



Changing Meanings of Citizenship in Modern China (Harvard Contemporary China Series)

From Brand: Harvard University Press



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This collection of essays addresses the meaning and practice of political citizenship in China over the past century, raising the question of whether reform initiatives in citizenship imply movement toward increased democratization.

After slow but steady moves toward a new conception of citizenship before 1949, there was a nearly complete reversal during the Mao regime, with a gradual reemergence beginning in the Deng era of concerns with the political rights as well as the duties of citizens. The distinguished contributors to this volume address how citizenship has been understood in China from the late imperial era to the present day, the processes by which citizenship has been fostered or undermined, the influence of the government, the different development of citizenship in mainland China and Taiwan, and the prospects of strengthening citizens' rights in contemporary China.

Valuable for its century-long perspective and for placing the historical patterns of Chinese citizenship within the context of European and American experiences, *Changing Meanings of Citizenship in Modern China* investigates a critical issue for contemporary Chinese society.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Edited by two eminent scholars of Chinese history and politics who reside at the John King Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard University, this collection of essays by scholars in the field reveals the complexity of the nature and development of citizenship in China, from the republican and imperial China of the past to the Communist People's Republic of China (PRC) of the present. Frequently utilizing T.H. Marshall's landmark analysis of the British experience with citizenship and comparing it with the Chinese experience, the contributors promote the theme that the Chinese social structure supports citizenship in terms of collective responsibility and community membership and does not support freedom of individual expression. The most interesting essays address citizenship as it relates to women, ethnic minorities, business entrepreneurs, laborers, peasants, "renegade" Taiwan, and the PRC's existing legal system, constitution, and legislative body (the National People's Congress). The groundwork for this book was laid by Carol Lee Hamrin and Timothy Cheek's *China's Establishment Intellectuals* (1986), with which many of the contributors are obviously familiar. It is intended for a scholarly audience. But it would also be most useful in public libraries whose patrons include members of civic-minded groups such as the League of Women Voters and politically aware individuals who, in political scientist Robert Putnam's terms, "bowl alone."

Peggy Spitzer Christoff, Library of Congress

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