



Twilight in the Forbidden City (Cambridge Library Collection - East and South-East Asian History)

Reginald F. Johnston

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British academic and diplomat Reginald Fleming Johnston (1874-1938) published *Twilight in the Forbidden City* in 1934. The work is a memoir of Johnston's time in Beijing between 1919 and 1924, at the court of the Qing Dynasty, where he served as tutor to Aisin-Gioro Puyi (1906-1967), last emperor of China. Johnston was one of only two foreigners who were permitted to enter the imperial palace, and so his account provides a unique Western perspective on the epochal events of the period. The work has a preface by the emperor Puyi and includes detailed descriptions of palace rituals, including Puyi's wedding ceremony; translations of key documents; Johnston's perspective on the revolution of 1911 and the 1917 restoration; his observations on Chinese society as a whole; and eye-witness accounts of the political intrigues of the palace. The memoir was dramatised in Bernardo Bertolucci's cinematic masterpiece, *The Last Emperor*.

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