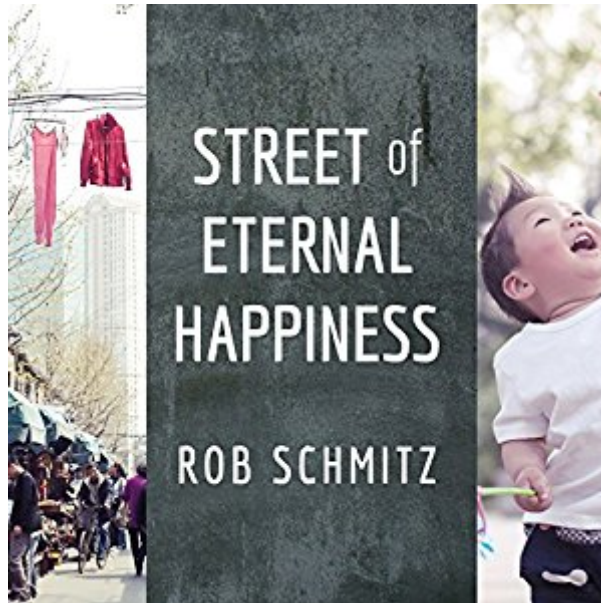


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# Street Of Eternal Happiness: Big City Dreams Along A Shanghai Road



## Synopsis

Modern Shanghai: a global city in the midst of a renaissance, where dreamers arrive each day to partake in a mad torrent of capital, ideas, and opportunity. Marketplace's Rob Schmitz is one of them. He immerses himself in his neighborhood, forging deep relationships with ordinary people who see in the city's sleek skyline a brighter future, and a chance to rewrite their destinies. There's Zhao, whose path from factory floor to shopkeeper is sidetracked by her desperate measures to ensure a better future for her sons. Down the street lives Auntie Fu, a fervent capitalist forever trying to improve herself with religion and get-rich-quick schemes while keeping her skeptical husband at bay. Up a flight of stairs, musician and cafe owner CK sets up shop to attract young dreamers like himself but learns he's searching for something more. A tale of 21st-century China, *Street of Eternal Happiness* profiles China's distinct generations through multifaceted characters who illuminate an enlightening, humorous, and at times heartrending journey along the winding road to the Chinese Dream.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

My Russian emigre parents and I, as a very young child, lived at 698 Changle Lu, House #1, before my family was able to migrate to Australia in 1950, so I will be buying an extra copy of this book to give to my 95 year old mother. She will enjoy this charming look at the lives of the current residents of a pretty tree lined part of the old French Concession, where I have been fortunate to visit several times, although next time I shall bring this book with me. What I appreciate so much is Rob

Schmitz's great humanity in telling these stories and his understanding of the differences in culture between his Chinese neighbors and the West. He is not at all judgmental, but at all times sensitive to the feelings of the people who have entrusted him with their life stories. China is changing with great speed and becoming more and more like anywhere else, so it is wonderful to have a snapshot of Chinese lives at this particular point in time, with its finely tuned ear to the differences between country and city and even between separate parts of this vast land. This is a heartfelt and sympathetic portrait which still displays without flinching the difficulties that still exist.

by Rob Schmitz  
For me, Shanghai was just the city where I had a one-or-two-day layover to transfer to a connecting flight en route to somewhere else. It's never been my destination: the smell of open sewers hovered over the city all the time and pedestrians elbowed each other to get ahead; the amazing Maglev train was boasting about the rapid development of the city's hardware, carrying people talking loudly, even gobbling and slurping aboard. *STREET OF ETERNAL HAPPINESS* is about the dreams and dramas of modern China. Rob Schmitz, the writer of this uniquely funny, moving, tragic and fascinating story, tells about people in Shanghai: local Shanghainese and the immigrants to pool money. It's about some individuals and some families—his local friends having Chinese dreams for rectifying their dark past lives and for the brighter future of their children. He's been in Shanghai for several years now, forging quite deep relationships with ordinary people there that we can take an intimate look at their daily lives in Shanghai. Thanks to his position as a foreign correspondent for *MARKETPLACE* of NPR, we closely look into the overall structure of Chinese society to make them live like that, which makes us fully understand them, some of which we could never know if not this book. This book brings me there to meet his neighbors having weathered the buffets of turbulent history of recent some decades spanning Mao era through to now president Xi Jinping. Peaceful Happiness Road, Eternally Fortunate Road, Long Happiness Road: Shanghai's roads have auspicious-sounding names, to me rather sounding sad. While reading this book, I was reminded of our one-time Korean-Chinese maid with nimble fingers who was always convivial and used to grouse about China's 'hukow' law. Next time I go to Shanghai, I'll spend some more days there. My stay would be longer than it's supposed to be. I want to try some scallion pancakes and fried turnip cakes cooked by Uncle Feng and then take a frothy cappuccino sitting at the table in the CK's restaurant 'your sandwich', listening to his accordion performance, overlooking the alley below tangled with people on scooters or bikes. Early morning, around the time when I think Zhao Shiling would manage shipment from the flower wholesaler, I'd stop by her shop to buy myself a bunch of magnolias. And I'd be headed for the Street of Eternal Happiness to hand a cup

of foamy latte to Rob's homeless Chinese New Year companion Zhang Naisun who'd perch upon the curb on the Xuhui side of the street.

Great book. Detailed, sometimes hard for me, personally, because I get hung up on the names /places/pronunciation of language I am not familiar with. So, I move on... to discover the pronunciation is not necessarily important, it's the story that draws one in, captures the space, street, human story of the people of Shanghai. The sentences are poetry, invoking images and culture one may not be familiar with. So we'll researched and lived in by the author that one feels and sees the place, people, the heart beats of what could have been too formidable. It reads like a novel. It teaches w/o obvious intent, allowing the reader to live there. In Shanghai, like the author did. A very fine piece of art, that is real and alive. Read it. You will be transported.

The stories in the book teach Chinese history in an enjoyable way. The author does a good job of explaining where many people in China are now and how forces within the country have created the situations they find themselves in.

It's not easy, even as someone living in Shanghai for a decade, to make the kind of personal connections and gain the trust of such a diverse group of characters as Mr. Schmitz has in 'Street.' It's a testament not only to Mr. Schmitz's Mandarin skills, but to his curiosity and patient unraveling of the imagined distance between foreigners and local Chinese. Stories exist all around us, but few of us take time out of our busy lives to wonder about the backstory of our corner florist or what our elder neighbor experienced in 1960's China. Mr. Schmitz delivers a generous yet balanced look into the strange world of a society still reeling from a wild-ride century. An excellent read!

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It has been on my TBR list since it was published and was thrilled when a book club I participate chose to read it. This book club is for teachers and I can't wait to use so many of these stories in my class.

Wonderful true stories about the people and culture of Shanghai China. Based on the authors conversations with the people living on his street. This book covers all walks of life in a typical Chinese street. Short stories about the interesting characters he meets. Some from far off provinces and others locals, but all open a window on the people of China. A great read.

Well written. Great insight into how the general population lives in china

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