Everyday Occupation

In this rich history of everyday encounters between US soldiers and Chinese civilians, Chunmei Du explores their entangled relations from the end of World War II to the founding of the People's Republic of China. Drawing upon official, popular, and personal accounts from both countries, Du examines the sensorial, material, and symbolic exchanges that took place between GIs and ordinary Chinese people – stall vendors, pedestrians, rickshaw pullers, "Jeep girls," and suspected thieves. Through the conceptual lens of the everyday, this book reveals how interactions such as traffic accidents, sexual relations, theft, and black-market dealings impacted larger political dynamics during this pivotal era. Du shows how mundane struggles made imperialism and sovereignty tangible, fueling anti-American sentiment. Meanwhile, these encounters fostered informal diplomacy, shaping identities and forging new bonds that left a lasting imprint on both countries. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

Chunmei Du is a historian of modern China at Lingnan University.

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Everyday Occupation

American Soldiers and Chinese Civilians after World War II

Chunmei Du
Lingnan University

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New Delhi – 110025, India

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www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009600682

DOI: 10.1017/9781009600705

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DOI 10.1017/9781009600705

First published 2026

Cover image: People talking on the street, Shanghai, China, May 1949.

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A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

A Cataloging-in-Publication data record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

ISBN 978-1-009-60068-2 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-009-60066-8 Paperback

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