

# What Books Win the Favour of Chinese Readers?

Jingdong Books and Dangdang release the top list in H1 2023

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What kinds of books do Chinese readers prefer? Recently, China’s online book platforms, Jingdong Books and Dangdang, successively unveiled their top book lists in H1 2023, summarizing the highly popular books that have captured readers’ attention. The lists include classic bestsellers such as *The Three-Body Problem* (《三体》), *Dream of the Red Chamber* (《红楼梦》), *To Live* (《活着》), *Red Rock* (《红岩》),

and others. There are also books like *The Knockout* (《狂飙》) and *Not Just Comics Series* (“ 不白吃漫画 ” 系列 ) that have gained popularity due to their corresponding TV shows and viral short videos. During this summer vacation, educational books like *Xinhua Dictionary* (《新华字典》), *New Concept English* (《新概念英语》), and *Xiao Xiurong’s 2024 Political Science Exam Preparation Series* (“ 肖秀荣 2024 考研政治 ” 系列 ) have attracted increas-

ing attention. These two major online book platforms have not only leveraged the advantage of sales data to meticulously select and recommend the most popular books to readers, but the commercial aspect of the list is also more conspicuous. Works by authors like Liu Cixin, Mo Yan, Higashino Keigo, and Feng Tang are all nominated on the list, and the authors’ own popularity further drives sales on the platforms.

## Jingdong Books: “Unmarried users buy books to advance their careers, while married users buy books to invest in education.”

During the World Book Day on April 23, 2023, Jingdong Research Institute for Consumption and Industrial Development released the *2023 Online Book Consumption Observation*. The sales data and research findings revealed that among online book purchases, educational and children’s books had the highest sales, accounting for 32% and 18% of the entire platform respectively. The fastest-growing sales were in medical, art, and electronics and communication books, while the per capita sales of political, military, legal books were the highest, reflecting the professional choices and career directions of China’s new generation, as well as their interest and willingness to explore different fields.

From the perspective of consumer demographics, the age group of 36 to 45 accounted for nearly 50% of book purchases, while the age group of 26 to 35 accounted for nearly 30%. They were the main consumer force on the Jingdong Books platform. Different age groups have significant differences in their motivations and purposes of buying books. Among the post-00s generation, the most popular purchases are exam preparation materials, college textbooks and study guidance, as well as foreign language learning books. Apart from educational books, they also enjoy reading youth literature, photography, and novels. Many of those who were born in the 1990s are busy balancing their careers and family lives, and they prefer books on parenting, financial investment, household items, marriage, and family. Jingdong Books summarized this phenomenon as “unmarried users buy books to advance their careers, while married users buy books to invest in education.”

During Jingdong’s “6.18” mid-year promotion, Jingdong Books unveiled the most popular list for the middle of 2023. The top 3 books on the list are *If History Was a Group of Cats Series* (“ 如果历史是一群喵 ” 系列 ), *Xiao Xiurong’s 2024 Political Science Exam Preparation Series*, and the collection of *The Three-Body Problem*. Among the 30 sets of books selected for the list, 11 are literary works, which were also in the Most Popular Book category. Educational books follow closely with 8 selections. Several children’s books and social science and management titles have also been included, validating the reading and book-buying preferences of Chinese readers as observed earlier.

Jingdong Books: 2023 Mid-Year Ranking – Overall List of Top 10 Most Popular Books			
1	If History Was a Group of Cats Series	2	Xiao Xiurong’s 2024 Political Science Exam Preparation Series
3	The Three-Body Problem	4	The Knockout
5	Xinhua Dictionary (12th Edition, Two-color Edition)	6	To Live
7	Reading Nursery Rhythms (PEP) 《读读童谣和儿歌(人教版)》	8	Dream of the Red Chamber
9	Comic Series: Psychology of Pupils (“ 漫画小学生心理 ” 系列 )	10	Lychee in Chang’an (《长安的荔枝》)

## Dangdang: Fans of Hit TV Shows Transform into Book Fans

Based on its e-commerce platform’s sales data in H1 2023, Dangdang released three categories of physical book rankings and one e-book ranking. The physical book rankings are divided into fiction, non-fiction, and children’s books. The event page specifically notes that the rankings are derived from the genuine choices of tens of millions of readers from January 1st, 2023 to June 20th, 2023, visualizing the reading preferences of vast Chinese readers.

The top 5 bestsellers in the fiction category are all works by Chinese authors. Liu Cixin’s epic science fiction novel *The Three-Body Problem* occupies the first place, and since the release of the TV adaptation of this novel in January 2023, the book’s score on Douban (often referred to as the Chinese version of Goodreads) has steadily risen to an impressive 8.7 out of 10. Many TV show fans have transformed into avid book fans.

Fiction Bestseller List			
Number	Title	Author	Publisher
1	<i>The Three Body Problem Trilogy</i>	Liu Cixin	Chongqing Publishing House, Science Fiction World
2	<i>Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out (《生死疲劳》)</i>	Mo Yan	Zhejiang Literature and Art Publishing House, Reader Culture
3	<i>Dream of the Red Chamber</i>	Cao Xueqin	People’s Literature Publishing House
4	<i>The Right Bank of the Erguna River 《额尔古纳河右岸》</i>	Chi Zijian	People’s Literature Publishing House
5	<i>Life is Like Ocean (《人生海海》)</i>	Mai Jia	Beijing October Literature and Arts Publishing House, New Classics

In the top 5 of the Non-Fiction Bestseller List, 3 books are authored by foreign writers. The heightened attention of Chinese society on mental health issues has driven the popularity of related books.

Self-improvement and psychotherapy books are receiving even more attention, with readers enriching their spiritual worlds and exploring self-fulfillment through reading.

Non-Fiction Bestseller List			
Number	Title	Author	Publisher
1	<i>It’s a Long Journey (《你也走了很远的路吧》)</i>	Lu Sihao	Hunan Literature and Art Publishing House, CS Booky
2	<i>The Temple of Earth and I (《我与地坛 (纪念版)》)</i>	Shi Tiesheng	People’s Literature Publishing House
3	<i>The Courage to Be Disliked: How to Free Yourself (《被讨厌的勇气: “自我启发之父”阿德勒》)</i>	[Japan] Ichiro Kishimi, Fumitake Koga	China Machine Press
4	<i>Counselling For Toads: A Psychological Adventure (《蛤蟆先生去看心理医生》)</i>	[UK] Robert de Board	Tianjin People’s Publishing House, Guomai Culture
5	<i>The Power of Insensitivity (《钝感力》)</i>	[Japan] Junichi Watanabe	Qingdao Publishing House

Bestselling print books also garner attention from e-book readers, with books like *The Knockout* and *The Three-Body Problem* frequently making appearances on the top lists.

Current hot topics like psychological intervention, the future of intelligent technology, and Chinese rural women also directly influenced readers’ preferences for e-books.

E-book Bestseller List		
Number	Title	Author
1	<i>The Gold Thread (《金线》)</i>	Feng Tang
2	<i>The Knockout</i>	Author: Zhu Junyi, Xu Jizhou    Adaptation: Bai Wenjun
3	<i>The Three-Body Problem</i>	Liu Cixin

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