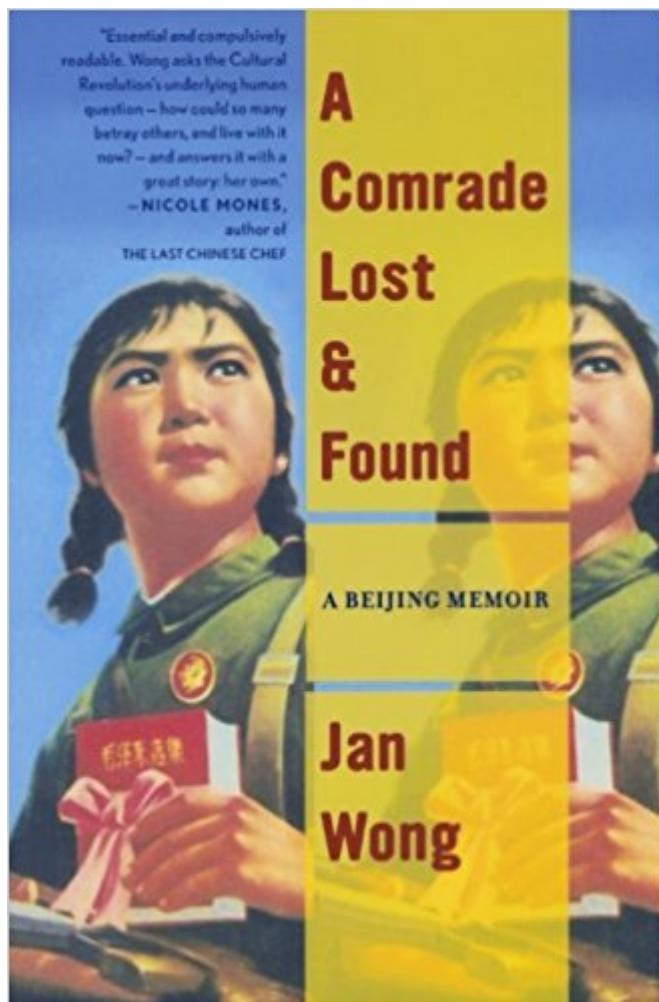


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# A Comrade Lost And Found: A Beijing Memoir



## Synopsis

In the early 1970s, at the height of the Cultural Revolution, Jan Wong traveled from Canada to become one of only two Westerners permitted to study at Beijing University. One day a fellow student, Yin Luoyi, asked for help getting to the United States. Wong, then a starry-eyed Maoist from Montreal, immediately reported her to the authorities, and shortly thereafter Yin disappeared. Thirty-three years later, hoping to make amends, Wong revisits the Chinese capital to search for the person who has haunted her conscience. At the very least, she wants to discover whether Yin survived. But Wong finds the new Beijing bewildering. Phone numbers, addresses, and even names change with startling frequency. In a society determined to bury the past, Yin Luoyi will be hard to find. As she traces her way from one former comrade to the next, Wong unearths not only the fate of the woman she betrayed but a web that mirrors the strange and dramatic journey of contemporary China and rekindles all of her love for "and disillusionment with" her ancestral land.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. As a young student, award-winning Canadian journalist Wong (*Red China Blues*) spent a year in Beijing on a foreign exchange program during the cultural revolution, and in this suspenseful, elegantly written book, she recounts her return to the city in an effort to find a former classmate she betrayed with grave consequences. As a fervent young Maoist eager to fit in with her compatriots, the author had voluntarily informed on Yin Luoyi, who had been interested in visiting America at a time when expressing approval for the imperialist running dogs could lead to

