



# One Child: The Story of China's Most Radical Experiment

By Mei Fong



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**An intimate investigation of the world's largest experiment in social engineering, revealing how its effects will shape China for decades to come, and what that means for the rest of the world**

When Communist Party leaders adopted the one-child policy in 1980, they hoped curbing birth-rates would help lift China's poorest and increase the country's global stature. But at what cost? Now, as China closes the book on the policy after more than three decades, it faces a population grown too old and too male, with a vastly diminished supply of young workers.

Mei Fong has spent years documenting the policy's repercussions on every sector of Chinese society. In *One Child*, she explores its true human impact, traveling across China to meet the people who live with its consequences. Their stories reveal a dystopian reality: unauthorized second children ignored by the state, only-children supporting aging parents and grandparents on their own, villages teeming with ineligible bachelors, and an ungoverned adoption market stretching across the globe. Fong tackles questions that have major implications for China's future: whether its "Little Emperor" cohort will make for an entitled or risk-averse generation; how China will manage to support itself when one in every four people is over sixty-five years old; and above all, how much the one-child policy may end up hindering China's growth.

Weaving in Fong's reflections on striving to become a mother herself, *One Child* offers a nuanced and candid report from the extremes of family planning.



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## One Child: The Story of China's Most Radical Experiment By Mei Fong Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

Review

#### Honorable Mention, ASJA 2017 Writing Awards

"A searing, important, and eminently readable exploration of China's one-child policy."

— **NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF**, *NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS*

"The policy itself remains a monument to official callousness, and Fong's book pays moving testimony to the suffering and forbearance of its victims."

— *NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW*

"Not to be missed ... [Fong] combines tough, broad economic analysis with individual stories."

— *ECONOMIST* / 1843

"A timely, important work that takes stock of the one-child policy's damage... *ONE CHILD* is, like the policy's abolition, long overdue, and Ms. Fong was the perfect person to write it."

— *WALL STREET JOURNAL*

"Fong's fine book is a moving and at times harrowing account of the significance of decisions taken by a small coterie of men with too much faith in science and ideology, and too little in humanity."

— *GUARDIAN*

"Fong writes eloquently and with an authority that reflects her knowledge of many cultures ... A deeply moving account of a policy that looks set to haunt China (and the world) for decades."

— *INDEPENDENT (UK)*

"With impeccable timing, [Fong's] new book offers a superb overview... Fong writes in an easy, accessible style, and in 200 pages takes us behind the scenes of the Sichuan earthquake, the Olympic stadium in Beijing, the dancing grannies, the migrant workers, the orphanages, the transnational adoption of Chinese baby girls, birth tourism, and surrogacy. She fills in the background to these familiar subjects with impressive research and interviews, conducted over many years."

— *LOS ANGELES REVIEW OF BOOKS*

"Fong excels in telling the personal stories of others, providing the reader with insight into how an Orwellian policy, rarely understood by outsiders, has played out in the lives of over a billion people."

— *MS.*

"The country's one-child policy, to be officially phased out in 2016, created more far-reaching social distortions than even its most vociferous critics realized, argues Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Fong in this timely exposé of a reproductive regime whose inner workings Chinese officials have tried hard to keep under wraps... Finished just before the announcement of the policy's demise, *One Child* is a touching and captivating anthropological investigation of one of the most invasive laws ever devised."

— *KIRKUS REVIEWS*

"Timely ... Compassionate ... Fong illumines individual grief and dignity ... [Her] human-scale portrayal of individual stories, weaving in her own fraught journey toward motherhood as well, makes for an approachable and edifying treatment."

— ***LIBRARY JOURNAL***

"Mei Fong's brilliant exploration of China's one-child policy must change the way we talk about China's rise. *One Child* is lucid, humane, and unflinching; it is vital reading for anyone focused on the future of China's economy, its environment, or its politics. It not only clarifies facts and retires myths, but also confronts the deepest questions about the meaning of parenthood."

