Ghost Cities of China: The Story of Cities without People in the World's Most Populated Country (Asian Arguments)

By Wade Shepard

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Over the next couple of decades, it is estimated that 250 million Chinese citizens will move from rural areas into cities, pushing the country's urban population over one billion. China has built hundreds of new cities and urban districts over the past thirty years, and hundreds more are set to be built by 2030 as the central government kicks its urbanization initiative into overdrive. As China redraws its map with new cities, it isn't just creating new urban areas, but also engineering a new culture and way of life. Yet, many of these new cities, such as the infamous Kangbashi and Yujiapu, stand nearly empty, construction having ground to a halt due to the loss of investors and colossal debt.

In *Ghost Cities of China*, Wade Shepard examines this phenomenon up close. He posits that the shedding of traditional social structures in the country is at an advanced stage, and a rootless, consumption-centric globalized culture is rapidly taking its place. Incorporating interviews and on-the-ground investigation, *Ghost Cities of China* examines China's under-populated modern cities and the country's overly ambitious building program.

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Editorial Review

Review

"*Ghost Cities* tells a mixed story of China's urbanisation drive. . . . Shepard presents an even-handed picture of this process as he has witnessed it and leaves the question of the future open."

(*Royal Society for Asian Affairs*)

From the Back Cover

Featuring everything from sports stadiums to shopping malls, hundreds of new urban areas in China stand empty, with hundreds more set to be completed by 2030. Between now and then, the country's urban population will leap to over one billion, as the central government kicks its urbanization initiative into overdrive. In the process, traditional social structures are being torn apart, and a rootles, semi-displaced, consumption oriented culture is rapidly taking their place. Ghost Cities of China is an enthralling dialogue-driven, on-location search for an understanding of China's new cities and the reasons why many have not yet attracted sizable populations.

About the Author

Wade Shepard is editor-in-chief at the *China Chronicle*. He lives in Xiamen, Fujian Province, China.

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