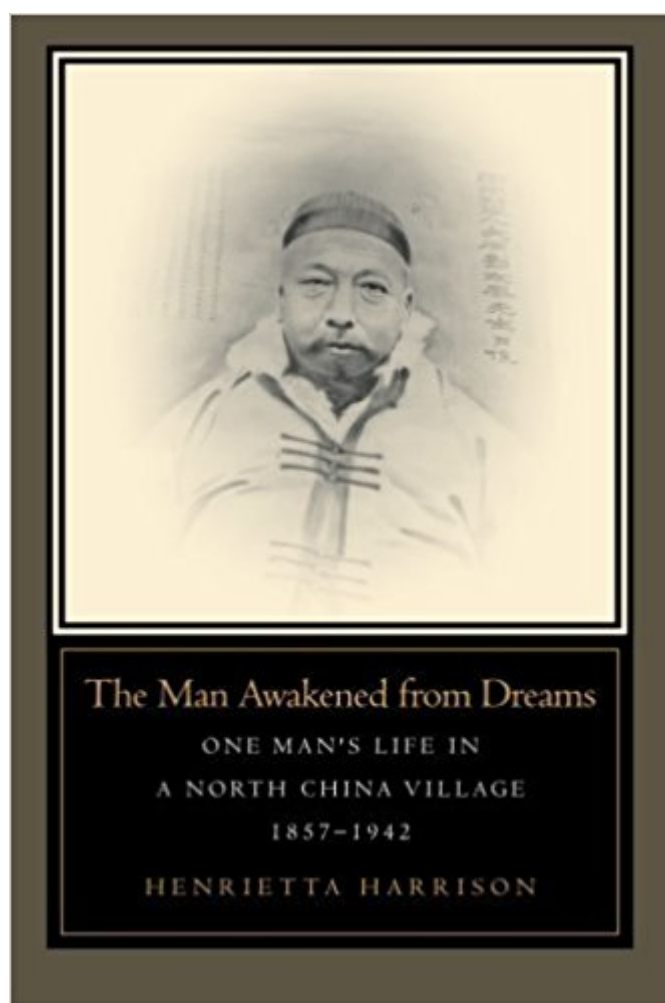


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The Man Awakened From Dreams: One Man's Life In A North China Village, 1857-1942



Synopsis

In this beautifully crafted study of one emblematic life, Harrison addresses large themes in Chinese history while conveying with great immediacy the textures and rhythms of everyday life in the countryside in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Liu Dapeng was a provincial degree-holder who never held government office. Through the story of his family, the author illustrates the decline of the countryside in relation to the cities as a result of modernization and the transformation of Confucian ideology as a result of these changes. Based on nearly 400 volumes of Liu's diary and other writings, the book illustrates what it was like to study in an academy and to be a schoolteacher, the pressures of changing family relationships, the daily grind of work in industry and agriculture, people's experience with government, and life under the Japanese occupation.

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Customer Reviews

"It should be on any short-list of 'necessary' books on modern China." (American Historical Review) "...eye-opening....Harrison does nothing less than open up for us a whole new world." (Journal of Asian Studies) "A tour de force of originality, clarity, and skillful organization....this tome deserves praise as a significant addition to the scholarship of modern Chinese history." (Chinese Historical Review) "This is a lovely book: sharp, human, meticulously theorized, and informative." (The China Review) "The Man Awakened from Dreams is a skillfully crafted book that deserves a wide readership....[It] is a splendid example of the value of studying particular individuals, areas and events to expand, refine and enliven the relatively abstract generalizations of more broadly based studies." (The China Journal) "The richness of this compelling and riveting book cannot be

encompassed in a short review. It is fortunate for us that Harrison brings to life a vanished world of family, work, and land and shows how these elements connect to the region, nation, and world in a time of remarkable political and economic transformations in Asia." (Agricultural History)

In this beautifully crafted study of one emblematic life, Harrison addresses large themes in Chinese history while conveying with great immediacy the textures and rhythms of everyday life in the countryside in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Liu Dapeng was a provincial degree-holder who never held government office. Through the story of his family, the author illustrates the decline of the countryside in relation to the cities as a result of modernization and the transformation of Confucian ideology as a result of these changes. Based on nearly 400 volumes of Liu's diary and other writings, the book illustrates what it was like to study in an academy and to be a schoolteacher, the pressures of changing family relationships, the daily grind of work in industry and agriculture, people's experience with government, and life under the Japanese occupation.

A biography of a late Qing rural scholar who, like 90+% of the candidates who passed the first level of the imperial civil service exams, did not pass the higher levels required for a government position, and who therefore found himself too educated to remain a peasant, and not educated enough for any profession except that of a teacher. What makes this biography different from that of the hundreds of thousands of examination candidates in this situation in the 19th century was the abolition of the civil service exams, the overthrow of the Dynasty, and the revolution in ideas which made his education obsolete. Most studies of intellectuals in the Republic of China focus on those who struggled against and overthrew Neo-Confucianism -- this biography describes how the world fell apart for educated conservatives in the China of 100 years ago.

I'm pretty sure it has its historical merits, but I found it extremely boring.

good quality

Based on nearly 400 volumes of Liu da peng's diary and other writings recorded over 50 years, this slim book illustrates what life was like under the Manchus and under the Japanese occupation. I find this book fascinating. Harrison writes well and neatly conveyed details of every day's life in a China village in the context of momentous changes in China. Her research is thorough. I highly recommend this book.

I like books

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