SELECT PAPERS FROM
THE CENTER FOR FAR EASTERN STUDIES

No. 4, 1979-80

Proceedings of the NEH Modern China Project, 1978-80:
Political Leadership and Social Change at the
Local Level in China from
1850 to the Present

Edited and with an Introduction by
Tang Tsou

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This is the second volume of the proceedings of the Modern China Project at the University of Chicago on "Political Leadership and Social Change at the Local Level in China from 1850 to the Present." It is a preliminary report of part of the research undertaken by members of the Project in the period from July, 1978, to December, 1980. It consists of seven papers. Four of them are written by members of the core group of the project: Professor Philip Kuhn, Professor William Parish, Dr. Susan Mann Jones, and Tang Tsou (with the collaboration of Professor Marc Blecher and Dr. Mitch Meisner). The other three are contributions by Professor Jerry Dennerline, who joined us as a research associate in 1978–1979, and Mr. Steven Butler and Mr. William Rowe, who served as research fellows. Professor Winston Hsieh's book-length manuscript is not included here. But we hope that, with revision, it will be published in the next year or two.

This project was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. It began actual operation in January, 1977, and ended in December, 1980. We want to express our gratitude to Dr. Margaret Child for her guidance in the initial funding of this project and to Mr. Jeffrey Field for his continuing and unflagging support to the very end.

During this period, the project continued to derive great benefit from the regular participation of Professor Keith Schoppa. Papers presented by Professor Elizabeth Perry, Dr. Tom Wiens, Professor Nicholas Lardy, Professor Edward Friedman, Professor Mark Selden, Dr. James Watson, Mr. Jan Myrdal, Mr. James Lee, Professor Zhang Kaiyan, and Professor Fu Yiling also helped us keep abreast of the latest developments in the field. We are grateful to Professors John K. Fairbank, G. William Skinner, Dwight Perkins, Peter Schran, and John Lewis for their willingness to serve on our National Advisory Board.

We also wish to acknowledge the help and encouragement of Dean William Kruskal, Dean Karl Weintraub, and
Professors Chauncy Harris, Tetsuo Najita, Ira Katznelson and Mr. James Cheng in their various capacities.

For assistance in administrative matters, we want to thank Mrs. Mani Reynolds and Ms. Lynne Wozniak. For preparing the proceedings for printing, I wish to acknowledge the invaluable help of Mr. Edmond Lee. Mrs. C. I. Chien wrote the Chinese characters for the glossaries to the articles written by Professor Dennerline, Professor Rowe, and Dr. Jones. The typing was done partly by Mrs. Rebecca Schiffman and partly by Mrs. Helen Bailey in the shortest possible time in our rush to publish the proceedings.

Finally, I want to quote part of the editor's note written by Dr. Susan Mann Jones who edited the first volume of the proceedings:

We beg the reader's indulgence for the idiosyncracies of format, romanization, and style that characterize the papers in this volume. . . . [N]o effort has been made to standardize style or format. We have aimed at accuracy in reproducing the papers as they originally appeared, with minimum stylistic revision. . . .

But we do hope that the publication of this volume of proceedings at the earliest possible date will be useful to our colleagues working in this field at other institutions.

Tang Tsou
Principal Investigator
Research Project on
"Political Leadership and Social Change at the Local Level in China from 1850 to the Present"
INTRODUCTION

by Tang Tsou

From one point of view, society in imperial China can be viewed as having been organized by two institutional arrangements: first, a system of top-to-bottom control by a centralized bureaucracy down to the level of the county; and second, a system of pre-capitalist "free enterprise" at the local level, particularly in the rural area. The first institutional arrangement demanded centralization, uniformity, and standardization in personnel management and bureaucratic structure. It was an artifact created and perfected over hundreds of years, an expression of the political and organizational propensity of the Chinese in their attempt to govern a vast empire with a large population under conditions of technological backwardness. The second was a product of evolution over a long period of time, a "natural system" if one wishes to use that rather ambiguous term. In studying the local system, political historians tended to focus on the first, economic and social historians on the second. But the really interesting problem which has recently attracted increasing attention lies in the interface between these two institutional arrangements: how they interacted with each other to produce at the local level below the county and the city a set of institutions, organization, and practices which linked the state to society and enabled the whole system to work.

The observations and analyses of this interconnection and mutual interaction between the bureaucratic system and the society necessarily form the base line for understanding the changes at the local level in the 20th century and particularly the revolutionary transformation after the period of 1946-1949. Throughout the nation, a strongly centralized Party-and government-bureaucracy which reaches down to the grass-roots level has been in place, though it was disrupted and thrown into confusion during the Cultural Revolution. In spite of its ups and downs, pre-capitalist "free enterprise" in the rural area had been largely replaced by a collective economy from 1955 onwards and was restricted
even more sharply in various places during the "ten years of calamity." In the urban area, large-scale enterprises were nationalized and even small shops operated by individuals or households were either turned into cooperatives or subjected to strict limitations. The traditional system and its transformation form the subject matter of research and discussion in the NEH project "Political Leadership and Local Change at the Local Level in China from 1850 to the Present."

In this second volume of our proceedings, we print as our lead article a most important and challenging article by Professor Philip Kuhn. Through an examination of the views of late Ch'ing and early Republican thinkers, particularly in contrasting the views of Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Chang P'ing-lun, Kuhn develops a sweeping reinterpretation of Chinese political development and the relationship between the central government and the local elites. He shows that the "gentry society" of the late imperial period lacked the support of effective concepts of immanence and representation. It could generate little more than a pallid parochialism in view of the intensive power of the state during the imperial age and the weakness of a tradition of local community autonomy in the sense of local areas generating a truly powerful stratum of indigenous leadership (p. 17).

This interpretation must be juxtaposed to the findings of Professor G. William Skinner, whose focus of analysis is on the "natural" socio-economic system, and Professor James Polachek. Their ideas, published, unpublished or developed informally in our seminars—especially their descriptions of the declining capability of the centralized bureaucratic organization—, give implicit and indirect support to the notion that China was a "gentry society." Professor Skinner detects a "long-term trend," beginning in T'ang times, of steadily declining official involvement in local affairs. One of the principal bases for this conclusion is that the percentage of "central places" in China that served as administrative centers declined while the total number of "central places" increased during this period. In his discussion of long-term secular change in the organization of government in urban areas since 1800, Professor Polachek links the rapid increase in popula-
tion with the rising costs of administration and the over­
load of work on governmental and administrative units at
all levels. These developments led to the appearance of
new extra-bureaucratic networks that circumvented the
cumbrous and ineffectual bureaucratic apparatus. The
litigation specialists, a prime example of these "pro­
fessional" networks, formed a powerful independent group
enjoying real influence with bureaucrats.

Are these interpretations and findings irreconcilable?
If so, which one is correct? If they are reconcilable,
what elements of each can be selected to build a new
synthesis, a new view of the Chinese polity, particularly
of local government and politics? At this stage of our
research and thinking, we have not made an attempt to
come to any conclusions. Our present task is to under­
take in-depth research on specific problems in different
periods to be used by all scholars in our profession to
tackle the fundamental problem of interpretation. But
at this time, certain questions can be raised, and certain
observations can be made. Is it possible that the long­
term trend of declining official involvement in local
affairs and even the official patronage of local gentry
and urban elite networks during and after the Taiping
Rebellion did not succeed in modifying the prevalent
view of the right of the bureaucratic state to dominate
local affairs and that they did not create a strong sense
of local autonomy or local self-government? Did this
gap between theory and practice, between legitimation
and actual operations, as well as the absence of rapid
economic development which could produce strong socio­
economic groups at the local level, deprive both the
long-term trend and its culmination after the Taiping
Rebellion of a solid foundation for further development?

In any case, the long-term trend which culminated
during and after the period of the Taiping Rebellion
was checked under the Kuomintang. The limited develop­
ment of indigenous capitalism in urban centers together
with the emergence of professional and occupational groups
was overshadowed by the political power of the Kuomintang
Party-state. The relationship between the state and
various urban groupings took on an appearance more similar
to "corporatism" than to "pluralism," to use the current jargon in political science. Later, "bureaucratic capitalism" set a limit to the expansion of private capitalism. The revitalization of the pao-chia system represented an endeavor to extend bureaucratic control below the county level. The rhetoric of "local autonomy" in the new county system was accompanied by an actual attempt to exercise strong central control over the county and the local units.

Under the Chinese Communist Party-state, centralized political control not only penetrated downwards to the grass roots but also extended horizontally to the economy and other aspects of social life. The total crisis which engulfed Chinese society and its relations with foreign powers rendered the rebuilding of a strong, centralized state and bureaucratic system necessary, or at least made it seem acceptable to many Chinese. The total crisis also legitimized the endeavor to make a social revolution which would destroy the traditional class structure, bring about a redistribution of income, reshape social institutions, industrialize the country, modernize its culture, and change the ideas, attitudes, and habits of man. A strongly centralized Party-state with a planned economy commanding and centrally directing numerous collective economic units emerged. In the rural area, the communes staffed by officials appointed from above and receiving salary from the state became both political and production units. The brigades and teams below them were penetrated by party-branches, party small-groups, or party activists. The "central places" at the lowest level in the "natural system" increasingly assumed the character of administrative and political units performing tasks assigned from above. Bureaucratic control overwhelmed spontaneous economic activities.

During the Cultural Revolution, the fractionalization of the Leninist Party at the national summit, the initial destruction of the system of party committees and governmental units below the central committee, and the decreased capability of the rebuilt party and governmental organs did not weaken the centralizing impulse. Indeed, this impulse found even fuller expression in the leftist revolutionary ideological and political line
initiated by Mao and carried to the extreme by the "gang of four" with the support of mobilized and misguided masses at least for a time. The idea of the primacy of politics and the practice of organizational control and mass mobilization were pushed as far as humanly possible. The limited sphere of pre-capitalist "free enterprise" in both rural and urban areas which had survived up to this time shrank still further. It was attacked as a "spontaneous tendency toward capitalism" rather than regarded as a survival of pre-capitalist "free enterprise" which had developed over centuries. It was not considered a necessary supplement to the farming activities of the peasants in eking out a living or to the socialist economy in the cities.

In the rural area, the movement to learn from Tachai and built Tachai-type counties marked the culmination of this trend. The use of a single national model for developing agriculture and organizing rural life was a concrete expression of the centralizing impulse which had been inherent in the political organization of the Chinese Empire but checked by the economic structure of pre-capitalist "free enterprise" at the local level, the technological backwardness of transportation and communications, and the size and diversity of China. Thus, the trend toward centralization, uniformity, and standardization in the performance of all functions and in a program to reshape socio-economic institutions was pushed forward by a mass political movement led by an apotheosized supreme leader. At the national level, it encountered nothing more than ingenious attempts to prevent it from going to the extreme, endeavors to evade its full impact in the process of implementation, concealed opposition, and hidden dissent. At the local level, it met extensive evasion and passive resistance.

But the program to eliminate the survivals of pre-capitalist "free enterprise" through a mass political movement in a short period of time was bound to fail, and the endeavor to use one model ran directly counter to the wide variation in geographical conditions throughout the vast expanse of China, in the traditional pattern of village life, and in the capability of the political
organization and leadership in numerous local units of production and governance. Hence, the movement to learn from Tachai did not bring about the desired result in vast areas of China where conditions were very different from those in Tachai. It stifled individual initiative. It did not enable the local units to cope with problems specific to them or with new emergent problems in time. It hindered the effort to improve agricultural productivity and to raise the living standards of the peasants.

In the national context of rejecting Mao's ideological and political line of the Cultural Revolution period, the repudiation of both the movement to learn from Tachai and the post-1966 developments in Tachai itself marked a reversal of the strong and accelerating trend toward centralization in 20th century China, a reversal of the tendency for politics in the form of mass political movements and bureaucratic control to penetrate to the lowest level of society for the purpose of restricting or eliminating what had remained of pre-capitalist "free enterprise" in the countryside. The reversal of this tendency and the rehabilitation of some types of pre-capitalist "free enterprise" are nowhere more obvious than in the encouragement of household sideline occupations, the protection and enlargement of "private plots," and the revival of the rural markets. But the changes go much farther and deeper. The most fundamental change can be found in the call for the promotion and perfection of the "system of responsibility in farm production," contained in a Party Center directive sent down for implementation in September, 1980. This document went beyond the demands made since 1978 to protect the autonomy of the production teams and to lighten the burdens on the peasants imposed by bureaucratic units at the upper levels. It called for the division of the team into year-round work-groups for day-to-day management of the fields and into specialized work-groups for other tasks.

Under the new system, production responsibilities are assigned to them through contracts with provisions for bonuses for over-fulfillment of their obligations and penalties for under-fulfilment. The team can even conclude production contracts with a single household or an individual either for field-management throughout the
year or for the performance of specialized tasks. The structure of the commune, brigade, and team is maintained to undertake those functions of farming, agricultural development, and building small workshops and factories which are beyond the capacity of the household and individual to undertake. Even so, the regime has now gone as far as it can in re-adopting some of the traditional forms of relations of production and farming practices short of a re-division of land and collectively-owned means of production and giving them to households. It attempts to effect a synthesis of the new institutions and practices adopted since the nation-wide movement to organize cooperatives in 1955-56 with some of the traditional institutions and practices of family farming.

To enable the production team to make these institutional changes in the light of its specific circumstances, the idea of the autonomy of the team has gained legitimacy and is being propagated. The reversal of the trend toward increasing centralized political control also finds expression in the recognition of the need to give greater authority to the provinces, municipalities, and counties and to devolve many more functions to them.

These specific changes in rural institutions at the levels of the brigade and team are given detailed treatment in the last article in this proceeding, "Policy changes at the National Summit and Institutional Transformation at the Local Level: The Case of Tachai and Hsiyang in the Post-Mao Era." If the regime's new rural policy succeeds, the relations of production will not revert to the traditional system of individual farming nor will it develop into commercialized agriculture in a capitalist form. It will be a curious mixture of a modern collective economy and some of the surviving features of pre-capitalist "free enterprise" of the households. This may represent the Chinese path to modernization in agriculture in the near future. Although "rural socialism" is now under strong attack as incompatible with "scientific socialism," it is just possible that in the long run, a synthesis of these two strands of thought will emerge and represent a creative response to the challenge of modernizing agriculture in a country with a high population-land ratio.
The NEH project, the research of our colleagues, and the discussions in the seminars over the past four years have enabled the writer of this introduction to see this contemporary development in a long historical perspective. After the tendency toward political, bureaucratic centralization inherent in the traditional Chinese political system and ethos had been revived and pushed to the extreme by the revolutionary movement and extended to the economy and other spheres, the regime reversed its course. It is now seeking a new balance in which individuals, households, and small groups of ten or more households are granted a fairly large area of freedom and autonomy in farming and other agricultural activities. After a protracted revolution, China is once again confronted with the historic problem of adjusting centralized, bureaucratic institutions to the "natural" economic system which evolved over the centuries, but in an entirely new international environment, in a modern technological, scientific world, with a new political system, and under the influence of a fundamentally different ideology.

In the light of the reversal in the 20th century of the long-term trend of declining bureaucratic control and the recent search for a new balance between central power and local interests at the grass-roots level, the study of the period of Chinese history from the Taiping Rebellion to the rise of the Kuomintang and CCP to power takes on new significance. On the one hand, that period seems, in the long history of China, like a short episode during which local interests strongly asserted themselves and which may have contributed to the rise of the Western notion of "gentry society." On the other hand, this period of eighty years and the notion of "gentry society" do highlight the perennial problem of the relationship between central power and local interests, between state and society, as well as the successful or unsuccessful endeavors to seek a satisfactory balance. An examination of this period may very well give us a proper perspective to view contemporary developments at and below the level of the city and county. Hence, the precise relationship between the bureaucratic officials on the one hand and local interests and networks
on the other remains to be described, ascertained, and defined in detailed, down-to-earth historical research as some of us are doing now. This work must continue to be done before we can talk convincingly about the gentry as a social formation, stratum, or class and local networks as interest groups which emerged out of the pre-capitalist "free enterprise" system but linked with the bureaucratic system. This is the significance of several other papers published in this volume of proceedings.

Professor Jerry Dennerline's paper gives us an account of local-level leadership and corporate community development in "Wuxi [Wuhsi] County" at the end of the Qing (Ch'ing) dynasty through a detailed examination of the charitable estate of the dominant Hua clan at Dangkou (Tangk'ou) which formed the economic and organizational base of the local leadership in the community. In his view, the charitable estate shows how imperial favor conferred upon real kinship organization enabled local corporate interests to gain some political autonomy in return for providing communal services and fixed revenues. He documents the continuous growth of this charitable estate from the 18th century to the end of the dynasty and beyond. He shows that the total amount of agricultural land incorporated in the process continued to increase from about 3% of the total in Wuxi county in 1881 to nearly 8% in 1931. He argues that the institution of charitable estates was one of the many ways in which local, particularistic political interests were shaped and adapted to state interests. Moreover, he suggests that the clan estate provided income from local agriculture and distant urban properties to pay for economic relief and education for the whole community, thus mitigating social conflict. The ideology which legitimized this development of the charitable estate and a corporate community was the traditional idea about the sharing of wealth. In late Qing, it was further reinforced by an increased emphasis on local autonomy and decentralization. All these findings lend support to the notion of the symbiosis of the centralized bureaucratic state and the local stratum of landlord-gentry and the growing importance of the quest for local autonomy since the mid-19th century.
Dennerline's most interesting contribution lies in his account of the changes in the nature of local leadership between 1400 and the early 20th century. In the second half of the 15th century, the head of the Hua clan was "a magnate of the old order," i.e., a large landlord in the current politicized terminology, with no title or rank. Beginning in 1573, his grandsons and great-grandsons passed the official examinations and acquired titles and ranks. This bureaucratic elite assumed leadership of the community. After the Qing conquest, the link between the local magnates and the bureaucratic system was loosened but apparently not severed. Local leadership depended more on its increased organizational capacity and services to the clan and community than on bureaucratic patronage from above. In the mid-19th century, it was the estate managers rather than men with titles and ranks who were clearly at the center of both the clan and the community. But down to the end of the dynasty, the pattern of advancement through clan activity to community service and to officialdom still obtained.

Dennerline argues not only that the interests of the clan and the whole community converged but also that the local leadership rapidly adapted itself to the changes in the examination and education system in 1905. But he also notes that more and more political leaders left the community for modern careers and that tax farmers and pettifoggers reclaimed their positions as intermediaries between the bureaucratic system and the community. The implication is that the nature of the local leadership changed once more, this time for the worse in a period of time when the political instability at the national level made the local community more important to the welfare of the people and when the movement for local self-government was gaining strength.

In any case, the local-level political process and the traditional symbiosis between the centralized bureaucratic state and local leadership rested on the traditional system of landownership. Once the Chinese Communist regime has fundamentally altered the relations of production through land reform, cooperatization, and finally the establishment of the system of communes, the nature of
the local political structure and process has changed completely and what constitutes the interests of the local community must also be redefined. But the most centralized and tightly organized state in the long history of China must still confront the problem of how to adapt itself to the traditional practices of hundreds of million "small producers" eking out a living at the subsistence level as well as to the "natural" system of villages, market towns, and other central places. Ultimately, the centralizing and revolutionary impulse retreats before this socio-economic reality as the recently renewed emphasis on the autonomy of the teams and the promotion of the "system of responsibility for farm production" show. Decentralization and the grant of a measure of autonomy to local units and individual peasants prove to be necessary measures in the search for a new balance between the state and society and for economic growth and modernization.

While Professor Jerry Dennerline analyzes the relationship between the state and society in the rural setting, Professor William T. Rowe studies the same problem as it existed in Hankow in the 1880's, a large commercial metropolis on the eve of industrialization. By a thorough examination of a riot in 1883 and its rapid suppression, he demonstrates the vitality of the local community and the effective cooperation between the centralized bureaucratic state and local societal interests in restoring law and order, and in maintaining the status quo for the last time in imperial China which was to be destroyed in the revolution of 1911. He shows that similar to major European cities at the immediately pre-industrial stage of development, Hankow was characterized by a high degree of social and occupational differentiation. He unambiguously outlines this structure of occupational groups in a roughly descending order of socio-economic status in a table on pp. 74-75. He argues that this differentiation had not yet significantly begun to be translated into divisive animosities based on economic class-consciousness. Yet he also accepts Allen Silver's schema and suggests that society in Hankow was divided into a "center" consisting...
of that segment of the population with the greatest financial stake in the status quo and less successful "peripheral" groups. More specifically, the "center" comprised two groups: (1) the gentry-merchants, or commercial capitalists in control of interregional trade, and (2) the gentry-managers operating the various local self-help organizations. This "center group" joined the local administration in suppressing the riot and brought other smaller merchants into the effort of building a strengthened structure of public security. This combination of the centralized bureaucratic administration and local interests quickly and effectively suppressed the two disruptive groups, i.e., first, the actual rebels of 1883 who had adopted heterodox religious beliefs and entertained intense anti-Manchu racial antipathies and second, the city's chronically underemployed males. For the purpose of this introductory essay, Professor Rowe's most relevant finding is that "the regime both acknowledged and itself contributed further to the emergence of an at least partially autonomous urban community" (p. 101). In other words, this finding gives further support to the general image of a "gentry society" as it emerged after the Taiping Rebellion. Both his description and analysis give historians of urban China in the 20th century a base line from which they can study the rather confused period after the 1911 revolution, the re-emergence of the centralizing impulse in the Chinese polity, the building of an increasingly centralized bureaucratic control structure in the cities, and the attempt to find a new balance between the centralized Party-state and local interests in the past three years.

During the 20th century, the fortunes of the local elites were reversed and the traditional, centralizing impulse was now reinforced by technological changes and new forms of government and political organizations. Dr. Susan Mann Jones' paper documents the demise of a powerful local merchant elite in Anguo (Ankuo), a county seat on the North China Plain. For over two centuries, Anguo had been the northern center of a national medicine market. It suffered a progressive decline from
1926 to 1936. It was dealt a further blow by the Japanese occupation of North China. By 1951, its place was taken over by Tianjin (Tietsin). Dr. Jones shows clearly that the decline of Anguo and the demise of its local merchant elite was primarily the result of the "forces of modernization: changing patterns of trade following the construction of railways, and the rise of new markets along the railway lines; the introduction of a standardized currency and a managed monetary system, and the imposition of two tax policies by the Nationalist government" (p. 118). Her findings fit in nicely with the general interpretation developed in this introductory note. As the local merchant elite was a product of the system of pre-capitalist "free enterprise," it was inevitably destroyed as the traditional market system was disrupted by modern developments in transportation, the economy, education, and political form. She suggests that the policy of the People's Republic of China to eliminate private business and business elites was built upon "the processes that had begun to alter the structure of private trade before 1950" (p. 119).

In the 1950's, the government of the People's Republic of China not only turned private industries, commerce, and trade into joint state-private enterprises but also established a system of centralized control over urban areas with a system of street committees, neighborhood committees, and neighborhood small groups. By 1956, the old structure of economic classes in both the rural and urban areas was destroyed. This fundamental change involved a redistribution of income and a narrowing of educational and occupational equality. Political scientist Theodore Lowi suggests that in the U.S., a program of redistribution can only be undertaken by a national elite with centralized authority over the various social groups or strata. In China, this urge of government control was, according to Professor Chiming Hou, "deep-rooted in Confucian humanism."2 The modern tendency toward centralization is related to "Chinese humanism" which invites planning and government intervention.3 But during the Cultural Revolution, a supreme, apotheosized leader, aided by a small coterie

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of radical leaders and supported for a time by mobilized masses went a step further. A series of policies were adopted to break the chain of inheritance between privileged fathers and privileged children. What the actual results of these changes and policies were is the question posed and answered by Professor William Parish in these proceedings.

In his study of Chinese village life and family conducted several years ago, Parish perfected a method of interviewing refugees and emigrés in Hong Kong, using them as informants rather than subjects and skillfully applying various kinds of statistical techniques most appropriate to the data generated by these interviews. Using the same proven method and techniques, he marshals an impressive amount of empirical data on urban life for the following conclusions. Prior to 1966, China had already achieved a significant degree of equality while continuing to maintain popular support and economic growth. The policies adopted during the Cultural Revolution did push equality of income and opportunity further. By 1972-78, China was considerably more equal than other developing countries. Chinese urban society was slightly more equal than the average socialist state. As the European socialist countries are much more highly developed and economic development tends to increase equality, the Chinese accomplishment was impressive. But this high level of equality was attained at the expense of long-term national growth because differential rewards are necessary for society in the modern world. There is thus a limit to "radical de-stratification." The model of combining moderate equality with economic growth provided by China before 1966 will not break the chain of generational inheritance any better than do the capitalist countries, but will provide a significant degree of equality of condition and a degree of security for those at the bottom. These empirical data and conclusions suggest that the recent reversal of the ultra-leftist program of the Cultural Revolution may have been a correct decision.

The paper by Dr. Steven Butler provides us with one of the most detailed accounts of the organization, personnel, and administrative functions of two communes
in Guangdong (Kwangtung) province at the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1977). It gives us a vivid picture of the Party's penetration below the county level through the commune to the brigades and teams. Although he finds that the communes' overall performance may not be as important as one might conclude from examining Chinese propaganda about the commune system, it provides an administrative link between the county, which plays a major role in interpreting policy formulated in Peking, and the brigade, which oversees actual implementation in the production teams and serves as the focus of many community activities. This linkage is provided by the commune party committee rather than the revolutionary committee. The commune administrative leadership is flexible in the discharge of its various functions. One of the most useful parts of the paper is a description of commune finances which has been a lacuna in our knowledge. As the Chinese commune structure will probably undergo important change in the current period of reform, the paper will stand as an important piece for our assessment of current and future transformations.

The last paper in these proceedings, "Policy Change at the National Summit and Institutional Transformation at the Local Level: The case of Tachai and Hsiyang in the Post-Mao Era," by Tang Tsou, Marc Blecher, and Mitch Meisner is focused on the institutions, organizations, practices and indeed "the relations of production" at the level of the brigade and below. It uses information gathered at Tachai and Hsiyang in a field trip in late July and early August, 1980, and puts it in the context of other published materials on Tachai and Hsiyang and on the changes of the Party's policies toward agricultural development and rural life. In turn, these discussions about rural policies are set in an interpretation of macro-political development in the post-Mao era. This discussion of the reversal of the policies in the rural areas parallels Professor Parish's analysis of the limits of "radical destratification" in the urban area. This paper could not have taken its present form and its underlying interpretation could not have been developed.
without the benefit of the insights and findings contributed by the other papers published in these proceedings and the series of seminars organized by the NEH project. It is also hoped that the detailed description of the latest developments in this and other papers will also alert historians of traditional China to some of the questions about the relationship between the state and society at the local level which are the central concerns not only of Western scholars but of the Chinese themselves. It is axiomatic that the present cannot be understood without a knowledge of the past. But the past takes on new significance if one can take another look at it from the perspective of the present. It is this opportunity to do both which has been provided to us by the long-term NEH project "Political Leadership and Social Change at the Local Level in China from 1850 to the Present." I believe that many of my colleagues share this assessment of the results of this project.

