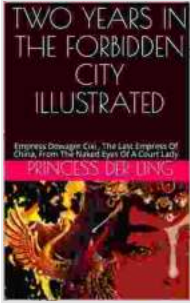


Empress Dowager Cixi: The Last Empress of China Revealed Through the Eyes of Her Court Lady



**TWO YEARS IN THE FORBIDDEN CITY ILLUSTRATED:
Empress Dowager Cixi , The Last Empress Of China,**



From The Naked Eyes Of A Court Lady by Curtis Wilkie

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 3782 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 312 pages
Hardcover	: 190 pages
Item Weight	: 14.4 ounces
Dimensions	: 6.25 x 0.5 x 9.75 inches



In the annals of Chinese history, Empress Dowager Cixi stands as an enigmatic figure, her life shrouded in both power and controversy. As the last empress of China, her reign witnessed the tumultuous transition of the Qing dynasty from its golden age to its eventual collapse.

Now, for the first time, we have an extraordinary glimpse into the private world of Empress Dowager Cixi through the candid memoirs of a court lady who served her for decades. These memoirs, long hidden away from public view, offer a rare and intimate perspective on the enigmatic empress, revealing her true character, her motivations, and the secrets of her court.

The Rise of a Concubine

Cixi was born into a humble Manchu family in 1835. At the age of 16, she was selected as a concubine for the Xianfeng Emperor, the reigning emperor of the Qing dynasty. Cixi's intelligence, charisma, and ambition quickly caught the emperor's attention, and she soon became his favorite concubine.

When the Xianfeng Emperor died in 1861, Cixi's son, Zaichun, became the new emperor, but due to his young age, Cixi assumed regency and ruled as the power behind the throne. For the next 47 years, Cixi wielded enormous influence over the Qing dynasty, guiding it through both periods of prosperity and turmoil.

A Controversial Reign

Cixi's reign was marked by both progress and setbacks. She modernized China's military and industry, but she also faced foreign aggression and rebellions. Her decision to declare war on Japan in 1894-1895 ended in a humiliating defeat for China, and the country was forced to cede Taiwan and other territories to Japan.

Despite her setbacks, Cixi remained a formidable figure in Chinese politics. She outmaneuvered her rivals, suppressed dissent, and maintained her grip on power until her death in 1908.

The Court Lady's Memoirs

The court lady's memoirs provide a unique and often surprising glimpse into the private life of Empress Dowager Cixi. The memoirs reveal that Cixi was a complex and contradictory figure, both ruthless and compassionate, intelligent and superstitious.

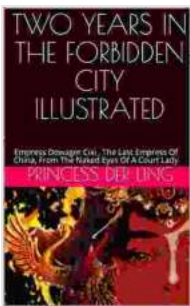
The court lady describes Cixi's love for her family, her passion for the arts, and her unwavering determination to maintain her power. She also recounts the empress's lavish lifestyle, her extravagant spending, and her sometimes cruel treatment of her servants.

Legacy of an Empress

Empress Dowager Cixi's legacy is a complex one. She was a controversial figure, both admired and reviled during her lifetime. Some historians view her as a strong and capable ruler who kept China together during a time of great turmoil.

Others criticize her for her ruthless tactics, her extravagance, and her failure to modernize China quickly enough to meet the challenges of the modern world. However, there is no doubt that Cixi was a remarkable woman who left a lasting mark on Chinese history.

The memoirs of a court lady offer a fascinating and unprecedented look into the life of Empress Dowager Cixi, the last empress of China. These memoirs reveal the true character of a complex and enigmatic woman, shedding light on her rise to power, her controversial reign, and her lasting legacy.



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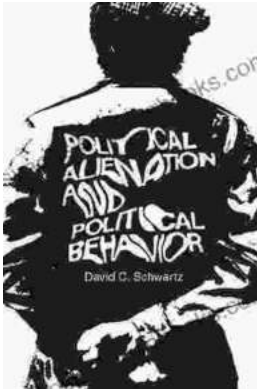
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