



# **The Road to Sleeping Dragon: Learning China from the Ground Up**

*Michael Meyer*

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**The Road to Sleeping Dragon: Learning China from the Ground Up** Michael Meyer

**From the highly praised author of *The Last Days of Old Beijing*, a brilliant portrait of China today and a memoir of coming of age in a country in transition.**

In 1995, at the age of twenty-three, Michael Meyer joined the Peace Corps and, after rejecting offers to go to seven other countries, was sent to a tiny town in Sichuan. Knowing nothing about China, or even how to use chopsticks, Meyer wrote Chinese words up and down his arms so he could hold conversations, and, per a Communist dean's orders, jumped into teaching his students about the Enlightenment, the stock market, and Beatles lyrics. Soon he realized his Chinese counterparts were just as bewildered by China's changes as he was.

Thus began an impassioned immersion into Chinese life. With humor and insight, Meyer puts readers in his novice shoes, winding across the length and breadth of his adopted country --from a terrifying bus attack on arrival, to remote Xinjiang and Tibet, into Beijing's backstreets and his future wife's Manchurian family, and headlong into efforts to protect China's vanishing heritage at places like "Sleeping Dragon," the world's largest panda preserve.

In the last book of his China trilogy, Meyer tells a story both deeply personal and universal, as he gains greater – if never complete – assurance, capturing what it feels like to learn a language, culture and history from the ground up. Both funny and relatable, *The Road to Sleeping Dragon* is essential reading for anyone interested in China's history, and how daily life plays out there today.

## The Road to Sleeping Dragon: Learning China from the Ground Up Details

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Author : Michael Meyer

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# From Reader Review The Road to Sleeping Dragon: Learning China from the Ground Up for online ebook

## Esther says

Interesting travel book of China. The author lives and travels off the tourist paths.

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## Lori says

If you've always wondered what it's like to join the Peace Corps and see a foreign country from within here is your answer. Meyer is in China at the perfect time as it transitions from old to new, out of Mao's time into whatever comes next. Witty, observant, self-critical. He makes an insightful observation that many travelers miss: you get so focused on crossing sites and cities off your to do list that you forget the real story is the people you meet along the way. I will definitely check out his previous books. Love the American names his students choose.

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## Chris Csergei says

Neither insightful or interesting. His "ground up" view is really just a story from his perspective, and reads like a travel log/journal. Not really worth your time.

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## Audrey says

I received this book for Christmas last year and decided to read Meyer's first two books first, and I'm glad I did - not because you need to read them in order, but because I enjoyed the first two a lot more. While The Last Days of Old Beijing and In Manchuria used more of a reporter's approach to delve into specific places and topics, The Road to Sleeping Dragon was much broader, providing a retrospective on Meyer's experiences in China to date. He didn't delve into any one topic, but instead gave general impressions and interesting anecdotes, which didn't have an overarching theme. Honestly, it felt like he thought back over his time in China, asked, "Okay, what sticks out in my mind the most?" and then wrote those things down. Interesting snippets of personal narrative, but ultimately insubstantial as the driving force for a fairly long book. Maybe I feel this way because I also lived in China, and so lots of the experiences he's had apply to probably every laowai in China. Sometimes that's a nice trip down memory lane, but I didn't find anything particularly insightful, unlike the actual research he put into his other books. So maybe this book would be better for a more general audience? Which is weird, because I feel like the majority of those who'd be drawn to picking it up are Meyer's fellow expats. Regardless of the audience, it's not a bad book by any means, but if you're looking for an overarching thesis or deep insights into China, this ain't it. I'd recommend The Last Days of Old Beijing or In Manchuria over this one; unlike The Road to Sleeping Dragon, those bones have meat on 'em.

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## **Gary McCray says**

Incredible book delivering the reality of China rushing from a rural and urban neighborhood culture to a modern power. As a regular traveler to the new China of endless factories and western hotels this provided a perspective that wish I would have experienced. Thanks to Michael Meyer fr sharing.

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## **Kelly says**

A fascinating look at the rapid changes - social, economic, political, and cultural - in China over the last two decades.

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## **Susan says**

I couldn't put this book down and really enjoyed his first two books of narrative non-fiction. Yet I kept finding myself scribbling notes in the margins in this one. Like when he talks about the design on the renminbi and how that's changed and how foreigners used to pay much more than locals for just about everything in China, but there's no mention of FEC. That kind of stood out. And when he and his wife traveled around China before they got married, there was no mention of needing a marriage certificate to stay in the same room. Maybe that was gone in the late 90s, but it was definitely a thing in '95. Just little things like that stood out to me, but I am probably being unfairly petty. If someone reads this book first, I highly recommend his two earlier books. Don't skip those just because this one has some overlap. All in all, I found this book to be inspirational for young adults who might be thinking about going into the Peace Corps or teaching in China. It's also a stark look at how China has changed so much in 20 years. Best of all, he's a great writer and you'll learn a ton from this book if you don't know much about China. And if you do know something about it, it will be a nice jog down memory lane, as it was for me.

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## **Becky Loader says**

Meyer's time in China was very productive for him. He learned about popular culture from beginning to end. His descriptions of travel experiences and teaching are very interesting, but ultimately I was disappointed by the ending.

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## **Carol Wakefield says**

Mr Meyer lived and worked in China during some rapidly changing times. His views of a China that was opening to the west, planning for the olympics and modernizing its infrastructure and ideas were fascinating. He made the people he met real to this reader in coping with changes they had little to no way to effect

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**Supriya says**

Good book, readable, started meandering sentimentally a bit after the part where he meets his girlfriend (now wife) so I stopped midway. But good writer

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**Bill Langeman says**

A well-written book which is compelling on several levels. I loved finding out about China which I think I did a little bit through this book and I loved following the character developments and relationships which matured over many years.

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