

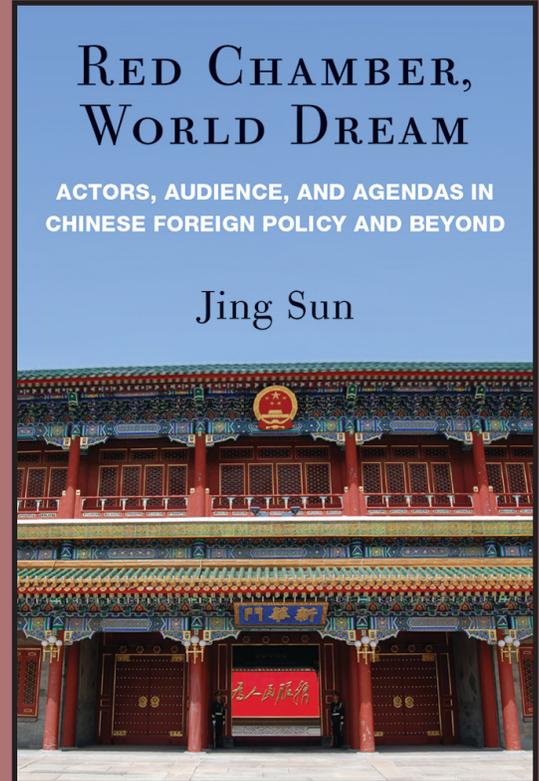
Red Chamber, World Dream

Actors, Audience, and Agendas in Chinese Foreign Policy and Beyond

This book represents an inter-disciplinary effort of deciphering the Chinese Dream and its global impact. Jing Sun employs concepts from political science and journalism and those from literature, sociology, psychology and drama studies, to offer a multi-level analysis of various actors' roles in Chinese foreign policymaking: the leaders, the bureaucrats, and its increasingly diversified public. The title – Red Chamber has two layers of meanings: first, it refers to an earlier Chinese dream that nearly all the Chinese are familiar with – an 18th century literature classic *Dream of the Red Chamber* that describes the rise and fall of seemingly invincible powerhouses; second, it refers to the ornate, red-painted headquarters of the Chinese Communist Party in downtown Beijing, where its leaders now are dreaming global – hence the second part of the title World Dream.

The classic epic novel *Dream of the Red Chamber* also offers methodological inspirations for this book: in telling a grand family's demise, the author Cao Xueqin rejected making any particular group of actors dominating the story narrative. Instead, he detailed activities by people at all levels. By doing so, the book presented a dynamic network of interactions, as power sparks on the nodes of this cobweb. Likewise, this book rejects a simple dichotomy of an omnipotent, authoritarian state versus a suppressed society. Instead, it examines how Chinese foreign policy is constantly being forged and contested by interactions among its leaders, bureaucrats, and people. The competition for shaping China's foreign policy also happens on multiple arenas: intra-party fighting, inter-ministerial feuding, social media, TV dramas and movies, etc. This book presents a vast amount of historical details, many unearthed the first time in the English language. Meanwhile, it also examines China's diplomatic responses to ongoing issues like the Covid-19 crisis. The result is a study multi-disciplinary in nature, rich in historical nuances, and timely in contemporary significance.

Jing Sun is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Denver.



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