— **EVAN OSNOS, National Book Award-winning author of *Age of Ambition***

"Eye-opening, powerful, and utterly gripping, *One Child* had me hooked from page one. Mei Fong possesses a rare eye for the details that truly illuminate a story, the ones that most of us overlook. She writes beautifully and vividly, revealing sides of China I'd never imagined to exist."

— **AMY CHUA, author of *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* and *The Triple Package***

"Babies are a strange topic for a weighty book about China. But Mei Fong's moving and highly personal account of the one-child policy will teach you more about the dysfunction and cruelty of modern-day China than any other. The story of her train ride to Sichuan Province with parents whose only children were killed in the 2008 earthquake is as heartbreaking as anything I've ever read about China."

— **BARBARA DEMICK, author of *Nothing to Envy***

"*One Child* is a critically important book about a major force that has shaped contemporary China, necessary reading both for policy experts and anyone interested in the future of one of the world's most important nations. But it is also a riveting read, written with the flair and compassion of a novel, that throws new light on the tough decisions we all face – and the joys we discover – in family life."

— **ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER, author of *Unfinished Business***

"*One Child* is a timely and informative look into China's infamous effort to control its enormous population. But Mei Fong has also given us a wry, bittersweet, and often very personal look at how courtship, marriage, birth, and death interact in the post-Mao Chinese family. A lovely antidote to decades of chillingly cold Party-speak from Beijing."

— **ORVILLE SCHELL, author of *Wealth and Power***

"Mei Fong reveals the dark underbelly of China's one-child policy. Whatever the original intentions, its implementation led to heartache, human rights abuses, and coercion of women across the country. Also poignant is the fact that the legacy of this state attempt to control reproductive rights may linger as an Achilles heel derailing its economic rise."

— **PAUL FRENCH, author of *Midnight in Peking***

"In human history, China's one-child policy is unique. If you want to understand how it affected the lives of ordinary people and Chinese society as a whole, you need to read this. With its vivid character portrayals and incredible stories, *One Child* is an eye-opening book."

— **XINRAN XUE, author of *The Good Women of China* and *Buy Me the Sky: The Remarkable Truth of China's One-Child Generations***

"A highly impressive account of one of the controversial aspects of today's China, combining policy analysis, extensive on-the-ground reporting, and personal experience."

— **JONATHAN FENBY, author of *The Penguin History of Modern China* and *Tiger Head, Snake Tails***

From the Inside Flap

**An intimate investigation of the world's largest experiment in social engineering, revealing how its effects will shape China for decades to come and what that means for the rest of the world**

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From the Back Cover

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## Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

**Linda Banks:**

Do you certainly one of people who can't read pleasant if the sentence chained in the straightway, hold on guys this kind of aren't like that. This *One Child: The Story of China's Most Radical Experiment* book is

readable through you who hate those perfect word style. You will find the details here are arrange for enjoyable reading through experience without leaving perhaps decrease the knowledge that want to deliver to you. The writer regarding One Child: The Story of China's Most Radical Experiment content conveys prospect easily to understand by most people. The printed and e-book are not different in the articles but it just different available as it. So , do you still thinking One Child: The Story of China's Most Radical Experiment is not loveable to be your top listing reading book?

#### **Teresa Dillard:**

A lot of people always spent their very own free time to vacation or even go to the outside with them family or their friend. Are you aware? Many a lot of people spent many people free time just watching TV, or even playing video games all day long. If you want to try to find a new activity this is look different you can read a new book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book that you read you can spent all day long to reading a e-book. The book One Child: The Story of China's Most Radical Experiment it is quite good to read. There are a lot of people that recommended this book. These folks were enjoying reading this book. When you did not have enough space to develop this book you can buy the particular e-book. You can m0ore very easily to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not too expensive but this book possesses high quality.

#### **David Trudeau:**

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the marine world or hanging out with close friends is thing that usually you may have done when you have spare time, in that case why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. A single activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition details. Even you love One Child: The Story of China's Most Radical Experiment, you could enjoy both. It is good combination right, you still wish to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh can happen its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't have it, oh come on its named reading friends.

#### **Zandra Woods:**

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