



Madame Chiang Kai-shek: China's Eternal First Lady

Laura Tyson Li

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Madame Chiang Kai-shek — a Booklist Editors' Choice for 2006 — is the first biography of one of the most controversial and fascinating women of the twentieth century. Raised in a powerful Chinese family, the beautiful, brilliant, and captivating Soong Mayling married Nationalist leader Generalissimo Chiang Kaishek, and went on to become his chief adviser, interpreter, and propagandist. When the Communists broke with Chiang's Nationalist Party, Mayling and her sister, the widow of Sun Yat-Sen, found themselves on opposing sides of a civil war. A relentless crusader speaking out against Communism well into her nineties, she sparred with international leaders and impressed Westerners and Chinese alike with her acumen, charm, and glamour. But she was also decried as a manipulative "Dragon Lady" and was despised for living in Western-style splendor while Chinese citizens suffered under her husband's brutal oppression. The result of years of extensive research in the United States and abroad and access to previously classified CIA and diplomatic files, here at last is the story of an extraordinary woman who has become a symbol of America's long, vexed love affair with China and China's own struggle to define itself as a world power.



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