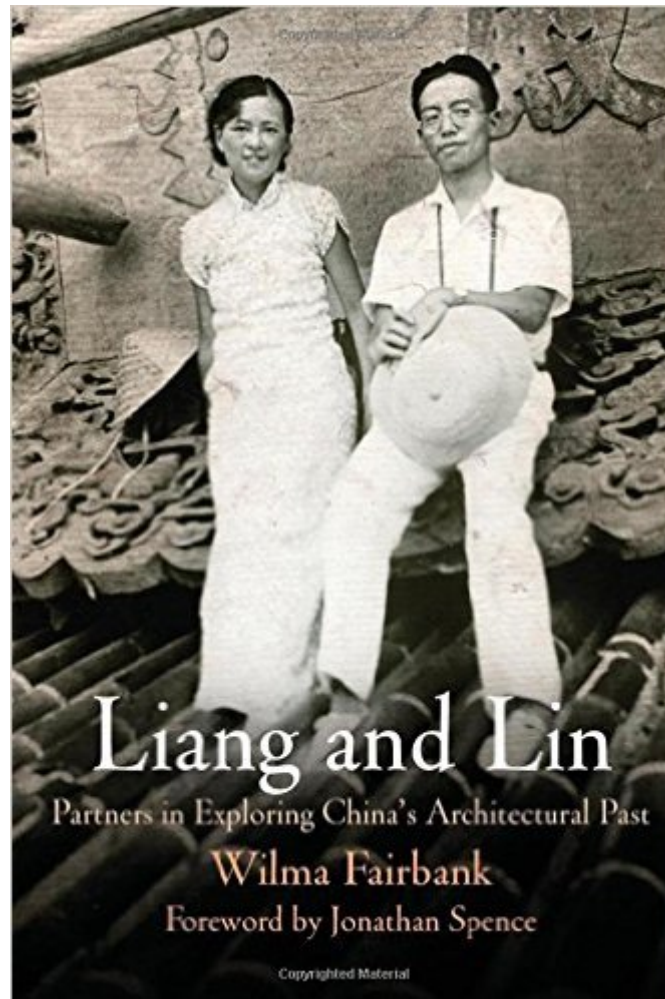


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Liang And Lin: Partners In Exploring China's Architectural Past



Synopsis

Wilma Fairbank documents, from both a historical and a uniquely personal perspective, the professional and personal achievements of Lin Whei-yin and Liang Sicheng. Liang and Lin were born in early twentieth-century China, a time when the influences of modernism were slowly bearing down on the traditional culture. In the 1920s, they traveled together to the Beaux Arts universe of Philadelphia, where they both graduated with honors from the architecture department of the University of Pennsylvania. Married in 1928, they returned to their native land and became the first two professors at the newly founded school of architecture in Shenyang's Tung Pei University. Wilma Fairbank and her husband, John King Fairbank, Harvard University's eminent historian of modern China, were lifelong friends of Liang and Lin. This relationship allows the author, herself a noted researcher of art and architecture, to paint a vivid picture of the couple within the context of China's turbulent past. Fairbank recounts how Liang and Lin used their Western training to initiate the study of China's architectural evolution. She also documents "as seen through the eyes of Liang and Lin" the tragic events that ravaged the Chinese homeland and its people: the 1937 invasion and bombings by the Japanese military and the ensuing illness and poverty; World War II and the civil war; the rise to power of the Communist government in 1949; and the victimization of the scholar class during the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76. Fairbank provides a highly readable, emotionally charged personal account of the couple's lives, and the numerous and sometimes horrific torments and humiliations they suffered. And, finally, when it was all too late, the posthumous praise and recognition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Lin & Liang are forerunners of contemporary Chinese architecture. Like most idealistic intellectuals of the period, they went out to learn from the west and returned back home to contribute what they had learned. This is an important trend in modern Chinese history. The long list of intellectuals includes Sun Yat Sen, Liang Qi Chao (the father of Liang) Chao Yuan Ren, Zhou En Lai, Tang Xiao Ping,.... It was a traumatic period for modern China. It was a time of possibilities, opportunities and frustrations. One could not imagine the achievement and contributions of modern China to the world without these intellectuals. The stories as told by Madame Wilma Fairbank is descriptive, touching and informative at the same time. Mrs. Fairbank (wife of John Fairbank) is a poet and historian at the same time. The book (text and images) is western journalism at its best. The most difficult period for Lin & Liang is not Sino-Japanese War period. Although physically, Lin suffered from fleeing around and illness, but their spirit were high and friends were always around. The most difficult period was after the liberation. Lin & Liang were destined to work with Chairman Mao, the founder of PRC. Based on their fruitful research and intellectual mind, they come up with the conclusion and dedicated their lives to the preservation of Chinese artefacts, and in most cases, Chinese architectural heritage. As detailed described and well put by Madame Fairbank in the book, Lin & Liang travelled all over China and had produced hundreds and thousands of research papers with surveyed plans and photos. Wilma should have known, she joined and lived with them more than once.

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