

China's Millennials: The Want Generation

By Eric Fish

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In 1989, students marched on Tiananmen Square demanding democratic reform. The Communist Party responded with a massacre, but it was jolted into restructuring the economy and overhauling the education of its young citizens. A generation later, Chinese youth are a world apart from those who converged at Tiananmen. Brought up with lofty expectations, they've been accustomed to unprecedented opportunities on the back of China's economic boom. But today, China's growth is slowing and its demographics rapidly shifting, with the boom years giving way to a painful hangover.

Immersed in this transition, Eric Fish, a millennial himself, profiles youth from around the country and how they are navigating the education system, the workplace, divisive social issues, and a resurgence in activism. Based on interviews with scholars, journalists, and hundreds of young Chinese, his engrossing book challenges the idea that today's youth have been pacified by material comforts and nationalism. Following rural Henan students struggling to get into college, a computer prodigy who sparked a nationwide patriotic uproar, and young social activists grappling with authorities, Fish deftly captures youthful struggle, disillusionment, and rebellion in a system that is scrambling to keep them in line—and, increasingly, scrambling to adapt when its youth refuse to conform.

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Editorial Review

Review
In debunking generational stereotypes, Mr. Fish gives the future of the world's most populous country a human face. He also outlines a relationship between the youth and the state that is far more nuanced than many have suggested it to be. The question now is how that relationship will play out once the millennials become China's movers and shakers. (*Wall Street Journal*)

Empirically very rich, the book is highly entertaining. . . .[T]he book provides a good overview of a variety of social issues. Its detailed descriptions of society through ordinary people's eyes make the book a good read for anyone who is interested in contemporary Chinese society. It may serve well as a textbook for undergraduate students, or as an introduction to contemporary Chinese society for journalists and other interested non-academic readers. (*China Information*)

In his new book, *China's Millennials:The Want Generation*, Mr. Fish draws on his years spent working as a teacher and journalist in China from 2007 to 2014 to give a multi-faceted look at the country's complicated younger generation. Through interviews with struggling factory workers, beleaguered recent graduates, social activists and others, he introduces readers to the generation born during the 1980s and '90s and coming of age at a time when China is newly ascendant on the world stage. (*Dow Jones News Service*)

It obviously behooves Western companies to increase their understanding of China's millennials and many (most?) are trying. I was thinking about this today as I reach about the halfway point in the book, *China's Millennials: The Want Generation*, by Eric Fish. Though intended far more as a de Tocqueville-like report on China's youth, this well-written book actually makes for an excellent starting point for any company seeking to market to or employ China's millennials. Through first-hand reporting on the stories of China's young from all over the country, Fish provides a fascinating road-map on how China's millennials think. If you are looking to better understand China's youth, I highly recommend you read this book. (*China Law Blog*)

Through nuanced reporting, Eric Fish offers a meaningful comparison between China's youth today and the earlier "Tiananmen generation." The stark differences between them might foretell China's future. (Xujun Eberlein, author of Apologies Forthcoming)

People inside China and around the world will be affected by the values and intentions of China's next, rising generation of innovators, disruptors, parents, and citizens. The members of this 'Want Generation' were raised in increasing prosperity but now take their place in a country with dire environmental challenges, newly evident corruption problems, and uncertain political prospects. Eric Fish does a wonderful, accessible job of portraying the complexities of this new generation and the mixture of pride and dissatisfaction with which they regard their country and its future. (James Fallows, The Atlantic; author of China Airborne)

Eric Fish's rare and insightful look at China's millennials provides a firsthand description of a new generation unlike any that has come before it. In telling the personal stories of young people from all over China, Mr. Fish offers an invaluable perspective on a cohort that is becoming an important voice in the country—and one that is bound to play an increasingly key role in China's present and future. (Paul J. Mooney, freelance journalist)

Eric Fish's new work, *China's Millennials*, chronicles in entertaining, lucid prose the vicissitudes, triumphs,

hopes, and prospects of the next generation of one of the world's most consequential countries. Fish's field of vision ranges from geopolitics to quotidian concerns, and he handles both well. While no one book can capture a generation of 250m, Fish's skillful and engaging mix of anecdotes, observation, and evidence should secure this work a place on the shelf of all who wish to understand the rise of China. (Walter Russell Mead, Bard College)

A really terrific book—one that is both entertaining and extremely informative. It brings to light a number of important trends underway in China today that are likely not well appreciated by many outside the country. (Elizabeth Economy, Council on Foreign Relations)

China's Millennials follows youth from around China as they struggle to cope with the country's wrenching socioeconomic and demographic transition after years of lofty expectations. Largely thought to be pacified by a booming economy and a nationalistic education instituted after the Tiananmen crackdown, young Chinese are again beginning to become a vocal force for change. Fish deftly captures youthful hopes, disillusionment, and rebellion in a system that is scrambling to keep them in line—and, increasingly, scrambling to adapt when its youth refuse to conform.

About the Author
Eric Fish is a freelance writer who lived in China from 2007 to 2014 as a teacher, student, and journalist. After earning his master's degree from Tsinghua University, he worked as a reporter for the *Economic Observer* in Beijing and founded the blog Sinostand.com. He currently writes for the Asia Society in New York City.

Users Review

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Typically the book China's Millennials: The Want Generation will bring you to definitely the new experience of reading a book. The author style to spell out the idea is very unique. Should you try to find new book to study, this book very acceptable to you. The book China's Millennials: The Want Generation is much recommended to you you just read. You can also get the e-book in the official web site, so you can more readily to read the book.

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