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The New Emperors: Power and the Princes in China



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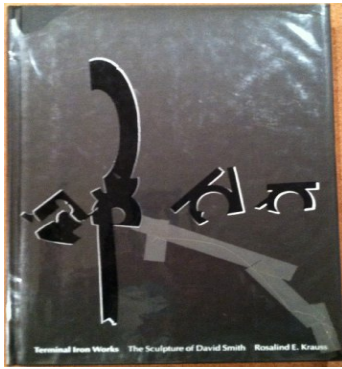
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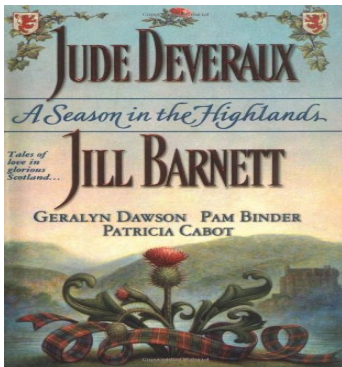
How does one become the leader of the world's newest superpower? And who holds the real power in the Chinese system? China has become the powerhouse of the world economy and home to 1 in 5 of the world's population, yet we know almost nothing of the people who lead it. In *The New Emperors*, the noted China expert Kerry Brown journeys deep into the heart of the Communist Party. China's system might have its roots in peasant rebellion but it is now firmly under the control of a power-conscious Beijing elite, almost half of whose members are related directly to former senior Party leaders. Brown reveals the intrigue, scandal and murder surrounding the internal battle raging

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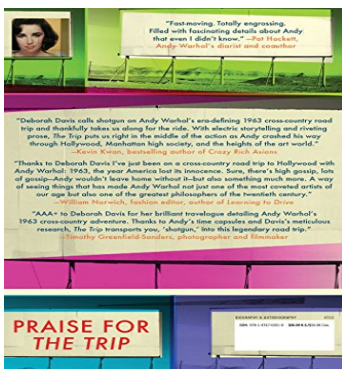
Terminal Iron Works: The Sculpture of David Smith

I don't touch, I touch with the eye— David Smith Rosalind Krauss believes that the body of work produced by David Smith over the past three decades constitutes the most important sculptural achievement of this century. This book characterizes his work in a way that wi



A Season in the Highlands

Love that grows among the heather is enchanted indeed...blessed with the misty magic and timeless passion of fair Scotland! New York Times bestselling author Jude Deveraux unravels a ghostly murder mystery in an ancient Scottish castle. National bestselling author Jill Barnett decrees all is fair



The Trip: Andy Warhol's Plastic Fantastic Cross-Country Adventure

From the author of Strapless and Guest of Honor, a book about a little-known road trip Andy Warhol took from New York to LA in 1963, and how that journey—and the numerous artists and celebrities he encountered—profoundly influenced his life and art. In 1963, up-and-coming artist

Operation Mind Control: The Cryptocracy's Plan to Psychocivilize You (Expanded Researcher's Edition)

Walter Bowart (1939 - 2007) was a journalist and a prominent figure in the New York City counter-culture of the 1960s. He was influential in promoting intellectual freedom through his work as editor of "The East Village Other" and through his Freedom of Thought Foundation. Bowart's "Opera

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Review 1:

Kerry Brown sheds a bright light on a subject that is pretty much shrouded in darkness; The leadership selection process of China and how the power to rule is accrued, shared and, ultimately, to whom it's attributed. Brown covers many areas of Chinese politics and arrives at some very interesting conclusions. The present leaders of the country, known as the 'Fifth Generation', are also analysed and assessed by the author which gives further insight into China's future directions. All of this is discussed in an environment which acknowledges just how remote and detached the elite has become from the rest of the country.

First it must be noted that the subject matter is a very complex one. China's leaders are selected via a very deeply confusing process. Each leader must satisfy several criteria ranging from the patronage of previous leaders to satisfying particular ideological concerns to having an 'institutional' background in areas such as big-business, the nation's Youth League, the nation's leading universities or by being part of the privileged 'Princeling' sect. Unlike past leaders, the current leaders of China also have very little, if any, military experience, they tend not to have studied abroad and have extensive previous experience of running regional cities and provinces. This certainly gives insight into how China see's it's future progress.

