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The Zhangs from Nanxun: A One Hundred and Fifty Year Chronicle of a Chinese Family

Nelson Chang, Laurence J. Chang

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In the mid-1800s, Zhang Songxian, the son of a shopkeeper from Nanxun, China, built a fortune in the silk and salt trades. Almost overnight, the Zhangs became one of China's richest and most influential families. Over the ensuing decades, a number of indelible figures in the family emerged, including Zhang Jingjiang, the crippled anarchist who became Chiang Kai-shek's mentor and China's "uncrowned emperor;" his beautiful, Western-raised daughters, whose romantic escapades enlivened Shanghai's gossip columns; and Zhang Shiming, the cultured bibliophile whose life of leisure was abruptly cut short by Shanghai's notorious gangsters in the 1920s. From a garbage dump purchased by "Great-Grandmother Gui" that became the "Great World," Shanghai's infamous pleasure palace; to the coded telegrams that would lead the family to become the primary financiers of the 1911 Chinese Revolution; to a buried treasure seized during the Cultural Revolution, the history of the Zhang family reflects the tulmultuous changes China has undergone over the past one and a half centuries.

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