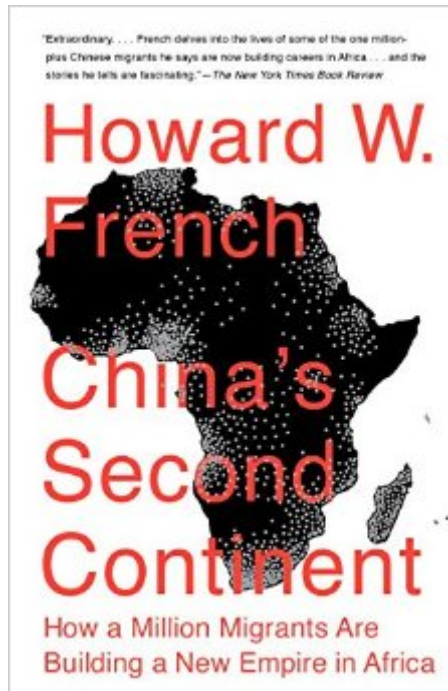


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China's Second Continent: How A Million Migrants Are Building A New Empire In Africa



Synopsis

Â New York TimesÂ Notable BookÂ One of the Best Books of the Year at Â The Economist
Â The Guardian Â Foreign AffairsChinese immigrants of the recent past and unfolding
twenty-first century are in search of the African dream. So explains indefatigable traveler Howard W.
French, prize-winning investigative journalist and former New York Times bureau chief in Africa and
China, in the definitive account of this seismic geopolitical development. China's burgeoning
presence in Africa is already shaping, and reshaping, the future of millions of people. From Liberia
to Senegal to Mozambique, in creaky trucks and by back roads, French introduces us to the
characters who make up China's dogged emigrant population: entrepreneurs singlehandedly
reshaping African infrastructure, and less-lucky migrants barely scraping by but still convinced of
Africa's opportunities. French's acute observations offer illuminating insight into the most
pressing unknowns of modern Sino-African relations: Why China is making these cultural and
economic incursions into the continent; what Africa's role is in this equation; and what the
ramifications for both parties and their people "and the watching world" will be in the foreseeable
future.

Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Vintage; Reprint edition (February 3, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0307946657

ISBN-13: 978-0307946652

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.7 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (107 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #61,085 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 inÂ Books > Politics & Social
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Customer Reviews

I know very little about Africa except for our media's portrayal of it. I know a lot about China, having
lived there for many years and speaking the language. But China is a civilization posing as a
nation-state, and its venerable history and dizzying pace of modernization constantly defy easy

understanding. Putting China and Africa together, oddly enough, turns out to be a formula to better understand both. And that is what Howard French accomplishes in his latest book, *China's Second Continent: How a Million Migrants Are Building a New Empire in Africa*. A well-traveled, well-educated, and multi-lingual American journalist, French presents a rare, if not unique, perspective on the Chinese experience in Africa and the African experience of China. The author for the most part steers clear of the ideological grand posturing too often found in Western coverage of China's involvement in Africa. Rather, his reporting reads refreshingly like a travelogue sprinkled with the almost reflexive musings of the traveler along his journey. Yet through those musings, along with the abundance of "as is" observations, emerges a much more serious and thought-provoking sense of a complex reality. French's unique contribution is that he writes not so much about "China" as a polity but more about the experience of individual Chinese emigrants and their African hosts at the personal level. And as individuals, we are each and every one different and cannot be reduced to simple statistics or generalization. Hence the richness of those personal stories creates space for the reader to interpret and come to his / her own conclusions. A blemish of the book is French's seeming lack of awareness that his identity as a Western journalist inevitably affects his interviewees' answers.

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