Brown covers the concept of the Princeling too. He identifies that the title indeed has a broad interpretation but generally refers to the over-privileged offspring of previous national leaders. These children make up almost 50% of the elite class in China and hold many lucrative positions in business and regional politics. The vast majority line their pockets too and are virtually unaccountable. Needless to say, the Princelings are a powerful group in contemporary China and will not disappear soon either.

Indeed, the author stresses the importance of 'networks' in determining who is fit to lead. Whilst powerful figures such as Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping are now creatures of the past, individual patronage and support is still essential to any budding leader. Jiang Zemin, the previous president from the 1990s, still has significant influence in determining the country's leaders. In fact, the downfall of Bo Xilai has been partially attributed to Jiang's dislike of him, among other things. The downfall of Bo himself is also covered by Brown and this is significant for several reasons. Bo's reformist agenda angered some of the older guard in China. His blatant corruption, as well as the murderous tendencies of his wife (re-Neil Heywood) attracted attention as it exposed the murky underside of China's leadership; massive corruption, murder, lack of accountability and the need for change and reform.

The author builds on his analysis by covering China's politics in a much wider scope as well. Brown documents the lack of accountability of it's elite leadership, their vast detachment from mainstream China, the monumental and poorly disguised corruption, the lack of an internal market for manufactured goods and the reliance of non-state entities for their vast economic success which could be in danger of over-heating if reform isn't considered. Brown concludes by emphasizing just where China needs to improve if it's to continue in it's growth and the dangers posed if the nation doesn't keep pace with the ever changing world.

This is a very good read and one which is essential to understanding how modern China's leadership functions.

Review 2:

By 2012 China was spending \$5 billion/year more on domestic security than external defense. Political reform had stalled - the Party was facing a massive legitimacy crisis due to the way in which relatives of leaders had made fortunes over the past three decades. On November 15, 2012, China's Communist Party appointed seven leaders to its Politburo Standing Committee to oversee its next decade. Author Brown's book is intended to explain how China's Standing Committee, the group of seven that runs the country, came to be comprised of its current members - all male. Secret ballots cast by party members played only a partial role - per Brown, the real negotiations took place in 2012 at a seaside resort where CCP elites huddled in consultations. Brown contends that the explanation can be found in their societal networks (birth, marriage, or tie to a top institution), or a mentor. All seven had proven themselves to be skilled crisis managers and effective communicators. President Xi Jinping rose to the top, per Brown, because his connections had the most impact - a father with strong guerrilla and revolutionary ties to Chairman Mao - as well as initiating economic liberalization in 1980s southern China, a wife with ties to China's military, and his graduation from China's elite Tsinghua (chemical engineering, Marxist philosophy). Xi also had been Committee Chair in charge of preparations for the 2008 Summer Olympics, President of the Central Party School, and worked through a succession of prior posts at lower levels within China. Also important - Xi Jinping had criticized corruption with CCP throughout his career. Further, he had never been a Red Guard - just the kind of history that could have proven negative to explain later.

Connections and blood relationships are also important in the U.S. - witness the 2016 race for president, with Hillary Clinton and Jeb Bush among the leading contenders. However, China has never been led by the direct descendant of a previous top leader - contrary to North and South Korea, Taiwan, and the U.S.

China is a highly hierarchical political system. In 1998 there were 40.5 million cadres running the country; 'leading cadres' constituted a bit over 1% of these, with 92% working at the provincial level and below. Previously power centered around one man - Mao, but those days are gone. Power is dispersed through different institutions and bodies, locally and nationally. Aspiring politicians have to 'canvas' amongst those different sources, recruiting support to have a chance to join the club of top 3,000 high-level cadres. Without the time and opportunity to build up a network in the ministries, provinces, and other key organizations, one's core support at the center can be very shallow.

Review 3:

Brown should have exercised greater diligence in his research. 1. The founding emperor of Ming Dynasty was not a beggar; he was a peasant. 2. Lee Kuan Yew can hardly be called "Yew"; his surname is Lee. 3. Brown tried to relate President Xi and Premier Li's PhDs to their actions; but elaborating without referring to their research questions simply does not make sense.

Review 4:

Very accessible and interesting read about China's major leaders, their backgrounds and how this is relevant to the current challenges China is facing domestically; and also how misunderstood China and its leaders are by Westerners not familiar with Chinese culture, the importance of networks. Recommended quick read for anyone working in China or with work related to China.

Review 5:

Interesting insight into the workings of China. A little cumbersome to read and keep up with all the characters.

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