NOTES

1. Professor Chi-ming Hou observes that "Apart from State monopoly of several key commodities, such as salt and iron, industry and commerce were primarily in private hands throughout Chinese history." "PRC's Current Economic Policy in Historical Perspective," a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Asian Studies on March 13, 1981, p. 6.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 2.
LATE CH'ING VIEWS OF THE POLITY

by Philip A. Kuhn

It has been a prevailing assumption (mine as well as others') that the lively late Ch'ing interest in local self-government stemmed from two main sources. One was the actual decline of central control over provincial and county-level politics dating back to the Taiping Rebellion. Another was constitutionalism, the dominant reformist program in the decade before the 1911 revolution, a program which demanded (so indicated its foreign models) detailed redefinitions of how central and local power were to be distributed. Neither of these explanations seems to me absolutely wrong, though both now seem inadequate. I would now argue that the intense concern over the theory of local self-government had to do with political concerns that looked farther back into the past, and farther ahead into the future. The discussion seems on the whole to have been as much metaphysical as practical. In the end, the debate transcended power distribution and constitutional mechanics; and touched basic questions of national identity.

As an initial illustration of how practical concerns were subtly mingled with metaphysical ones, consider first the connections drawn between constitutionalism and the ideas of Ku Yen-wu (1613-1682), who was an object of reverence among late Ch'ing reformers. I need not rehearse here the worship (both figurative and literal) of Ku by statecraft activists from Wei Yuan through Feng Kuei-fen, which has been examined by James Polachek and others. Ku's writings on "feudal" values, and their potential value to the transformation of local administration, were first broached in the Chün-hsien lun (On the bureaucratic system of local administration). His conclusions about the ultimate futility of the rule of avoidance were drawn upon explicitly by Feng Kuei-fen and by writers of the 1890s, such as Huang Tsun-hsien, who respected Feng's ideas.¹

The Chün-hsien lun may have been an early work

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and therefore not representative of Ku's fully developed views on local government. But an editorialist in the Cheng-i t'ung-pao of 1906 was able to find passages in Ku's mature scholarly notebooks, the Jih-chih-lu, some of which contained very similar ideas.2

The Jih-chih-lu discussions of the local polity are a fair example of the way practical administrative concerns are mingled with concerns of deeper import; Ku's discussions indeed prefigure late Ch'ing writings in this respect. First, good government is considered to require fineness of local infrastructure. Ku points out that the "local official" (hsiang-kuan) system of the Han had deep historical roots in the administrative history of the feudal period. Even in high antiquity, "the completeness of the local official system and the detailed character of the regulations were essential for the good order of the empire as a whole. . . . It was like nets within nets. There were lines of authority, but they were not tangled."3 The general efficacy of the system (unfortunately, thought Ku, abolished by emperor Wen of the Sui) could be summed up in Liu Tsung-yuan's remark that government of the entire realm in some sense began with the headmen of the villages "and only afterward was there the magistrate of the hsien," and so on up the official hierarchy; meaning that lower officials were more important than higher ones—and in some historical sense prior to them. Ku concluded that "when petty officials were numerous, the age would be prosperous; and when great officials were numerous, the age would be in decline." Now, it is apparent that this entire argument could be based on desiderata of efficiency and control: the more officials at the lower levels, the more fine-toothed the gears of control and extraction. Immediately following it, however, is a sentimental passage in which Ku tells the stories of two native local headmen of Han times, whose local affections earned them the eternal love of the people and ensured good local government. "These two gentlemen were both natives of the counties in which they served. How can this be matched by a system in which an official must serve in an alien place, and in which only a stranger
The twentieth century commentator takes this attack on the rule of avoidance as an obvious analog to Western ideas of local elections of officials.

The point, though, is that neither Ku nor his commentator considers the mechanism to be the important factor. The psychological and spiritual basis of local government dominate the discussion: we are shown a kind of family closeness between leader and led, based on the extrapolation of private, proprietary feelings into the public realm. The main point of the 1906 article is to show that China had, from earliest times, a system of government that emphasized local infrastructure. To see this system through Ku's writings, however, was to see it from the perspective of a scholar-reformer who, when the chips were down, considered the main desiderata of change to be essentially spiritual in nature. By 1906, writers were no longer explicitly emphasizing "feng-chien" as a transitional concept for the remaking of China's local polity. Yet there was something important here that merits our close attention: even mainstream constitutionalism was closely involved with a search for those aspects of a modern polity that go beyond mechanics of election and representation.

To be sure, constitutionalism requires some rethinking of the local polity in the following terms: if there is to be representation, on what components of local society shall it rest? The answer to this question will involve decisions about whether the populations of territorial units or corporate bodies are to be represented. It will also involve actual on-the-spot investigation—carried out by local bodies specially empowered to do so—into the number, wealth, literacy, and status of local populations. It will require the careful drawing of boundaries. And it will require the raising of funds to carry on all this preparatory work. Indeed, the years of constitutional preparation, beginning about 1908, brought forth many plans and much practical activity toward these ends. The basic structures by which the work was to be accomplished were organizations of local elites operating under the general rubric of "local self-government." The delegation of power to such bodies, involving a consider-
able grant of formal local authority, was seen to be an essential step in the formation of a national representative system. Such a delegation of powers was, naturally, a way of defining what was to be represented. Generally, this kind of bottom-up procedure seemed to fit logically with the older idea that local infrastructure was prior to national integration, and indeed essential to it.

But even in this realm of practical calculation, metaphysical statements about the nation were much in evidence. A 1905 article in the Nan-fang pao is entitled "In establishing a constitution, local self-government must be the foundation." It says little about practical matters such as establishing representational boundaries, but a good deal about the fundamental spirit of the new state. China, we are told, is now in the inevitable historical stage of constitutionalism. Such is the form of government appropriate to the present age of international competition. It makes no difference that "the qualifications of the Chinese people are not up to the level of the Japanese on the eve of Meiji," for historical stages impose their own imperatives. If indeed constitutionalism is the order of the day, then China cannot be considered as simply "borrowing" Japan's system, for history is in some sense imposing it upon all contemporary societies.

Then comes the convergence question: whether the "inevitable" march of modernism is going to override national differences. China, we are told, is indeed different from Meiji Japan in important respects. The difference must be reflected in the nature of the constitutional system that China adopts. The crucial and determining quality is that the Chinese political system embodies a gulf between the official stratum and the populace at large. "All of China's civil government is relegated to officials. Officials have power and commoners (min) have no power. Officials extract profit (li) and commoners forgo profit. Officials and commoners thus obviously are divided into the two realms of public and private. Except for their private family affairs, in all matters of benefit to a township or county the commoners hastily withdraw and entrust them to officials." The result is a sharply divided society: all political power walled off in the official realm. Curiously, we
are told nothing of an "intermediate" stratum of indige­
nous elites with significant local power, a further sug­
gestion that our cherished "gentry society" image was not
necessarily shared by Chinese observers.

Now, what this little piece of social analysis is
trying to suggest is that a narrow polity of this sort
is incompatible with modernity and national strength.
Where the author gets this idea is uncertain, but the
implication is that the essence of constitutionalism is
a polity in which the power of the whole collectivity is
immanent in every constituent part, not merely in a ruling
stratum. This condition of immanence is what history is
requiring China's polity to achieve. It is a condition
which already exists in Meiji Japan (and presumably in
other constitutional systems). The thinking here is not
antithetical to the assumptions behind Ku Yen-wu's view
of local leadership: the essence of the whole collectiv­
ity is to be found in every unit of the local polity,
where the realm of leaders and the realm of followers are
closely integrated. Although there is no mention of so­
cial "equality" in this discussion, there is an implica­
tion that, with respect to the dimension of political
power, the new order will have no sharply marked distinc­
tions between leaders and led.

To probe somewhat more deeply into the concept of
immanence (that is, the assertion that sovereignty of the
collectivity is inherent in every part of it), we must di­
gress briefly into fourteenth and fifteenth-century Europe.
It is particularly logical that we penetrate the European
scene at this point, rather than the sixteenth and seven­
teenth centuries, when notions of individual rights began
fatefully to confuse the issue. For a comparison with the
Chinese experience, it is just as well to leave concep­
tions of inalienable individual rights out of our discus­
sion. In late medieval Europe, problems of redefining
the polity arose, on the one hand, in the context of rela­
tions between ecclesiastical and temporal power; and on
the other hand, of relations between the ecclesiastical
hierarchy (the "official stratum," as it were, of Christen-
dom) and the whole body of Christian believers.

Papal meddling in imperial politics during the 1320s had stimulated resistance within the tradition of scholastic philosophy, which began with an effort to define an independent and self-sufficient realm for temporal power; and moved on to consider the relation of the sovereign ruler to the community he governed. The terms of analysis were laid down by the rapid breakdown of the Thomist synthesis, which had sought to reconcile Aristotelianism with Christian revelation. In the influential Defensor Pacis, Marsilio of Padua asserted that human reason alone was enough to guide men in temporal affairs. The State did not depend upon the Church for revelation of its guiding truths; and Marsilio treated the Church itself, in its temporal existence, as what we would call a "functional" segment of the body politic. It followed that the State (following Aristotle) had a self-sufficient quality, and so could be relied upon to furnish the basis of its own legal principles. This was a long way from the doctrine, enunciated nearly two centuries earlier by John of Salisbury, that the priesthood served as a kind of tutor to temporal rulers in matters of high policy. The Aristotelian conception of the self-sufficient city-state polity that lay behind Marsilio's work suggested to him that "human law (as distinct from Divine law) is a command of the whole body of citizens, or of its prevailing part. . . . The legislator, of first and proper efficient cause of law, is the people or whole body of citizens, or a prevailing part of it. . . ."7 There is, of course, an uneasy tension built into this formula: are we dealing here with the whole body, or with its governing elites? Is this indeed a statement that political power is immanent in the society as a whole, or is it a justification for aristocratic government? What Marsilio is formulating, I think, must be seen as a blend of the Aristotelian city-state vision, and the medieval theory of estates. The organic linkage of estates makes this vision quite compatible with a belief in the immanence of sovereignty within the whole body politic.

This conclusion is strengthened by the way in which this scholastic movement proceeded to deal with the internal governance of the Church itself. Not only was
The Church accused of meddling outside its proper competence in matters of politics; its internal constitution had been perverted to place undue power in the hands of episcopacy, with the Pope at its center. Marsilio went on to apply the same principles to the Church as he had to the temporal polity: governing power in the Church was immanent in the whole body of communicants, and was not confined to the papal bureaucracy. It is particularly revealing that this important branch of Western political theory was worked out in the context of Church governance, for there the implications of equalitarianism—a kind of equalitarianism as yet without individualism—are most evident. As communicants in a common stream of divine truth, all believers had a rightful interest in the governance of the affairs of the Church. Marsilio's challenge to the prerogatives of the "governing stratum" (the kuan, as it were, of the priestly hierarchy) suggests, in George Sabine's words, "how fully the Reformation was prepared in the two preceding centuries of the Middle Ages."

The doctrine that sovereignty was immanent within the whole body of the Church was furthered by the writings of William of Occam and Nicholas of Cusa, who attempted to justify on theoretical grounds the making of Church policy by general councils. Like Marsilio, Occam believed that power within the Church was immanent in the whole body of believers and not confined to the priesthood. Papal pretensions to absolute power he regarded as tyrannical and contrary to established usage; his was an essentially conservative assertion based upon the customary rights of monastic communities to regulate their own devotional lives. Nicholas of Cusa, writing in 1433, also followed a conservative vein—in his case, invoking a kind of social contract theory, which sought a justification for power in the consent of the whole body of the faithful. This was, it should be stressed, not an argument from individual rights. The original "freedom" of the community, to which Nicholas appeals, was that of the whole society, which, through mutually accepted customary usage, furnished the substratum of consent upon which legitimate power could be founded. Power was immanent in the community as a whole, though
Several aspects of this late Medieval experience need emphasis in our effort to understand the experience of early twentieth century China. First, the doctrine of immanence is very difficult to apply in a practical sense, except in a social context where the representative capacities of elites or corporate bodies are already generally accepted. Who is to be accepted as the embodiment of the immanent powers of the whole community? Or of its several parts? The theory itself does not, in other words, embody a convincing theory of representation. In a society undergoing rapid change, more attention would inevitably have to be devoted to mechanisms, both theoretical and practical, whereby one person or group is deemed to wield legitimate power on behalf of others. In China, such mechanisms were unsuccessfully sought in parliamentarianism, and more successfully later in a theory of the historical role of classes supposedly represented by semi-militarized bureaucracies called "parties." Second, the fifteenth century conciliar movement illustrates that, in a late medieval context, Europe was already capable of generating a concept of immanence without an accompanying concept of individualism. We, with our post-enlightenment political prejudices, are so used to linking the two, that we tend to see as an anomaly or perversion any system that embodies a theory of immanent power, but does not at the same time embody a theory of individual rights. Third, in late medieval Europe the concept of immanence has an essentially conservative intent: to assert, through both fiction and fact, the primacy of an order that limits the authority of the sovereign in terms of the ancient rights of the community; and seeks the roots of positive law in terms of some kind of community "will" that is determined by history and custom. In China, similarly, an "ancient" "feudal" integration of ruler and ruled was called upon to justify a challenge to the authoritarianism of the official stratum. But Chinese were adopting such views in a context which allowed them little time to work out the implications of such a doctrine with respect to the limitation of power. What was needed, if China were not to perish at the hands of her enemies, was a concentration...
and intensification of power. How could power be diffused to a wider polity and be at the same time effectively concentrated to effect the salvation of China as a people and a nation? This conundrum underlay much twentieth century thinking about the role of legitimate leadership in the Chinese political world.

We return here to the China of the early twentieth century, where we again face our original question, namely, the reasons why political thinkers of this period were so deeply interested in questions of local organization. Looking at the problem from the standpoint of an "immanence" concept of political power, there is a certain logic, from the Chinese point of view, of examining the emerging new polity through its manifestations at the local level. The Chinese analog of the "immanence" concept—namely the idealized "feudalism" of Ku Yen-wu and his admirers—had deeply conditioned Chinese thinkers to looking at problems of national political theory from the bottom up. If the power of the total society was immanent in every part of it, then presumably the place to revitalize the society was at its grassroots. The basic paradigm or structure "how can you have X before you have Y" implies, in Chinese terms: local is prior to, and necessary to, national. To revitalize the nation, it was local society that had first to be revitalized. This was a natural and necessary beginning on the road to modern nationhood in a preindustrial society that had derived a theory of universal empire essentially as an extrapolation of particularistic values proper to individual conduct, family authority, and local loyalty.

It is not at all surprising that the most influential political thinker of his day, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, should have devoted considerable attention to local organization as an element of national strength. But his vision of local organization itself turns out to be centered, not on schemes of representation of county-level self government, but rather on the more metaphysical question of how individual character can be transformed. Here is an interesting example of how a concept of immanence can be proposed without an accompanying belief in individual rights per se.
Liang's essay "On self-government" (Lun tzu-chih) was published in 1903 as chapter 10 of his "On the renovation of the people" (Hsin-min shuo). The opening is a bald statement that consensus—in the sense of shared purpose—rather than leadership is the foundation of societal discipline. The self-governing society he compares to a machine or a body of troops. The incorporeal "leader" of this body is actually the laws (fa-lü) which amalgamate the natural altruistic spirit (liang-hsin) of all the members of the group (ch'Un). Thus, he tells us, there is "system" (chih) but not autocracy (chuan). Accordingly, the essence of "self-government" is a set of shared purposes that proceeds from all the individual subjects. In this respect, "self-government" is clearly distinct from the old system of "government by others" (chih yü-jen). The governing stratum has somehow been conjured out of existence, in the modern self-governing community, in favor of a completely integrated polity, in which all components are animated by a set of laws, emanating from the whole polity, to which all, therefore, necessarily adhere.

A striking aspect of "self-government" is the internalization of societal norms (really the "laws," or fa-lü) which animate the group. So intimately are these bound into the consciousness of the group that specific orders and regulations (hsien-ling, t'iao-hsun), (the hallmarks of "government by others") are needless. The implication is that, once external authority (that is, the governing stratum) is removed, the collectivity will have sufficient internal discipline to cohere and progress. Such a conception is not entirely alien to that of the self-sufficient Aristotelian city-state that formed one part of the Conciliarists' attack on ecclesiastical power. Clearly, Liang sees what he believes to be such an internalization of societal discipline as the essence of Western effectiveness: Westerners, he reveals, all get up at the same time, work the same hours, and quit at the same time. This is the basis of constitutionalism and good government. The hard-won discipline of the factory system has become, as seen from Liang's perspective, a natural governing principle of Western society.
Given the history of Chinese political thought, it is not surprising that Liang should have pursued his search for a principle of immanence into the individual character. The paradigm of analogous reasoning, from self-discipline to family discipline to the government of society, is still very much alive. The _tzu_ or "self" of "self-government" bears a reflexive meaning for both the individual and the group. Self-government (tzu-chih), is only a step from "self-mastery" (tzu-sheng), which Liang sees as the cornerstone of larger-scale social discipline. He cites Tseng Kuo-fan's and Hu Lin-i's mastery of self (in a militant spirit of mind-over-matter) as the secret of their success as statesmen. Self-mastery is in fact the key to self-realization, since self-realization will come through service to society. Here is immanence pressed through to the individual atoms of society—but it is hardly the basis for a doctrine of individual rights. Confucianism dies hard: "First let us try to govern our own selves; then group self with self to form a small group and self-govern within it; then join group with group to form a large group, and (etc.) ... Then will emerge a nation-state of elevated character that is free, equal, independent, and sovereign."10 In such a nation-state, the spirit of self-government animates every scale of political and social organization. The best analogy I can think of for this concept of immanence is the genetic composition of the body, in which every cell bears within it the complete genetic code for the body as a whole. In such a conception, "localism" as such has no ascertainable meaning. The local self-government idea is only useful insofar as it provides a metaphysical basis for the immanence of political power within the entire Chinese national community. For Liang, the animating force of constitutionalism is neither its concrete representational mechanics nor its power-sharing provisions, but rather its spiritual aspect. And power-sharing itself is only meaningful to the extent that it furthers ultimate power-concentration and intensification.

In the popular press, Liang's radical reduction of self-government to the individual level produced some interesting amplifications. Late in 1904, the Shih-pao asserted that "local self-government" was a matter of each
individual in the country carrying out fully his duty as an element of the nation. Now unfortunately there are certain groups of people that are unable to do this. If you take away the weak and bound-footed women, that immediately reduces the number by a half. Remove then the emaciated opium addicts, and you lose half the remainder. Beggars, bandits, Buddhist and Taoist priests, fops, and local gentry of the t'u-hao type, the diseased, the criminals, the actors and prostitutes (all of the latter "avoiding their group responsibilities")—you have lost another 20 or 30%. What remains of the population is about a tenth. (This sounds roughly like the size of the urban male population.) Note that all the disqualified groups are victims of either physical disability, or of moral defects; or belong to traditionally excluded occupational groups. The remedies are, first, to study problems of public health (wei-sheng), particularly the opium evil, which accounts for so many of the others; and also footbinding, which women increasingly are coming to hate; and to study physical education. Thus will our citizens develop strong, healthy bodies, and then lively, progressive spirits. There is obviously nothing at all here to rationalize the dispersion of local power or to provide for a representational mechanism. The tone is essentially inspirational and even apocalyptic: "Without this kind of "local self-government," "we shall not be able to live in the Garden of Eden for even a morning, or in the Heavenly Kingdom of Moses." However banal it may seem to us, it is clear that the immanence of national identity was seen to permeate the very physical fiber of every individual in the collectivity; individual health was a crucial prerequisite to national health. Without attention to public health, "the spirits of the people will be ruined and their bodies fragmented; females will be licentious, and the atmosphere will be dark with demonic forces."12

From the examples above, it is clear that we should be quite wrong in assuming that the mainstream of constitutionalism was obsessed with the mechanics of power-sharing—or oblivious to the implications of power-sharing for power-concentration. The inner logic of these documents is not wholly alien to the doctrines we have
examined in the European context, save that a major correction must be made for the fact that China was entering an age in which she had to develop the discipline and power appropriate to a nation-state, even while making the transition to a concept of power immanent in the entire body-politic. In this sense, constitutionalism's inspirational power was probably a significant aspect of early twentieth-century nation-building.

As one might expect, the great nay-sayer to all this was none other than Chang Ping-lin, intellectual leader of the revolutionary camp, and vigorous political opponent of Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the constitutionalists. In approaching Chang's critique of constitutionalism, it is well to bear in mind his longstanding hostility to K'ang Yu-wei, Liang's mentor. This hostility stemmed largely from Chang's repugnance toward K'ang's new-text views in classical scholarship, views which underlay much of his political program. For K'ang, new-textism intersected with a romantic view of feudalism; there are also important connections between feng-chien romanticism and new-textism running through Wei Yuan and his circle, which have yet to be studied. In Chang Ping-lin's case, anti-pathy toward feng-chien rhetoric meshed logically with his opposition to the specific political program of the constitutionalist camp.

In attacking constitutionalism, Chang rejected the immanence-theories with which Liang had expressed the case. For Chang, race was the only principle whereby the power of the collectivity could be seen as immanent within every part of it. A specifically Chinese (Han) political destiny could be realized only when the Han took control of their own nation.

The trouble with the constitutionalists' way of expressing the idea of immanence, wrote Chang in 1907, was that constitutionalism was indeed (as its proponents had once asserted) closely related to feudalism. Taking a completely non-romantic and resolutely non-metaphorical view of feudalism, Chang pointed out that China was some 2,000 years removed from her feudal past. Constitutionalism, being a mere guise of the hereditary ministerial system of feudalism, is therefore wholly unsuited to China. The value of constitutionalism is in "knowing
the people's troubles in fine detail and transmitting them upward," meaning that the small-scale units of local representation would be tied in, through their representatives, to higher levels of government. This kind of tie-in, Chang says, could not be accomplished without "retaining feudal usages." He then argues historically to show that the bicameral system of constitutional states is in fact a near-descendant of the feudal system of estates, in which the power of the aristocracy was signalled by the superior prestige of the upper house. Such a system is wholly alien to China, where noble titles had really borne no power since the end of the feudal age. Bicameralism, as a feudal remnant, obviously was unsuited to a nation that was fundamentally egalitarian.

Chang admires the social and political integration that characterized the real feudal age. Feudal society was vastly superior to the high imperial age in the basic governmental functions of collecting taxes and raising troops. The farther you get away from the feudal system, the less martial the populace and the less forthcoming with taxes. This is because feudal communities embodied an intimate relationship between leaders and led, in which, for example, there was a perfect meshing of the government's demands for taxes and the people's ability to pay them; and a clear willingness on the part of the people to respond to the needs of defending their home territory under their own local leaders. Under imperial governments, by contrast, the people conceal land from the registers and avoid military service.

Indeed, he presents the very bleakest picture of imperial government, as contrasted with feudal. Yet history moves on, and there is no earthly way in which feudalism can be restored. Chang sees the "local self-government" aspect of constitutionalism as a disastrously anachronistic attempt to revive feudal-style local administration by furnishing local areas with indigenous headmen. Under prevailing conditions of official corruption, he writes, it would be catastrophic to entrust local functionaries with increased power. Bandits and villagers would soon be working in collusion, and there would be
rampant concealment of taxable land.

In this respect, Japan and the European nations are fortunate in being only recently removed from their own feudal ages: in Europe, a few hundred years; and in Japan, a mere generation or two. Naturally, it is not difficult for them to make constitutionalism work, since their societies are not nearly as advanced, historically, as China's. Those who advocate adopting their system see only the abstract similarities and not the historical differences. He notes wryly that the martial character of the Japanese, so recently evident to China's disadvantage, was clearly not a product of constitutionalism, as some asserted, but rather a product of feudalism; for Meiji Japan adopted its constitution in the same year it had beaten China in war. So much for the martial effects of a constitution!

Chang's historical pessimism pervades his withering attack on the constitutionalist position. Actually he likes much about China's feudal age: its martial spirit, its community consciousness, its tight social control, and the closeness of elite and people. But there is no going back. Any attempt to achieve national solidarity through a system based on the integrity of the small community is bound to fail as anachronistic. China is now irredeemably bureaucratic and centralized. Whence, then, may China hope for change? Change must come from a tightening of the lines of authority by which the bureaucracy is controlled. Chang admires the strict control measures of the K'ai-yuan era of the T'ang (c. A.D. 713, under Emperor Hsuan-tsung). Only when bureaucrats are draconically punished for malfeasance will the people have any faith in their government. When they see taxes actually being used for public purposes rather than being pocketed by officials, they will be glad to pay them.

For Chang, the antiromantic, there is no eliminating the governing stratum, no convenient disappearance of the gulf between governors and governed as some constitutionalist rhetoric seemed to suggest. The people would in some sense always remain objects of control. Yet the existence of this governing stratum has, paradoxically, a positive correlation with social equality. Central bureaucratic power can mitigate the harshness with which
local magnates dominate their societies. It is, he believes, the fundamental equality of Chinese society that makes the bureaucratic system peculiarly appropriate to it. In an article in Min-pao the following year, aimed at refuting the premises of representative government, Chang points out that China is fundamentally different in this respect from nations that have not fully evolved from the social effects of feudalism. Hereditary status in China is virtually nonexistent; hence there can be no longstanding castes to divide the people. Representation, however, is likely to create a new elite, which will mean discarding one of the genuine political virtues that China possesses.15

Chang's position on the ultimate locus of political authority is, in a sense, conventionally Legalist in tone. If there is a shared sovereignty, it is to be realized through the metaphysical qualities of race, not through an arrangement (equally metaphysical in its premises) whereby the basic distinction between officials and commoners is to be eliminated. The Chinese political system, distantly removed from its feudal past, can only rely upon the universal application of the laws, rigorously employed to control the bureaucracy. Though the Manchus, along with monarchy itself, will pass from the scene, China will remain a society marked by a deep gulf between governors and governed.

Comparing the Liang and Chang positions, it is easy enough to say that Liang's is the more palatable. It seems to be aiming at a universal identification of the individual citizen with the nation-state, rather than with a concept of racial-nationalism that seems to us distastefully atavistic. That the modern state should be both centralized and representative in character grows naturally out of the "local self-government" ideas of the early twentieth century; for those ideas never limited themselves to a narrow rationalization of the actual power-devolution that had taken place in military and financial affairs since the middle of the preceding century. Their tone was essentially metaphysical rather than practical, inspirational rather than mechanistic. The immanence of sovereignty right down to the individual level was stated without a corresponding declaration of individual rights,
a formula which fit neatly into the Chinese political tradi-
tion. And the bottom-up vision of national integration
was quite compatible with the actual needs of revolutionary
leaders, from Sun Yat-sen to Mao Tse-tung, whose quest for
national power was in fact starting from regional bases.

