



# **A Bitter Revolution: China's Struggle with the Modern World (Making of the Modern World)**

*Rana Mitter*

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In this powerful new look at modern China, Rana Mitter goes back to a pivotal moment in Chinese history to uncover the origins of the painful transition from pre-modern to modern. Mitter identifies May 4, 1919, as the defining moment of China's twentieth-century history. On that day, outrage over the Paris peace conference triggered a vast student protest that led in turn to "the May Fourth Movement." Just seven years before, the 2,000-year-old imperial system had collapsed. Now a new group of urban, modernizing thinkers began to reject Confucianism and traditional culture in general as hindrances in the fight against imperialism, warlordism, and the oppression of women and the poor. Forward-looking, individualistic, and embracing youth, this "New Culture movement" made a lasting impact on the critical decades that followed. Throughout each of the dramatically different eras that followed, the May 4 themes persisted, from the insanity of the Cultural Revolution to China's recent romance with space-age technology.

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