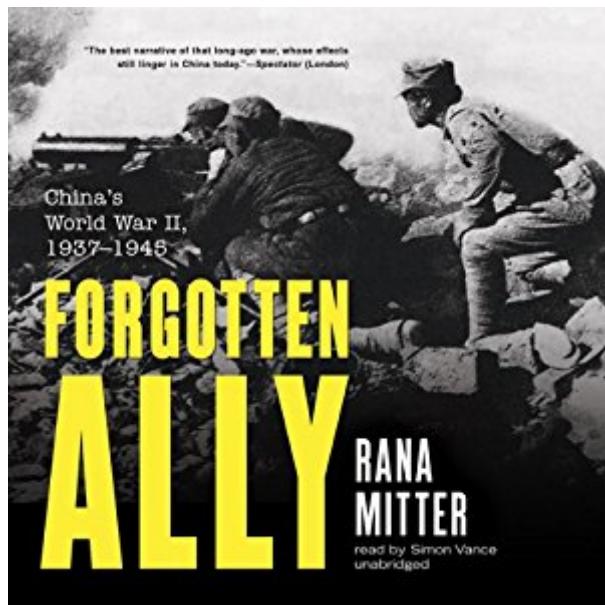


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Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937 - 1945



Synopsis

The epic, untold story of China's devastating eight-year war of resistance against Japan. For decades, a major piece of World War II history has gone virtually unwritten. The war began in China two full years before Hitler invaded Poland, and China eventually became the fourth great ally, partner to the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain. Yet its drama of invasion, resistance, slaughter, and political intrigue remains little known in the West. Rana Mitter focuses his gripping narrative on three towering leaders: Chiang Kai-shek, the politically gifted but tragically flawed head of China's Nationalist government; Mao Zedong, the Communists' fiery ideological stalwart, seen here at the beginning of his epochal career; and the lesser-known Wang Jingwei, who collaborated with the Japanese to form a puppet state in occupied China. Drawing on Chinese archives that have only been unsealed in the past 10 years, he brings to vivid new life such characters as Chiang's American chief of staff, the unforgettable "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell, and such horrific events as the Rape of Nanking and the bombing of China's wartime capital, Chongqing. Throughout, *Forgotten Ally* shows how the Chinese people played an essential role in the wider war effort, at great political and personal sacrifice. *Forgotten Ally* rewrites the entire history of World War II, yet it also offers surprising insights into contemporary China. No 20th-century event was as crucial in shaping China's worldview, and no one can understand China, and its relationship with America today, without this definitive work.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rana Mitter has contributed something that is basically unique, and that uniqueness is both

astonishing and terrible. This is the first English language popular history of the Sino-Japanese War of 1932-1945 that actually tries to give the Chinese side. There are scholarly and political histories about the rise of the Chinese Communist Party, CCP, and monographs on aspects of Kuomintang rule, but general histories are genuinely lacking. Especially one that does not take Barbara Tuchman's "Stillwell and the American Experience in China" as its prime focus. Mitter, does more than give the Chinese agency, he emphasizes the long and lonely war that the various Chinese factions fought against the Japanese, and how it was seen by both sides as part of the Anti-Imperialist struggle that dated back to the Opium Wars. In this struggle, Britain was as much an enemy as Japan, until the Japanese slowly but inexorably decided to take all of China for themselves in the name of anti Imperialism. The events of the war are ably and unsensationally recounted, particularly after the creation of the United Front and the outbreak of general hostilities in 1937. The Battle of Shanghai, the Sack of Nanking, the retreat into Sichuan, are all well told, and impressively a fair bit is made of the Nationalist success in keeping large areas of Central China free of the Japanese before 1941. Chiang is presented here, rightfully in my opinion, as a Chinese patriot who was fully committed to the war against Japan. Though the corruption of KMT rule is pointed out, it is presented in the context of its time.

With the surrender of Japan on August 14, 1945, WW II came to an end, leaving the "Big Four" of the United States, Great Britain, the USSR and China as the powers that would play a permanent and central role in the formation of the United Nations. The war in Europe and in the Pacific has generated an enormous literature. The war between Japan and China, and its place in the global conflict, has received far less study. China suffered nearly 20,000,000 deaths during WW II, second only to the USSR. Rana Mitter's new book, "Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937 -- 1945" helped fill many gaps in my understanding of both WW II and its aftermath. The book offers an accessible and balanced account of China's WW II, centering on the Japanese invasion. Mitter is professor of modern Chinese history at the University of Oxford. Mitter explains the purpose of his study in a brief Prologue: "In the early twenty-first century China has taken a place on the global stage and seeks to convince the world that it is a 'responsible great power'. One way in which it has sought to prove its case is to remind people of a time past, but not long past, when China stood alongside the other progressive powers against fascism: the Second World War. If we wish to understand the role of China in today's global society, we would do well to remind ourselves of the tragic, titanic struggle which that country waged in the 1930s and 1940s not just for its own national dignity and survival, but for the victory of all the Allies, west and east, against some of the darkest

forces that history has ever produced.

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