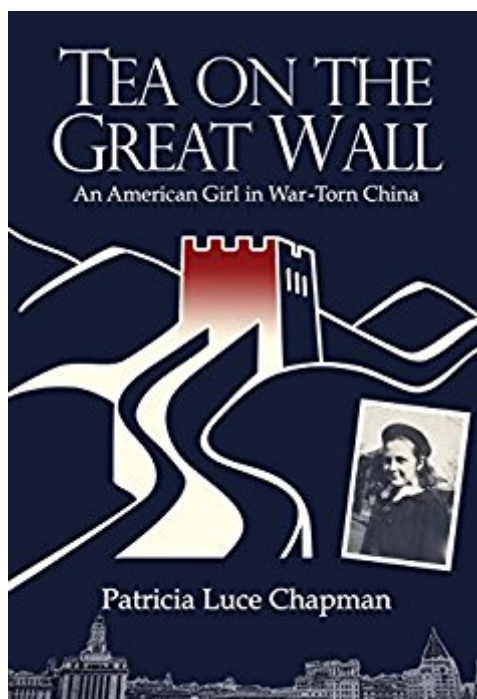


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# Tea On The Great Wall: An American Girl In War-Torn China



## Synopsis

Shirley Temple in Wonderland meets Chinese opium addicts, Nazis, and Japanese bayonets. Tea on the Great Wall is a young American girl's account as the world falls apart in 1930s China. Patricia Luce Chapman's memoir is full of the color and feel of living as a foreigner in a Chinese world, the encroachment of the Japanese, and the takeover by the Nazis of the German school in Shanghai that she attended.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Waxing nostalgic over one's stay in YESTERDAY's Shanghai, with tears in one's heart. The way the author writes ("My computer screen ....has gone asleep..my finger briefly caresses the screen...") reminds one of Faulkner's flashback technique. The Chinese kowtow, a chamber pot under the bed, and the father's forced march as a prisoner to the Bund all help Westerners read the Chinese mind. The author's long-smothered ill-feeling finally explodes when she quotes Johnny spitting out a few obnoxious words to a Japanese soldier amidst that tea party on the Great Wall: "Noong ze iguh tzu loh!" I strongly recommend one read this memoir along with Frederick Brown's "The Boxer Rebellion" (2013) and Kathy Kacer's "Shanghai Escape" (2013).

Patricia not only gives one a window into the privileged life of a young girl growing up as an expatriate in pre-communist China, she pulls you in emotionally. You feel her empathy for the Chinese people and the sadness she felt as she witnessed the atrocities of the Japanese and then the sad parting, never to see again, the beloved Chinese house staff (who were like family) when her family was forced to leave China. Tea on the Great Wall is a lesson in history as well as a fascinating memoir of the author. I could not put it down.

I found this book a little hard to get into, but it really grabbed me at some point. I knew nothing about this time period in Chinese history. The author's childhood in Shanghai was fascinating, and I could feel her pain, fear, and anxiety about the brutality of the Japanese takeover. This book is well worth reading.

Very interesting read for those who love history. Written thru the eyes of a young girl living in China during the Japanese invasion. How it affected her life and the Chinese people surrounding her during her growing up years. Includes snippets of background history concerning the European invasion of China.

A compassionate, personal story about China as told by an American girl who lived with her family in the International sector of Saigon. Starting with the memories of the writer's war correspondent mother, it touches on ancient history, and moves through the Boxer Rebellion, the Mao years, the Revolution, the invasion by Japan and the negative effect of World War II. This book covers the evolution of China, with honest details about the poverty as well as the opulent life style of foreign business people and their many loyal servants. The beautifully written descriptions of vacations within China become an informative travel log showing deep respect for the Chinese Culture.

To understand China today, you have to understand China then, and Patricia Luce Chapman's memoir of growing up in one of the most fascinating periods of history in Shanghai provides a perspective on pre-1949 China that is insightful, eye-opening and told beautifully. Rich with details, even old China hands will learn something. "Shirley Temple in wonderland meets Chinese opium addicts, Nazis and Japanese bayonets," says the book cover, capturing the surreal dichotomy of wartime China. Glamorous society parties, doting servants and tea on the Great Wall -- alongside the fear and uncertainty of a changing world, as Nazi flags go up at school, Japanese warships

crowd the harbor and emaciated opium addicts crowd the streets. Chapman has her journalist mother's genes; she is a beautiful writer who also gets the facts and the history straight. What lifts this from the ordinary is her telling of this story with the freshness of a child's perspective. Little Patty Potter wonders if the warships anchored by the Bund hold teddy bears for her, plays warlords with her brother, and becomes indignant at the plight of the city's rickshaw men. Throughout, she is a keen observer of her beloved Shanghai, of the people, of Chinese ways and etiquette, and of the news of the day. By showing us a human-scale view of China before communist rule, we're able to see both the injustices that made a revolution inevitable, and effects on people of that rule. What has happened today, for example, to the courteousness that she insists is instilled in the Chinese people? This is such a rare thing: a book about a period in history, written by someone who was there, with the words of a novelist, the perspective of a historian, and the eyes of child.

Well written. It gave a wonderful feel for China at a time of great turmoil and tragedy. Additionally it showed how connected many other international citizens were to China and loved her people. It gave so much knowledge about the many peoples who came to China to escape The European horrors. The shift from past and present was disjointed at times but outweighed by the fullness of the picture created.

From an historical perspective this book was extremely interesting -- quite an eye-opener. And it was beautifully written. However, it was not compelling in the sense that I wanted to skip meals or stay up late to read it. One chapter at a time was enough. All-in-all a good read, especially if you are a history buff.

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