



# China's Environmental Challenges (China Today)

*Judith Shapiro*

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## **China's Environmental Challenges (China Today)** Judith Shapiro

China's huge environmental challenges are significant for us all. They affect not only the health and well-being of China but the very future of the planet.

In the second edition of this acclaimed, trailblazing book, noted China specialist and environmentalist Judith Shapiro investigates China's struggle to achieve sustainable development against a backdrop of acute rural poverty and soaring middle class consumption. Using five core analytical concepts to explore the complexities of this struggle - the implications of globalization, the challenges of governance; contested national identity, the evolution of civil society, and problems of environmental justice and displacement of environmental harm - Shapiro poses a number of pressing questions: Can the Chinese people equitably achieve the higher living standards enjoyed in the developed world? Are China's environmental problems so severe that they may shake the government's stability, legitimacy and control? To what extent are China's environmental problems due to world-wide patterns of consumption? Does China's rise bode ill for the displacement of environmental harm to other parts of the world? And in a world of increasing limits on resources, how can we build a system in which people enjoy equal access to resources without taking them from successive generations, from the vulnerable, or from other species?

China and the planet are at a pivotal moment; transformation to a more sustainable development model is still possible. But - as Shapiro persuasively argues - doing so will require humility, creativity, and a rejection of business as usual. The window of opportunity will not be open much longer.

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