

The Lost Book of Sun Yatsen and Edwin Collins



Sun Yatsen (1866-1925) occupies a unique position in modern Chinese history, being equally venerated as the founding father of the nation by both the mainland Communist government and its rival in Taiwan. As well as being first president of the Republic of China, the peasant born yet western educated Dr Sun was a dedicated political theorist, constantly in search of the ideal political, constitutional and social blueprint to underpin his incomplete revolution. A decade before the emergence of his Three Principles of the People, and weeks before his first publication in 1897, Kidnapped in London, a slim memoir of his recent rise to world-wide fame, Sun was already hard at work in the British Museum Reading Room, planning his most ambitious book yet: a comprehensive political treatise in English on the tyrannical misgovernment of the Chinese nation by the Manchus of the Qing Dynasty. Started then abandoned twice over, destined never to be completed, let alone published, we can only conjecture what title this revolutionary book might have had. The Lost Book of Sun Yatsen and Edwin Collins is the first study of this lost work. It draws its originality and its themes from three primary sources, all presented here for the first time. The first is a series of interconnected lost writings co-authored by Sun Yatsen between 1896 and 1898. The second is the mass of long-lost political interviews with, and articles dedicated to, Sun Yatsen and his politics, first published in the British press in the aftermath of his rescue from the Chinese Legation in London in 1896. The third source is the figure of the one-time world renowned Apostle of the Simple Life for Children, the Anglo-Jewish Rabbi-Reverend Edwin Collins (1858-1936), a devotee of Jean-Jacques Rousseaus Emile, who became Sun's writing collaborator of choice during his years of political exile from China.

