



Will the Boat Sink the Water?: The Life of China's Peasants

Chen Guidi, Wu Chuntao

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The Chinese economic miracle is happening despite, not because of, China's 900 million peasants. They are missing from the portraits of booming Shanghai, or Beijing. Many of China's underclass live under a feudalistic system unchanged since the fifteenth century. They are truly the voiceless in modern China. They are also, perhaps, the reason that China will not be able to make the great social and economic leap forward, because if it is to leap it must carry the 900 million with it. Chinese journalists Wu Chuntao and Chen Guidi returned to Wu's home province of Anhui, one of China's poorest, to undertake a three-year survey of what had happened to the peasants there, asking the question: Have the peasants been betrayed by the revolution undertaken in their name by Mao and his successors? The result is a brilliant narrative of life among the 900 million, and a vivid portrait of the petty dictators that run China's villages and counties and the consequences of their bullying despotism on the people they administer. Told principally through four dramatic narratives of particular Anhui people, *Will the Boat Sink the Water?* gives voice to the unheard masses and looks beneath the gloss of the new China to find the truth of daily life for its vast population of rural poor.

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