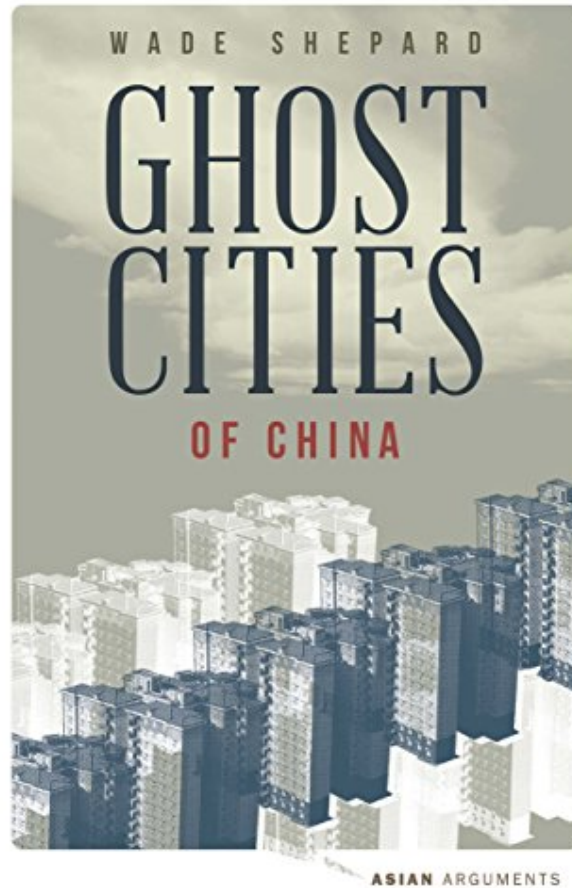
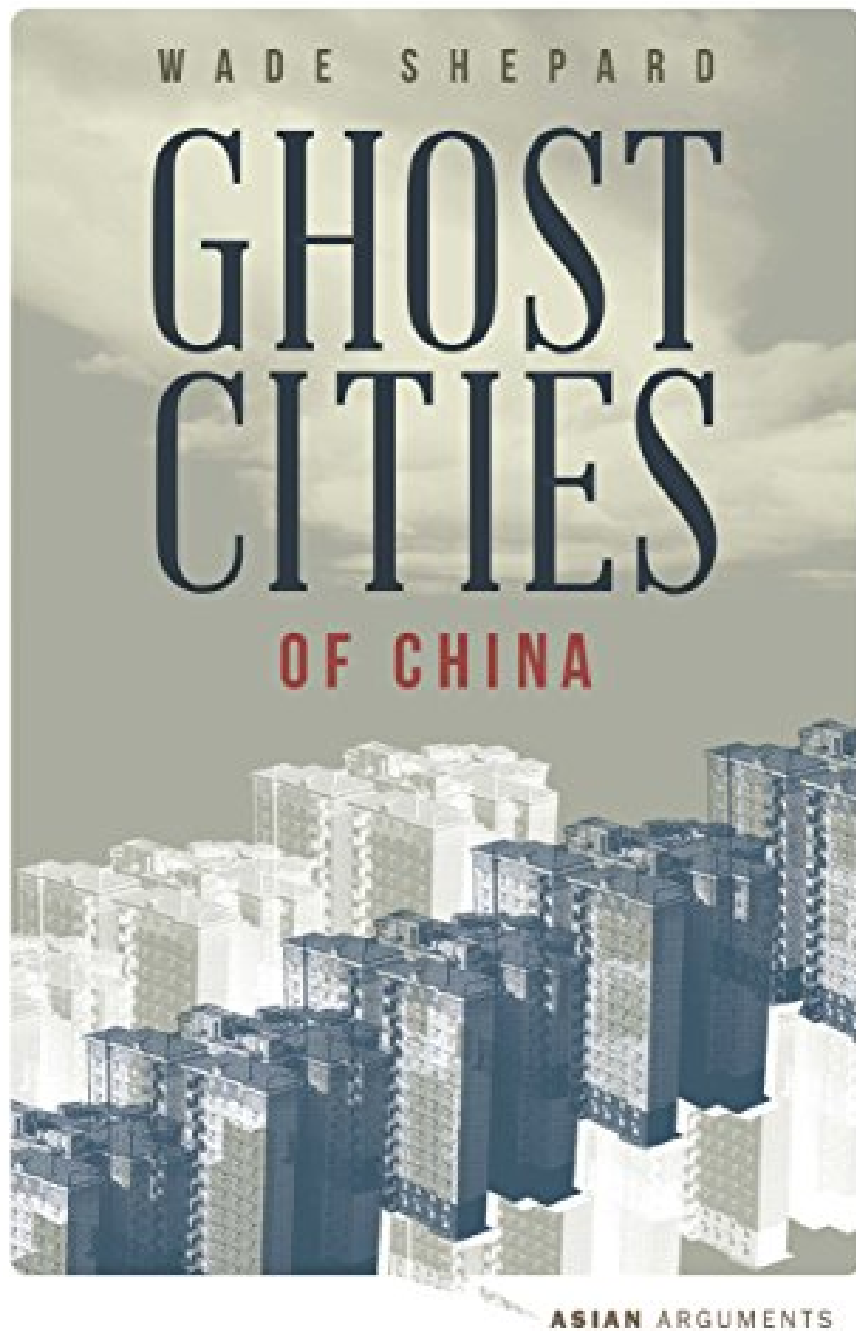


