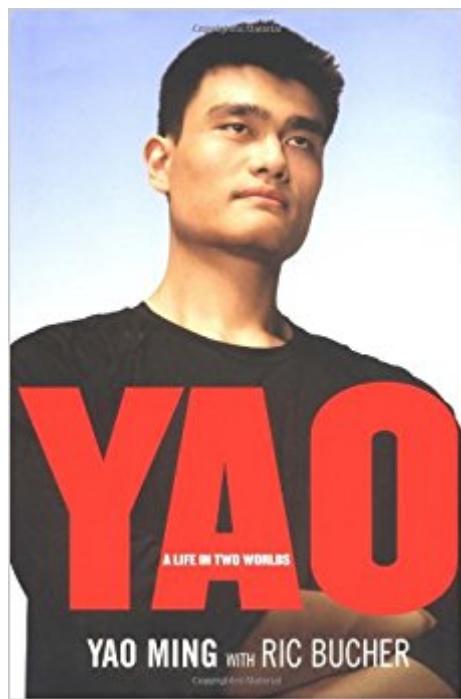


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YAO: A Life In Two Worlds



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Houston Rockets spent the 2001 season's number one draft pick on Yao, a seven-foot, five-inch center from Shanghai, China. Yao's journey to the NBA has been chronicled in his autobiography, "Yao Ming: A Life In Two Worlds". He has proven to be a marketing goldmine for the profit-driven NBA. Yao appeared in a nationally televised Apple Macintosh Computer commercial (alongside the ubiquitous Verne Troyer, "Mini-Me" from Austin Powers) and being billed alternatively as the "Ming Dynasty" or the "Ming Emperor." Ticket sales and merchandising increase dramatically for Houston, trends that began before Yao had ever played a minute in the NBA. On the court, as well, he has made a huge contribution to his franchise. Ed Derse in a January 16, 2003 radio broadcast for American public media stated that "The Rockets, who finished in 2001 near the bottom of the Western Conference standings, now contend for a playoff spot in the ultra-competitive west." Yao's commercial success and basketball skills signal the dawn of a new era in the NBA game. While the league has historically had some international flavor (Nigerian Hakeem Olajuwon, Lithuanian Arvydas Sabonis, and Sudanese Manute Bol being members of the old guard of international competitors in the NBA), the American game is now reaching new heights of global exposure and global presence. Truly, these trends are complimentary in nature. As the NBA acquires more international talent, global citizens from regions that nurtured this new NBA talent become ardent fans and supporters of a specific NBA franchise or simply of the NBA in general. Jon L. Wertheim wrote in a piece for "Sports Illustrated" that these fans buy merchandise, tickets, and a portion of American culture all at the same time.

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