expulsion, ostracism or worse; Yin was expelled from the school. Wong returns to a transformed Beijing. Gone is the semirural capital where the author's revolutionary course of study included bouts of hard labor and self criticism sessions. In its place are eight-lane expressways lit up like Christmas trees, shiny skyscrapers and the largest shopping mall in the world. Wong is a gifted storyteller, and hers is a deeply personal and richly detailed eyewitness account of China's journey to glossy modernity. (Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In the 1970s, Wong, a Canadian student with idealized views of Communist China, got the opportunity to study at Beijing University. Swallowing Mao's doctrine hook, line, and sinker, Wong turned in a fellow student, Yin Luoyi, after the girl approached her about finding a way to get to the United States. In 2006, Wong "now a married journalist with two sons" travels with her family to Beijing with the intention of finding Yin, not an easy task in a country where people routinely change their phone numbers "and even their names. The journey takes Wong back into her past, as she reconnects with teachers and fellow students from Beijing University, and gives her a glimpse into the way the Chinese are rapidly and eagerly embracing capitalism and technology. It couldn't have been easy for Wong to write a book about a shameful act from her youth, but she approaches the subject with courage, grace, and dignity, offering readers fresh insights into China and her people during the Cultural Revolution and today. --Kristine Huntley --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

this is the third of jan wong's books on china that i've read, and i must say that i love them. i read the first during my first trip (of 10 months) in china, and discovered in her a depth, a simplicity, and a transparency that is rare in westerners writing about china. she's not pushing an agenda nor a viewpoint, she's simply a talented and descriptive writer who can lay out just what she sees and experiences in an inviting and literate way.

while the book contains some interesting areas, it drags on and on and many times the author repeats the same information. not much of an effort by the author, just writing because the need to publish another book.

This book is an amazing follow up to the phenomenal "Red China Blues". They work so well together on many levels. First, there's the obvious correlation of the previous story about ratting out

her classmate. The follow-up is so great and really revealing. Wong's inner turmoil and guilt about the incident are relatable, making the urgency all that more serious. Second, where "Red China Blues" showed the primitiveness and poverty of Cultural Revolution China, "A Comrade Lost and Found" contrasts that with the newfound wealth and rapid development of China. The contrast between the two Chinas is highlighted with poignancy and skill. I cannot recommend these two books enough. They give such a great understanding of China and the Chinese people in the current era.

This is an excellent follow-up to Ms Jan Wong's earlier book, "Red China Blues". In her usual intelligent, insightful, humorous manner, Ms Wong cuts to the heart of China today and compares it to the China of the Cultural Revolution under Mao. She lived through both. Taken together, these books offer the most penetrating, comprehensive, and thoughtful look at China over the past 50 years. China is a big, bustling, forward-looking country on the go, full of new construction with a rapidly developing infrastructure, while at the same time providing numerous opportunities for entrepreneurs to become wealthy. "To get rich is glorious" is the new Chinese mantra. Ms Wong has the knack of bringing all this down to a personal level with her numerous descriptions of what she has experienced. Her descriptions of day to day life in China, as well as reflections on Chinese history, are matchless. This book and its predecessor are well worth reading. They should be read in sequence. Although the theme of the book revolves about her search for her long-lost comrade, whom she thought she had wronged during the Cultural Revolution, it is much more than that. It is a wonderful description of China and its people, past and present.

The author wrote one book on how she turned her unsuspecting Beida (Peking University) classmate in; and in this book she told the story on how she had overcome impossible hurdles to find the classmate so she could apologize to her - profiting twice. Well, one little thing's hard to ignore: finding someone in China isn't difficult. Case in point: in 2011 I went to the police station looking for a friend of my mother back in 1968. I only gave the cop his name, even unsure how he writes his given name due to homonym, where he used to work and approximate age. Within a minute, they picked him out from the lineup from the computer. The next second, they called him up. After three rings, he answered the call. It was free, by the way. The streets, neighborhood and even city change frequently but the fundamentals such as police work doesn't. I read this book while trying hard to silence a nagging doubt: given the fact that the author studied in China and worked there as a journalist, how could she not know the police will find the mate in a heartbeat? Private

detective is so unChina. Thank god the searching in the police station was short because the house was filled with idling smokers. I felt I needed a lung change afterward.

I've read both "Red China Blues", and "A Comrade Lost and Found: A Beijing Memoir", so I had a background understanding of the author's motivation before reading this book. I don't know if it would have been easier to find her using other means (private detectives, via government back channels, etc), but I think either way it would have taken lots of resources and time. I doubt it was as easy as walking into a police station and file a report as stated by another reviewer. I enjoyed reading her works because I like her witty writing styles. Of course her topics are also interesting (why else would I have bothered otherwise?).

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