Yet the historical pessimism of Chang Ping-lin was,
in its own way, also rather appropriate to the predicament
in which modern Chinese have found themselves. Compared
with the late feudal society of the West, China's late
imperial society was infertile ground for conceptions of
immanence and representation. For immanence, there was
no universal body of communicants whose interests could
be held to transcend those of the governing hierarchy.
For representation, there was neither a tradition of feu-
dal rights that could nourish a vigorous local self-gov-
erment, nor a theory of estates that could justify broadly-based participation. In the face of the intrusive pow-
er of the state and the attractiveness of serving in its
bureaucracy, the "gentry society" of late imperial China
could generate little more than a pallid parochialism.
Revolution could strip from the gentry their local pres-
tige and privilege. But revolution could not create out
of whole cloth a tradition of legitimate local community
power. In the absence of effective concepts of immanence
and representation, save through the uncongenial myth of
the world-historical destiny of "class," China was hope-
lessly marooned from her feudal past: socially equalitari-
an but politically stratified, still a society of rulers
and ruled.

NOTES

1. James Polachek, "Literati Groups and Literati Poli-
tics in Nineteenth Century China," Ph.D. dissertation,
Berkeley, 1977. Also see Philip A. Kuhn, "Local Self-
Government under the Republic: Problems of Control, Auton-
omy, and Mobilization," in Frederic Wakeman and Carolyn
Grant, eds., Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China
257-98.

3. Quoted in ibid., p. 113.

4. Quoted in ibid., p. 115.


6. Ibid., p. 217.


8. Ibid., p. 262.


10. Ibid., 3: 54.


12. Ibid., p. 110.


Early in 1860 seventy-two kinsmen surnamed Hua gathered at the hall that had served as their clan's formal meeting place for 130-odd years. Some made the trip to rural Dangkou in style, no doubt, like Hua Jinfang, whose selection as a Hanlin bachelor in 1856 at the age of twenty made him one of Wuxi county's most promising native sons. (See map on next page.) Jinfang surely saw little of Dangkou in his short life—he died later that year—as his own family lived in the county seat where the third son of one of the Hua jinshi of 1659 had established his residence in the Kangxi period. Others probably travelled more humbly from the village of Ganlu, on the far side of Goose Lake, or nearby Zhaobang where the Hua had settled continuously for generations. It is a safe bet, however, that most of the men who affixed their seals to the agreement (gongyi) that emerged that day were from Dangkou and its immediate environs, including the lineage head (zuzhang) and the three brothers and their nephew who had called them all there.

The purpose of the meeting was to approve plans for a new Hua charitable estate (yizhuang). The atmosphere was surely less festive than it ought to have been on such an occasion. The Taiping rebels were approaching the Taihu basin and the siege of Zhenjiang was already anticipated. The three brothers who had been purchasing subsoil rights to good rice land for twenty years now since their father's death worried that the impending battle between the Taipings and local defenders would spoil their plan to double the clan's land holdings and put their own sub-branch (pai) in control of half of it. Acting on the authority of their father's will, they had set a goal of 500 piculs annual rent as the bottom line on which to begin incorporating the new estate. By 1860 they could only manage 375 piculs, but fearing the land already
accumulated would be lost in the event of a Taiping attack, they had decided formally to pledge the income to the support of some 130 destitute members of their own main branch (zhi) who were already on the old estate's relief roles. With a family statement of agreement (jiayi), witnessed by a dozen in-laws and twenty-one kinsmen, and a list of the properties in quintuplicate already in hand, they publicly vowed to supplement the old estate's inadequate relief payments in cash within five years and to take over relief in kind within ten.\(^4\)

The brothers' decision was timely. Within months the Taiping armies had overrun the delta. Hua Yilun's Dangkou militia had failed to stem the tide. Yilun, under whose paramilitary leadership Dangkou and Ganlu remained the county's longest holdouts against the Taipings, was forced to withdraw with his family to Shanghai. Many of his kinsmen lost their lives.\(^5\) Yilun's son, the mathematician Hua Hengfang, joined Zeng Guofan's tent government as a ballistics expert while Yilun continued his efforts to influence Qing military strategies.\(^6\)

Since the time of Yilun's great-great-grandfather, whose thirty year effort provided the clan with the basis for its current estate, his family had been close to the leadership core of both the clan and the community.\(^7\) His seal, along with those of ten uncles and cousins, may well have been the most important ones on the new yizhuang agreement of 1860. The three brothers who were currently trying to expand the clan's communal properties came from a peripheral position, as Yilun's ancestor had.\(^8\) Their timely response to the crisis of the mid-nineteenth century was probably typical of the sort of action that had renewed both the basic values of Chinese rural society and its leadership throughout the late imperial period. That the brothers succeeded in their effort, despite the Taiping occupation, that their sons and grandsons extended the effort to the community in the 1890's and 1900's, and that the Hua continued to produce politically and professionally prominent individuals well into the modern period are all significant facts. This paper will analyze them in local historical context.
The Historiographical Context

Previous discussions of the modern transformation of rural local-level politics before 1949 have focused on changes in the relationship between land owners and cultivators, as well as between state and society. The development of a relatively autonomous stratum of gentry-managers (shendong) in the late nineteenth century is seen to have undermined the balance between the yamen and traditional literati interests. The key to the gentry-managers' power initially was tax privileges that gave them an advantage over small land owners and control over tenants whom they shielded against the tax collector while they pressed for rent. The agencies developed by this new managerial class, depending as they did on traditional loyalties and entrenched interests, continued to impede modernization of local-level political processes under the Guomindang in the 1930s, to the extent that nothing but their elimination could enable a modern political structure to develop.

The story of the new Hua yizhuang raises important questions about the validity of such an analysis and points out how little we understand about local-level political processes throughout this long period. In this essay I will use the story to show how one sort of local-level process was renewing the leadership of clan and community in Dangkou in a manner that was suitable to some, though not all, of the society's modern needs. The case leads me to argue, contrary to the notion that local leadership only impeded modernization, that the disruptive effects of revolutionary changes from 1900 on impeded the modern development of local-level political processes as well.

To argue that certain disruptive effects of revolutionary change impeded the development of local-level political processes is, of course, not to argue that the revolution was only disruptive or that the sorts of changes introduced by traditional responses to the challenges of the nineteenth century were sufficient. It is only to say that we can better understand what all these changes meant for rural society by analyzing what did in fact happen at the local level. In order to analyze what happened, we must first be able to describe the political processes in which people were involved, and such a description demands that we follow the action from one
issue to another rather than evaluate each action using an analytic framework based on our current inadequate understanding of what is progressive and what is not.

The yizhuang is an ideal focus for studying local-level politics. It was at once a large piece of agricultural property, so that its management determined how some significant part of the resources of the society would be used, and an important organizational center for a kinship group, so that it influenced levels of cohesiveness and competitiveness within the rural community. It enjoyed a privileged tax status, as corvee duties were not levied on it and its properties were not subject to encroachments by assessors and collectors, so that its tenants were more closely bound to their landlord than were most. It brought both income and services into a given community and distributed them in accordance with the decisions of the owners and their managers, so that it was an important part of a local-level political field. The organizers and managers of such estates were local-level leaders, influencing the social and political structure of the community and being influenced by it. Our task is to see how, in the present case, these influences were related to the major issues of the day.

The only study to date that places lineage organization in social historical context is Hilary Beattie's Land and Lineage in China. She argues that clan leaders responded to the growing opposition against the arrogant and exploitative behavior of the literati in the late Ming by actively discouraging such behavior among their kin. New clan rules imposed sanctions against such behavior and a new interest in ideological correctness urged literati members to keep personally in touch with their agrarian interests. The campaign was successful, and the great clans continued to prosper, Beattie argues, in part because solidarity versus the taxing power of the state and other potential encroachments kept landowning profitable. Solidarity, in turn, depended on the continuity
of a strong leadership core in each successful kin group.

Beattie's study raises several interesting questions. First, if prominent literati and lineage leaders adapted their behavior to the demands of rural society, then were those demands not an important part of the political processes that made them prominent? Second, if clan solidarity versus the taxing power of the state perpetuated the clan's leadership locally, was such action not an essential part of the local political field? And, third, if solidarity was determined by the continuity of a strong leadership core, was entry into the core and influence over it not a primary political goal? In short, although Beattie's analysis deals only with the importance of land ownership as opposed to literati status in determining lineage power, it points toward a new definition of local-level politics in which the principal actors are not literati who pursue their own interests in monopolizing the link between community and yamen, but local leaders who achieve their position by proving able to keep all potential exploiters away. If, as Beattie argues, land and not literati status was the primary determinant of social position in Tongcheng, then community processes and not literati status were the primary determinants of leadership. Establishing, maintaining and managing an yizhuang were not just functions of a local elite, they were also means by which some and not others came to power. We need to know what the men who did these things were trying to accomplish, what helped and what hindered them, and what were the results.

The Hua and Local Leadership

The institution of yizhuang had existed since the eleventh century and no founder of such an estate in later times failed to invoke the memory of Fan Zhongyan, whose estate survived in Suzhou as a model. Yet there were no other yizhuang so venerable as Fan's and his, in fact, was revived in the seventeenth century and seems to have survived until then only because it was the model. Apparently not until the early sixteenth century did literati families in the Yangzi delta begin to establish such estates on a comparable scale and few survived the
Qing conquest. To my knowledge only two yizhuang besides the Fans' in all of Suzhou prefecture endured from Ming times, and none survived in Wuxi.\textsuperscript{10} It was nonetheless important to the Hua heritage that two major estates (over 1000 mou) and several minor ones bearing their surname had appeared in the sixteenth century, and that among the county's existing estates in the nineteenth century the Hua clan's estate in Dangkou was the oldest. An yizhuang, perhaps better than a family temple, symbolized the power of the clan.

Who were the Hua and why is the symbol of their power so striking? Virtually every person with that surname in Wuxi and the neighboring counties was descended from a Song dynasty official who moved to the county after the fall of Kaifeng in 1126.\textsuperscript{11} Claiming a fourth century paragon of filiality from Wuxi as his ancestor, he settled in the village of Longting and set about building his fortune. His great-great-grandson, known locally as Hua Banzhou—Half a Prefecture Hua—is said to have controlled an estate worth 480,000 piculs in rents by the mid-thirteenth century, a holding that enabled him to run a private relief granary for the whole county and to operate an agricultural school to encourage development.\textsuperscript{12} From the fifteen grandsons of the late Song magnate emanated the main lines known as the "Ten Tong" (shitong) and the "Five Qi" (wuqi), after their ritual names, encompassing a population surely in excess of 7,000 males by the turn of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{13}

By far the most populous line since early Ming times was that of Tongsi, one of whose many great-grandsons first moved to Dangkou in the early years of the Ming. Members of each of five main branches emanating from the sons of his second son were active in the leadership core at Dangkou during the next 500 years, building shrines, temples and bridges, serving as tax chiefs and libationers, providing education and relief. At least four of the five lines produced men with national reputations. The men credited most highly with directing the Hua fortunes through the Ming-Qing transition belonged to two separate branches, the founder of the 1745 yizhuang came from a third and the founders of the 1875 estate belonged to yet another. Yet another col-
lateral branch appended 500 mou to the older estate in the Daoguang period. The branch called Sanxing, for which the new estate was established in 1875, alone had a recorded population of 1,591 males in 1911, with residences in Dangkou, Wuxi city, Suzhou, Shanghai and fifty-eight separate rural locations around Wuxi county.\textsuperscript{14}

The character of the leadership offered by various members of the Hua clan and the degree of solidarity it demonstrates for the whole clan, for segments of it and for the rural communities of which they were a part at different times is a topic I have only begun to research. The scheme outlined here represents my preliminary findings. When Hua Zonghua moved to Dangkou after the Ming conquest he set about reclaiming the land around Goose Lake with explicit assurances from the new regime that the family's recent background of service to the Mongols and ownership of manor-like estates would not be held against him and his heirs. After wandering about the delta living with friends and relatives during the years of civil war, Zonghua's father had chosen the site specifically because it was a relatively underdeveloped part of Wuxi county. Zonghua then moved the Tongsi ancestral shrine to Dangkou and became that region's chief magnate. In addition to starting the reclamation project that his son turned into a sizeable estate, he compiled a second edition of the complete clan genealogy in 1388, and set aside ritual land for the Tongsi shrine, thereby claiming leadership of an otherwise broadly diffused clan.\textsuperscript{15} From the 1380s until the early 1500s his descendants served as tax chiefs (lianzhang) for the township of Yanxiang, receiving official appointments and citations for service.\textsuperscript{16}

By the end of the fifteenth century, the burdens of being a tax chief and the privileges of being a literatus were changing the structure of local-level politics. The story within the Dangkou lineage unfolded much as it did elsewhere. Fathers who suffered losses as tax chiefs sent their sons to compete in the examinations, and sons who succeeded exempted themselves from tax duties. Within a few decades, it was the privileged literati rather than the estate managers who were best situated to provide community and clan with the services and protection
necessary to keep exploiters away.

One case demonstrates the point dramatically. Hua Zhen (1437-1503), a great-grandson of Zonghua, the Dangkou patriarch, was a magnate of the old order. Like his brothers and cousins and father and grandfather before him, he held no title or rank. When, sometime after 1488, he received an imperial citation for providing famine relief in the community he had the plaque erected at the grave of his grandfather, whose reputation had been blemished by "false" criminal charges many years before. The most important result of this act was posthumous exoneration of the grandfather, who was later remembered in the county gazetteer as one who "transformed the people of his township into industrious farmers," built the first community relief granary and generally added to the legitimacy of all his descendants' claims to local leadership. 17

The same Hua Zhen and his sons succeeded in restoring a shrine at far off Huishan to the fourth century paragon of filiality from whom the Song immigrants claimed descent and in winning an imperial proclamation for semi-annual public ceremonies to be performed there. They then attached 500 mou of land to the new semi-public institution to pay for its upkeep and, in addition, to provide relief for members of the Hua clan. To aid in the process, Hua Zhen had compiled a new edition of the complete genealogy. Thus, by 1504 the non-literati leaders of the Dangkou branch had presented the Hua clan with its first yizhuang. 18

For Hua Zhen's grandsons, however, the role of local magnate no longer sufficed. There were thirteen of them in all, and no fewer than ten were county, prefectoral or imperial academy students. In 1513 one of these passed the provincial examination and for the first time a Hua from the Yiyin branch (the descendants of Hua Zhen's father) entered the ranks of what we have come to know as the upper gentry. 19 By the time Hua Zhen's great-grandson Cha won his jinshi degree in 1526, the character of the leadership core had changed.

From then until the end of the Ming men like Hua Cha were instrumental in advancing and protecting the interests of the community against anyone, including the state, who would remove the surpluses from its developing economy. This is not to say that the emergent bureau-
cratic elite, as I prefer to call those who served this function, did not enrich themselves at the expense of others in the community, but only to point out that they did so legitimately. Since the time that Hua Zhen had earned an imperial citation for his famine relief efforts, speculation in real estate and manipulation of tax privileges had become the major threats to security among the farmers. Relief efforts more and more were directed at subsidizing land owners who were in danger of losing their property to yamen functionaries and degree holders whose privileges protected them against the increasingly onerous duties of lijia tax collection and delivery. In general, those degree holders and officials with close ties to their communities of origin must have provided protection, while those who speculated in real estate or specialized in litigation procedures at some distance raised the level of exploitation. 20

Two communal estates appeared in the latter half of the sixteenth century, one showing the effects of these leadership changes on the community and the other on the clan. Both were the work of high level metropolitan officials. In the first case, Hua Cha led his kinsmen in setting up an estate of 2,400 mou primarily for the purpose of covering tax deficits for the township of Yanxiang, and secondarily to provide other kinds of relief for clan members. The managers of the estate called it "service land" (yitian) as it was designed to relieve land owners, many but not all of them Hua kinsmen, from the inequities of lijia duty. The rents went to pay off arrears that the yamen registers claimed were due from Yanxiang land but which Yanxiang lijia village heads could not collect because the land was owned by privileged persons outside their tax districts. Once the pressure was taken off the local owners, the managers of the estate could use their influence in the provincial and central government to rationalize the registers and thus prevent further alienation of subsoil rights from the local area. Farmers could continue to control both the income from their land and the tax collection procedures that they feared would impoverish them if allowed to fall into the hands of others. 21

The second estate was charity land on the old Fan
Zhongyan model, designed primarily to provide relief for Hua kinsmen, including protection for them and them only against inequities in the *lijia* tax administration system. In this case, a prominent retired official by the name of Hua Yun personally donated 1,000 mou for the use of all the descendants of the Song magnate. Protected only by Yun's personal status and influence, the estate appears not to have survived the accelerating speculations of the late sixteenth century despite his attempts to set up corporate processes for selecting and rejecting managers.

Nor was it well situated to serve community interests. Yun belonged to a segment of the clan centered in the southern suburb of Wuxi city and ritually distinct from the Dangkou line (viz., the Tongba line). His properties lay in the vicinity of his residence, beyond the control of the Yanxiang community, and his granaries were not easily accessible to them. Nor did anyone compile a new edition of the complete genealogy until some thirty years later. In short, the Hua leadership during this period was fragmented and largely dependent on official status and privilege for its success, while the community centered in Dangkou attached its interests to those best able to serve them.

With the Qing conquest the character of the leadership core changed once more. Under the threat of political persecution (the Tongsi line had produced over 200 degree candidates in the last 200 years under Ming rule) and loss of official influence, clan solidarity and mutual assistance among close kin were essential for the security of the Hua and, by extension, for the protection of the Dangkou community. The only nationally prominent official from a Dangkou family at the time set about the task of compiling the ninth edition of the complete genealogy, while others helped keep Hua properties in Hua hands and to keep various contenders for local power out of their villages during the transition to Qing rule. The compiler was executed in 1648 as a Ming loyalist but others with no official titles or student rank who were instrumental in the process survived and prospered. The son of one of these men and the nephew of another emerged as national figures in the crucial *jinshi* examination of 1659, one of them second on the list.
link between local leadership and literati influence was thus reestablished, but the direction of the influence had been reversed. The Dangkou Hua of the 1650s had mobilized to save their local position. Their local position secured, they then were able to place their most talented sons in official circles, much as their ancestors had done 150 years earlier.

In spite of the continued success of clan members in the civil service examinations between the 1650s and the 1740s, neither clan nor community seem to have produced any leaders of note. Descendants of the successful jinshi of 1659 moved to Wuxi city, to neighboring Yixing county and elsewhere.29 Those who stayed in Dangkou appear to have had little interest in corporate activities. None of the old corporate estates remained and ritual lands on a small scale were managed by interested families.30 The civil service recruitment system seems finally to have separated itself from the community as upper degree holders were concentrated more and more in the city and the process of lineage segmentation isolated Dangkou more and more from the educated elite. In short, the progression in community leadership from landed magnates to bureaucratic elite had run its course, and whatever benefits the literati offered came in the form of financial aid to their closest kin or philanthropic acts on behalf of their old native place.

Could a place with a history like the one described above be leaderless for long? The dubiousness of such a prospect leads one to search for a new pattern in the wake of the old. In fact, the roots of yet another sort of leadership core, the one that was still developing at the turn of this century, are to be found in the period when literati leadership declined. The first clear signs are in the families of the successful jinshi of 1659 before the degree candidates' success. In one case, it involved the grandfather's taking on tax duties for an orphaned nephew in the late Ming, rather than allow the nephew's property to fall into speculators' hands when he faced the inevitable squeeze, and the father's assistance in compiling the complete genealogy of 1645.31 In another, it was an uncle who managed clan ritual properties before and after the conquest, and who helped keep the community to-
gether through the conquest. It was five donors from the latter's branch who provided the first seventy mou of ritual land for the shrine of the old paragon of filiality on Huishan. Significantly, the efforts of these men were not continued by the clan's most prominent literati, even those who were close kin, but by others at the center of the community and the fringes of the literati world.

Hua Jinsi, the founder of the yizhuang of 1745, was such a man. One of twenty-seven fourth generation descendants of a juren of 1594, he was especially aware of the ways in which clan, community and literati interests could converge. His grandfather, who had emptied his granary for one or another armed band in return for their promise not to harm him or his neighbors while the neighboring city of Jiangyin fought out their resistance to the Qing invaders in 1645, gave up competing in the examinations to run a family school after 1654. The school provided scholarship support for some lineage boys and it is said that the man's benevolence helped to impoverish him to the point that he lived by the charity of relatives in his old age. What surely moved his grandson the most, however, was the story that told of how at the age of seventy-eight he learned of a contract slave (pu), in a Suzhou household, with the surname Hua who had sold himself when his father died and he could not afford to pay his rent. Out of pity, and surely also out of shame for the family name, the old man bought the slave's freedom and gave him a plot to cultivate. The need for interdependence among rural kinsmen in a vicious world is the moral of the story. Hua Jinsi's estate was intended to meet this need.

By the time Jinsi's father began purchasing land for a yizhuang, the Ming juren's male descendants in the fifth generation numbered thirty-eight. Their genealogical chart suggests that some of their fathers were flourishing and some were not (see figure 1 on next page). In addition, the proliferation of offspring in what must have been the more well-to-do lines ensured that once the property was divided the wealth would not be so great. The most striking feature of the chart is that six of the nineteen descent lines that reached Jinsi's generation did so
Fig. 1. Hua Jinsi's sub-branch: a complete genealogical chart of the adult male descendants of Hua Zuqin to the sixth generation, showing adoptions
by adoption within his or the previous generation. Two more of these nineteen lines survived only by adoption in the next generation, and Jinsi's own heir was his adopted nephew. Recalling that Jinsi's grandfather had exhausted his estate in his own lifetime, his father surely thought that with only two grandsons of his own he stood a good chance to keep enough property together to provide relief when the inevitable squeeze arrived. And, since Jinsi's son was adopted, he was especially aware of the need for interdependence that his heritage taught him to address himself to.

Jinsi inherited 500 mou from his father in 1736 but waited another nine years until his property totalled 2200 mou before putting 1300 into an inalienable clan estate. Although he must have been a better manager than most, it had taken him thirty years to accumulate it. The fame of his project won him an imperial citation and the appointment of assistant magistrate for She county in Huizhou prefecture, where he died some years later at the age of sixty-four. Unlike the estates of the sixteenth century, this one survived its founder and prospered.

Jinsi's adopted son built a new granary, closer to the hub of the Dangkou region than the old one, and added land for education and other needs. His grandson helped raise funds for a 500 mou addition specifically for the needs of what must have been the least prominent local branch, the descendants of the fourteenth century founder Zonghua's eldest son. The product of local effort, the yizhuang was growing to meet local needs.

The estate's success was due less to literati patronage than to the increased organizational capacity invested in it by the developing leadership core. The clearest evidence of this capacity is in the history of the most important Hua ritual properties during the Qing period. The endowment established for the shrine to the old paragon of filiality by Hua Zhen and his sons in 1504 had disappeared by Hua Cha's time. Cha and his sons set aside a modest endowment of thirty-two mou in 1563 and that did not survive the conquest. Around 1650 five members of the subbranch to which Hua Cha had belonged donated a total of seventy mou, which was still attached to the shrine when the new yizhuang appeared in 1745. Three years later, a
communal agreement (gongyi) of the clan decreed that control of the ritual land should pass from the donors' descendants to the clan and that the latter should have the power to select its managers. Since the donors' own sub-branch had taken responsibility for the shrine since 1504, the agreement was to let capable members of that branch in Wuxi city manage some thirty mou that were located close to the city and to let residents of the Goose Lake area manage the forty mou in Yanxiang township. Just six years later control of the Yanxiang properties passed to the yizhuang, again by communal agreement, because "those who were managing the rents were not good at it and the land was about to be lost." By 1840 the rest of the shrine's ritual land had also come under yizhuang control. More properties, including urban rentals, were being attached and all of it was separated from the relief budget along with the endowment for education.39 The estate managers were now clearly at the center of both clan and community.

When Hua Qinglian died in 1840, then, leaving 375 piculs in rentals to his four sons for the purpose of endowing a new yizhuang for the Hua in Dangkou, he was promoting them for a central position within this leadership core. Qinglian and his sons were, if comparison is possible, even more peripheral to the literati world than Jinsi had been.40 There were no successful degree candidates among their ancestors and none among the living collaterals of Qinglian's fifth generation ancestor. Their relationship to the leadership core was a bit closer. One of Qinglian's granduncles had been a manager of the old yizhuang in the last century, and his brother and two first-cousins had helped compile a genealogy for their subbranch in 1828.41 It is significant that the urban-dwelling descendants of a 1659 jinshi, members of the same subbranch who were at the very center of literati activity in the county, were not involved in that project.

The New Yizhuang of 1875 and the Community

I would argue that the old yizhuang had significantly
altered the relationship among literati, clan and community. Before extending the argument to the relationship between the community and the yamen, let us follow the pattern of this development through the new yizhuang of 1875 and down to the twentieth century. The first thing worth noting is that although the Hua surname continues to appear on the examination lists with about the same frequency from the beginning of the Qing period to the end, the yizhuang organizers and their offspring are not conspicuous among them. The first from Jinsi's line to pass a provincial examination was Yilun, the anti-Taiping militia leader, in 1844. The only other successful provincial candidate from the Dangkou leadership core was Hua Hongmo, a grandson of Qingliang who passed in 1873 and who was the most active leader in clan related community affairs until his death in 1911. In the first case a tradition of imperial service within the family had already begun with extraordinary subbureaucratic appointments—Jinsi's was the first—based on titles awarded for community service and purchased gongsheng degrees. In the second, militia leadership had brought honorary titles and brevet ranks to Hongmo's father and uncle. The pattern of advancement through clan activity to community service to official career is clear.

As for intra-clan and family relations, the new yizhuang organizers were securing a new constituency for themselves from within the old clan association. The main branch for which they were establishing the estate included all the living descendants of one grandson of the Dangkou founder, Zonghua. Jinsi and his descendants were from a different main branch. A rough estimate of the size of this constituency in 1881 is 900 to 1,000 males, or close to 400 households, most of them in the Goose Lake area. The plan was to provide relief of 1.5 dou, or about 15.5 litres, of rice per month for 130 individuals in this constituency, and .5 dou as a supplement to the grants of 1.0 dou made by the old yizhuang to other clan members. The total capacity of the estate was to provide for 200 persons in the former category and 500 in the latter. Destitute members of the immediate branch of the ritual head, limited currently to descendants of Qingliang's fourth generation ancestor and later
to the descendants of the fifth generation ancestor of the living ritual head, would receive 2.0 dou per month, an amount in excess of that found to be the average consumption of women over forty in the region in the 1930s.44 This grading of constituency by degree of kinship carried over into other functions of the estate, where scholarships were provided initially for the founder's immediate branch only, and would be extended to others as funds permitted.

