



The Changing Face of China: From Mao to Market

John Gittings

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Where is China heading in the twenty-first century? Recent curtailments of liberty, such as the new "cyberwall" prohibiting internet users from reaching pro-democracy websites, has dimmed the hopes of many that China might be entering a new era of freedom on the heels of rapid economic expansion and success. Will China's Communist Party be able to balance an economy which demands liberal reform with their own hard-line approach to government control? Or will their new economy be their undoing, as its demands on natural resources bring China to the brink of environmental disaster? In this highly readable account, John Gittings sheds light on modern Chinese history as he answers these vital questions.

Gittings, the *Guardian's* China specialist and East Asia editor for twenty years, offers a fascinating glimpse into Chinese history in the last half century. His narrative ranges from the early Peach-Blossom socialism, to the Great Leap Forward, the two Cultural Revolutions, the Hundred Flowers, the Gang of Four, and the Tiananmen Square massacre. Bringing his account to the present, Gittings concludes that environmental degradation and rising pollution represent the most serious threats to the Chinese people today. He points out that the nightmare scenario for China is not a collapse of the Party or of the banks, or another uprising by the rural masses. It is that China will run out of water.

Based on three decades reporting on China, Gittings charts a complex but epic history of one of the world's superpowers. His work will offer insights for readers with an interest in modern China, and students of modern Chinese history and politics.

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