

CHINA BOOK TALKS

BOOK TALK

Patrick McGee on Apple in China

The author and journalist explains how China captured Apple's business and learnt from its technology, in a China Books Review event at Asia Society.

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BUSINESS



The tech giant Apple, lured by China’s seemingly inexhaustible supply of cheap labor, spent hundreds of billions of dollars to create the world’s most sophisticated supply chain, centered on the People’s Republic. This enabled Apple to build the iPhone and other iconic products — in staggering volume and for enormous profit. Yet without intending to, Apple also built an advanced electronics industry within China, only to discover that its massive investments in technology upgrades had inadvertently given Beijing a power that could be weaponized.

In [Apple in China: The Capture of the World’s Greatest Company](#) (Scribner, May 2025), business journalist Patrick McGee tells the story of how Apple tied its fortunes to America’s biggest rival, transforming both company and country. Drawing on interviews, emails and internal memos, McGee highlights the characters who were instrumental in Apple’s ascent, from the Mormon missionary who established the Apple Store in China, to the “Gang of Eight” Apple executives tasked with placating Beijing. The book was a *New York Times* bestseller and topped our own [bestseller](#) list. Also read our [excerpt](#) about the launch of the first iPhone, and how Apple’s supply chain in China for the product was born.

Last week, we hosted Patrick McGee at Asia Society in New York to talk about how Apple became dependent on China for its manufacturing, and what that means for China’s technology rivalry with the U.S. The book talk was moderated by Zeyi Yang, senior writer at WIRED magazine. Watch the video here:



“Multinationals operating in China are slowly being squeezed out in favor of Chinese companies that have learned from these multinationals.”

— Patrick McGee

Speakers



[Patrick McGee](#) is a technology writer and the author of [Apple in China](#) (2025). He has been a journalist with *The Financial Times* since 2013, reporting from Hong Kong, Frankfurt and California. McGee holds a BA in religion from the University of Toronto and a graduate degree in global diplomacy from SOAS, the University of London.



Zeyi Yang is a senior writer at WIRED, covering technology and business in China, where he cowrites the newsletter [Made in China](#). Previously, he was a China reporter at *MIT Technology Review* and a tech reporter at Protocol. His journalism has appeared in *Rest of World*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, *Nikkei Asia* and elsewhere.

The video of this talk was also posted at [Asia Society](#). ■