The ritual provisions of the new estate show how the experience of interdependence within Qinglian's subbranch may have provided some motivation for the estate, as it seems to have in Jinsi's case. It was Hongmo who succeeded in attaching to the yizhuang a shrine to the main branch's fourteenth century patriarch in 1882. There had been no such shrine previously and the symbol of family solidarity before Hongmo's generation had been a shrine to an early seventeenth century patriarch attached to the residence that had once belonged to his grandson, the great-grandfather of Qinglian. In 1862 this shrine had been moved to an anteroom of the building Hongmo and his cousin were using as a distillery, producing the wine for which the Goose Lake region was noted. Everyone had felt that such a noisy, noxious atmosphere was somehow inappropriate for the spirits of one's ancestors and Hongmo did not fail to note this in his commemoration of the events of 1882.45 The newly established shrine to the main branch patriarch had secured a position of respect for Hongmo's more recent ancestors as well and guaranteed that humbler spirits such as theirs among his immediate kin would have a secure resting place.

The story may reflect a pronounced kinship solidarity among the second cousins of Qinglian's generation (see figure 2 on next page). There were fifteen of them in all, and five were designated heirs of uncles. Three out of four of Hongmo's own first cousins were adoptive heirs, and Hongmo adopted out one of his own two sons to one of them.46 The high degree of interdependence in this line adds considerable emotional value to the provision in the yizhuang rules for funds in support of marriage expenses regardless of need wherever lines of descent were endangered.47
Key:
- adult male
- consanguineous patrilineal descent
- descent by adoption, legitimate heir
- no heir
- descent line continues, details not shown

Fig. 2. Hua Qinglian's sub-branch: partial genealogical chart of adult male descendants of Hua Depu, showing adoptions
As for the relationship between clan and community, the point that increased organizational capacity made local community clan members less dependent on philanthropy and literati conscience is already clear. But, what did the yizhuang do for those who were not part of the Hua clan? There were three major benefits at the outset. First, by providing sufficient relief to feed a large number of destitute individuals it eased the pressure on local land and labor that would otherwise have affected Hua and non-Hua alike. In effect, it kept the value of labor in the local market a little bit higher. The second benefit is directly related to the first. Insofar as some of the property owned by the yizhuang, especially urban property, was located beyond the geographic boundaries of the community, it increased the total amount of resources available. Most of these new resources were applied to services, especially education. And, third, whatever portion of the yizhuang's land could be considered a community resource to begin with—much of it does seem to have been located in the local tax district—became a more valuable resource because of the estate. In addition to being exempted from fees imposed on private land for fiscal administrative expenses, its tenants were protected against rent collectors' squeeze and were even reimbursed 10% of their rent during the spring planting season to provide a little hedge against the usurious loans that peasants often had to take at that time of year.

Once the estate got rolling, in fact, its functions spread rapidly to more distant clan members and eventually to non-kin as well. Hongmo used income from the estate, rather than individual assessments, to support a major genealogical project and managed to see the results for every main branch in the Tongsi line in Wuxi county before his death in 1911. A standard form for relief application attests to the need for witnesses and guarantors as those eligible for relief were too many for the managers of their agents to recognize personally. From the 1870s to the 1890s new acquisitions and donations supported a local school (yishu), a literary society and examination prep school good enough to attract students from neighboring counties, an emergency
The final development of the new yizhuang came with the abolition of the examination system and educational reform. One could hardly expect the clan-supported country school to be in the vanguard of educational reform but it appears to have adapted quickly once the reform began. In 1898 the local literary society was publishing the examination essays of the local students with a prefatorial note to the effect that current developments in the capital—i.e., the ascendancy of Kang Youwei's reform party—might make them useless. In the same year the literary society (wenshe) was replaced by a study society (jiangxi hui), and once the new public school system was proposed, the yizhuang donated its school room and scholarship land to the township for a modern-style school (xuetang). Hongmo's grandsons received appointments as educational officials elsewhere in return.

The place of the yizhuang in the community should now be clear. It remains to describe how it affected the relationship between the community and the yamen. It should be remembered that the great Yanxian communal estate of the sixteenth century was organized explicitly to provide relief from inequitable tax burdens owing to the continued use of rotating collection and delivery duties after the decline of the rural tax chief system. The seventeenth century reforms known as "equal service for equal land" (juntian junyi) were designed to rationalize the rotation system so that registers of a standard fiscal size (juntu) based on the assessed value of the land would become the basic units of taxation. Anyone owning land in the unit would pay the yamen clerks directly and any land owner with scattered holdings who chose to do so could register his land separately or together with his own chosen associates as a juntu, avoiding the onerous rotating duties of policing the tu to which his land would otherwise be assigned. By the Yongzheng period the system had been rationalized further on paper to eliminate the policing duties as well, so that all the land should be registered in standard fiscal units with definite geographic boundaries while the tax was levied on owners in residential districts. Policing duties for each unit then
fell either to yamen hired agents or to selected representatives of the residential community. The new system should have eliminated the need for tax protection.55

The Yongzheng reforms were never implemented in Wuxi.56 Rotating police duties (xiannian) continued to drive large land owners to evasion and middling ones to hire yamen functionaries to do the work for them. The latter were the tax farmers who profitted by charging interest on the amounts they advanced for the taxpayer and fees for litigation in tax-related cases. Under these conditions the yizhuang was in a privileged position, in that it kept a long list of scattered properties under autonomous control.57 A group of land owners who sought protection against the inequities of the current system could find it in this type of corporate estate. Moreover, should the rotation system reduce one to penury temporarily, the estate would provide relief and a chance to recover. Since the Qianlong emperor had decreed in 1764 that only clan properties with legitimate ritual and relief functions could be incorporated in this manner, it was the only legitimate way to provide protection against the tax policing system.58

The proposition that the yizhuang served this function in the nineteenth century is supported by the fact that the amount of land held by such estates increased most rapidly in Wuxi county during the years when tax and rent resistance were becoming common and when local land owners intensified their campaign to replace the rotation system with locally selected and locally controlled policing agents. The total amount of yizhuang owned land increased at a rate of 660 mou per year between 1825 and 1850 versus a rate of 210 mou per year in the previous three decades (see figure 3 on next page). The period of more rapid growth coincided with a public confrontation between local control advocates and the yamen, described below, with the land owners finally winning their case in 1846. Between 1846 and the Taiping occupation in 1860 at most a total of only three new estates appeared and the rate dropped to at most 115 mou per year. The intensified demand for tax relief before 1846 would explain the surge of new estates in that period.59

Hua Qinglian died in 1840, directing his sons to
Fig. 3. Clan-owned charity land in Wuxi-Jingui, 1745-1878 (in thousands of mou)
undertake the yizhuang project, just three years after the land owners who advocated local control of the tax policing system suffered a major setback for their case at the hands of the provincial administration. A new edition of the county gazetteer had appeared in 1838 without a description of the issues, and when Qinglian died one of his kinsmen, Hua Zhan'en, was in the process of preparing an alternative gazetteer under a pseudonym in protest against the yamen's manipulation of the case. Seen in this context, the new Hua yizhuang emerges not only as a sign of expanding collective organization within the local community, but as part of the struggle between the community and the yamen as well. Let us examine the details.

The Yizhuang and the State

Philip Kuhn has argued persuasively that the confrontation between rural elites and the Guomindang bureaucracy had its roots in the confrontation between what he calls gentry land owners and the Qing fiscal administration in this period. Insofar as the new Hua yizhuang began as part of the confrontation in the 1840s and emerged as the major local source for funding public education and relief in the 1900s, it demonstrates the nature of the confrontation as it developed in Dangkou. The local mobilization in this case, I would argue, was not due so much to a previously disinterested gentry moving into a power vacuum as Kuhn suggests, as it was due to the expansion of power by a corporate group already feeling the strength of its collective organization. Theirs was a type of power that had expanded steadily since the seventeenth century. The key to their power was not gentry interest, although that was also involved, but pooled resources and effective management.

A quick glance at some figures should demonstrate how an emergent collective power in clan and community affairs could lead to confrontation. By 1881 there were a total of forty-nine yizhuang in Wuxi county with landed property totalling 32,000 mou. If the new Hua yizhuang was typical, their rents totalled about 36,000 piculs per year. The total land tax for the county, when the portions due in silver are converted back to rice at the cur-
rent official rate, was 226,000 piculs. The collective taxing power of the yizhuang over agricultural property was thus approaching one sixth the taxing power of the county. Moreover, the rate of incorporation between 1873 and 1878—the last date mentioned in the 1881 gazetteer—had increased dramatically to 880 mou per year and may well have remained that high for the next several decades. A report of 1931 shows a total of 87,000 mou of land owned by lineages at that time.

We have seen that the new Hua estate continued to grow throughout the next two decades. From 1,000 mou in 1881 it grew to 2,700 by 1899 and was increasingly incorporating urban property as well. Urban properties aside, the total amount of agricultural land owned by the two Hua estates in Dangkou by the turn of the century was at least 5,100 mou, probably worth 55,000 to 60,000 taels and drawing rents of about 5,800 piculs per year. These figures should be compared to the figures for the tax district (qu) in which Dangkou and probably most of the corporate property was located: 52,600 mou with a tax liability of about 9,200 piculs. The taxing power of the Dangkou corporate estates was at least 63% as great as the taxing power of the state in that district. Moreover, nearly 70% of the estates' income in 1875 had been designated for relief and spring assistance to tenants, while the taxes paid to the state provided little of immediate benefit to community members, and the Hua provided community schools in the bargain. This was the situation in Dangkou on the eve of the movement for local self-government.

The sources run out at this point. Only if local information becomes available will it be possible to know just how the community responded to the challenges of local self-government, industrial development in Wuxi city, Guomindang organization, Japanese occupation and land reform. Yet one thing is certain. The starting point for the response included a powerful corporate interest with considerable public influence and a history of progressive opposition to yamen control. If this corporate interest was defined as a clan interest, it was partly because the Qing state had restricted incorporation to real kinship groups, and partly because the clan provided a strong ritualistic focus for communal organization. It would be wrong
in this case to see the clan simply as a tool for the use of gentry control.

The Ideology of Corporate Community Leadership

The convergence of clan and community interests under local leadership vis-à-vis the state was not without ideological support. In fact, as the ideology had been applied to the community struggle since the sixteenth century, it bound clan incorporation to the broader utopian goals of equitable distribution of wealth throughout the society. In its most extreme form, it held to ideals of primitive communism—directly contradictory to the idea of an imperial state with its highly centralized political power. As modified by the realities of the Ming and Qing empires it held to ideals of equilibrium between the demands of the state and community needs. In this modified form the ideology supporting the incorporation of clan interests merged with other trends in the development of statecraft thought.

Philip Kuhn has demonstrated that the development of statecraft thought in the late Qing period was directly related to a growing gentry autonomy and that it provided an important link between traditional values and the local self-government movement. He argues further that statecraft reformers like Feng Guifen envisioned a devolution of power to the prefectural and county level in order to encourage local political participation, but not to the level of the market town where entrenched interests could hamper the self-strengthening efforts of the state. The argument is persuasive insofar as local self-government is seen as an ideal consistent with traditional statecraft thinking and supportive of a balance of autonomy and control. Yet one also wants to know why, or indeed if, one who believed in decentralization thought local-level participation would not degenerate into selfish competition for spoils and, eventually, political fragmentation. Either the participants would have to be limited to a locally disinterested upper elite stratum, in which case the fact that they were local participants would be irrelevant, or there would have to be a renewal.

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of public spirit among the broader gentry or, perhaps, the society at large. The activities of the Hua at Dangkou and others like them probably inspired the belief that such a renewal was possible.

Among Feng Guifen's essays on statecraft appears one entitled "On Restoring the Laws of the Kindred" (Fu zongfa lun). It appears a highly impractical if not utopian piece and it has received little attention. In it one detects a certain resonance with an essay by the influential sixteenth century statecraft writer, Tang Shunzhi, commemorating Hua Yun's attempt to establish a durable yizhuang for the whole Wuxi clan. When read in conjunction with the history of the Hua estates at Dangkou, the two essays point to an ideological link between the yizhuang and statecraft ideas. By the time Feng prefaced his essays in the autumn of 1861 both Wuxi and Suzhou had fallen to the Taipings and Hua Yilun, the head of the Dangkou militia bureau, was in Shanghai, as was Feng. Feng surely was aware of the Hua leadership in Dangkou and it is certain that the Hua leadership knew Feng's essays as they extended their leadership in the decades that followed. Given the rapid growth of corporate estates like those of the Hua in the Daoguang period and again in the 1870s, Feng's interest in zongfa merits closer attention.

Zongfa referred to the rules that governed the rituals of noble lineages in the early Zhou period. As described in the Liji, they determined the order of the tablets in the ancestral shrine and guaranteed that when a member of the kindred (zong) other than the son of the nobleman was selected as his heir, the line of descent and hence the legitimacy of the clan would not be in doubt. Among other things, the rules determined that the adopted heir should continue to honor his blood ancestors in his own family shrine, the relationships therein being limited to the small kindred (xiaozong), or five generations of common descent, but that he should honor the ancestors of his adoptive father in the rituals of the great kindred (dazong), which included all the descendants of the founder. It was this aspect of the zongfa, symbolizing clan solidarity versus the particularistic interests of the family, that occupied commentators throughout the Qing period. But, for Tang Shunzhi in the 1550s and again for Feng
Guifen in 1861, zongfa symbolized another aspect of the ancient Zhou system as well—the equitable distribution of wealth.

Tang Shunzhi used the occasion of Hua Yun's yizhuang to raise probing questions about the need for charity. For him the ancient zongfa was a symbol of what the human condition could be like if property were shared and social distinctions were not based on wealth:

Charity land (yitian)—is it something left over from the way of the ancients or does it emanate from the ancient way's demise? The great kindreds of the past were collectivities of kinsmen (shouzu­zhe). Should we think of charity land as a remnant of the great kindred? On the other hand, when there were great kindreds there was no charity land. Does this mean that the latter emanates from the former's demise?

The ancients relied on the kin group (zu) to establish kindreds for them. Those kinsmen who had surplus wealth then returned it to the kindred, and those who could not provide sufficiently for themselves partook of the kindred's wealth. These kinsmen treated one another as parts of a single body, like bone and sinew, hand and foot. Their resources covered all like digestive juices, overflowing into interstices, filling up only the empty places, and there were no depressed or swollen places, no over­abundancy and no deficiency. Thus in the whole kin group there were no wealthy and no poor families. Moreover, no kin group under heaven was without a kindred, and in this way there were no wealthy and no poor families under heaven. Isn't this what was meant by saying that when everyone treats familiares as familiares (qin_qin) there is tranquility under heaven?

Only after the demise of the well fields were there means for ranking by property in the village. Only after the demise of the law of the kindred were there means for ranking by property within the kin group. At the extreme are cases where slave boys tire of meat and gravy while kinsmen grab for the ladle. The benevolent gentleman sympathizes and
thereupon makes use of his position to make charity land to succor his kin. Thus, even though there is something that the great kindred bequeaths to them, yet as charity lands are established the term "great kindred" is further obscured.

In essence, it is the case with charity land that it exists because there is a man of means, while under the law of the kindred even the most valuable properties were shared (xiang tong). In the case of charity land, it is only the benevolent person as a part of the kin group's body who treats the others in a public-spirited manner (xiang gong), while under the law of the kindred even when the inheritance was small and niggardly no one could treat the others parsimoniously (xiang lin). Therefore, as a model charity land leads to narrowness and onesidedness, whereas the law of the kindred leads to equity and universality. Still, since the understanding of the benevolent gentleman is already sufficient to attain this level, can the fact that no one shares one's means with others really be owing to the differences between ancient and contemporary times? Might it not also be that charity land emanates from the ability of such a person to take the responsibility upon himself, while the law of the kindred could only be imposed from above and never be established by joint responsibility?70

For Tang, if the values of the utopian past could not be revived in the village or the imperial state, the institution of yizhuang was proof that they could nonetheless be approximated by the action of conscientious clan leaders.

Feng Guifen emphasized the same theme in "On Restoring the Law of the Kindred," but for him the yizhuang was not a philanthropic institution, it was a collective organization. As a collective organization, it was a political unit of sorts, with advantages similar to those of the ancient dazong. The advantage in each case, it becomes evident, is in the size of the community involved and the inherent balance between personal and shared interests of the members:

Among the laws of antiquity were the well-field and the establishment of noble houses (fengjian) which,
once they disappeared, could not be revived. In later times it has been all too common to propose reviving them. In my opinion, reviving well fields and established noble houses would not be so good as reviving the law of the kindred.

The law of the kindred is the basis on which assistance for the state in nurturing and instructing the people depends. The disorderly among the people are not disorderly at birth, but if they are not nurtured and instructed there may occur something that causes them to be disorderly. When the magistrate has responsibility for their nurture and instruction, that is what is called nurturing without being able to dress them and put the food in their mouths, instructing without being able to enter the household. It is respectful but not affectionate, broad but not close. A father or an elder brother becomes affectionate and close, but in some cases there is no father or elder brother or the father or elder brother is inept. In such cases the people are missing anything to depend on. If a kinsman (zongzi) were made to nurture and instruct them, then what the magistrate cannot put in order the kinsman can, because the magistrate is distant and the kinsman close by. What the father or older brother cannot provide instruction in, the kinsman can, as the father and older brother are lenient and the kinsman strict. The law of the kindred in fact is able to fill in the gap between the magistrate and the father or older brother.

Feng goes on to argue that this meaning of the extended kin group was lost on the great families of medieval times who understood only how to utilize blood lines for power. Not until Fan Zhongyan's yizhuang was the original function of the kindred as an organizing principle outside the family but closer and more personal than the state revived. Feng would extend the principle:

For each surname, set up a zhuang as the place for offering sacrifices, holding banquets and ordering the group's affairs. . . . Establish a kinsman and restore the ancient ritual regulations. . . . Call him the regular kin group head (zuzheng). Provide
him with a contract kin group head (zu yue) as an assistant. For the regular head, let the principle of nobility (gui gui) govern. . . . For the contract head, let the principle of ability (xian xian) govern. Both will be selected by the whole kin group publicly, as they are in contemporary yizhuang.71

The most striking point in Feng's essay is the clear link he draws between the zhuang and the local polity. The zhuang he describes is an organizational unit based on the kinship model, but it is not a higher order lineage. It is explicitly not the familiar litigious, feuding lineage common to Fujian and Guangdong. It is limited in size to about a thousand persons, it reports to the yamen and helps maintain local control and it can be made up of non-kin as well as kin. It is a basic unit of the society --everyone must belong to one--and it performs certain functions that would otherwise have to wait for the administration of a sage king (wangzheng). In effect, Feng would integrate the corporate group at the village and market town level into the political structure of the empire.

It should be remembered that Feng Guifen also advocated expanding local administration below the township level and electing local residents to administrative positions. It is hard to imagine that the basic units of administration in Feng's scheme would not overlap with the zhuang. In his better known essay, "A Proposal for Restoring Village Offices," (Fu xiangzhi yi), he argued that the reason the tuanlian militia was superior to the baojia was easy to see--the leaders of the former had a respectable semi-official status (fei guan er jin yu guan) while the leaders of the latter were lowly conscripts (jian yi, fei guan). Local administration would function well only if the job was attractive to respected and capable men.72 The zhuang managers also were to be elected by the whole zong on the basis of ability. Would capable zhuang managers not prove to be the best candidates for local administration and vice versa?

An ideology that linked the goals and the organizational capacity of the yizhuang to the ideals of decentralization and local participation in government would have provided legitimacy for local leaders like the Hua in
Dangkou in confrontations with the magistrate and the governor over how to govern. Hua Zhan'en must have felt some such ideological justification when he published his alternative local history in 1843. In it he described how his party had petitioned to replace the rotation system for policing the tax collection process with local selection of constables. As part of their case they had argued that proxy payment in advance (dianwan), or tax farming, would have to be strictly forbidden before respected and capable persons could be expected to serve. The petition had received the support of the acting provincial treasurer, whose recommendation Hua Zhan'en quoted in full. According to the recommendation:

All obstructive practices should be eliminated in order to make the implementing orders clear. Henceforth to fulfill the duties of the constable, the people of each tax subdistrict should, in accordace with precedent, (i.e., earlier directives in Suzhou and Changzhou prefectures), publicly select an honest and capable person and report the decision to the yamen for approval (baoguan dian-chong). It will not be necessary to determine an order of service and make a replacement each year, nor will coercing the well-to-do households into service by rotation be allowed. . . . If there is someone who refuses to pay . . . [the yamen runners] may not bind [the constable] with proxy remittance (laokun baodian). As for the public affairs of the subdistrict in general, the constable should be authorized to deal with them in a manner that is the most satisfactory to all concerned. . . . In this way agreements concerning public selection will be reached and no privileged household (dahu) will need to seek legitimate exemption. The burden of making advances and pressing for reimbursement will be lifted and the duties of the constable will not appear onerous.73 But, collusion between the staff of the Wuxi yamen and that of the governor led the latter to reject the petition on the ground that abuses of the system, and not the system itself, were to blame for the inequities. On this matter, Hua Zhan'en, grandson of the old yizhuang founder
and uncle of the anti-Taiping militia bureau chief, minced no words:

Unexpectedly, parasitic clerks learned of [the recommendation] and felt that, although it would be convenient for the people it would be most disadvantageous for the bureaucrats (guanli). They worried the local magistrates and dragged the prefect in to plead with the governor personally. Their own petition was secretly delivered and the order that descended reversed the decision previously reached. 74

The local leaders' cause for autonomy in policing fiscal administration was thwarted by the tax farming interests on which civil service administrators depended for minimizing their deficits.

Although the original recommendation was implemented by a new governor and a new magistrate in 1846, it was not universally effective. The problem of engrossment in local fiscal administration was still around in the 1930s. Reports from the region around Dangkou at that time find, for example, a group of nine households owning fifty-four mou of middling land paying three times as much as their assessed tax in illegal fees. 75 Reports from elsewhere in the county describe owners paying collection fees to headmen simply because the latter beat them to the county treasurer's office, or paying multiple bribes to clerks for the right to file for tax relief in a bad year. 76 What is most significant about the nineteenth century case, therefore is not that the local control advocates finally won, but that it was a step toward local autonomy and rational fiscal organization consistent with the development of both local lineage power and statecraft thought.

The next step must have been local self-government. It appears that corporate community mobilization was progressing apace in Dangkou in the 1890s and 1900s and that the sorts of intermediary functions associated with the gentry-manager concept were anathema there. The question in this case, then, is what happened to the mobilization once local self-government was born?

My guess is that because the Qing and Republican regimes implemented local self-government in hopes of directing and controlling the mobilization, fewer and fewer potential leaders found it worthwhile. Because the local
educational mobilization was successful, more and more potential leaders left the community for modern careers. And, because potential leaders fled, the tax farmers and pettifoggers reclaimed their positions as intermediaries between the yamen and the community. Some of them, of course, may have been surnamed Hua, but they were neither the spiritual nor the ideological successors of the late Qing local leaders.

If the Hua leadership followed a course similar to the Xue of Lishe on the other side of Wuxi city, they continued to manage their yizhuang to the benefit of the local economy, joined the peasant association movement and the Guomindang, left the party during the purification campaign of 1927, but still held onto local control positions in the 1930s. In addition, the poorer peasants who were not Hua kinsmen may well have become more dependent as tenants on Hua landlords when the economic situation worsened in the 1930s, producing a stronger and perhaps more arrogant land owning group from which to recruit students and local leaders. The general mood of the leadership, if it resembled the Xue, was conservative and defensive.

The Implications of Corporate Community Development

It may be appropriate in conclusion to raise some preliminary hypotheses concerning the historical significance of yizhuang organization. Let us consider first how the Dangkou case contributes to our understanding of issues related to China's early modernization and then see how the historical problem might be related to the continuing modernization process.

Lineage and Community. Lineage organization has been seen as a particularistic and divisive feature of Chinese society, an impediment to the development of community structures capable of assuming a modern political form. Recent anthropological studies are challenging the lineage-community dichotomy and the present study supports this challenge. In this case, the corporate activities of the kinship group and the interests of the community had been growing closer since the eighteenth century after
an apparent digression of some 200 years. By 1900 the clan estates were providing income from local agricultural and distant urban properties to pay for economic relief and educational expenses for the whole community. Although the actual extent of the benefits for non-kin is not known, the principle of universality, growing out of earlier efforts to overcome the cleavages caused by lineage segmentation and to provide services conveniently for all with the Hua surname who resided in and around Dangkou, is clear.

**Local leadership.** Most discussions of leadership in this period focus on the anachronism of literati leadership, the appearance of gentry-managers in public administration, and the search for alternative sources of leadership in the mobilization of communities or groups for modern developmental tasks. The causes of frustration in the search for alternatives are often reduced to the imprecise concept of "gentry power." The present case shows how the latter concept obscures the processes by which men were achieving power in this period by combining different sorts of power in a single category, ignoring the possibility of alternatives within it. The nature of local leadership changed several times between 1400 and 1900, reflecting changes in the social network and in the juxtaposition of political fields, even though civil service examinations, land tenure relations and the special relationship between the yamen and the holders of degrees and titles were fundamentally unchanged. The yizhuang phenomenon and the Hua involvement in it shows how the development of corporate leadership was changing local politics from the eighteenth century on. The changes may have been more important than the effects of either the Taiping occupation or the educational reforms of the 1900s.

**State and society.** Discussions of confrontations between imperial or national interests and local or particular interests focus increasingly on the problems of yamen control and conflicts between social categories or classes. State interests thus appear either to favor the interests of one category versus another or to impede the development of "natural" social-economic organization with divisive or restrictive administrative ones. The growth of the yizhuang in Wuxi county, on the other hand, shows how imperial favor of real kinship organization enabled local corporate interests to gain some political
autonomy in return for providing communal services and fixed revenues. This development was continuous from the eighteenth century to the end of the dynasty, and the total amount of agricultural land incorporated in the process continued to increase from about 3% of the total in Wuxi county in 1881 to nearly 8% in 1931. It seems likely that this was only one of many ways in which local, particularistic political interests were shaped by and adapted to state interests while serving to mitigate social conflict.

Land tenure and rural economic development. It is universally recognized that fragmentation of farm property was the principal obstacle to modern development in the crucial sector of agriculture. Much of the discussion on this issue centers nonetheless on class relations. The problem is to determine the extent to which either landlords, yamen clerks, the structure of fiscal administration or various brokers and agents that came between any of them and the peasantry impeded the development of larger scale private farming and rural sideline industries. The yizhuang, as a privileged corporate estate providing relief for kinsmen and protection for tenants, had several effects worth noting. It increased the dependency of both the poorest lineage members and a large number of tenants on a single large landlord. At the same time, however it depersonalized the dependency relationship, as the estate was a corporation and the clan was large enough to require witnesses and guarantors for those receiving relief. It also decreased the opportunities for exploitation of the tenants by intermediaries, as the land the tenants farmed was exempt from labor duties and the estate's rent collection agents were supervised by interested managers subject to dismissal by the clan assembly. It increased the level of security among poorer clan members and estate tenants, making their economic prospects more predictable. This, in turn, should have provided some encouragement for household economists to take risks they would not otherwise have done, perhaps to engage in cooperative ventures, and so on. On the other hand, the relative strength of the yizhuang, the fact that its land was inalienable,
and its purpose to distribute income from rents meant that it exacerbated the problem of fragmented land holding.

