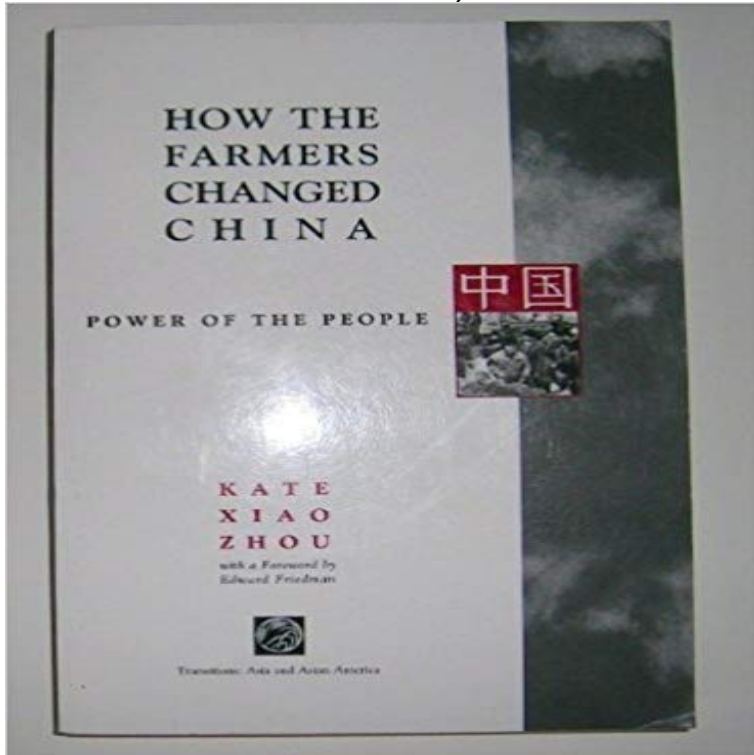


## How The Farmers Changed China: Power Of The People (Transitions : Asia & Asian America)



In this original and provocative book, Kate Zhou argues that Chinese farmers who comprise one-fifth of the world's population have been the driving force behind their country's phenomenal economic growth and social change over the past fifteen years. Guided by their own interests rather than by directives from Beijing, farmers have restored family autonomy in farming, created new markets, established rural industries that now generate over half of China's industrial production, migrated to cities despite rigid governmental controls, shaped their own family-size policy, and redefined the role of women. Drawing on rich primary source material and her own years of experience in the countryside, the author focuses on the farmers' initiatives and the stories of ordinary people who collectively have played a central role in the economic upsurge. She takes issue with most current interpretations, which credit China's economic success almost entirely to reforms put in place by the Chinese leadership. Indeed, Zhou argues that the farmers were effective precisely because their movement was spontaneous, unorganized, leaderless, nonideological, and apolitical. In stark contrast to the turmoil surrounding the Tiananmen Square protests, farmers have been gradually yet remorselessly leaching power away from the central government without overt confrontation or violence. Their reform from below may well have generated the most long-lasting and fundamental changes contemporary China has witnessed.

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