



China.

Portrait of a Country

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This lavish tome brings together the work of 88 acclaimed Chinese photographers. Edited by Pulitzer-winning photojournalist Liu Heung Shing, *China. Portrait of a Country* charts the evolution of the People's Republic from the post-Mao era to its current position as a global economic powerhouse. There are six sections, each devoted to a different decade, beginning with the nation's historical context. An essay in three languages (English, German and French) introduces every chapter, starting in 1949 with the Birth of China, with an essay by James Kyngé, award-winning former journalist in Asia.

In an image taken by Qin Wen, we see a group of Chinese labourers plying their trade on the upper reaches of the Yangtze river. Shown from the back, the men are harnessed in a brace of ropes, pulling a boat upstream. They are nude. Apparently they have so few clothes, they work naked to preserve the few garments they possess. The photograph was taken as recently as 2005.

Born in 1951, two years after the People's Republic was founded, Liu Heung Shing witnessed Mao's Great Leap Forward that devastated the lives of millions. When he conceived of the book, China had won the bid to host the 2008 Olympics. And Heung Shin wondered whether, with all eyes on China, people would fully understand how the nation, and its people, had arrived at that point.

For four years, Heung Shin journeyed through the People's Republic in search of other photographers and their archives, sometimes even rescuing negatives from gathering dust under beds. Collected into a mighty volume, the pictures paint a vivid portrait of the turbulent journey China has taken over the last 60 years.