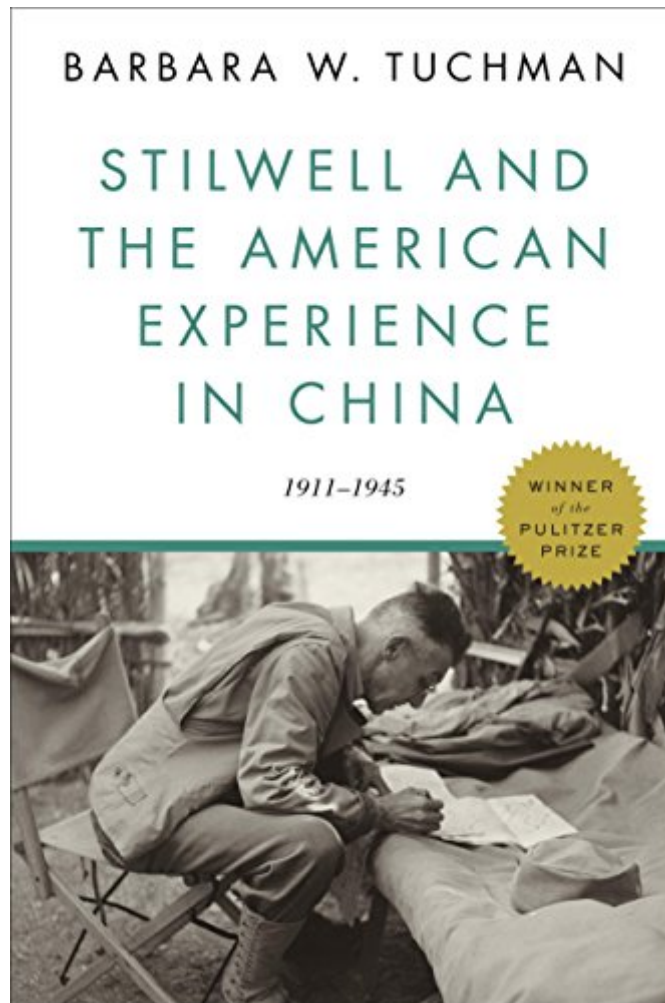


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Stilwell And The American Experience In China: 1911-1945



Synopsis

Barbara W. Tuchman won her second Pulitzer Prize for this nonfiction masterpiece—an authoritative work of history that recounts the birth of modern China through the eyes of one extraordinary American. General Joseph W. Stilwell was a man who loved China deeply, spoke its language, and knew its people as few Americans ever have. Barbara W. Tuchman's groundbreaking narrative follows Stilwell from the time he arrived in China during the Revolution of 1911, through his tours of duty in Peking and Tientsin in the 1920s and 30s, to his return as theater commander in World War II, when the Nationalist government faced attack from both Japanese invaders and Communist insurgents. Peopled by warlords, ambassadors, missionaries, and the spiritual heir to the Empress Dowager, this classic biography of the cantankerous but level-headed "Vinegar Joe" sparkles with Tuchman's genius for animating the people who shaped history. Praise for Stilwell and the American Experience in China — "Tuchman's best book . . . so large in scope, so crammed with information, so clear in exposition, so assured in tone that one is tempted to say it is not a book but an education." —The New Yorker — "The most interesting and informative book on U.S.—China relations . . . a brilliant, lucid and authentic account." —The Nation — "A fantastic and complex story finely told." —The New York Times Book Review

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Customer Reviews

This book is about a period that is both so important and yet largely neglected in American education. The book is quite easy to read with its strong steady narrative flow, its interest in the personalities at play as well as its study of the background of their struggles. Since the book came out around the time of the Vietnam War, I assumed it would be more anti-American foreign policy in tone than it is. It's quite balanced. Tuchman obviously regards Stilwell as the hero of the tale. It's hard to come to any other conclusion about this deeply humble but brilliant, unwearied but always frustrated man. Yet she is quite fair in assessing the difficulties faced by Stilwell's close-to-home antagonist, Chiang Kai Shek. She is also not sparing in describing the courage, success and tactical genius of Claire Chennault, whose (clearly wrong-headed) conception of the War was opposed to that of Stilwell. The story of America in China in WWII and its aftermath is so fascinating, so HUGELY important - and still so relatively little publicized - especially in relation to the affairs of MacArthur, Nimitz and Halsey in the Pacific or Eisenhower, Bradley and Patton in Europe. I long for a movie that will show the fascinating struggle among Stilwell, Chiang, and Chennault in relation to the Japanese and Mao's Communists. It can be said that America's foreign policy in 1943-50 has far less immediate impact in post Cold War Europe today than in Japan, China, Burma, and Indonesia. America's two costly wars since WWII have been in Asia. This book gives a wonderful background to anyone interested in how did the existing state of affairs in China come to pass?

"Stilwell and the American Experience in China" is a very interesting biography of one of America's great military leaders. It engages the reader on several levels. Mrs. Tuchman weaves a study of an era in China's history around the biography of General Stilwell. The period spans approximately one hundred years, beginning with the Opium Wars of the mid 19th century. The history concludes with the Chinese Communists' assumption of power in 1949. Barbara Tuchman's research and analysis of the events and people who lived during this period provide a partial explanation for the success of the Communist revolution. She accomplishes this through her intriguing character studies of the main protagonists, Chiang Kai-shek, Mao Tse-tung, and President Franklin Roosevelt. The character studies suggest the motivation for their decisions. Mrs. Tuchman also effectively exposes the vastly different management styles of the Allied military and political leaders. They include Churchill, Mountbatten, Roosevelt, Marshall, Eisenhower, Chiang Kai-shek, and Stilwell. She reveals how these men attempted to exert influence over each other in deciding the conduct of the

war. She identifies which men prevailed in these negotiations. This book would serve as an excellent reference on management for either civilian or military leaders. Mrs. Tuchman also provides interesting insights into the personalities of Major General Claire Chennault of the Flying Tigers and General George Marshall, who also authored the plan that restored Europe's economy after the war. She helps us understand the basis for their fame and determine whether they were worthy of the recognition they received.

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