Urban-rural conflict and the distribution of capital and scarce resources. Urban-rural relations changed most radically during industrialization, and several famous early industrializing families came from prominent Wuxi clans. The Hua were not among them. Joseph Esherick has proposed a distinction between "gentry" with a strong urban orientation conditioned by developments in the cities from the 1890s on and a more traditional land-owning type, with the former favoring provincial-level political organization and the latter clinging to older statecraft and self-strengthening ideas. Mary Rankin has found the interests of families in two Zhejiang market towns more continuous on the urban-rural scale. In the Dangkou case a developing rural institution, with the advantage of old-style urban rural connections, increased the flow of resources from the city to the village by attaching urban property, and increased mobility out of the village by providing education there. It may be significant that new urban properties were attached in the 1890s and that the clan school became a modern-style one as soon as the opportunity presented itself. It may also be significant that Hua Yilun's son, Hengfang, was a prominent Western style mathematician and self-strengthener in the 1860s, while students I have been able to identify who studied military strategy in Japan and modern Japanese medicine in Shanghai in the 1890s and 1900s came from an urban branch of the Hua clan, not from Dangkou. Yet, Hongmo's grandsons, as we have seen, were modern-style educational officials. The evidence, slim though it may be, points to a ready adaptability to modern developments among the Dangkou group through the 1900s, and to the concurrent strengthening of old-style urban-rural ties despite industrialization--all to the benefit of the village.

Ideology. In his persuasive study of Liang Qichao, Hao Chang has located the turning point between traditional statecraft thinking and the modern search for alternative ideologies in the decade between 1895 and 1905, and most would agree that ideas stressing ritual obligations and traditional loyalties were anachronistic by this time. This agreement should not detract from the point that
these ideas were important for justifying the effort to build the new Hua yizhuang as recently as 1875, and that they provided the raison d'etre for group solidarity and redistribution of the income from a large estate. It is equally significant that ideas derived from treatises on clan ritual supporting the sharing of wealth converged in this ideology with ideas supporting local autonomy and decentralization of power. Hua Hongmo's concern for the welfare of his kinsmen and the community they lived in appears to have been related symbolically to his concern for the spirits of ancestors forced to endure the effects of fumes and raucous voices emanating from the family distillery. And, more significantly, the widespread sharing of inheritances among cousins and acceptance of the obligations incurred seems to have supported the idea of redistributing the wealth more broadly in a systematic way.

The new Hua yizhuang was a product of the Tongzhi restoration. The story of its development from the 1840s to the 1900s shows how local political processes continued to renew the leadership core of a clan whose interests were converging more and more with those of a community. The leaders who emerged in the 1860s and the 1890s themselves appear to have been able to adapt to the needs of a modern society within the limits imposed on them by economic conditions. The revolution could not tolerate these limits. Land reform and collectivization have changed the rules too dramatically to allow for any meaningful discussion of continuities in the processes, yet the problems of modernization as they are related to local leadership remain.

At the turn of the century the time was ripe for the development of local autonomy with constitutional guarantees. Land reform was not an issue. The yizhuang and its managers were part of a continuing local mobilization for extending benefits of education and improving social welfare. Such a mobilization could only contribute to conditions favorable to economic development in the long run, so long as its leadership remained adaptable and its goals served only to balance and not to contradict the goals of economic growth. Yet, conditions in the
1930s show that local leadership in the Wuxi countryside was defensive and the peasants more dependent than ever on whoever could protect them against the agents of bureaucracy and the vagaries of the market.

The yizhuang story suggest a new hypothesis with regard to this leadership problem. If the yizhuang organizers and managers were representative, then there was good potential in the late Qing period for corporate community leadership at the local level. But, there was also a good potential for engrossment by the many sorts of essential intermediaries between the yamen and the community. The problem was no different in the marketing and credit systems, where brokers needed regulation in order to minimize producer and consumer exploitation. If a modern, more effectively integrated system was to develop, corporate interests needed promotion and intermediate networks needed regulation. Corporate community interests were not well promoted by any regime between 1911 and 1949, while intermediaries were regulated with variable success. Since liberation, corporate community interests have developed to the point that private interests are negligible, while the intermediate networks that made the old China appear integrated have been eliminated. The current problem, then, is one of promoting new supralocal intermediate networks and regulating corporate community processes.

Hua Hongmo died in the summer of 1911 at the age of seventy-one. His mild countenance glows above his long white beard in the photograph his grandson appended to the genealogy he had finished compiling for the Sanxing main branch just before his death. It was the second edition that Hongmo had personally taken charge of, the previous one having been completed thirty years earlier. He noted in his preface that of the twelve main branches in the Tongsi line, the two to which the founders of the two yizhuang had belonged had completed genealogies in 1872 and 1881, three were centered in other prefectures or counties, and the other nine all had been able to compile complete genealogies for the first time between 1899 and 1908 with the financial support and under the editorial management of the new yizhuang. As the general editor of all these compilations, Hongmo had succeeded in the broad-
est project of "gathering the lineage" (shou zu) ever, and he hoped that the example he now set by compiling a new edition of the Sanxing genealogy after a lapse of thirty years would inspire the next generation of managers to marshal their energies and follow suit.

By 1941, of course, no conscientious local leader was expending his energies on such matters. Yet, are we to assume that Hongmo's death in the last weeks of Qing rule marked the end of the local-level political processes that had made a leader of him, just as the Wuhan uprising marked the end of the empire? A renewed clan leadership had been able to respond and adapt to political changes in Qinglian's generation and again in Hongmo's. Could it not continue to do so in the generations that followed? If it could, in fact, then the two Hua yizhuang with their 5,100 mou of agricultural land, their 5,800 piculs in rents, their schools, their community relief program, their tax privileges, their management system and their clan council meetings are a good starting place for the study of modern rural society and politics.

NOTES

1. This essay is a preliminary analysis of research in progress, pertaining to the history of Wuxi county in late imperial and modern times. In addition to Tang Tsou and the members of the University of Chicago modern China project, I would like to thank James Cheng at the University of Chicago Regenstein Library, Jack Jacoby at the Columbia East Asian Library and George Potter at Harvard Yenching Library for their assistance in collecting the sources for this study, and my students in the statecraft seminar at Yale for their contributions to the discussion of zongfa and local administration. The term "Wuxi county" is used throughout this essay to refer to the geographic area administered by Wuxi xian or zhou from the Song period to 1726, and by Wuxi and Jingui xian after 1726. Dangkou was part of Jingui xian in the late Qing period. The administrative seat was in Wuxi city.
2. Hua Hongmo, "Jian zhuang yuanshi jilüe," in Hua Cunkuan, et al., Hua shi xin yizhuang shilüe (Wuxi, 1901), 1:58-59b, and "Chuanjian yizhuang hetong gongyi," ibid., 1:3. This important source, hereafter cited as HS, 1901, contains descriptions and essential documents pertaining to the establishment of the 1875 estate and to subsequent additions up to 1899. It was printed for distribution by the estate, and a copy is in Harvard Yen-ching Library.

3. Hua Hongmo, ed., Hua shi Tongsi Sanxing gong zhi zongpu (Wuxi, 1911), 12:55, hereafter cited as HS, 1911. Cf. HS, 1901, 1:4-4b. The Hua genealogies and other Hua sources used in this study are cited as follows:
   HS, 1872. Hua Wenbo, et al., Hua shi Shangui gong zhi zongpu (Columbia East Asian Library, 2252.8/4450).
   HS, 1876a. Hua Zuyue, preface, Hua shi Tongjiu zhi chuan fang ji, and
   HS, 1876b. Hua Yunzhong, ed., Hua shi Tongjiu zhi zongpu (Columbia, 2252.8/4450.34).
   HS, 1881. Hua Hongmo, et al., Hua shi Tongsi Sanxing gong zhi zongpu (Tōyōbunkō, #262).
   HS, 1899. Hua Hongmo, preface, Hua shi Tongsi Yiyin gong zhi zongpu (Columbia, 2252.8/4450.43).
   HS, 1901. Hua Cunkuan, et al., Hua shi xin yizhuang shiüe (Harvard Yen-ching Library).


5. Shi Jianlie, "Ji (Wuxi) xiancheng shishou kefu benmo," in Xiang Da, ed., Taiping Tianguo (Shanghai, 1952), 5:253-4. An appendix to Wuxi-Jingui xian zhi, 1881 ed., hereafter cited WJXZ, ch. 40, lists over 3,000 names of those killed in the Taiping conquest. There are many surnamed Hua. I have not tried to cross reference them, but there are scattered references to deaths due to the attack throughout the Hua genealogies.

7. HS, 1872, 3: 16-65b.

8. HS, 1911, ch. 13. See below for details.

9. Hilary J. Beattie, Land and Lineage in China: A Study of T'ung-ch'eng, Anhwei, in the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties (Cambridge, 1979). Denis Twitchett, "The Fan Clan's Charitable Estate, 1050-1760," in D. S. Nivison and A. F. Wright, eds., Confucianism in Action (Stanford, 1959), pp. 97-133, and "Documents on Clan Administration: I., The Rules of Administration of the Charitable Estate of the Fan Clan," Asia Major 8 (1960-61): 1-35, has done a classic job of placing the Fan estate in historical perspective in the Song period, but does not really treat the social context of the estate in the later period. I will not discuss the massive bibliography on clans and clan property here. Suffice it to say that Shimizu Morimitsu, Chūgoku zokusan seido kō (Tokyo, 1949) and Makino Tatsumi, Kinsei Chūgoku sōzoku kenkyū (Tokyo, 1949), remain the most useful for a historical introduction. Kung-ch' uan Hsiao, Rural China: Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century (Seattle, 1960), pp. 348-57 and notes for that section, contain much useful information concerning mid-Qing clan-government relations. His conclusion that clan organizational power was declining by the mid-nineteenth century is in need of revision.

10. Wu xian zhī, 1933, 31: 11-26, lists old and new yizhuang in the three counties with seats in Suzhou.


13. HS, 23: 1-2, 24. The estimate of 7,000 is based on the figure of 1591 males in the Sanxing line in 1911 (see HS, 1911, ch. shou) and the fact that the Shangü and Yiýin genealogies appear as large as the Sanxing one, while Hua Hongmo lists a total of twelve branches with separate
genealogies by 1911 (HS, 1911, preface).

14. HS, 1911, shou, lists of sub-branches (pai) with populations and places of residence attached.


17. HS, 1899, 1: 4ff; WJXZ, 25: 4; HS, 1905, 30: 1-5.

18. HS, 1899, 1: 4; HS, 1872, shou: 14-16; HS, 1911, shou: list of previous zongpu compilations.

19. HS, 1899, 1: 4ff.

20. Concerning the "bureaucratic elite," see my The Chiating Loyalists (New Haven, forthcoming), chapters 3 and 11. The service land of Hua Cha is also discussed in chapter 3 and 5.

21. WJXZ, 40: 17, 37: 9 (Wang Shizhen, "Yanxiang xiang yitian ji"), and 37: 6 (Hua Cha, "Shou jian san gong sheng si ji").

22. WJXZ 30: 10, and 37: 2 (Tang Shunzhi essay, see below); HS, 1905, 14: 11; HS, 1901, 1: 58.

23. HS, 1901, 1: 58.

24. HS, 1905, 14: 11.

25. HS, 1911, shou: list of previous genealogies. The complete genealogy of 1581 was the first to be compiled since 1504, although one of the 1504 compilations was printed in 1528. The compiler of the 1581 edition was from the Tongliu line, not from Yun's Tongba.

26. HS, 1905, 6: 1b.


29. HS, 1911, 12: 22-34, Zhangzhi's descendants.

30. HS, 1872, shou: 14-16.


32. Yixiang's uncle, Fucao, in HS, 1899, 4: 2b, and HS, 1905, appendix.

33. HS, 1872, shou: 14-16.

34. Zuqin, in HS, 1872, 1: 3.

35. Chengcao, in HS, 1872, shou: 47.

36. HS, 1872, ch. 3.

37. HS, 1872, shou: 51, and 53 insert.

38. The Yongxi branch; see WJXZ, 30: 13b, and HS, 1901, 1: 58.

39. HS, 1872, shou: 14-16.

40. Although Jinsi's immediate family were not degree holders Jinsi married three times into official families. The marriages indicate something of the position of his father and grandfather, surely reflecting Zuqin's status a century earlier, but it is also significant that no one else in this line married the daughters or granddaughters of the bureaucratic elite, not even Jinsi's adopted son. HS, 1872, 3: 24b.

41. The estate manager was Yuancheng, the eldest of five brothers. HS, 1911, ch. 13, and HS, 1881, wenxian kao: 10. The compilers, listed in HS, 1911, shou, were five in all, three of them descendants of Yuancheng and his brothers, and none of them from prominent literati lines. HS, 1911, 12: 19, 13: 27, 13: 30b, 13: 63 and Qinglian's brother, Qingfan.
42. The Sanxing and Shangui main branches, see note 3.

43. Precise figures are obtainable from HS, 1881, but I do not have them. My estimate is based on fragmentary pai totals copied from HS, 1881, which come to an amount roughly 56% of the totals for the same pai in HS, 1911. Since the 1911 total for the whole main branch was 1591, I take the total in 1881 to be roughly 56% of 1591, or about 900.

44. HS, 1901, 1: 9-11. Fei Hsiao-t'ung, Peasant Life in China (London, 1962), p. 125, found the average adult man's annual consumption to be 12 bushels, and the average household's 32 bushels. If 1 bushel = 35.24 liters, and one liter = .966 sheng, then an adult man consumed the equivalent of about 40.85 dou per year, or .11 dou per day. Fei's table, therefore, might be converted to dou/month as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Consumption (bushels)</th>
<th>Conversion (dou/month)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man over 50</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman over 40</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child over 10</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average household</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(5 persons)

45. HS, 1901, 2: 16.

46. HS, 1911, ch. 13.

47. HS, 1901, 2: 10b.

48. HS, 1901, 58b-59b.

49. Various communications mention that properties were located in four separate subdistricts of the thirty-ninth tax district (du). Eg., HS, 1901, 1: 18b, from the county magistrate to the governor. It is not known how much of the property was located in these districts, but the form seems to indicate that these were the largest concentrations on the appended list of properties. For the
location of the subdistricts, see WJXZ, 4: 24-25.

50. HS, 1901, 1: 10b.

51. HS, 1911, preface.

52. HS, 1901, 1: 57.

53. HS, 1901, 58-59b, 2: 1, and 2: 21.

54. HS, 1901, 2: 1; HS, 1911, preface, and 13: 98.

55. A good summary of these developments is in Philip Kuhn's "Local Taxation and Finance in Republican China," in last year's proceedings—Select Papers from the Center for Far Eastern Studies, No. 3, 1978-79, esp. pp. 103-120, and bibliography.

56. It is not always clear from the gazetteers whether or not a reform has, in fact, been implemented. The juntian junyi reform as originally worked out by administrators and land owners in Songjiang, for example, was imperiled immediately by attacks on the yamen clerk who took charge of implementation, and the series of directives from provincial officials indicate that implementation continued to be a problem in the years that followed. See my "Fiscal Reform and Local Control," in Frederic Wakeman and Carolyn Grant, eds., Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China (Berkeley, 1975). In this case, the reform advocates sought a directive to be inscribed in stone and cited precedents in the surrounding counties. See WJXZ, 38: 49-53, and Hua Zhan'en (under the pseudonym of Muyunsou), Xijin zhiwai (Wuxi, 1846; Taiwan reprint, 1976), 5: 1-2. Details below. David Faure, "Land Tax Collection in Kiangsu Province in the Late Ch'ing Period," Ch'ing-shih wen-t'ı, 3.6 (1976): 49-75, discusses related issues.

57. HS, 1901, 1: 23, being the magistrate's order to clerks in charge of each subdistrict containing properties on the yizhuang list to make a separate register (jia) for them and exempt the register from service.
duties. According to the estate's regulations, 1: 8, the first obligation was to pay the land tax in full, and only then would the estate proceed to its relief program and other obligations.

58. Da Qing huidian shili (1908), 399: 3b, cited in Kung-chuan Hsiao, Rural China, pp. 353-4.

59. WJXZ, 30: 10-16.

60. Hua Zhan'en (Muyunsou), Xijin zhiwai. See the introduction to the 1976 reprint.

61. Kuhn, "Local Taxation and Finance."

62. HS, 1901, 1: 18b-19, magistrate to governor. The average rent was 1.13 piculs/mou.

63. WJXZ, 9: 6b and 10: 4. The average rate times the total acreage for the two counties with seats in Wuxi adjusted to the average fiscal mou gives \(0.1755 \times 1,270,417\) mou = 222,958 piculs. On the other hand, subtracting the average assessment in kind from the rate gives \(0.1755 - 0.06 = 0.1155\) piculs/mou to be converted to silver; dividing this amount by the silver assessment gives \(0.1155/0.1068 = 1.08\) for Wuxi xian and \(0.1155/0.1039 = 1.11\) for Jingui xian, or a rough estimate of 1.1 piculs/tael for the rate of conversion; multiplying this rate by the actual silver assessment gives \(1.1 \times 136,454 = 150,099\) piculs; and adding this to the actual assessment in kind gives 76,227 + 150,099 = 226,326 piculs total revenue cost to the taxpayers.

64. Amano Motonosuke, Shina nōson keizai ron (Tokyo, 1940), I: 38, citing Chen Hanseng reference to a survey of Wuxi county by the Nanjing shehui kexue diaocha so in 1931. The figure of 7.81% would have meant 87,000 mou, or 55,000 more than in 1881, an increase of more than 1,000 mou per year. Amano's figure, though, is for all lineage owned land, not just yizhuang.

65. HS, 1901, 1: 18b-19, shows the actual cost of 1,023
mou purchased before 1875 to have been 11,451 taeels. 1: 58-59b, shows 2,700 mou owned by the estate in 1900. The old yizhuang owned 1,300 mou in 1745, and added 500 mou in the Daoguang period. An additional supplement is mentioned in HS, 1872, 6: 7, but without the acreage involved. HS, 1911, 13: 32b, lists 400 mou of additional scholarship land after 1860, and WJXZ, 6: 23 notes an additional 200 mou for scholarship. There is no way of knowing how much land may have been attached after any of these publication dates.

66. WJXZ, 4: 24-5.

67. HS, 1901, 1: 9-11. Rents totalled 1,158 piculs on 1,023 mou. Over 700 piculs were designated relief money, and the spring assistance to tenants was 1 dou per mou, or about 10% of the rent.


72. Ibid., 10-12b.

73. Hua Zhan'en, Xi Jin zhiwai, 5: 10-11b.
74. Ibid., 5: 2b.


79. Amano, loc. cit. Compare the information given by Chin Chi-chu, "Farm Mechanization in Wusih County, Part I," Peking Review, 21.31 (July 29, 1977): 20-24, that only 4.3% of the fixed assets in the county's agricultural communes were owned by communes or brigades in 1965. The Hua may have owned corporately 10% of their commune-sized tax district's agricultural land in 1900.

80. See the form for applications for monthly relief, HS, 1901, l: 57.


86. Even when the powerful Suzhou managers came under fire for their relative autonomy vis-a-vis the yamen, the issues were rent reduction and regulation, not land reform. See Tao Xu, Zu ho (1884), reprinted in Suzuki Tomō, et al., Kin-dai Chūgoku nōson shakai shi kenkyū (Tōkyō Kyōiku Daigaiku Tōyōshi gakuron shū, 8, Tokyo, 1967), discussed in James Polachek, "Gentry Hegemony: Soochow in the T'ung-chih Restoration," in Wakeman and Grant, Conflict and Control, pp. 211-257.

GLOSSARY*

baoguan dianchong 報官點充 甘露 Ganlu 甘露
baojia 保甲 gongyi 公議
dahu 大戶 guanli 官吏
Dangkou 蕃口 guí gui 貴貴
dazong 大宗 Hua Cha 華察
dianwan 墳完 Hua Chengcao 華呈藻
du 都 Hua Dayuan 華大元
fei guan er 非官而近於官 Hua Fucao 華勇藻
jin yu guan 封建 Hua Hengfang 華衡芳
fengjian 封建 Hua Honguo 華鴻模
Fu xiangzhi yi 復鄉職議 Hua Jinfang 華晉芳
Fu zongfa lun 復宋法論

*Place names at the county level and above, and names of well-known historical persons are omitted.
REBELLION AND ITS ENEMIES IN A LATE CH'ING CITY:
THE HANKOW PLOT OF 1883

by William T. Rowe

On the last day of April, 1883, a number of "wild men" from Honan province suddenly made their appearance in the streets of Hankow, the largest commercial city of central China.¹ Rural refugees, seasonal workers, and other immigrants were hardly an unusual phenomenon in this major urban center, but there was something inexplicably ominous about these particular new arrivals. Sensing that mass violence of some sort was in the offing, many local residents discreetly began to make plans for withdrawal to sanctuary in the surrounding countryside. Over the next few days rumors of rebellion became gradually more intense, and by the 2nd of May the trade of the town had slowed perceptibly as businessmen closed shop and fled in ever greater numbers. That evening the general exodus reached such proportions that alarmed local officials decided to close the city gates.

The following day brought utter panic. All businesses closed down, including even the major wholesale markets and warehouses which gave life to the city—all businesses, that is, except the pawnshops, which did a brisk trade accepting valuables in exchange for the more portable cash and bullion. Brawls and stampedes broke out among the crowds pressing to hire boats and board ferries along the Han and Yangtze river banks, and dozens of boats overturned causing great loss of life and property. The officials thereupon declared the piers closed. The town's two Sub-magistrates, its resident Taotai, and even the Hupeh Provincial Governor made personal appearances throughout Hankow in an effort to soothe the urban population and bolster faith in the abilities of their administration to maintain public security. In late afternoon the officials called a conference with private civic leaders at a local temple to map joint government-private strategies for upholding public order. Hankow's military detachments were put on full alert, and an addi-

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tional five hundred men ferried over from the provincial garrison at Wuchang to patrol the city. Throughout the evening of 3 May, as the local British Consul reported, "the streets in the native town were full of soldiers."

Late that night one of the patrols was searching an opium den in Ts'ai-chia Alley when it stumbled upon one Teng Wu-yeh, who in a besotted flush of self-importance declared to them that he was one of the leaders of the impending uprising. The initial skepticism accorded to Teng's admission was dispelled when he proved able to lead the patrol to a cache of arms in nearby Ta-t'ung Street, and to supply locations of other arms and lists of co-conspirators. A number of nests of these plotters were quickly discovered throughout Hankow and the two adjacent cities of Wuchang and Hanyang.

The actual uprising, it was determined, was set to have begun in Hankow at ten P.M. the following day, 4 May, upon a signal provided by setting afire a harbor landmark pagoda on the Wuchang shore. Groups of rebels secreted in all three towns, recognizing each other by a white thread strung through their queues, would then slaughter the local officials, seize government treasuries, arsenals, and magazines, and embark upon a military conquest of the empire. Having been discovered, however, this rebellion never came off. Instead, martial law and the inquisition of suspects continued throughout the 4th and for weeks and even months thereafter. Eventually, close to two hundred persons were executed for their part in the rebel plot.

The swiftness and effectiveness of these countermeasures ultimately left in question the true magnitude of the threat which had called them forth. Did the sequence of events just narrated indeed reveal the seeds of a major rebellion (or even revolution) against the Ch'ing? Was it simply a minor local alarm which led a jittery local administration to violently overreact? Or, most intriguingly perhaps, did it constitute merely a pretext for an indigenous non-official elite to seize a greater share of local power?

No mention of this incident appears in secondary historical literature in any language (including the provincial gazetteer), a fact which probably testifies less to its inherent insignificance than to a systematic underestimation.
phasis on such actions bequeathed to historians in the Chinese official record. Indeed, the affair was accorded no more than a few passing notes in the chronicles of the routinely rebel-plagued central administration; yet the apparently real alarm expressed by the Kuang-hsu emperor upon being informed of it suggests a recognition of something out of the ordinary. Local eyewitness accounts are sharply divided in their evaluations. In daily letters on the subject, for example, British Consul Chalconer Alabaster expressed doubts as to its seriousness, finally concluding that, "The whole business was, as far as I could learn, a scare, for which there was no real ground whatsoever." The Chinese language press, on the other hand, consistently accorded complete credibility to local administration claims that the uprising was not only very real, but was indeed intended as the first salvo in a coordinated empire-wide sectarian rebellion (chiao-fei ch'ishih). A more cautious attitude was that adopted by the English language North-China Herald. The Herald's Hankow correspondent first reported the events with the weary skepticism expressed by Alabaster, but as subsequent information became known the tone of his reporting gradually changed to one of real concern, and a month after the panic of early May he wrote that "what we have seen was nothing short of an extensive and well-planned movement to overthrow the present dynasty." The richness of detail uncovered by local authorities regarding the plot, while not fully satisfying to the historian of Chinese rebel movements, nevertheless convinces me that the Herald correspondent's final assessment lay closest to the truth.

Yet regardless of our verdict on the basic character of the incident, the manner in which it eventually worked itself out clearly had a profound impact on the structure of local power at Hankow, and to a lesser extent on that throughout central China. As we will see, its resolution also had important consequences for the fate of the Ch'ing, and for the imperial system itself. Most interestingly, the whole affair offers a convenient prism for studying the pattern of social relationships and level of urban development in a major Chinese city on the eve of industrialization. To the latter end, I propose to analyze it in part with reference to the following table.
of Hankow's occupational structure. The table has been assembled on the basis of all data on the city which I possess, and displays occupational groups in a roughly descending order of socio-economic status.

**TABLE**

**HANKOW'S OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE, c. 1883**

I. Professional (estimated 5% of total urban workforce)
   A. Public sector
      1.1 Officials
      1.2 Extra-bureaucratic gentry administrators (mu-yu, wei-yuan)
      1.3 Sub-bureaucratic yamen functionaries
      1.4 Professional security personnel (regular military, pao-chia headmen)
   B. Private sector
      1.5 Gentry-managers (shen-tung)
      1.6 Professional literati (teachers, students, artists, etc.)
      1.7 Doctors, priests, monks, diviners

II. Commercial (30%)
   A. Non-salaried wholesale
      2.1 Commodities brokers, factors, and warehouse
      2.2 Bankers
      2.3 Wholesale merchants (resident)
      2.4 Wholesale merchants (traveling)
      2.5 Commission agents and compradores
   B. Non-salaried retail
      2.6 Retail shopkeepers, retail money-lenders, purveyors
      2.7 Stall peddlers
      2.8 Itinerant peddlers
   C. Salaried
      2.9 Shopclerks and commercial apprentices
      2.10 Commercial laborers (stockboys, cooks, etc.)