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Featuring everything from sports stadiums to shopping malls, hundreds of new cities in China stand empty, with hundreds more set to be built by 2030. Between now and then, the country's urban population will leap to over one billion, as the central government kicks its urbanization initiative into overdrive. In the process, traditional social structures are being torn apart, and a rootless, semi-displaced, consumption orientated culture rapidly taking their place. Ghost Cities of China is an enthralling dialogue-driven, on-location search for an understanding of China's new cities and the reasons why many currently stand empty.

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9 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

Seeds of modernity

By T. Carter

For the past several years, the phenomena of China's ghost cities - idle property developments void of habitation - have been a hot topic among Western journalists and China watchers, many whom view the country's rapid urbanization as unsustainable. But Wade Shepard, author of the first long-form study of the topic, hopes to dispel what he says are popular misconceptions about these empty cities.

Shepard, a native of the American Rust Belt, makes it clear from the outset that his aim is not to portray ghost cities as the epic failures of overly-ambitious property developers, as muckraking media such as 60 Minutes have, but as investments into China's future; "seeds of modernity" intended to meet the nation's inevitable demand for housing.

In Shanghai's Pudong New Area, for example, Shepard found the greatest concentration of ghost cities of anywhere in China, part of the local government's 20-year master plan to expand the municipal map into the surrounding countryside and lure "high-resource-consuming" middle-class masses away from Shanghai's crowded core.

Prospective colonists have yet to take the bait, but Shepard remains optimistic. It might not be this year, nor this decade, nor even this generation, but as the author so cheekily corrects his detractors, no civilization in the history of the world has ever been built and populated in a day.

Ghost Cities is as much of a travelogue as it is a sociological study. Shepard, an itinerant word traveler, spent several years traveling to various provinces across China in search of ghost cities, riding around on a bicycle and sleeping in a tent due to the sheer lack of services and facilities in these undeveloped areas. Who but only the most road-hardened tramp would or could do that? His haunting first-hand stories about these

unhaunted cities weave a page-turning personal narrative not often found in academic texts.

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4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Inside View of China

By Patricia F. Sheffield

This is a fascinating story about how China is trying to upgrade the lives of many people by building huge "new" cities, which are now empty, but which will in the future have residents once businesses have come in to provide jobs, etc. Many Chinese are now simply buying apartments as an investment, but the hope is that future residents will have a much better life. Published in the UK by an American who has lived in China, speaks Mandarin and traveled all over to document this.

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Learn what is going on in China city building

By Barbara Kates

I like this book. As a tourist in China, you can not help but notice all the building in the cities. This book tells you what is going on in simple language and stories, but links it all the complex interactions of economic development, cultural change, and politics. I have been recommending it to friends. I am lucky that I have had the opportunity to take travel tours with the author Wade Shepard.

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