



# Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937-1945

By Rana Mitter

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**Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937-1945** By Rana Mitter

**An Economist Book of the Year**

**A Financial Times Book of the Year**

“A book that has long cried out to be written.” — *Observer* (UK), Books of the Year

In 1937, two years before Hitler invaded Poland, Chinese troops clashed with Japanese occupiers in the first battle of World War II. Joining with the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain, China became the fourth great ally in a devastating struggle for its very survival.

Prizewinning historian Rana Mitter unfurls China’s drama of invasion, resistance, slaughter, and political intrigue as never before. Based on groundbreaking research, this gripping narrative focuses on a handful of unforgettable characters, including Chiang Kai-shek, Mao Zedong, and Chiang’s American chief of staff, “Vinegar Joe” Stilwell. Mitter also recounts the sacrifice and resilience of everyday Chinese people through the horrors of bombings, famines, and the infamous Rape of Nanking.

More than any other twentieth-century event, World War II was crucial in shaping China’s worldview, making *Forgotten Ally* both a definitive work of history and an indispensable guide to today’s China and its relationship with the West.

“In the manner of David McCullough, [Mitter] creates a complex history that is urgently alive.” — *Kirkus Reviews*

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#### Review

"Rana Mitter's brilliant new book, *Forgotten Ally: China's War with Japan, 1937-1945*, makes an important and moving contribution to the historical record by illuminating the largely forgotten war that took the lives of millions of Chinese, yet ultimately facilitated the rise of modern China." -- Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

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"Important and compelling . . . Closely examin[es] Beijing's role in the Allied war effort, the heavy and often thankless price paid by the Chinese in their fight against Japan, and the impact of China's wartime traumas on the country's postwar development. . . . Fascinating." — *Wall Street Journal*

"Powerful . . . Mitter excels . . . in placing China's wartime experience in a robustly international framework. . . . General readers curious to learn more about Chinese history should welcome any new book by Mitter." — *Daily Beast*

"Rana Mitter's history of the Sino-Japanese War . . . is a major contribution to the one aspect of the Second World War of which we know far too little, and should know much more if we are to understand the new superpower today. It is a model of clarity and good writing." — Antony Beevor, *Times* (UK)

"Restor[es] a vital part of the wartime narrative to its rightful place. . . . **A remarkable story, told with humanity and intelligence**; all historians of the second world war will be in Mitter's debt. . . . No one could ask for a better guide." - Richard Overy, *Guardian* (London)

"**The best narrative of that long-ago war**, whose effects still linger in China today." - Jonathan Mirsky, *The Spectator* (London)

"**Illuminating and meticulously researched**. . . . It is the voice of the Chinese [ . . . ] that gives the distinctive tone to Mitter's narrative. From the diaries of Chiang Kai-shek to those of national journalists and middle-class Chinese fleeing the conflict, these first-person observations are woven skillfully into his chronicle of the battles and struggles." - *The Economist*

"*Forgotten Ally* is a breathtaking chronicle of China's war with Japan from 1937 to 1945, a major theater of World War II whose story most Western readers have never heard in full -- certainly not as Mitter interprets it here. Authoritative and epic, pulsing with life, this is a grand vision of China's transformation through the cataclysm of war in the twentieth century." -- Stephen R. Platt, author of *Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom*

"Gripping...He shows that...the east Asian conflict shaped both the outcomes of the second world war and the development of the postwar world." - *The Observer*

"An important, timely contribution to shedding light where there is currently much darkness... Mitter 's book demonstrates why to this day the Chinese view Japan with such animosity." -- *The Financial Times*

"Mitter has done an important service both in pulling together the complex narrative threads of this period and in reminding readers of China's vital and largely neglected contribution to the Allied war effort... Mitter's excellent history tells us why we need to remember it." -- *The New Statesman*

"Rana Mitter has written a masterly account of the war, which blends wide deep scholarship with an accessible narrative...Mitter's great achievement is to have encompassed a multi-faceted story in a readable, coherent and gripping manner" - Jonathan Fenby, *The Times*

"This monumental new work by Oxford University professor Rana Mitter magisterially surveys this conflict, the broader repercussions of which still resonate across East Asia." -- *South China Morning Post*

"For decades, argues Rana Mitter in his superb new book, western readers have known too little about China's suffering....Mitter offers a lucid and moving account of the conflict's staggering military tragedies. But it is also a first-rate political and social history of China's wartime years....Mitter's elegant, rigorous and balanced account is an ideal guide to traumas that continue to cast a long shadow over the region." -- *The Telegraph*

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"Mitter's narrative élan, in the manner of David McCullough, creates a complex history that is urgently alive. An important, well-told tale of China at war." -- *Kirkus*

"An important and compelling history of China's World War II experience...Mr. Mitter's book gives China its historical due." -- *The Wall Street Journal*

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