III. Transport (30%)
     3.1 Transport brokers

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3.2 Boatmen and sailors
3.3 Inter-local overland carriers
3.4 Local transport laborers

IV. Industrial (10%)
4.1 Artisans
4.2 Industrial laborers

V. Construction (10%)
5.1 Mechanics
5.2 Construction laborers

VI. Agricultural (5%)
6.1 Cultivators, animal husbandmen, fishermen

VII. Marginal (10%)
7.1 Menial security personnel ("braves," firemen, watchmen, etc.)
7.2 Custodians, domestic servants, slaves
7.3 Entertainers (actors, streetsingers, fortune-tellers, prostitutes)
7.4 Beggars
7.5 Criminals and "toughs"
7.6 Unemployed

Rebels and "Dangerous Classes"

What can be said of the socio-economic background of the participants in the May plot? As one might expect, the occupational groups most heavily implicated were those engaged in menial occupations with little in the way of upward mobility expectations under the existing order. The North-China Herald correspondent concluded, some weeks after the alarm, that "this affair appears to have been got up almost exclusively by the lower classes, chiefly artisans, mechanics, labourers, boatmen, and soldiers."7

In terms of the bulk of the participants, investigations conducted by the local administration add support to this view. For example, the "wild men" from Honan whose appearance had first initiated the fears of a rising turned out to be carpenters engaged in the manufacture of wooden tea-chests, used as containers in the overseas trade in which
Hankow played so large a part. Other groups implicated most strongly included the town's metalworkers and blacksmiths, tailors engaged in the manufacture of ready-made clothing, and producers and vendors of food products such as bean thread. In other words, the majority of the would-be rebels were drawn from the regularly employed, skilled or semi-skilled workforce of Hankow (groups which in our table fell into categories IV, V, and to a lesser extent III).

The administration's investigations also revealed, however, that the direction behind the plot came not from these groups but from more socially and economically established types. Several rebel leaders were clearly drawn from the commercial elite of the port (category II.a). One was described as "a partner in one of the principal [wholesale] medicine stores of Hankow," and another as proprietor of a large wholesale bamboo goods dealership. Moreover, not only the commercial establishment, but what I have termed the town's "professional" occupations (category I) also produced rebel leaders. Some of these, not surprisingly, were military men. Teng Wu-yeh, for example, whose untimely confession aborted the plot, was discovered to be an expectant military official. Another man arrested and executed several months later as a mastermind of the plot was a wealthy owner and rentier of numerous Hankow commercial properties who spent his days as proprietor of a Wuchang martial arts academy, allegedly a training ground for rebel forces. At least one accused leader was on the fringe of the civil rather than the military bureaucracy; he was a proprietor of an elite-oriented bookstore in the provincial capital who at one time had held the rank of expectant county magistrate.

Two marginal groups on the urban scene were felt by contemporaries to have a particular link to the uprising attempt; regional mercenaries, or "braves" (group 7.1), and the urban toughs known as p'i-kun, or "bare sticks" (7.5). Suspicion of the "braves" stemmed in part from a general distrust of all local military personnel, since even the comparatively disciplined regular troops of the provincial garrison at Wuchang contributed less to stability than to increased disorder and breakdown of authority in the area. In October of 1882 the Wuchang county magis-
trate had in fact been attacked and severely wounded by a group of garrison soldiers in revenge for having cashiered and beaten a low-ranking petty officer on a civil charge. When these assailants were faced with prosecution, a general mutiny of some fifteen hundred troops ensued, resulting in what was locally interpreted as a backing down on the part of the civil administration. British Consul Alabaster drew a specific connection between this incident and the panic of the following May, noting that not only did a hearty mutual resentment between civil and military authorities continue into the spring, but that:

It was natural, therefore, that there should be some feeling of insecurity among the Chinese, when they saw their Rulers weakly passing over the open mutiny and outbreak of their own troops, and it was equally comprehensible that there should be a desire on the part of the Mandarins to recover their prestige by a display of vigilance and vigour. 13

To the surprise no doubt of all, the garrison troops performed in an exemplary manner throughout the actual uprising crisis. Clearly, their own earlier collective action had been designed to secure for themselves greater advantages within the existing order, and they felt no community with those attempting to mount a challenge to the order itself.

The "braves," however, while as high-spirited as the regular troops, were less socialized, less economically secure, less disciplined, and in general a much greater cause for alarm. Over the course of the preceding decade higher levels of authority had routinely selected Hankow as the dumping ground for contingents of these men precipitously disbanded after anti-rebel duty in the central China highlands, and local officials and residents just as routinely faced with trepidation the task of getting these homeless adventurers out of the city before too much damage was done. It so happened that three steamers were due to arrive at Hankow to set loose bands of braves on the very day the uprising was
scheduled to break out, and this coincidence was not lost on local residents; virtually all believed that the plotters were either in league with the braves, or at least had timed their rebellion in the expectation of eliciting a spontaneous movement on their part. Upon discovering the details of the plot, local officials managed to forestall release of the braves on the critical day. They first devised an alternate strategy of depositing them some two hundred miles up the Yangtze River at the town of Yochou, but the prospect of the braves' descent upon such a small and defenseless locality, combined with the speed with which martial law succeeded in restoring order in Wuhan, caused them to reconsider this decision. The braves were eventually released in Hankow during the second week in May, with no disastrous consequences.14

The second marginal group closely linked with the affair were the urban toughs, the rise of whom as a social force had been an object of concern in Hankow for some two decades. "Toughs" were unemployed male youths who roamed the streets in gangs, engaging in robbery, protection rackets, gambling operations, or simply fighting with one another. Not surprisingly, the general population assumed that any local uprising would feature prominently these men, described by Alabaster as Hankow's "large and disaffected rowdy class," and indeed subsequent investigations did implicate a few p'i-kun as participants in the plot.15 The number of these, however, was remarkably few. As with the disbanded braves, it turned out that the urban toughs as a group were less to be feared as the initiators of rebellion than as a pool of discontented marginal elements within which a devastating ripple-effect of disorder might be generated by a social movement in the planning of which they had originally taken no part. Two particular activities of the Hankow p'i-kun during the crisis reveal how this effect might operate in their case. Later interrogations of shopkeepers revealed that the panic which gripped the city on May 3rd had been specifically the result of rumors deliberately spread by bands of toughs not themselves privy to the plot, but who simply wished to seize the opportunity for plunder of abandoned shops.16 Similarly, once martial law had been enacted some toughs responded by
organizing themselves into bogus government security patrols in order to harass and extort local shopkeepers. One such band was so large that a major local militia force was necessary to surround and disarm them. 17

We have depicted, then, three levels of participation in this attempted urban uprising of 1883: (1) the leadership, which seems to have been drawn largely from comfortably established commercial and professional strata, (2) the rank and file of rebellion, composed largely of poorer but still occupationally secure artisans, mechanics, and laborers, along with some marginal elements, and (3) a far larger group of individuals (including braves and local toughs) not directly involved in the plot but whom could presumably be counted upon to provide sympathetic or opportunistic support for disorder generated by the more self-conscious rebels.

It seems useful to recall at this point the findings of George Rudé from his studies of urban rebellions in eighteenth century London and Paris. Rudé concluded that the crowds of French sans-culottes and the British "mob" were not made up primarily of the cities' casually employed vagrants, or "dangerous classes," with which contemporary authorities sought to identify them. Rather, they were more often multi-occupational coalitions of regularly employed workers. He acknowledged that lumpenproletariat "dangerous classes" had indeed by this time come to constitute important segments of those cities' populations, and that these individuals could in fact participate in urban social movements, but found that this participation was generally on a spontaneous and non-goal-specific level and rarely central to the movements themselves. Further, Rudé argued that even given the worker composition of such movements as the Wilkes and Gordon riots and the storming of the Bastille, they could not have attained the level of success they did without organizational leadership provided by urban "middle classes," with whom the workers found cause to strike a temporary alliance. 18 In each of these regards, Rudé's findings from major European cities similarly on the verge of industrialization correspond closely to our observations from the Hankow of 1883.
Motives for Rebellion

What was it then which served to unite the disparate rebel elements in Hankow, and what was the goal of their rebellion? As reconstructed by the local authorities, the movement had been initiated by a vegetarian religious sect (chai-fei) associated with the White Lotus tradition. According to one contemporary analyst writing in the pages of Shen-pao, these vegetarians devoted themselves to ritual and dietary purification and lived in heterodox communal groups (fei-tang) ordered along strict master-disciple lines. Within the groups the chai-fei upheld equality of the sexes and freedom of co-habitation, and in fact many of the core group of rebel fighters arrested in Hankow were women. As with White Lotus devotees elsewhere, the Wuhan rebels believed in the generation of invulnerability to weapons by means of spells and incantations, and several manuals of these were turned up by the authorities along with large quantities of White Lotus prophetic literature. Also discovered were several banners emblazoned with trigrams, evidently intended to serve as rallying points for bands of rebel forces. The rebellion was clearly designed by its architects to usher in the new world-age (or "coming life," lai-sheng) predicted by sectarian teachings.

One of the most interesting aspects of the Wuhan affair, however, is that while spearheaded by White Lotus millenarians, it apparently represented a temporary alliance of several diverse heterodox associations. Some of these, like the Red Lantern sect, which was heavily implicated, may have shared religious affinities with the White Lotus tradition. Such could not be said, however, of the Society of Elder Brothers, or Ko-lao-hui, affiliation with which was claimed by a large number of those eventually executed as plotters. In fact, both the contemporary Shen-pao analyst and more recent scholarship stress the fundamental differences between the devoutly mystical religious sects and the basically secular, pragmatic, self-help fraternities like the Ko-lao-hui. To the extent that the latter cherished any ideology, it tended to be one conforming closely to the orthodox Confucian system of values. While Buddhist-inspired millenarian sects might cultivate faithful among the mer-
chants, shopkeepers, and artisans whom we have seen involved in the Hankow movement, the Ko-lao-hui was largely military in its appeal; in fact both the regular troops of the provincial garrison and the contingents of braves which frequently bivouacked in the area were known to be heavily permeated by this society. Historically as well as philosophically White Lotus and Ko-lao-hui adherents would seem to have opposed each other more frequently than they cooperated. What then brought them into alliance at this particular time and place?

Rudé would tell us that, given the structural similarities between the Hankow plot and the sorts of urban popular movements he describes, we should suspect the prominent role of underlying economic grievances. Moreover, other European historians such as Eric Hobsbawm and E. P. Thompson would have us see millenarian movements generally as imagistic cloaks for essentially economic conflicts. Were there specific economic factors at work behind the Hankow plot in 1883? Clearly, our answer must be yes.

As both Ch'uan Han-sheng and K. C. Liu have recently shown, the year was one of severe crisis for the Chinese economy. This was due largely to the impact of successive natural disasters, culminating in the flood of the Yellow River in the spring, which severely disrupted agriculture and commerce and wreaked havoc on the incipient national credit market. The effects of these disasters were exacerbated by the ruinous over-speculation which had been taking place in the new joint-stock enterprises engaged in self-strengthening industrialization and mining projects, and were brought to a head by widespread panic at the prospects for destruction of China's modern economic sector raised by the then current Sino-French War. As portrayed by Ch'uan and Liu the 1883 crisis was most disastrous in Shanghai, where the fledgling Chinese entrepreneurial class was all but wiped out, but an inland commercial center such as Hankow could not but be affected as well. Local reports throughout the year in fact emphasized that not only did the depressed market bring about the collapse of numerous credit institutions and commercial houses, and a dismal year for most others, but flood and famine in the surrounding provinces
had brought an unusually heavy influx of refugees into the town.\textsuperscript{27} Thus the city at the time of the panic seems to have witnessed a potentially explosive combination of a large destitute population on the one hand, and a less than normal capacity to carry out relief services for them on the other.

Another purely local factor no doubt contributed to an atmosphere of tension in the city at this time: the anti-Western boycott undertaken by the Hankow Tea Guild. I have described this event in detail elsewhere, and need only note it briefly here.\textsuperscript{28} Although the boycott was not formally declared until the scheduled opening of the tea market on 12 May, by which time the plot had been aborted and the town placed under martial law, the fact that a confrontation of some sort in the tea trade would be forthcoming in the spring had been known by all local residents since the close of the preceding year's trading season. Even as the sectarian rebels were gathering their forces, local Chinese tea dealers were plotting their own strategies and bracing themselves for a struggle of a different sort. To my knowledge, only one local correspondent noted the temporal coincidence of the two events, and he acknowledged their interrelationship only in the vaguest terms.\textsuperscript{29} Clearly, however, in certain ways the two events lent support to one another (by each fostering moods of insecurity), and both may have been seen by their progenitors as in some sense cures for the current ills of the economy. For example, the combination of the chronically flagging state of the Hankow tea trade in these years and the prospect of a struck market that very spring may well have encouraged many among the trade's menial participants (such as boatmen, porters, and our "wild" tea-chest makers) to essay an independent course of action.

Despite the existence of these economic provocations, however, there is little testimony in contemporary sources directly linking them to the May plot. British Consul Alabaster, a man at times impressively well-informed about local conditions, in fact specifically discounted their potential as a cause of rebellion. In expressing his belief that the "plot" was little more than a bogeyman manufactured by the administra-
tion, Alabaster conceded that secret societies did indeed permeate the local population, but added that, "There is no great pressure at the present, notwithstanding the distress caused by flood and famine in the country round, and without pressure to force them into active life, or some popular enthusiasm to fan their smouldering fires into flame, these associations are of no very great ac-

Moreover, there is nothing in local sources to reveal a current shortage-induced spiralling of staple food prices in the city--the specific economic factor identified by both Rudé and Thompson as most significant in precipitating pre-industrial urban collective violence. In the few instances when such price spirals had led to popular unrest in the past, the Hankow administration and commercial elite had demonstrated themselves capable of taking whatever cooperative action was necessary to de-

fuse the situation, generally by means of massive emer-

gency disbursements of grain. There is simply no indi-
cation that such action was either contemplated or demanded at this time.

With regard to more identifiably class-based eco-

nomic grievances, it seems clear that, to the extent that these were articulated at all in Hankow, they played lit-
tle direct part in the activities of 1883. This is sug-
gested not only by the diverse socio-economic strata from which the plotters themselves were drawn, but also by the total absence of any evidence pointing to hostile action contemplated against the city's economic elite; the tar-

get of the uprising was to be the regime alone. This is not to say that no correlation existed between an indi-

dividual's economic position and his role in the events of May; we have already seen, and will see further, that rough correlations along these lines could indeed be drawn. Nevertheless, conscious class antagonisms by the 1880s still assumed only a very minor role among the lines of social conflict normal to the city. Occupational con-

flicts, for example, remained overwhelmingly of a verti-
cal nature (one trade versus another), rather than hori-

zontally-defined movements such as the apprentices' riots characteristic of eighteenth-century London. There was no perception in Hankow of collusive government/

merchant-capitalist oppression of the urban populace;
rather, despite its close relations with the commercial elite, the local administration in a variety of ways gave concrete expression to its paternalist policy of protection of the small merchant, the worker, and the consumer. 34

In retrospect, it seems that Consul Alabaster was clearly cherishing too sanguine a view; the current economic ills of Hankow (especially that of the rural refugees) must certainly have played some role in determining at least the timing of the Hankow plot. Yet overall economics can be identified as playing far less a role in providing the motivation for the 1883 rising than in offering its opportunity. The Hankow plot can be seen as an example of an almost purely politically rather than economically motivated instance of collective action. 35

Politically motivated in what way? Surprisingly, despite Hankow's growing reputation as a center of overt anti-foreignism, antagonisms or contemplated reprisals against members of its foreign community seem to have played no part in the movement. Even the normally hypersensitive North-China Herald correspondent concluded that, "During the whole of the excitement not a word was heard against foreigners . . . and from all that I can gather there appears to be no reason to believe they had any intention of molesting us." 36 While the anathema of the West usually loomed large in the identity and world-view of the braves and other marginal groups loosely connected with the rebellion affair, it seems to have been outside the range of major concerns of the plot's actual sponsors, the vegetarian sects. Where the true ideological common ground between the various underground groups involved was to be found was in a fiercely held Han racial chauvinism. In fact, it was as an anti-Ch'ing dynastic rebellion motivated specifically by anti-Manchu sentiments that the 1883 incident was interpreted by most contemporary observers. 37 The ability for such a broad rebel coalition to be put together on such lines at so early a date may suggest the need for revision of the conventional view identifying the revival of popular anti-Manchu sentiments only with the first stirrings of modern mass nationalism in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War of 1895.

To sum up, then, in terms of motivation as of par-
ticipation we can differentiate something like three concentric circles within this popular movement. The core group of White Lotus sectarians saw in the uprising a millenarian sweeping away of the corrupt vestiges of an expired world-age; their equally committed allies such as the Ko-lao-hui could join them on the basis of shared anti-Manchu racial sentiments; marginal fellow-travellers strung along simply on the prospect of immediate material gain.

Local Origin and Urban Crisis Behavior

In an historical context marked by high geographic mobility, such as late nineteenth century China, any analysis of urban collective action must include consideration of spatial as well as economic and ideological factors. And indeed, in the case of the Hankow plot, a look at the distribution of rebel, neutral, and counter-rebel elements in terms of native origin proves exceptionally revealing.

To begin, we need to ask to what extent the forces behind the rebel movement itself were indigenous or extraneous to the city. We have up to now been assuming that the plotters were none other than members of the local Hankow population, and in terms of their occupational backgrounds this would certainly seem to have been the case. Yet their organizational affiliations, at least, suggest that the initiative for their actions derived rather from a greater than local, and even greater than simply urban, context.

Despite the failure of their major uprisings in the Chia-ch'ing reign, White Lotus adherents continued into the 1880s to proliferate throughout much of north and central China, and were particularly active in Hupeh province. Accordingly, most contemporaries felt that the elaborate strategies discernible behind the Hankow plot could not but be part of a broader geographical movement. In his initial report to the throne, Hukwang Governor-general Tu Tsung-ying speculated that the movement was perhaps an aftermath of a disturbance recently put down in Huang-mei county of Hupeh's Huang-chou prefecture. The court ultimately rejected this hypothesis, deciding instead that the Hankow plot derived from the teachings of the Shan-tung sectarian rebel Wang Chueh-i, whose followers were
responsible for a broad pattern of unrest throughout Ki-
angsu, Hupeh, Honan, and Szechwan. The man identified as
the principal organizer of the plot, one Teng Yü-t'ing,
was believed to have been acting in concert with Wang's
son and chief disciple, Wang Chi-ta. Neither Wang
pere nor Wang fils were ever apprehended locally, and so
this thesis too may have been mere speculation. Respon-
sible officials of course had an interest in positing an
extraneous origin for local unrest, and contemporary Chi-
nese journalists did not place a similar emphasis on links
with extra-provincial sectarian leaders. They did, how-
ever, note a probable connection with disturbances else-
where (at Sha-shih in Hupeh, in Ch'ang-chou prefecture of
Kiangsu, and in the Ch'ing-Huai area of Honan) which fol-
lowed the Wuhan affair within a matter of weeks. On
balance, it seems likely that rather than itself spawning
the planned uprising, Hankow was more accurately delib-
erately selected as its site—no doubt because of the
economic and social tensions already described.

This impression is reinforced by an examination of
the local origins of those actually apprehended as con-
spirators in the plot. Several of these individuals came
from provinces other than Hupeh; one alleged leader was
from Honan, another from Shantung, and another (the
above-mentioned medicine dealer) probably from Szechwan.
The majority of the participants, however, came neither
from outside Hupeh, nor from the Wuhan cities or the
counties in which they were located, but rather from a
ring of predominantly rural hsien immediately surrounding
these. The rebellion's chief architect, Teng Yü-t'ing,
hailed from Han-ch'uan hsien in Hanyang prefecture;
another major leader came from Wuchang prefecture's Chia-
yü hsien. By far the most heavily represented as native
places of the rebels were Huang-pei and Hsiao-kan, the
two counties of Hanyang prefecture directly north and
northwest of Hankow. While some accused rebels (like
the wholesale commodities dealers we have mentioned)
were no doubt long-term residents of the city, most of
these men from surrounding counties were fairly recent,
familyless immigrants, or seasonal workers in the town,
as can be seen from the fact that most were apprehended
at the inns, restaurants, and temples which specialized
in providing lodging to such men. 41 We are presented, then, with the striking possibility that Hankow in 1883 was less a city in the throes of internal turmoil than a city under seige from its hinterland.

However, the question of extra-urban origin of the Hankow rebels is complicated by the fact that virtually all of the city's residents were to some degree outsiders. Due to its sudden founding ex nihilo in the sixteenth century, and further to the massacres carried out locally by the Taipings, there were in the 1880s few if any acknowledged aboriginal natives of the place among the town's population. This unusual situation was seen by the North-China Herald correspondent as chiefly responsible for the wholesale exodus of early May. If not themselves in league with or sympathetic to the rebels, he nevertheless found "but little doubt that a great many people were warned to leave by their friends who were in the plot."42 The reporter reasoned further that:

The present inhabitants of Hankow are almost entirely natives of the surrounding districts. . . . Had there been an outbreak, the place would have been plundered and burned, and very many of the present inhabitants would have taken part in the spoilation and gone home with what they could have got away with. Then they would have remained there to watch the turn of events, and be ready to take sides with the strongest party. 43

This bleak scenario accords well with conventional Western views of the predatory "sojourner" mentality of urban residents in late imperial China, and moreover no doubt accurately depicts the political ambivalence of most of the city's population. But as a general statement about the strength of popular attachment to Hankow it is seriously misleading, particularly in its failure to take into account the city's substantial and more rooted elite strata.

The key fact here is that in nineteenth century Hankow geographic origin and local interest were related, in a manner which may at first seem paradoxical. That is, a surprisingly direct correspondence pertained between
the distance from Hankow of an individual's native place and his probable social and economic status within the city. Whereas men from the immediately surrounding area made up the bulk of the town's small retail shopkeepers, peddlers, artisans, and laborers, its large wholesale dealers and brokers (category II.a in our table) were overwhelmingly drawn from relatively distant regions such as Kiangnan, Kwangtung, and Shansi. It is worth noting that no one of these extra-provincial groups ever clearly monopolized the economic opportunity structure of the town, a fact which probably saved Hankow the disaster of major vendettas between "foreign" exploiters and exploited "locals." Our point, to the contrary, is that it was this geographically far flung commercial elite which nevertheless maintained the greatest permanency of attachment to their host city. This derived in large part of course from the greater economic stake they had in the fate of the town, but also to some extent from their typical aspiration to gentry status, which manifested itself in a commitment to leadership of local public causes.

This situation was clearly reflected in the pattern of responses exhibited to the rebel threat of 1883. All contemporary observers concurred in noting a sharp distinction between that portion of the population which broke off work and abandoned the city before 3 May, and that portion which left, if at all, only on that day. Non-native reporters expressed this distinction in terms of occupation (artisans and retail shopkeepers in the former category, wholesale merchants in the latter), site of business (side streets versus major thoroughfares), and social status (general population versus the "better" or "respectable classes"), but Chinese reporters identified it further as one between Hupeh natives (pen-sheng-jen) and "the various firms of hang merchants belonging to [extra-provincial] sojourner guilds" (k'e-pang hang-tien ko tzu-hao).

A similar pattern can be observed in the counter-mobilizational efforts elicited by the uprising attempt. In the face of rebellion, the local administration turned immediately to its most accessible, potent, and, it justifiably believed, willing ally on the urban scene: the
major guilds overseeing the city's role in China's huge interregional trade. On the evening of May 3rd the officials convened a conference (chi-i) at a downtown temple, the Shen-chia-miao, to which they invited only the managers (tung-shih) of Hanow's so-called "Eight Great Guilds" (pa-ta-hang)—those governing the most important commodities of trade, such as rice, salt, and tea. The conferees determined to respond to the threat by calling out forty-eight of the city's fire brigades (shui-chu), arming their personnel, and having them patrol the town on a block by block basis. Many of these independently organized but task-coordinated brigades, which in normal times served as the city's sole firefighting forces, were operated directly by the guilds themselves; the remainder were run out of separate "benevolent halls" (shan-t'ang) financed by guild or individual merchant capital. Their daily operation was entrusted to a class of non-merchant "gentry-managers" (shen-tung, group 1.5 in our table), who were generally offspring either of long-term sojourner gentry-merchants (shen-shang), or of the indigenous regional gentry-landlords, and who in effect occupied the position of mediators between the extra-provincial commercial elite and the rest of the local urban society. Like the guild leaders themselves, this group of gentry-managers was reported as being exceptionally energetic in devising means for keeping order during the initial crisis period.

It was these two groups, then, the guild notables and the gentry-managers largely in their employ, which formed the core of the urban society's counter-mobilizational forces. Around them was to form a broader alliance capable of preserving order and tranquility throughout the difficult weeks and months ahead.

The Structure of Counter-mobilization

Beyond the regular military forces whose reliability was a matter of doubt, the exercise of urban control during the 1883 crisis fell essentially to three types of institutions generated by the local society: the fire brigades, a revitalized network of pao-chia neighborhood
headmen, and a resurrected t’uan-lien local militia system.

During the first days following the panic of early May, the general maintenance of order in Hankow was left largely to the fire brigades, a strategy which freed the regular military patrols to concentrate on dragnet operations to root out subversives. The fire brigades in fact continued as the city's primary policing instrument throughout the month; it was they for example who succeeded in capturing the false "patrol" of local toughs mentioned earlier. In late May some thirty-eight brigades were still devoted to nightly security-patrol duty, in alternating shifts of nineteen per night. But by the beginning of June the continuing need for security patrols suggested to officials and civic leaders the desirability of creating an alternate instrument for this, which would free the firemen to resume their normal duties. Nevertheless, throughout the following summer and fall five brigades per night continued to be deployed within the framework of Hankow's overall martial law apparatus, to hose down sections of the town and to combat blazes, many of which were believed to have been set by sectarian remnants.

Given the average size of six to ten men per brigade, we find some three to four hundred firefighters who were relied upon by the city as its first line of security. In general, these personnel were drawn from the same marginal population (category VII) which made up the city's "dangerous classes," and, as with so many other nineteenth century public service and public security innovations, the brigades were undoubtedly created at least in part with an eye to providing work and channelling the loyalties of the growing numbers of chronically underemployed males in the city. In this goal they seem to have succeeded completely. Their use in this situation of crisis was probably encouraged at least in part by the belief that the fire brigades, owing personal allegiance via brigade headmen to the guild leaders and gentry-managers, were less suffused with secret society influences than were the regular troops. Moreover, every attempt was made to guarantee the brigades' continuing loyalty by rewarding them with special remuner-
ations. At the original Shen-chia-miao conference on 3 May, for example, a fund was set up out of which to pay each fireman an additional 120 cash beyond his normal wages for the performance of these emergency duties. On 5 June, when the firemen were formally relieved of their security patrol duties, all personnel who had participated were rewarded by their gentry-managers with a great feast at the Shen-chia-miao, in recognition of their exceptional performance and unquestioning devotion to the anti-rebellion cause. Hupeh Governor P'eng Tsu-hsien himself made a point of attending the event and personally presented a cash bonus to each brigade member.

