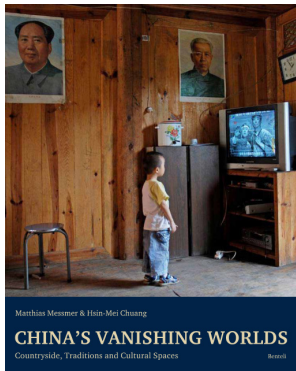


KULTURGESCHICHTE

NEUERSCHEINUNG

NOVEMBER 2012



China's Vanishing Worlds Countryside, Traditions and Cultural Spaces

Fotografien von Matthias Messmer,
Texte von Hsin-Mei Chuang und
Matthias Messmer

Englisch mit deutschem Anhang
336 Seiten, ca. 1000 farbige
Abbildungen, 24 × 30 cm, Hardcover
Euro (D) 54.–, (A) 55.50, CHF 68.–
ISBN 978-3-7165-1753-6

Das ländliche China – Ort schwindender Traditionen

Nur wenige Kilometer von den grandiosen Silhouetten chinesischer Metropolen entfernt beginnt das riesige Land China, der häufig vergessene Raum hinter der glamourösen Grossstadtwelt. Auf den Spuren alter Handelsrouten, einst blühender Marktstellen, verlassener Gutshöfe, abgewirtschafteter Modelldörfer und mystischer Rituale haben die Verfasser des Buches die Weiten des Landesinnern erforscht, dort, wo die Mehrheit der Chinesen noch immer lebt. Über einen Zeitraum von sieben Jahren hinweg haben sie wertvolle Zeitzeugnisse in Form von Bildern und Texten gesammelt – entstanden ist eine beeindruckende Dokumentation über die Folgen der rasanten Modernisierung einer noch immer vom Totalitarismus geprägten Gesellschaft und über das häufig harte Leben der Menschen im ländlichen China. Ersichtlich werden in diesem Bildband auch die Narben von Chinas jüngerer Geschichte, die Verödung und das Verschwinden von einst reichen Kulturräumen oder der Verfall von Traditionen aus den vergangenen Jahrhunderten.

Matthias Messmer, geb. 1967 in St.Gallen, Staatswissenschaftler, Dr. rer. soc. Seine Forschungstätigkeit widmet sich interkulturellen Themen in Wort und Bild mit Schwerpunkt auf China. Regelmässige Beiträge für die *NZZ* und andere Zeitungen im deutschsprachigen Raum. Er ist Autor der Publikationen *China – Schauplätze west-östlicher Begegnungen* (2007) sowie *Jewish Wayfarers in Modern China – Tragedy and Splendor* (2012).

Hsin-Mei Chuang, geb. 1979 in Taiwan, M.A. in Medienwissenschaften der University of Wisconsin–Madison. Sie arbeitete als Kulturvermittlerin für schweizerische Institutionen in Shanghai. Für taiwanesischen Zeitschriften schreibt sie literarische Beiträge und Reiseberichte.



ABOUT THIS BOOK

Only a few kilometers from the grandiose silhouettes of the large Chinese metropolises, we encounter a vast countryside, an often forgotten and seemingly limitless landscape stretching far beyond the glittering worlds of the large cities.

Following the traces of ancient trade routes, once-flourishing market places, abandoned estates, decrepit model villages and mystical rituals, the authors of this book have studied the broad expanses of the interior, where most Chinese still live. Over a period of seven years, they have collected valuable evidence of the past and present in the form of pictures and texts. An impressive documentation has thereby arisen showing the consequences of the greatly accelerated modernization and the often harsh lives of people in rural China.

In this book, the scars of China's recent history also become apparent, along with the abandonment and disappearance of once-rich cultural spaces and the declining traditions of past centuries.

"This is a beautiful and unusual book. I know of no parallel volume that both promises and sustains such a thorough exploration of China's still attainable built past, and its all-too-swiftly vanishing present. As the authors note, what they have been striving to trace in China is 'a special type of luxury,' one that confers 'the privilege of seeing beauty that others cannot see or have not yet noticed.' That is a lofty goal, but certainly the authors come very close to attaining it."

Jonathan Spence
Author of *The Search for Modern China*, Sterling Professor of History Emeritus, Yale University.

"A learned and loving photographic and verbal portrait of a disappearing China: the diverse people, landscapes and buildings of the vast and seldom visited hinterland of villages and small towns. Messmer and Chuang have traveled the length and breadth of the country to bring us vivid images of landscapes, buildings, and lifeways. At first glance, the China they picture for us seems untouched by modern development, but on closer inspection their portraits reveal telltale signs of a transition that is destroying the rich legacy of the past. Their work reminds us of the past, informs us of the present, and warns us of the future."

Andrew J. Nathan
Class of 1919 Professor of Political Science, Columbia University.

"Messmer's camera is focused on villages and peasants that have been forgotten by the progress of urbanization. This is the other reality of China. The portraits of lonely and pensive old people and images of lonesome and bored children are the most impressive in this book. The scenes that were shot in middle to long distance especially stress the desolate feeling between people and the environment. It seems that everything pauses at a certain moment in the past. This book as a whole conveys a lonely and melancholic atmosphere."

Li Xianting
Art critic and curator of contemporary Chinese art.

Matthias Messmer & Hsin-Mei Chuang CHINA'S VANISHING WORLDS



Matthias Messmer & Hsin-Mei Chuang

CHINA'S VANISHING WORLDS

Countryside, Traditions and Cultural Spaces

Benteli

Benteli

ISBN 978-3-7165-1753-6



9 783716 517536