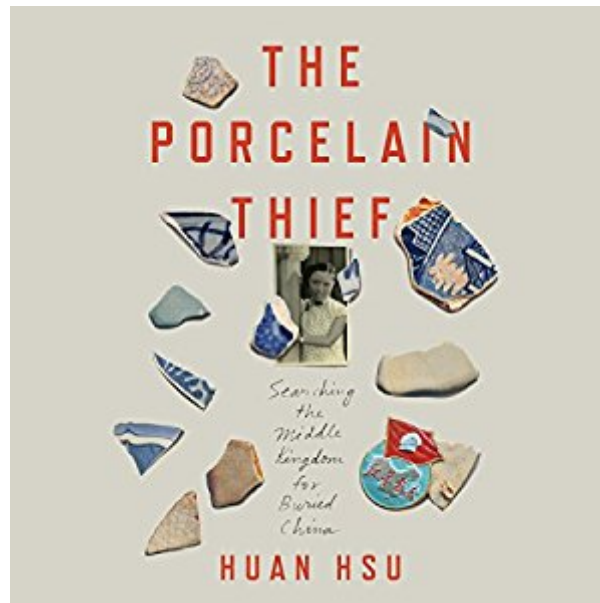




The book was found

The Porcelain Thief: Searching The Middle Kingdom For Buried China



Synopsis

A journalist travels throughout mainland China and Taiwan in search of his family's hidden treasure and comes to understand his ancestry as he never has before. In 1938, when the Japanese arrived in Huan Hsu's great-great-grandfather Liu's Yangtze River hometown of Xingang, Liu was forced to bury his valuables, including a vast collection of prized antique porcelain, and undertake a decades-long trek that would splinter the family over thousands of miles. Many years and upheavals later, Hsu, raised in Salt Lake City and armed only with curiosity, moves to China to work in his uncle's semiconductor chip business. Once there a conversation with his grandmother, his last living link to dynastic China, ignites a desire to learn more about not only his lost ancestral heirlooms but also porcelain itself. Mastering the language enough to venture into the countryside, Hsu sets out to separate the layers of fact and fiction that have obscured both China and his heritage and finally complete his family's long march back home. Melding memoir, travelogue, and social and political history, *The Porcelain Thief* offers an intimate and unforgettable way to understand the complicated events that have defined China over the past 200 years and provides a revealing, lively perspective on contemporary Chinese society from the point of view of a Chinese American coming to terms with his hyphenated identity.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Interesting and insightful book on a Chinese American's return to China and his coming to terms not only with his identity, but with his family and his relationship to them (both literally and figuratively). I

particularly enjoyed how he placed his family's experiences in context with what was happening in China at the time, as well as his efforts to draw a parallel between Chinese history and the significance of the Chinese porcelain industry. I did find off-putting what comes off, perhaps unintentionally, as self-loathing with respect to the Chinese, both on the Mainland and in Taiwan, although his observations, when stripped of their judgmental characterizations, were remarkably accurate and perceptive. (I read this book on the plane back from spending a week in Taiwan). And I suspect that the author meant his more perjorative comments to be representative of his personal search for his identity through the metaphor of his family's porcelain--he, the outsider looking critically at China and the Chinese, even as he finds common ground with them and his own family member. While, as a Chinese American I can relate to some of the author's negative sentiments, but I fear that those without this unique perspective will simply come away with negative stereotypes of the Chinese.

Fascinating. Was given this book as a present, decided to buy a copy to give to a friend! Learned so much about Chinese culture from American born Chinese who returns to China to look for any possible remnants of his grandfather's storied collection, lost in the Cultural Revolution when the family fled to Taipei. Highly readable.

Told in a laid-back style that belies the wealth of historical insight about China's development as a nation, this book is a heartfelt exploration of what it means to try to understand our grandparents and their grandparents lives as they unfolded in real time. Loved this book.

It was pretty slow

As travelers to China and as a husband of a wife who continues to travel there on a regular basis for work, we enjoyed the cultural and historical background from a young man with family ties to China. The author's search to understand how porcelain had become such an artistic touchstone in China was fascinating.

Such a great read. It seamlessly presents recent Chinese and Taiwanese history with amazing true stories of the writer's extended family. It combines "arm chair traveling" with humorous cultural clashes and an unbiased view of modern life in mainland China. Loved it. Would highly recommend it.

This book had me intrigued from the first time I heard about on NPR. I was not disappointed in the least. While I was wanting to find out about the porcelain, I learned so much about Chinese culture, and about family ties. What a great read. And what a great author. He had me right up to the end.

I had to read this book for a college course, and it was phenomenal. The way the author writes is incredibly vibrant and I would recommend this to any history or asian culture enthusiast.

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