

YAO: A Life in Two Worlds

By Yao Ming, Ric Bucher

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Since Yao Ming's electrifying NBA debut with the Houston Rockets in 2002, the 7-foot-5 Chinese center has appeared in numerous TV commercials, on magazine covers, and in countless basketball-highlights reels. And yet, despite Yao's status as one of the country's most recognizable sports stars, the remarkable story of how a shy, gangly kid from Shanghai went on to become the NBA's first foreign-born and developed #1 draft pick has remained, until now, largely unknown.

With this memoir, Yao reveals himself as a thoughtful, opinionated young man whose insights extend far beyond the basketball court. He paints a compelling portrait of how his parents, both former Chinese basketball stars and fully aware of the bleak outlook for ex-players, resisted the Chinese government's interest in steering their son into the sport as a child. But the love of the game took hold of Yao as a teenager, and he began to sense both his own potential and the restraints he would face from the bureaucrats who ran the sport. As Yao's success in China grew, it became clear that his future would be with the NBA. But nothing came easily. With riveting detail, Yao recounts the white-knuckle gamesmanship required to win the approval of Chinese officials for his leap to America.

Yao: A Life in Two Worlds vividly chronicles Yao's move from Shanghai to Houston: The sudden millionaire has to learn to drive his newly acquired car; the young man who has only ever had one girlfriend tries to make sense of pro-basketball's hard-partying life off-court; the supremely dominant player in China is transformed into a NBA rookie unnerved at the prospect of facing Shaquille O'Neal. But soon enough, aided by his easygoing manner and sense of humor that has proved so appealing to fans, Yao finds his moorings and flourishes as a major NBA star with a worldwide following.

Sports writer Ric Bucher spent hundreds of hours in conversation with Yao in the U.S. and China, closely tracking the player's feelings and observations during that historic first season with the Rockets. Yao: A Life in Two Worlds is an inspiring account of how one man's faith in himself, hard work, and drive have taken him from national success story to international icon and helped build a bridge between two countries.

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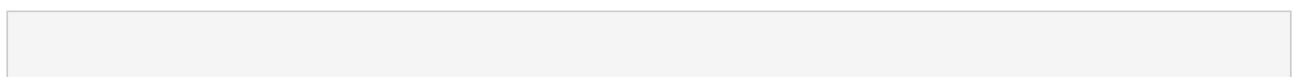
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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Yao, the 7'5" Chinese NBA center, charms readers with the same grace and humility that have made him one of basketball's most mediagenic personalities. Coauthored by Bucher, an *ESPN the Magazine* writer, the book includes short sections by Yao's Houston Rockets teammates and managers, but its driving voice is 23-year-old Yao's. The language is simple, sincere and often funny as Yao jokes about Wilt Chamberlain's reputation as a ladies' man and presents a view of himself as a blue-collar worker ("I sweat for my paycheck"). The book follows Yao's career in China, the bureaucratic struggles involved in getting him to the U.S., and his experiences on the court, including what it was like to play against Shaq. Though there's lots of basketball talk, the book's most compelling sections address the clash of cultures, such as the time when Yao's former team, the Shanghai Sharks, banned one of Yao's representatives from negotiating because he was white. Yao clearly loves his native country and says his greatest dream is to lead China's national team to an Olympic gold medal. But with millions in endorsement deals, the adoration of fans across the globe and this earnest book, it's clear he's living out the American dream, too. Photos.

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From [Booklist](#)

The seven-foot-four-inch Yao, all-star center with the Houston Rockets, is the best basketball player ever to come out of China. This as-told-to autobiography covers the usual ground: Yao's youth as the son of two outstanding Chinese basketball players; his enrollment in the Chinese basketball pipeline and subsequent international success; and his decision to try the NBA. What sets the book apart from similar sports bios is Yao's comparison of Chinese culture with the one to which he's adapting in the U.S. For example, he contrasts the freewheeling NBA sexual lifestyle versus his own chaste courtship of a player on the Chinese women's national team. He also displays a sly sense of humor, digging playfully at NBA broadcaster Bill Walton by noting that Yao's translator has no idea what Walton is talking about. Coauthor Bucher, a first-generation American whose initial language was German, adds context to Yao's story with his own experience assimilating a new culture. This will be a very pleasant surprise for readers expecting the usual and-then-we-played memoir manufactured to capitalize on the popularity of a young superstar. *Wes Lukowsky*

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Review

". . . opens an enlightening window to his past and his struggle against . . . Chinese fear of failure and change." -- *Reuters*

"A fascinating story." -- *Coach John Wooden*

"A remarkable book . . ." -- *Sports Illustrated*

"A very pleasant surprise for readers expecting the usual and-then-we-played memoir manufactured to capitalize on the popularity . . ." -- *Booklist*

"Large, interview-like quotes with Ming's friends and family give the story rich detail." -- *Library Journal*

"Yao charms readers with the same grace and humility that have made him one of basketball's most mediagenic personalities." -- *Publishers Weekly*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jeffrey Spencer:

Reading a guide can be one of a lot of task that everyone in the world adores. Do you like reading book so. There are a lot of reasons why people like it. First reading a reserve will give you a lot of new data. When you read a publication you will get new information simply because book is one of several ways to share the information or perhaps their idea. Second, studying a book will make a person more imaginative. When you examining a book especially fictional book the author will bring you to imagine the story how the figures do it anything. Third, you can share your knowledge to others. When you read this YAO: A Life in Two Worlds, you may tells your family, friends and also soon about yours reserve. Your knowledge can inspire the others, make them reading a guide.

Brett Munoz:

Reading can called imagination hangout, why? Because if you find yourself reading a book especially book entitled YAO: A Life in Two Worlds your thoughts will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in every single aspect that maybe unfamiliar for but surely will become your mind friends. Imaging every single word written in a book then become one application form conclusion and explanation that will maybe you never get prior to. The YAO: A Life in Two Worlds giving you another experience more than blown away the mind but also giving you useful information for your better life on this era. So now let us explain to you the relaxing pattern at this point is your body and mind will be pleased when you are finished reading through it, like winning a game. Do you want to try this extraordinary shelling out spare time activity?

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