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of the Chang sisters, four girls born between 1908 and 1914 in the ancient provincial city of Hofei. The affluence of their family cushioned them only intermittently from the calamities of civil war, Japanese invasion, and the 1949 Communist revolution.

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nurse-nannies -- uneducated widows from the Hofei countryside -- contributed their own traditional beliefs and opinions on modern ways. As the sisters grew up, one broke with tradition to marry an actor, one survived the most violent political years of Communist rule, one married one of China's greatest novelists, and one, raised separately by her devout Buddhist great-aunt, was taught to be a rigorous practitioner of China's classical arts. The Chang sisters' prolific correspondence provides a rare glimpse of private life in China during the twentieth century, as well as a chronicle of the country from prosperity to persecution, from foreign wars to Cultural Revolution. In Chin's expert prose, *Four Sisters of Hofei* is an intensely person story that illustrates the complex history of a complex land.

In the 1980s China's politicians, writers, and academics began to raise an increasingly urgent question: why had a Chinese writer never won a Nobel Prize for literature? Promoted to the level of official policy issue and national complex, Nobel anxiety generated articles, conferences, and official delegations to Sweden. Exiled writer Gao Xingjian's win in 2000 failed to satisfactorily end the matter, and the controversy surrounding the Nobel committee's choice has continued to simmer. Julia Lovell's comprehensive study of China's obsession spans the twentieth century and taps directly into the key themes of modern Chinese culture: national identity, international status, and the relationship between intellectuals and politics.

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The intellectual preoccupation with the Nobel literature prize expresses tensions inherent in China's move toward a global culture after the collapse of the Confucian world-view at the start of the twentieth century, and particularly since China's re-entry into the world economy in the post-Mao era. Attitudes toward the prize reveal the same contradictory mix of admiration, resentment, and anxiety that intellectuals and writers have long felt toward Western values as they struggled to shape a modern Chinese identity. In short, the Nobel complex reveals the pressure points in an intellectual community not entirely sure of itself. Making use of extensive original research, including interviews with leading contemporary Chinese authors and critics, *The Politics of Cultural Capital* is a comprehensive, up-to-date treatment of an issue that cuts to the heart of modern and contemporary Chinese thought and culture. It will be essential reading for scholars of modern Chinese literature and culture, globalization, post-colonialism, and comparative and world literature.

"The first half of the book details the history of the prosperous Chang family from the turmoil of the Taiping Rebellion in the 1860s to the birth of Yuan-ho, the oldest sister, in 1907. From there, rather than writing conventional biographies of the four sisters, Chin mimics the structure of k'un-ch'i, a refined form of Chinese performance that showcases only a few scenes of an opera. In this style, drawing on voluminous family correspondence, diaries and interviews (all four sisters are still alive [in 2004]), Chin chooses each sister's most significant experience and expands upon it"--*Publisher's Weekly*, quoted in Amazon.com.

For more than two thousand years, Confucius has been an inseparable part of China's history.

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Yet despite this fame, Confucius the man has been elusive. Now, in *The Authentic Confucius*, Anping Chin has worked through the most reliable Chinese texts in her quest to sort out what is really known about Confucius from the reconstructions and the guesswork that muddled his memory. Chin skillfully illuminates the political and social climate in which Confucius lived. She explains how Confucius made the transition from court advisor to wanderer, and how he reluctantly became a professional teacher as he refined his judgment of human character and composed his vision of a moral political order. The result is an absorbing and original book that shows how Confucius lived and thought: his habits and inclinations, his relation to the people of the time, his work as a teacher and as a counselor, his worries about the world and the generations to come. In this book, Chin brings the historical Confucius within our reach, so that he can lead us into his idea of the moral and to his teachings on family and politics, culture and learning. *The Authentic Confucius* is a masterful account of the life and intellectual development of a thinker whose presence remains a powerful force today.

In the 1980s, important contemporary Western works began to be translated into Chinese. Postmodernist Chinese authors began to present their readers with experimental stories that

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challenged the conventions of culture and ideology. This volume gathers the most exciting of these writers.

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