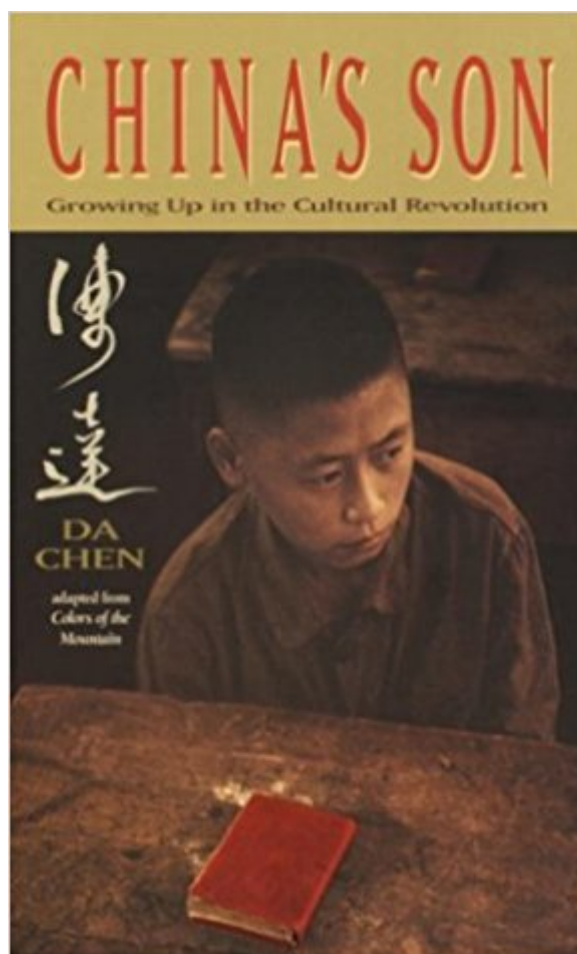


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# China's Son: Growing Up In The Cultural Revolution



## Synopsis

A candid memoir about growing up during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, adapted by the author from his *Colors of the Mountain*, published by Random House. Da Chen was born in China in 1962. The grandson of a landlord, he and his family were treated as outcasts in Communist China. In school, Da was an excellent student until a teacher told him that, because of his family's crimes, he could never be more than a poor farmer. Feeling his fate was hopeless, Da responded by dropping out and hanging around with a gang. However, after Mao's death, Da realized that an education and college might be possible, but he had to make up for the time he'd wasted. He began to study "all day and into the night. His entire family rallied to help him succeed, working long hours in the rice fields and going into debt to ensure that Da would have an education. When the final exam results were posted, he had one of the highest scores in the region and had earned a place at the prestigious Beijing University. Now his family's past would not harm their future. From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Born in 1962 in southern China, Da Chen had monumental hurdles to overcome before he could even walk or talk. Mao Tse-tung's Cultural Revolution was in full swing, and the descendents of landlords, who were despised, were routinely stripped of their wealth, beaten, humiliated, and sent off to labor camps. Da Chen, the grandson of a landlord, lives several parallel lives: he excels in

school but then gives up studying in the face of unbearable pressure and harassment from teachers, students, and administrators. He is a self-taught musician but also a member of a gang of toughs. His siblings, banned from school, work from before sunrise to sunset in the muddy, backbreaking rice fields. But eventually all the dichotomies in Da's life come together, and he makes a break for a new life, with higher education as his foundation for future success. Da Chen's engrossing memoir, adapted for younger readers from his book *Colors of the Mountain*, paints a colorful, painful, sometimes humorous picture of life during the 1960s and '70s, when formerly privileged Chinese families were at the mercy of Chairman Mao and his ruthless Red Guard soldiers. The writing is at times jerky, other times poetic, and Da Chen's time frame can be confusing. However, this is a book young readers will not soon forget, especially if it's their first glimpse of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. (Ages 12 and older) --Emilie Coulter --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Adapted for young adults from Chen's memoir (*Colors of the Mountain*), this coming-of-age tale traces the author's boyhood in Maoist China. Born in 1962, Chen grows up in privation and humiliation as the grandson of former landlords. His family has been stripped of property and is cruelly treated by fellow villagers and politicians. Chen's siblings must quit school to become farmers, his father is fired from his teaching job and repeatedly hauled off to labor camp, and his grandfather is publicly beaten. Chen's only recourse is to excel at his studies ("I shone, despite their efforts to snuff me out"). The pacing here lurches a bit; what may have worked well for adult audiences could throw younger readers. However, humor and unflinching honesty inform the narrative, which is shot through with lyrical descriptions ("my fate stood undecided, wavering in the wind like a blade of grass along the Dong Jing River"). Some of the most involving scenes revolve around the boy's gradual inclusion in a Huck Finn-esque gang that cares little about his privileged background. Young adults interested in this area of history may wish to read Ji-li Jiang's recent *Red Scarf Girl*, which chronicles her adolescence at the time Mao was taking power. Chen's reminiscences add another intriguing perspective on this turbulent time. Ages 12-up. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

After living in China for the last decade, this book really resonated with me, helping fill in gaps and explain certain behaviors and idiosyncrasies. Very readable for students and interesting enough to keep the attention of middle school kids. A wonderful personal tale of survival during a difficult period of China's history.

I've read several books on the Chinese Cultural Revolution at this point. I would recommend this one as a great introductory book into the subject (Along with "Red Scarf Girl"). Both are very well written, easy to read, and touch on a lot of aspects of the Cultural Revolution in terms of daily life.

Da Chen's voice is so honest. If you need a push in life, you need to read this. I love Da Chen's Colors of The Mountain. That's what that made me want to explore his other titles. What I did not realise that China's Son was the same book in a different title. I read somewhere that it's a juvenile version of Colors of The Mountain. But since it's my all-time favourite book, I don't have any regrets having bought it in Kindle version.

I had already read "Colors of The Mountain" and didn't realize this is the same book only the shorten version. Shame on me for not reading the notes provided in the explanation of the book. I would highly recommend "Colors of the Mountain" because it would have much more detail.

As a teacher working in China, I was really interested in this book just from the synopsis. This book really gives the reader a sense of what China was like during the Cultural Revolution. I found myself reading with my mouth open because of the shocking things that happened during that time. I like this book because it is an autobiography- so nothing is fake. I teach students who are so privileged and they hate school- this boy loves school. I love the differences between then and now.. you gotta read this book!

Interesting story

This book was a required reading for my son's summer reading entering 7th grade. Product was as described online and shipment was fast. Product was reasonably priced. Great doing business with you.

Like most accounts of the Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward, this one is filled with flawed memories. As an example, it begins: "I was born in Southern China in 1962, in the tiny town of Yellow Stone. They called it the year of The Great Starvation." In fact, the worst of the Great Famine (1958-1961, referred to in China as "three years of difficult period" was ostensibly over by the end of 1961 in most of the country), and the worst in Fujian, where the author was born, was

definitely over by the time of his birth in 1962. Furthermore, there is no record of 1962 being called "The Great Starvation" in Fujian or anywhere in China. It suits his story to say he was born in the Great Famine, but it simply didn't happen that way. Which leads one to question if the rest of his story is "adjusted" to create a fanciful novel rather than an accurate memoir, as is so common with many of these Chinese memoirs that tend to "borrow" from other memories rather than recording reality.

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