The 1883 affair marked the first recorded use in Hankow of the fire brigades in a police capacity. While locally the brigades were relieved of their arms and formal security duties after only one month, we know from the experience of Peking and other cities that the temptation to keep such units under arms indefinitely was difficult to overcome. If this was avoided in Hankow it was primarily because more effective policing systems were so quickly devised to succeed the fire-brigades. These systems combined the virtues of being essentially extra-governmental and yet sufficiently "bureaucratized" to avoid the appearance of being privately-controlled vigilante forces of the elite. They were also undeniably the more palatable and the more effective for deriving from traditional institutional roots.

One such system of urban control brought into play in 1883 was the pao-chia, whose previous operations in Hankow I have described elsewhere. Briefly, by the second half of the nineteenth century the system's local headmen (known variously as pao-chang, pao-cheng, or ti-pao) continued to play active roles in the city as neighborhood peacekeepers, mediators, and often community project directors, as well as conduits between the population and the local officials. The multiplication of the headman's duties brought about by the increasing complexity of the urban social fabric had necessitated the evolution of this functionary from a part-time position assumed in rotation by neighborhood residents to a full-time occupation pursued by a class
of self-interested professionals, who nevertheless seem on the whole to have remained fairly responsible to the neighborhood constituencies from whom the bulk of their income was drawn. The more basic component of the system, however, the regimentation of the entire urban population into mutual-security decimal groups of households, had long proven unworkable in this highly mobile urban milieu. Despite occasional efforts at enforcement, even the basic provision for maintenance of household door placards recording occupancy (men-p'ai) was no longer regularly observed. At the time of the 1883 crisis, the local Shen-pao correspondent was forced to lament, "I am deeply afraid that [the existing system] has the name of pao-chia, but not its reality."57

This was the situation inherited in May by Chang Ou-fang, the Hanyang Sub-prefect governing Hankow, who as martial law commander became for a time perhaps the most powerful single individual in the city's history. On the basis of the pao-chia system's existing strength, its neighborhood headmen, Chang through a series of vigorous actions constructed a powerful apparatus of urban control that was centralized, yet financed and operated by the neighborhoods themselves.58

Upon hearing of the Hankow plot, the Kuang-hsu emperor issued an angry and strongly-worded edict ordering responsible officials to "investigate pao-chia procedures and assume direct management over them,"59 but before this edict could have been received locally Sub-prefect Chang's reform had already begun to take shape. Only five days after the incident, on 9 May, Chang announced the creation of a central pao-chia bureau (pao-chia-chü) whose authority would be precisely coterminous with the boundaries of Hankow chên. Any previous hierarchical structure of the system above the headman level had long withered away, and pao-cheng had in recent decades been reporting rather un-systematically to one of the two sub-magistrates whose jurisdictions divided the city. Local reformers at least since the late seventies had been advocating the creation of just such a central municipal bureau under local gentry management, but their suggestions had been resisted by the administration in part out of bureaucratic inertia and in part out of fears of allowing control of so crucial an
institution to fall to the indigenous elite. Similar institutions, however, had in recent years begun to be established in other areas of the country. Now, the shock of rebellion provided the necessary stimulus for its creation in Hankow. In line with the emperor's injunction, Sub-prefect Chang personally assumed the duties of manager (pan-li) of the bureau, but it seems evident that the post was designed to be turned over to an extra-bureaucratic local notable once the immediate crisis had been weathered. Significantly, the bureau itself was situated not in Chang's or any other government yamen, but in the private Shen-chia-miao.

Below the central bureau, Chang created a level of five pao-chia districts, corresponding to the city's existing ward (fang) structure. Like the central bureau, each of these districts was headquartered in an important local temple, with the Shen-chia-miao itself hosting the most geographically central of the five. Each district was under the control of a specially appointed "deputy" (wei-yuan), who was given a great range of disciplinary powers over the headmen and the general local population. For these sensitive positions Chang selected private individuals of "intelligence, competence, and strong leadership abilities" (ching-ming ch'iang-kan). It was not specified whether these men were to be restrictively drawn from the gentry-merchant and gentry-manager classes, but in practice there can be little doubt that they did come from one or the other of these groups. The neighborhood headmen within each district were ordered to report to these deputies, and were reassigned to duty on a block-by-block (ti-tuan) basis.

It is interesting that Chang made no effort to revive the ten-household mutual-responsibility groups dear to the hearts of pao-chia's original creators, but he did insist on the posting of door placards and accurate compilation of population registers (yen-hu-ts'e). Each headman was charged with making a new and thorough survey of all households on his beat, and turning in an accurate population list to the central pao-chia-ch'U. The registers for each district were then to be distributed among the responsible district headquarters, and the deputies assigned the task of ensuring their contin-
uing accuracy on a daily basis. Each household was re-
quired to post an up-to-date placard listing every res-
ident, and these were to be routinely cross-checked by
pao-chia personnel against the registers on file at the
district headquarters.

Several actual cases reported by the Chinese press
testify to the fact that despite a degree of popular
resistance this effort was indeed a strenuous one, and
totally unlike the half-hearted registration drives of
previous years. In one report, a certain householder
refused to provide occupancy data to the neighborhood
headman, and then again to the wei-yuan who personally
followed up his subordinate's efforts. As a result the
offender was hauled before the responsible sub-magistrate
and sentenced to two hundred strokes of the bamboo. 62
Other reports tell of punishments given out for discrep-
ancies between actual occupancy and that stated on the
door placard. 63 Despite the enormity of the task, such
determination allowed the completed compilation of the
registers by the beginning of June.

There are other evidences as well of the general
success, at least for the time being, of Chang Ou-fang's
revamped pao-chia system. Within two weeks of its cre-
ration, the apparatus headed by the new central bureau
was credited with having flushed out from hiding several
of the key figures wanted as leaders of the uprising plot.
In June, the neighboring provincial capital of Wuchang
initiated an overhaul of its pao-chia system in accor-
dance with the Hankow model, and by July procedures were
under way to create an integrated province-wide network
imitating that at Hankow, with the goal of stamping out
once and for all the sectarian rebels which plagued
Hupeh. 64

Yet the revitalized pao-chia remained essentially
a passive control system, and Chang sought to provide
for it an active patrolling arm. Thus, around the mid-
R of May, he petitioned "higher authority" for per-
mission to take the extraordinary step of re-establish-
ing a local militia, or t'uan-lien, system for Hankow. 65
In doing so he cited the model of previous anti-Taiping
organizations bearing the same name, but his new system
was clearly innovative in at least three aspects: (1) it
was to be a specifically urban phenomenon, (2) it was to be wholly merchant, rather than gentry-landlord sponsored, and (3) it was designed to combat internal unrest, rather than the external threat of rebel armies. Upon receiving the blessing of his superiors, Chang around the first of June called another major conference at the Shen-chia-miao, to which he invited the militia's expected backers. With remarkable dispatch, he was then able to get his t'uan-lien corps operational by the target date of 5 June (the first day of the fifth lunar month), when all newly-enlisted militiamen assembled at a large suburban temple, were issued swords and bamboo helmets, and formally relieved the fire brigades of their security patrol duties.

A total of two thousand militiamen (t'uan-yung) were raised, plus an additional three hundred reserves. They were divided into five detachments each of four hundred men, assigned to offices (t'uan-lien-chü) located in the same five temples which housed the district pao-chia headquarters. The detachments themselves were known as tzu (Chinese written character), since each was identified by a different colored banner upon which was emblazoned a character derived from the name of the urban ward in which the detachment was assigned duty. Militiamen were to conduct nightly patrols on a rotating one-in-five schedule, with the four hundred men on duty each night broken up into patrol units (ch'i) of fifty men each. All were given briefings on patrol procedures and military techniques by personnel of the county's regular army contingent, and detailed regulations for their conduct were drawn up, including provisions on care of weapons, proscriptions against drinking or gambling while on duty, and so forth.

As suggested by the common locations of their district headquarters, the city's t'uan-lien and pao-chia systems were to be intimately coordinated. Patrol units, for example, were instructed to accept the direction of local headmen in the handling of criminal complaints within each neighborhood. At the central level there eventually evolved a unified Hankow Pao-chia and Militia Bureau (Han-k'ou pao-chia t'uan-fang chü), located at the Shen-chia-miao. Sub-prefect Chang was officially
given the collateral title of General Manager (tsung-li) of the combined bureau, but a private "upright individual" (kung-cheng chih jen) was selected to serve as its operational General Director (tsung-ling).

The precise identity of the individual who assumed this post is not recorded, but very likely it was one Liu Lin, lauded in his county gazetteer biography as the prime initiator of the Hankow militia system. Liu was a familiar gentry-merchant type in the city (the combination of literary and commercial roles in such men is perhaps most strikingly revealed in the career of Liu's son, Hsuan-ch'ing, who became both a chin-shih of 1890 and shortly thereafter a founder of the Hankow Chamber of Commerce). Although he was unusual of this type in that he hailed only from nearby Wuchang, Liu Lin's residence in Hankow was nevertheless described as a "sojourn" (ch'iao-yü). In characteristic fashion, this did not prevent him from assuming a regular role in the leadership of local urban public service and philanthropic projects, among which t'uan-lien management was merely one example.66

The mercantile social basis of Hankow's new militia system is further seen in its pattern of sponsorship. The June 1st Shen-chia-miao conference agreed to assess the provision of one militiaman to every ten participating commercial firms. In theory these men were to come from the firm's own permanent staff, but it was specified in the regulations that "hired representatives" would be acceptable, providing they be of suitable age and health. Given Hankow's large underemployed labor pool, it seems certain that the vast majority of militiamen were simply recruited from this marginal population. Each assessed place of business was obliged to post a placard listing the name of the militiaman who represented it.

The selection of just which business firms would participate in sponsorship of the militia program tells us a great deal about the city's spatial as well as its social structure. Though in fact it was far from neatly laid out, the town was conceived of by contemporaries as structured along four major thoroughfares, all of which ran an arc-shaped course parallelling the shoreline of the Yangtze-Han river confluence. Reading inland from the river, these were River Street, Main Street, Center (or
Narrow) Street, and Back Street. There was a rough, if clearly recognized, hierarchy of commercial importance among these thoroughfares. Main Street was the site of the city's major wholesale warehouses and dealerships (hang-hao), largely dominated by guilds of extra-provincials, as well as some of the city's larger shops (tien-p'u). River Street and Center Street hosted lesser shops of both Hupeh and non-Hupeh origin, but almost no warehouses. Back Street was largely residential. Significantly, at the June 1st Shen-chia-miao conference which decided for and drew up plans for the new militia system, only proprietors of Main Street firms were in attendance, and the resulting program called for the patrol of that thoroughfare alone. The management of security measures for the city's lesser arteries was deliberately left undecided, until such time as the intentions of shopkeepers along these streets could be determined. However, by the time the system became operational on 5 June, the smaller firms which lined River and Center Streets had been somehow convinced to back the scheme as well, and the militia program that eventually went into effect was supported by and provided security for all three commercial thoroughfares and their radiating alleys. Back Street, and its resident "small households" (hsiao-hu), was left to its own devices. By August, when the system had taken on an air of permanency, an arrangement was worked out whereby all petty tradesmen of this hsiao-hu class would accept reduced militiamen assessments and participate in the city's overall security system on a scale appropriate to their means and needs.

Only in mid-October did Sub-prefect Chang and his merchant supporters get around to putting the final touches on this comprehensive security program for Hankow, in the form of a series of regulations governing security practices within the residential sidestreets and alleys (hsiang) of the town. These policies essentially intensified and refined a drive which had been underway with indifferent success for a decade in Hankow, in response to perceptions of growing crime rates, to have the local population on a neighborhood basis collectively finance and manage the construction or repair of street-enclosing gates and the employment
of night watchmen. In the present context we need only note a few of the innovative features which the 1883 crisis had introduced into this drive. Most interesting of these was the emphasis on a new, and for the first time uniquely urban, territorial unit, the tuan, to be informally created by mutual cooperation between the residents of several adjacent hsiang. Security practices and gate construction within each tuan were to be overseen by the gentry-managers of the merchant-backed "benevolent halls" which by this time were located in virtually every urban neighborhood. Within each individual hsiang, a "senior, worldly, and upright" gentry-merchant (shih-shang) was to be "publically selected" (kung-chü) to manage security finances and operations and to personally investigate the infiltration of any "rebel elements" (fei-lei) into the neighborhood. Thus, local police power was placed more firmly than ever in the hands of the neighborhood elite—specifically, the commercial elite.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1883, the new Hankow merchant militia and its concomitant security institutions enjoyed a considerable success in mopping up remnants of the May rebellion attempt. More significantly in the long run, however, and no doubt of greater immediate interest to the businessmen of every scale which supported it, it was able in these months to carry out an unprecedentedly vigorous and successful campaign to "round up" Hankow's vagrant elements and, in merchant eyes, its special malignancy: the urban toughs.71

Conclusion: Urban Development and Popular Movements in China

Hankow in 1883 was a large commercial metropolis on the eve of industrialization. Despite the fact that the steam-powered factories which began to transform the city in the following decade were largely foreign-owned and wholly foreign-inspired, the town in these years nevertheless shared a number of attributes with major European cities at a similar, immediately pre-industrial, stage of development.72 Among these attributes was its high degree of social and occupational differentiation (clearly
observable in our table). This differentiation, however, had not yet significantly begun to be translated into divisive animosities based on economic class-consciousness. Instead, the city was better characterized by an atmosphere of participatory urban community which had been developing over the course of the nineteenth century.  

One aspect of this community was a broadly inclusive consensus demanding the public order necessary for pursuit of individual economic interests—the interests which, for most residents, had prompted relocation to the city in the first place. The participants in this consensus (or as a Western reporter termed them a few years later, "the party of order") spanned many socio-economic levels, including at the lower end small retail shopkeepers, self-employed artisans, and no doubt many wage laborers. In terms of our table, this would comprise nearly all persons in category I, most in category II, group 3.1 of category III, and many individuals from categories IV, V, and VI. The consensus would also include those among the city's marginal population who had been specifically co-opted into employment within the security apparatus itself.

This of course does not imply that within this consensus the demand for order was felt with equal intensity by all persons. Sociologist Allan Silver has schematized this demand in modern "civil society" as originating with the urban population's socially and economically successful "center"—that segment with the greatest financial stake in the status quo—and only through a process of combined normative and coercive appeals gradually expanding to include participation by less successful "peripheral" groups. Indeed, the progress of counter-mobilizational efforts enforcing social stability in Hankow provides a remarkably clear-cut case of this model in operation. In Hankow, the "center" comprised two groups: (1) the gentry-merchants, or commercial capitalists in control of the interregional trade, a group drawn almost exclusively from distant areas of China but who somewhat paradoxically most closely of any social group recognized an identity of their interests with the fate of the town, and (2) the gentry-managers operating the
benevolent halls, fire brigades, etc. It was the guild notables representative of this center group which first joined with the local administration at the May 3rd Shen-chia-miao conference and unhesitatingly committed their firefighting forces to the defense of law and order in the city. By the time of the second Shen-chia-miao conference on June 1st, the notables could be bypassed in favor of a wider coalition of all wholesale merchants occupying the city's Main Street. It was of course this same group which had earlier demonstrated their commitment to local stability by remaining in town, doing business, until the eleventh hour before the rebellion was due to break out. The months of June, July, and August saw a continual process of bringing merchants of ever smaller scale, and eventually other urban residents, into an active participation in public security projects.

Given the inclusiveness of this "party of order" in Hankow, who was left to constitute its opponents? Here we have tried to distinguish two separate groups. First were the actual rebels of 1883. On simply socio-economic criteria these individuals (and particularly their leadership elements) may have belonged more appropriately to the city's forces of order, but they had become alienated due to their adoption of heterodox religious beliefs and/or intense anti-Manchu racial antipathies, neither of which were then shared with any real commitment by the majority of the urban population. We have argued that while Hankow was deliberately selected as the locus of their rebellion, the rebellion itself did not represent a specifically urban movement.

The second disruptive group, however, was distinctively urban. This was the city's "dangerous classes," or marginal population. Hankow by the 1880s had been undergoing for many years a distinctively modern set of urbanization problems, characterized by the growth of a large body of chronically under-employed males. Unlike the bulk of the urban population, whose relocation to the city had derived from economic advancement motives, this group was the product of rural dislocations attributable to rising population densities, commercialization, and most immediately to the devastations and militarization associated with the great mid-century rebellions. We have
seen that such marginals were linked only indirectly with the plot of 1883, yet it is significant that once political rebellion had prompted the city's forces of order to mobilize themselves into an articulated security apparatus, these forces very quickly began to concentrate their energies less on anti-imperial rebels than on their own more usual adversaries--the "dangerous classes."

Finally, let us briefly consider the role played in these events by the imperial administration. In China, as in Europe (for example, the London of the early eighteenth century76), official recognition of the unique security problems of highly urbanized areas had been slow to develop. Thus while campaigns for the preservation of public order in Hankow had become increasingly frenetic over the course of the post-Taiping decades, these had involved essentially makeshift adaptations of security systems traditionally designed to fit a rural social model. In the counter-mobilizational machinery it authorized in response to the 1883 plot, however, the regime both acknowledged and itself contributed further to the emergence of an at least partially autonomous urban community. Pao-chia and t'uan-lien were of course venerable means of combatting disorder, but their new manifestations in Hankow were distinctively and innovatively urban in such factors as taking the confines of the city alone rather than the county as their scope, being tailored to a hierarchical neighborhood structure based solely on commercial importance, and emphasizing new territorial units (the t'uan) created in response to a distinctively urban residence pattern. In the course of the affair the downtown Shen-chia-miao emerged as something very much resembling an autonomous town hall. Most importantly, all of the new security measures were entrusted for both sponsorship and actual management to urban commercial forces, and especially the commercial elite. These new policies were simply rational administrative adjustments to new social realities, and indeed proved tremendously effective in resolving the immediate crisis at hand, but they had unforeseen long-range consequences.

The threat posed by the 1883 rebels, while directed solely against the regime, had resulted in an almost perfect marriage of Ch'ing administrative and local societal
interests. This marriage, however, would not long endure. As the leading student of the 1911 Revolution in Hupeh, Joseph Esherick, reminds us, the Hankow commercial world was to become among the most vocally and financially supportive groups in all China of the republican revolutionary movement. It would not be long before the anti-Manchu sentiments which fired the May plotters would win over the very forces which at that time so effectively drove them back underground. As an hypothesis for future research we may speculate that this resulted largely from the intervening process of local industrialization: so long as control of simply commerce remained the prize, Hankow merchants were happy to be left by the imperial administration with management of their own affairs and of their urban milieu, but when industrial enterprise began to require not mere laissez-faire sympathy but active government stimulation, that administration itself had to go.

Once this change of attitude had been effected, the same privately-managed security mechanisms originally devised jointly by the local administration and its commercial allies would be put to new uses. In 1910 the organizational descendants of the merchant militia corps of 1883 boldly reconstituted themselves into a singly Hankow Municipal Militia Alliance (Han-k'ou ko-t'uan lien-ho-hui). The following year this Alliance became an active arm of the revolutionary cause.

NOTES

1. This paper represents the first fruit of a much broader study of the problems of community, class, and conflict in late Ch'ing Hankow, intended to supplement the study of commercial and social organization presented in my dissertation, "Urban Society in Late Imperial China: Hankow, 1796-1889" (Columbia University, 1980). If, in an effort to set out some general concepts of use in this study, I have strayed beyond the confines of analysis necessarily dictated by the event at hand, I hope the reader will find these excursions provocative.

For their helpful comments on earlier versions of
this paper I wish to thank seminar audiences at the University of Chicago, Yale University, and the California Institute of Technology. Special thanks go to Jerry Dennerline, Jill Friedman, and David Strand.

2. This general narrative has been reconstructed from various eyewitness reports, especially Alabaster to Grosvenor, 3 May 1883, 4 May 1883, 5 May 1883, and 7 May 1883, all in F0 17/934, Public Record Office, London; North-China Herald, 11 May 1883, 18 May 1883, and 1 June 1883; Shen-pao, Kuang-hsu 9/4/3 and Kuang-hsu 9/4/6.


5. Shen-pao, Kuang-hsu 9/4/6, Kuang-hsu 9/4/13, Kuang-hsu 9/6/25, etc.


10. North-China Herald, 1 June 1883.


14. North-China Herald, 11 May 1883; Alabaster to Grosvenor, 2 May 1883, 3 May 1883, 4 May 1883, 5 May 1883, 7 May 1883, and 12 May 1883, FO 17/934.

15. Alabaster to Grosvenor, 3 May 1883, FO 17/934; Shen-pao, Kuang-hsu 9/4/6, Kuang-hsu 9/5/3, etc.


20. Shen-pao, Kuang-hsu 9/4/6; also North-China Herald, 18 May 1883.


22. Alabaster to Grosvenor, 7 May 1883, FO 17/934.

23. Shen-pao, Kuang-hsu 9/4/13. For recent views on this


27. Shen-pao, Kuang-hsu 9/11/24, Kuang-hsu 9/12/1, etc.


30. Alabaster, F. O. *Commercial Reports*, 1883, p. 86; see also Alabaster to Parkes, 12 September 1883, FO 228/700.


32. The most famous instance of this occurred in the year 1800; see Hsia-k'ou hsien-chih (Gazetteer of Hsia-k'ou county, 1920), 15:6.

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34. For examples of this economic paternalism in action, see Rowe, "Urban Society," especially chapter six. A similar paternalism characterized British economic policy up until the very eve of the industrial revolution; see Thompson, op. cit. pp. 197-8.

35. For a discussion and typology of this distinction in the Ch'ing context, see C. K. Yang, "Some Preliminary Statistical Patterns of Mass Actions in Nineteenth-Century China," in Frederic Wakeman, Jr., and Carolyn Grant, eds., Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 194-6.


37. See especially North-China Herald, 25 May 1883. The Chinese daily Shen-pao, despite offering much concrete detail on the affair, is strangely silent on the overall motivation of the rebel movement. I believe this to be easily explained by the fact that the plot's underlying anti-Manchuism, which must have been obvious to the journal's readership, was one of the few subjects held to be absolutely taboo to the Chinese press.


40. Shen-pao, Kuang-hsu 9/4/6 and Kuang-hsu 9/5/3; North-China Herald, 18 May 1883.

41. Shen-pao, Kuang-hsu 9/4/6, Kuang-hsu 9/8/25, etc.

42. North-China Herald, 1 June 1883.

43. North-China Herald, 18 May 1883.
44. See Rowe, "Urban Society," chapter seven.


46. Shen-pao, Kuang-hsu 9/4/3; North-China Herald, 11 May 1883; Alabaster to Grosvenor, 3 May 1883 and 4 May 1883, FO 17/934.

47. Shen-pao, Kuang-hsu 9/4/3.


50. Shen-pao, Kuang-hsu 9/5/3.


52. Shen-pao, Kuang-hsu 9/4/3.


55. On "the demand for the bureaucratization of police functions" in European cities, see Silver, p. 10.


58. The overhaul and operations of the new pao-chia sys-
tem in Hankow are reported in Shen-pao, Kuang-hsu 9/4/14, Kuang-hsu 9/4/21, Kuang-hsu 9/4/28, Kuang-hsu 9/5/3, Kuang-hsu 9/5/12, Kuang-hsu 9/7/21, and Kuang-hsu 9/9/19; see also North-China Herald, 18 May 1883.


61. There were actually four wards (fang) comprising the chen of Hankow, and their classically-derived names were applied to four of the town's new pao-chia districts. The fifth district comprised an area of the Chinese city directly adjacent to the British Concession, which had become densely populated only since the Concession's establishment in 1861. The fact that Chang Ou-fang chose to carve out a new unit rather than simply relying on the four already in existence seems to further demonstrate the seriousness of his intentions and efforts.


63. Shen-pao, Kuang-hsu 9/7/22.


65. Major sources on the new Hankow t'uan-lien system are Shen-pao, Kuang-hsu 9/5/3, Kuang-hsu 9/5/12, Kuang-hsu 9/5/14, Kuang-hsu 9/7/21, Kuang-hsu 9/8/22, Kuang-hsu 9/8/25, and Kuang-hsu 9/9/19. For the general background of this institution, the standard work is of course Philip A. Kuhn, Rebellion and its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796-1864 (Cambridge; Harvard University Press, 1970), from which also the title of the present paper has been brazenly lifted. A suggestive article emphasizing the often violently localist character of t'uan-lien organization is Fu I-ling, "T'ai-p'ing T'ien-kuo shih-tai t'uan-lien k'ang-kuan wen-t'i yin-lun" [Evidence on the Problem of Anti-Governmental Action by Militia Units in the Taiping Period], She-hui k'e-hsueh, 1945, pp. 86-91.


70. *Shen-pao*, Kuang-hsu 9/9/19. For the previous history of these policies locally, see Rowe, "Urban Control," pp. 101-2.

71. *Shen-pao*, Kuang-hsu 9/8/9, etc.

72. Hankow's social ripeness for industrialization was frequently noted by members of its European community. See especially Alabaster, "Report on Trade for 1874," FO 17/732, and Alabaster, in F. O. Commercial Reports, 1878, p. 68.

73. E. P. Thompson argues for a similar dominance of urban community over class-based identities in London until just shortly before the advent of the industrial factory system. In the British case, the stimulus which brought class to the forefront of consciousness at this time was the accident of an outside political event, the French Revolution. Thompson, op. cit., chapters five and twelve.

74. *North-China Herald*, 13 July 1889.

75. Silver, especially p. 10. Silver derives his "center-periphery" concept from the work of Edward Shils.


78. Hsia-k'ou hsien-chih, 5: 18.

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tien-p'u  店鋪
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tuan  段
t'uan-lien  團練
t'uan-lien-chü  團練局
t'uan-yung  團勇
tzung-li  總理
tzung-ling  總令
tung-shih  董事
wei-yuan  委員
yen-hu-ts'e  煙戶冊
This paper describes the twentieth-century demise of a powerful local merchant elite in a county seat on the North China Plain. Although this elite, like its landlord-gentry counterparts, constituted a formidable obstacle to the penetration of government control below the county level, its decline had little to do with government policies that sought to reduce its power. Rather, modern rail transportation, wartime occupation, and the increasing reliance of traders on legal and fiscal security afforded by big cities like Tianjin, eroded the traditional trade networks that nurtured local merchant elites. The efficacy of a local god, the personal trust and confidence offered by individualized brokerage service, and the accumulated traditions associated with fair attendance and guild loyalties—all these were advantages the Anguo County Medicine Fair offered to the nineteenth century trader. These advantages lost their appeal during the twentieth century.²

The Anguo case presented here raises a number of issues that are not addressed in this paper. Traditional Chinese medicine was a business that catered mainly to domestic tastes and consumers, although some foreign trade did supply overseas Chinese communities and consumers in East and Southeast Asia. Traditional medicine was in that sense a "national capitalist" enterprise, fostered and protected by the People's Republic of China (hereafter PRC) after 1949 as part of the campaign for self-sufficiency and self-reliance, using national products. Production and distribution of Chinese medicine, which did suffer its moments of censure during the reign of Mr. Science in the 1920s, on the whole has been encouraged and fostered by the present government.³

The Tianjin businessmen who sold Chinese medicine were well aware of PRC policy in 1951, when they held a
major conference that stressed their commitment to fostering trade networks between rural areas that supplied medicine and the major cities where medicine was marketed:

We in the Tianjin National Medicine business ought to study the history of the national medicine trade at Anguo, learn from her past experience, revitalize her old trade connections, and divert her major trade items gradually to Tianjin.⁴

Chinese medicine trade was a symbol of the mutual interdependence of city and countryside in the new polity, and Tianjin businessmen understood both the political and the economic rationale for that fact.

