

Lazy Man in China

HELENE CHUNG MARTIN

This is a China book you read through in one go ... a very intimate China reportage that is personal and conversational with often unfashionable private judgments ... It is at once a wistful love story ... and a dialogue between [Chung] and her partner about China.'

Professor Stephen FitzGerald OA
Chairman, The Asia-Australia Institute, UNSW
Australia's First Ambassador to the People's Republic of China

The forgotten art of letter-writing brings a vanished China into the email age: Beijing is 'a fascinating and most exotic place in a repressive and sinister sort of way.' *Lazy Man in China* is John Martin's witty, perceptive, self-deprecating take on China, drawn from letters to family and friends, and edited and updated by his partner, former Beijing correspondent Helene Chung.

Her new book marks the 21st anniversary of her posting as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's first female foreign correspondent, when she was warned, 'There's a lot riding on your appointment.'

Martin, the self-dubbed 'lazy man', accompanied her and worked as 'the token Australian and the token man' in the Australian embassy aid section. His images are shot through with colour, ironic humour and insight as old communism gives way to new capitalism. He didn't live to see the China that she experienced in 2002, the cosmopolitan China of BMWs, new rich, new poor and a Tiananmen Square emptied on the thirteenth anniversary of the massacre by a World Cup soccer game viewed on giant screens.

THE AUTHOR

Helene Chung Martin has worked in radio in Australia, Britain, China, Egypt and Hong Kong, and in television in Australia. She has also freelanced for BBC, CBS, Hong Kong radio, NPR and NZBC. A fourth-generation Tasmanian Chinese, she was born in Hobart and educated at St Mary's College, Hobart, and The University of Tasmania. She is a BA (Hons) and MA in history. An honorary research fellow at Monash Asia Institute, Melbourne, she is the author of *Shouting from China* (Penguin, 1988 and 1989), and *Gentle John My Love My Loss* (Hill of Content, 1995).

Lazy Man in China will be launched by former China Cultural Counsellor, Asialink Chairman Carrillo Gantner AO on Wednesday 29 September at 6.30pm at Asialink, Melbourne.

Helene Chung Martin is available for interview.
We would appreciate a copy of any review.



ENQUIRIES

Diana Giese
telephone
+61 2 9558 0643
fax
+ 61 2 9558 0643
email
dgiese@bigpond.com
web
www.pandanusbooks.com.au

PANDANUS BOOKS

Research School of Pacific
& Asian Studies
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT Australia
telephone
+61 2 6125 3269
fax
+61 2 6125 9975
email
pandanusbooks@anu.edu.au

SPECIFICATIONS

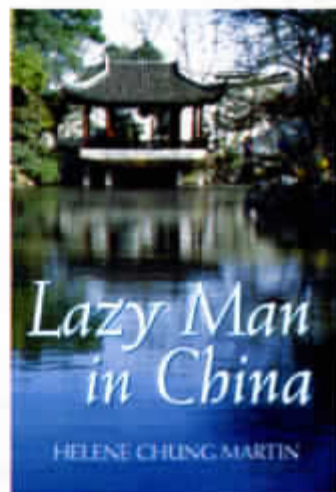
\$34.95
September 2004
ISBN 1 74076 128 6
227 x 153mm
[large biography format]
xvi + 227pp
90 colour photos throughout

LAZY MAN IN CHINA - DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- China past and present: from the early eighties when Chinese aspired to the four things that go round (a watch, a fan, a bicycle and a sewing machine), through the late eighties when they dreamed of the four big things (a washing machine, a refrigerator, a cassette recorder and a television set), to today when they lust for the four luxuries (an apartment, a car, private education and overseas travel) — and perhaps a pet pooch and a concubine too.
- Dynamics of role reversal: the balance between high-flying female and supportive new age male. Unlike other China books by foreigners, this is largely through the eyes of the spouse of the appointee to Beijing — an Australian man who no more wants to live there than in Afghanistan but who goes to support his partner and her career.
- Wry humour is a characteristic of this memoir. How many China books are written largely in the anecdotal style of private letters (edited so that readers almost forget they're letters or come to think they're addressed to them)? And how many assume the conversational tone of a dinner party?

LAZY MAN IN CHINA - QUOTATIONS

- **On tourists and visiting dignitaries such as US President Ronald Reagan:**
'Tourists are responsible for most of the absolute rubbish talked in Australia about China (politicians are all tourists) ... Tourists are raced around from one cooked up situation to another. Ronald Reagan recently visited a market which had not even existed until just before his arrival. The customers and stall holders were all police.'
- **On the visit during the Cold War of Soviet diplomats to the ABC apartment:**
'They turned out to be Russian diplomats ... I still cannot find the bugs they must have planted ... but I can't wait for the beautiful ballerina to ring me up and arrange a meeting.'
- **On a press conference to explain China's mass execution campaign:**
'Anyway, he said, it had been necessary to have a lot of executions lately due to the Bureau slackness in previous years — catching up with the work load.'
- **On the walled diplomatic compounds where foreigners had to live, segregated from the Chinese people but spied on by appointed Chinese staff:**
'We live in separate compounds with our own 'ayi' auntie, driver etc. All supplied by the Foreign Services Bureau. These do our bidding and keep an eye on us and see what visitors we have. All is reported at regular meetings. We are very fortunate with ours and are really quite good friends within the obvious limitations, imposed by the Government. I suspect sometimes that faced with a grilling by Helene or the State Security Police, our people would prefer to face the latter.'



NEW RELEASE

Lazy Man in China
Helene Chung Martin

ENQUIRIES

Diana Giese
telephone
+61 2 9558 0643
fax
+ 61 2 9558 0643
email
dgiese@bigpond.com
web
www.pandanusbooks.com.au

PANDANUS BOOKS

Research School of Pacific
& Asian Studies
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT Australia
Tel +61 2 6125 3269

SPECIFICATIONS

\$34.95
September 2004
ISBN 1 74076 128 6
227 x 153mm
[large biography format]
xvi + 227pp
90 colour photos throughout