

Epistemologies of Water in Asia: Discourses, knowledges and culture (Earthscan Studies in Water Resource Management)



Through the use of contemporary case studies, this book examines the role of knowledge in water practices across Asia. It challenges the idea of water as a mere resource, by showing how the ways people use and relate to water is based on their knowledge of it, which is obtained in a number of ways and from a multiplicity of sources. It addresses criticisms of Eurocentrism, but also avoids romantic notions of ancient Asian traditions and indigenous knowledge. The authors take a bottom-up approach and avoid judging the relative worth of different kinds of knowledge, such as local, global, expert, scientific or religious. The focus is less on theorizing abstract relations of water knowledge, and more on real world examples that show water knowledge as it is used in everyday life. Examples of the empirical case studies include: water use in the megacity of Delhi, the impact of radiation on water practices in Fukushima (Japan), culture and water discourses in Thailand, and ritual irrigation in Bali. These highlight that there is no single generalizable epistemology, but a diversity of ways in which water and water-use is understood across Asia. The contributing authors come from a variety of disciplines such as anthropology, human geography, cultural studies, philosophy, sociology, area studies and development studies.

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