Thus we might expect a certain ambivalence in PRC government policy toward the Chinese medicine business, and particularly toward the traditional trade associations that enabled it to flourish. The destruction of these associations threatened to disturb one of the vital signs of the Chinese body politic—physical health, national pride, independence from Western trade and Western science, all were bound up in China's national medicine trade. It is plausible to suggest that the Anguo trade structure was among those that the PRC government might have been most tempted to preserve, at least for a time. They never had the chance.

Discovering a Dying Market

For over two centuries (some accounts say as many as five), Anguo County in Hebei Province was the northern center of a national medicine market. The Anguo Medicine Fair was held twice a year in three-month cycles, from the third through fifth and the ninth through eleventh lunar months. It drew traders from nearly every major economic region in China. (See Map 1 on next page.) In 1931 the Anguo Fair also drew a survey researcher from the Institute of Social Sciences of the Academia Sinica to its spring opening. This social scientist, like many of his colleagues, wanted not merely to describe, but to prescribe, for China's countryside and for her future as a nation. Through Zheng Hecheng's eyes we see a market

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Map 1. Anguo's national market, with numerals designating regional bang, showing trade routes. Source: Zheng, 1933.
situated according to the location of a temple, run by a small coterie of powerful family leaders and merchant cliques, dominated by the personal ties of several hundred petty brokers—a market, in other words, bearing all the hallmarks of traditional society and barely touched by signs of modern "progress." The most evident of these was the new business tax the Kuomintang government was collecting from the county. Slow, costly, inefficient transportation; primitive hotel and lodging facilities; weights, measures, and currency that varied from seller to buyer and product to product; rampant drug abuse (opium as well as heroin); prostitution—to the surveyor all were symbols of the old society that continued to thrive in China's county seats. Zheng also marked signs of the Anguo market's pending demise. The number of brokers licensed by the county during winter fairs had fallen from 624 in 1927 to 431 in 1931. The number of companies (hang) participating in the fair had declined apace, from 370-80 in 1927 to 180-250 in 1931. Membership in the local Chamber of Commerce had fallen steadily from 251 in 1927 to 193 in 1931.

Zheng predicted when he published his report that Anguo would not survive the development of the railways; that the advantages of a trading system based on personal trust and confidence would eventually give way before the cost savings of speedy and efficient transportation, the comforts of urban hotels, and the ameliorating influence of a standardized currency system. There are good reasons, as we shall see, to remain skeptical of some of Zheng's pessimistic observations. Like many of his contemporaries, he was a social critic as well as a social scientist. However a statistical survey published in 1936 recorded the following observations of the Anguo Fair, indicating that the downturns observed in 1931 by Zheng had continued:

The south suburbs are the site of a medicine fair which in former times was the single medicine market for the whole country. Held twice a year in spring and winter, it drew herbs and medicine traders in huge numbers to the scene of a flourishing exchange. The medicine company trade here was a national symbol. More recently, because of
inefficient transportation, medicine markets have sprung up in many places and the trade has fallen off dramatically.

The rising new centers included four market towns along the rim of Anguo's immediate hinterland: Shifozhen, Wurenqiaozhen, Dawunuzhen, and Xibozhangzhen.6 (See Map 2 on next page.)

The effects of the Japanese occupation after 1937 hastened the decline that Zheng documented. In 1951 the leaders of the Tianjin medicine business published a trade magazine in a series printed by the Tianjin Progressive Daily, summing up the situation as follows:

China has a long history of developing and using her own native medicines. This has been important in contributing to her health as a people and to the growth of urban and rural economies. Unfortunately for many years now our native medicine has stressed past experience and ignored the findings of modern science, and as a result it has developed a severely conservative outlook, so that it is everywhere regarded as "a superstition passed down by our ancestors," or as "blind obedience to the ways of the past." This conservatism has been a great impediment to the development of our national medicine industry, and it is something we must guard against. On the other hand, throughout the long history of Chinese medicine, it has been a national market involving exchange between north and south. Had we no national market, we would have no way to make use of our native medicines. If you look at any one of the old medicine shops up here in the north, you will see a sign advertising "Medicines from Sichuan, Guangdong, Yunnan, and Guizhoub," a symbol of the long tradition of north-south trade in the medicine industry. It may be true that "the earth and water of each place will sustain its people," but it is not true that the medicine of each place will cure everything for its people. We need medicines from all over the country, a fact as true today as it has ever been.
Map 2. New medicine markets, 1936
The North China Medicine Trade Conference, which was in effect a National Chinese Medicine Trade Conference, this year recognized the trends in management in the national medicine industry, and opened with Tianjin as the center of the entire northern and southern medicine trade. In the past the Medicine Fair at Anguo was the major center for this trade in North China, but now times have changed. If you look at our location with respect to transportation, and to our situation in domestic and foreign trade, you can see that Tianjin can replace Anguo in every respect.

Like the medicine traders of Anguo County in the 1920s, the Tianjin business class could not anticipate their own future decline as an entrepreneurial elite. The Anguo County traders and banks capitulated to what we call the forces of modernization: changing patterns of trade following the construction of railways, and the rise of new markets along railway lines; the introduction of a standardized currency and a managed monetary system, and the imposition of new tax policies by the Nationalist government. These forces impinged on the political economy of Anguo by undermining the conditions that made it possible for Anguo's traditional trade organizations, including her local banks, to flourish. When Japanese armies occupied North China after 1937, the trade flows through Anguo were cut off, traders moved to Tianjin where railway lines remained open, and the Anguo medicine fair collapsed. After the war it did not recover. Standardized currency systems introduced with the initiation of a managed monetary supply after 1931 reduced the need for currency exchanges on which the Anguo banks depended for much of their business. And whereas the business taxes collected by the Nationalist government through the Chamber of Commerce provided a source of income and control to the Chamber and its constituents by allowing them to assess their own taxes, these taxes were also an incentive for traders outside the Chamber or in competition with the major hang to seek untaxed markets elsewhere, case in point being the four new markets around Anguo cited above (Map 2).
The government of the People's Republic after 1949 hastened the demise of local entrepreneurial elites in the city as well as the countryside, by centralizing banking and credit, by creating state purchasing agencies and later state-owned companies, and by eliminating the discrepancies between weights, measures, and exchange rates that had divided regions, commodity exchanges, trade organizations, and banks in the old society. In the long run PRC policy aimed at the elimination of private business and business elites through nationalization of major industry and trade organizations. But PRC policy was also able to build upon the processes that had begun to alter the structure of private trade in the decades before 1950.

The case of the Anguo Medicine Fair illustrates the point.

Internal Organization of the Anguo Medicine Fair

Trade in herbal medicine at Anguo exhibited all the attenuated linkage systems characteristic of marketing in traditional China. At its lowest level, the fair supplied jobs in transport and packaging for unskilled workers. Regional trade associations (bang) and individual companies (hang) purchased and sold through brokers (jingji) who lined up customers, guaranteed transactions, and deposited and transferred funds through the native banks. The native banks, eleven of which served the medicine fair, accepted deposits and made exchanges in the four units of account employed by the major regional associations trading at Anguo. They supplied credit, attracted cash deposits, regulated exchange rates and interest rates, and adjusted the money supply to accommodate the massive semiannual fluctuations in the local trade. That the latter function was performed with remarkable efficiency may be seen from the relatively narrow range of interest rate fluctuation shown in the graph on p. 129.

A Chamber of Commerce (Shang Hui), composed of leading citizens of the Anguo county seat and about a fourth of the local business community, assessed and collected business taxes, adjudicated disputes, maintained a local police force, and controlled competition among the regional associations.
Attached to this trading system were thousands of local residents who worked as coolies and packagers; proprietors of small inns and managers of cartage stations; prostitutes; and personnel who managed, patronized, and serviced the temple at the South Gate of the county seat that served as the focal point of the fair--suppliers of incense sticks and paper money, woodcarvers and painters, performing artists and so forth.

The semiannual burst of economic activity in Anguo affected jobs and credit in the surrounding area. (See Map 3.) During the fairs it was possible for persons with few skills to earn daily wages that were far higher than those paid either to farm laborers or to local non-farm wage earners. Printers, the best paid workers in local industry, earned an average monthly salary of ¥8; potters, the lowest paid, made half that amount. Local wages for farm workers averaged ¥40 per year, including food. By contrast, at the medicine fair a packer earned an average of over ¥16 per month; carters and haulers made ¥1.5 per day, and brokers averaged ¥200 per fair, or nearly ¥33 per month.Prostitutes who were able to work the first-class brothels that catered to overnight guests could charge from 3 to 5 yuan a night (subject to tax for registered prostitutes). Some prostitutes worked in collaboration with a broker who offered their services to close deals. Village women used this source of extra income on an ad hoc, short-term basis, coming to the fair with their families and staying on for a few days (women referred to this as "going to the fair," gan miao). Opium and heroin sales were the most lucrative source of income--drug traffic in heroin alone was valued at between 2,000 and 3,000 yuan a day at peak season, in a market where the annual taxed volume of trade was around ¥1,800,000, or ¥10,000 per day.

Zheng claimed that commercial activity and affluence in Anguo were on one level inversely related to the economic health of its immediate hinterland. High interest on deposits at peak fair season drew cash out of neighboring banks and market systems into Anguo, causing a contraction of the money supply in local banks in the surrounding area. Drug use may have lowered labor productivity, as well as squandering the family resources.
Map 3. Anguo's thirteen-county hinterland showing rail lines and the Grand Canal
of addicts. Zheng does not mention the effects of the Anguo labor market on the surrounding economy. My assumption is that much of this effect was beneficial, in supplying employment for surplus labor. However, parts of the fair cycle overlapped with spring planting and autumn harvest, as well as the sowing of winter wheat; during these times a reduced agricultural labor force could have meant a labor shortage in the countryside.

Because the ramified employment structure of this market was shaped by the transport, bulking, and storage of goods, the location of the Anguo fair is worth some comment. The medicine fairs were held at a point where transportation from production points to major consuming centers was costly, slow, and inefficient. In 1932 the cheapest mode of transportation overland was by big cart (da che). Roads were mostly unimproved and typical of the North China plain—mired in mud during the rainy season and dust-choked in dry weather. Automobiles were useless. Some transport costs could be saved by shipping medicine by cart to the railway station at Dingxian some 35 kilometers away, but the cost of rail transport, except on the main line to Wuhan, ruled it out for most shorter runs. During the rainy season one could travel to Tianjin more cheaply by sampan than by rail, but water transport was so slow, and in any case likely to require preliminary overland shipping, that rail was generally preferred. By the early 1930s, as we shall see, there were signs that the high cost of transportation was beginning to have an adverse effect on the volume of trade at Anguo.

Anguo had won the medicine market away from rival markets in the area sometime before the mid-18th century. This triumph was not a function of economic centrality or transport efficiency, but of the efficacy of a local god, the Medicine King (Yao Wang), who attracted pilgrims and large crowds to his temple located on the east side of the road leading south out of the Anguo county seat. This god represented the spirit of the King of Pichang, a tutelary deity whose name was also linked to a charismatic healer known only as "the man from outside the south gate of Qizhou." This healer, granted a posthumous title by

*the historical name for Anguo County.
the Song court as the "Efficacious, Luminous and Gracious, Radiant King," was said to have been honored with a temple as early as the Song dynasty. Semiannual festivals at the temple at Chingming and on the 15th day of the 10th month became the occasions for regional medicine fairs.\textsuperscript{12} Medicine sold on the site of the Medicine King's temple, during his festival, acquired the special aura of the Anguo Fair. In 1932 some herbs were still transported from their place of production to Anguo, sold, and transported back again, in order to ensure that they acquired the potent healing effects conferred by the presence of the Medicine King.\textsuperscript{13}

\begin{table}
\caption{Cartage costs (100-catty weights, in ¥) to Anguo from:}
\begin{tabular}{lcc}
\hline
& Dingxian & 0\.9¥
& Zhangde & 4\.5¥
& Baoding & 1\.2¥
& Bozhou & 12\.0¥
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\begin{table}
\caption{Rail freight costs (metric tons, in ¥) to Dingxian from:}
\begin{tabular}{lccc}
\hline
Depot & Distance (km) & Class A & Class E
\hline
Beiping & 199 & 22\.52 & 4\.46
Shijiazhuang & 64 & 8\.21 & 1\.65
Zhangde & 309 & 31\.45 & 8\.06
Hankou & 1,009 & 71\.84 & 14\.14
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

Note: There are 16\.54 units of 100 catties each in a metric ton. If Anguo shippers could take advantage of tonnage weights when shipping smaller quantities, costs of shipping 100 catties by rail may be obtained by dividing rail freight costs by 16\.54. Calculating the exact cost of shipping any herb by rail also requires knowing its classification into one of five grades, of which the above list displays the most and least expensive.

Anguo's community leaders responded to this opportunity by organizing to provide accommodations and rules of order, as well as a means of profiting, during the semiannual descent of outsiders for the fair. Members of the local gentry formed a Lodge for Catering to Guests (An Ke Tang), donned a new hat in 1910 as the local Chamber of Commerce, and reorganized themselves that year and again in subsequent years (1914, 1931) in response to government orders concerning local trade organizations. Unlike Chambers of Commerce in many counties, this one had some teeth, set in the long local tradition of consolidated community action, and sharpened in the 1920s by the leadership of two families residing in the market area who operated the Chamber as an instrument of their own personal interest. The volume of trade overseen by the Chamber also provided the advantage of placing ample revenue sources at the Chamber's disposal.

Two prominent local families were passing the presidency of the Chamber back and forth between them during the five years covered in Zheng's survey (1927-31). Although by 1931 membership rolls were showing a steady decline, the decline was not yet a subject of concern for Chamber leaders. The power of their organization was evident in its control over information about the wealthiest residents of Anguo, and its authority over them. The others, including the county magistrate, the Chamber merely intimidated. This local authority allowed the Chamber to serve as the arbiter of "community custom" by determining the guidelines for ethical business practice and the norms of conduct in local trade. When called upon, as in the case of the Tianjin appeal cited below, the Chamber could use this power effectively even in a court of law to protect its own constituency.

Anguo traders who were not members of the Chamber fell into two groups--local merchants and members of regional trade associations (bang) who came from outside the Anguo area. Local non-member traders appear to have suffered discrimination at the hands of the Chamber, discrimination impossible to document since the Chamber "never kept records." Non-members were required to defer to Chamber decisions in all compulsory mediation. While members and non-members were subject to the ad hoc tax
levies carried out by the Chamber, members tended to be taxed and assessed at more favorable rates. Non-members were liable to harsher penalties for defaulting on debts, in some cases being required to pay damages directly to the Chamber for an additional 50 per cent of the claims against them.

With the regional associations, on the other hand, the Chamber cultivated the most cordial ties, sealed at the end of each fair with a special meeting to which the leaders of each regional association were invited to "air their views." At the conclusion of every winter fair, each regional association leader was asked to present his own assessment of the amounts owed by members of his association and to set a tax quota for each broker that dealt with his group.14

Thus regional trade associations from outside Anguo, and the Anguo Chamber of Commerce, formed a powerful informal decision-making body that assessed the local valuation of trade in behalf of the government, and in the process protected the assets of its constituents. The outsiders fell into two groups known locally as "the thirteen associations" (bang) and "the five clubs" (hui). The latter were major trade associations outside the medicine trade--foreign textiles, leather goods, foodstuffs and dry goods dealers, and others. The "thirteen" were all medicine trade groups, defined in various ways but roughly corresponding to the following regions: 1) Beiping-Ningbo-Tianjin, 2) Guandong (Manchuria), 3) Shandong, 4) Shanxi-Guangdong, 5) Jiangxi, 6) Shaanxi, 7) Zhangde, 8) Yuzhou, 9) Tanhuai, 10) Bozhou, 11) Zhangjiakou, 12) Shanhuo (not a place, but a reference to one variety of medicine), 13) Anguo.15 Map 1 shows the location of these regional groups and the major routes by which their goods reached Anguo.

Anguo people said that most of the local trade involved northern suppliers and southern buyers: "People take more medicine down south than they do up north." Most Anguo traders believed that northerners tried to recover from illness without medicine, and similarly thought that southerners took medicine as a matter of course ("with their meals") whether they were sick or not. Zheng Hecheng tried to document this by tracing the flow
of goods between the various bang, which he found impossible to do because of the arrangement of the brokerage system (discussed below).

Differences among traders at Anguo were expressed in such regional stereotypes, and in their patterns of consumption and standards of living during the fairs. As influential as they appear to have been in the local trading community, the lives of many of these businessmen must have been spartan. Accommodations for traders, apart from those from larger companies fortunate enough to own or rent permanent living quarters or office space, were crude. The small inns that opened up to house itinerant traders and high-income workmen were tiny places of about three-room (san jian) size, offering two kangs for sleeping, shared by all the guests in the place. The local name for these inns (qi huo dian, or heat-up houses) was misleading, as the only heat to be found was from kindling purchased from the innkeeper and burned by the guests themselves. In wintertime smoke from these fires filled the inns, escaping only through tears in the paper-covered window openings made by careless guests. By contrast the very richest trade associations, like the Tong Ren Company from Tianjin, maintained private residences for employees, who sojourned in solitary comfort.16

The various bang of the Anguo trading system therefore encompassed a range of wealth and lifestyles, and it would be a mistake to homogenize this group by calling it a "bourgeoisie." The common consciousness of its members, if they shared one, stemmed not from a common relationship to the mode of production, but from common membership in the hierarchical structure of the regional associations, which safeguarded their claims in the market against competition from rivals and from the exactions of the government, through the Anguo Chamber of Commerce.

Commercial and Political Infrastructure of the Anguo Fair

Day-to-day operations of the Anguo Fair depended on two sets of institutions: the native banks and the Chamber of Commerce. These institutions provided necessary
economic and political ties with other centers on the North China plain. The banks regulated cash flows and compensated for the cyclic character of the fair by adjusting the money supply through regular reinvestment patterns. They guaranteed high interest rates on deposits to ensure an ample supply of cash at the fairs. The larger banks then rechanneled money back to affiliated banks elsewhere when the fairs were over. Anguo banks also extended loans to small market town banks in off-season periods, making some surplus capital from the fair accessible to these banks twice yearly in the form of low-interest loans.

Anguo banks, like the trading community itself, catered to a differentiated clientele. Of the forty native banks, eleven "big banks" financed the medicine fair. These banks, unlike the small local yinhao, were affiliated with native banks in major cities—Beiping, Tianjin, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. The two largest were both part of the Shanxi banking network; one of these had maintained a branch in Anguo for over a century. During fair season, these banks shared assets of roughly two million yuan; during off-season periods they shipped their surplus capital off to urban affiliated banks. While these large banks maintained staffs of several officers and apprentices, the small local banks often employed no more than three or four people altogether. Zheng's report in the 1930s shows that most banks were organized as joint stock companies with limited liability among stockholders, and were customarily dissolved and reconstituted at thirty-year intervals. 17

Most informants agreed that each of these banks must have assets of over 100,000¥, though no one could produce any evidence for this. The remaining 29 small banks (averaging 15,000¥ each, guessed informants) financed regular local trade and extended loans to local residents and businessmen. Other native banks in market towns of the surrounding counties (see Map 3) received deposits from the big banks at low interest in off-season, and lent out this money to traders in lower-level market towns. Interest rates on loans therefore cycled semi-annually, roughly in conjunction with the fair, falling to their lowest point in June, and rising
slowly throughout the year. The graph on the following page shows the annual interest cycle in 1930 for Anguo and two major market towns in its immediate hinterland (see Map 2). Interest rates were lower in Anguo than in surrounding trade centers that were dependent on the Anguo banks, due not only to the volume of Anguo trade, but to the differing demands for credit in each market town. Note that contrary to Zheng's reportage, lower interest rates in Anguo were not regularly passed on to borrowers in outlying areas in 1930; interest rates reflect the contingencies of local needs. (See figure 1 on next page.)

Banks performed other critical functions in addition to regulating cash flows. The larger banks offered transfer accounts so that a buyer could purchase without ready cash by ordering his bank at Anguo to pay directly into a broker's account. Brokers (jīngjí) then paid the seller out of their own personal accounts, and guaranteed each transaction. Banks thus never transferred funds directly from one company account to another. A member of one hang buying from another hang engaged a broker for the sale, and the banks' records would show only receipts to and debits on the account of the broker. This arrangement made it impossible to obtain bank credit without employing a broker. Banks transferred funds only at the behest of a limited local clientele, well-known to the banking management and regulated by the Chamber of Commerce—the brokers. Since the number of brokers active in a given year ranged from 400 to 600 at each fair, the large banks must have had dealings with an average of 40 to 60 brokers at a time. The Chamber required that all brokers be registered residents of the county to ensure that it could exercise formal jurisdiction over them. Brokers were certified by a Brokerage Association (Jīng Shou Zōng Hui) which issued licenses that required in turn the backing of two "guarantors" who signed their willingness to pay up if the broker defaulted.

Intense competition for clients kept brokerage fees below the prescribed four per cent of sales. Most brokers had to compromise their percentage in order to close a deal. For example, weights and measures not being standard
Fig. 1. Interest rates at Anguo and two neighboring towns* (*Source: Zheng, 1932, p. 195)
in Anguo markets, a broker might find himself making up the difference in a deal for a customer selling 100 catties of an herb that weighed in on the buyer's scale at only 95.

Brokers conducted many transactions themselves in behalf of buyer clients, including some off-season mail orders from the major Tianjin drug company, Tong Ren Tang. Brokerage service was a buyer's market, and merchants from outside could choose from a range of attractive fringe benefits, including complimentary banquets and prostitutes' services, in selecting a broker. The very old established companies, like the Tong Ren, never responded to gimmicks or solicitations. They operated through a few brokers over long periods of time. On the other hand, once any merchant group had "promoted" (ti ba) a broker to special status with the firm, the relationship tended to be lasting and to become increasingly paternalistic over time. The survey cites one example of an aging, ineffectual broker whose long-term sponsors refused to negotiate contracts without his continued consultation, even though they had been forced to hire younger men to make their sales for them.20

The mutual reliance of brokers and their business patrons created standards of trust, scrupulous conduct and personal loyalty in a market where prices, weights, currency, and clientele were constantly shifting. Traders preferred to do business at Anguo, where they could count on the extraordinary reliability of the indigenous Anguo brokerage network, rather than turning to developing markets in Manchuria and Niuzhuang, where the brokers were known to be "swindlers and outsiders." For precisely this reason, however, it took time and skill to make a good Anguo broker. One new recruit put it this way:

Today I spent the whole day running from one end of the market to the other until my legs ached, but I only sold a little bit here and a little bit there. When you're a new broker like me, you can't depend on one firm; you always have to keep chasing after customers. After you've been at this for two or three years, and you know the market well,
and the shopkeepers trust you, and you know which businesses are the big ones and which herbs make the most money—then you can stop dealing in bits and pieces and specialize in one or two herbs or just do business with one or two companies. Then you can talk about making money. Right now I'm just running around after people—who said anything about making money?²¹

Nonetheless for those without the right connections, even with effort it was hard to enter the closed circle of experienced, established brokers who did in fact "make money" (fa tsai). Brokers who started their careers poor tended to end them the same way, as mere so-called bao yao lou zi (medicine crate-packers). The son of a former broker, on the other hand, could find himself doing business for a major Tianjin company within his first year of work.

It was important to have a broker from a well-to-do family because sometimes brokers went bankrupt, and the guarantor system was not fool-proof. A case appealed to the High Court in Tianjin in the 1920s makes the point. The court overruled plaintiff's argument that a guarantor must pay losses for a defaulting broker, deferring to "social custom" as described by the testimony offered by the Anguo Chamber of Commerce. The Tianjin court held guarantors exempt from the obligations to which they had ostensibly agreed, noting that the entire Anguo market system rested on personal guarantees and patron-client ties that no one would willingly undertake if he could be held financially responsible in a court of law. The viability of the Anguo economy rested on personal trust rather than on legal contractual protection.²²

Modernization and commercialization:
The Politics of Trade

Zheng Hecheng closed his survey report with a note on "Problems and Prospects" for the Anguo Medicine Fair. He saw the recent years as a turning point in the fortunes of Anguo traders--after 1929, he marked a steady decline in the volume of trade, the number of brokers in the sys-
tem, the membership in the Chamber of Commerce. In many respects, Zheng's description of the fair shows that he did not expect it to survive the transition to modernity.

It was first of all (in his view) a market created not by economic forces of supply and demand, but by "superstition." The same herb, produced in Suixian, did not become medicine until it was transported to Anguo and sold in sight of the Medicine God's temple. Zheng argued therefore that the spread of modern education alone would remove the rationale for an Anguo Fair. Moreover, herb markets in cities on rail lines, like Niuzhuang and Jinan, were beginning to draw customers. Hankou was becoming the main distribution center for southwestern markets. Manchurian herbs were going by sea direct to Shanghai and Canton.

The Republican governments too had had a hand in the decline of the Anguo Fair. During the term of one military governor in the 1920s, there were two unsuccessful attempts to move the fair by force to a preferred bailiwick—first to Baoding and later to Dingxian. When these failed, the provincial government sought to tax the fair through a brokerage tax of two per cent levied on individual brokers and payable to a government tax office (Ya Ji Ju). Appeals to the Kuomintang failed to alter this system after the Northern Expedition. However a Hebei provincial law issued in 1931 guaranteed the local Chamber of Commerce the right to collect brokerage taxes in behalf of the government. Thereafter the annual meetings between the Chamber and regional merchant groups included negotiations for meeting the annual tax quotas of 36,000¥. During these years, government intervention began to take its toll on the volume of trade. Anguo's best quality Jilin ginseng and many other herbs found outlets in new markets where taxes were lighter.23 (See Map 2.)

Maps 1 and 2 show how modern transportation tilted the market against the Anguo Fair during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The two main north-south rail lines (Beiping-Hankou and Tianjin-Shanghai) circumvented the county. These lines were later connected by a railway running from Cangzhou to Shijiazhuang, contributing further to the rise of the latter in the market.
hierarchy of the subregion. In the national market of which Anguo had been a center, traders in 1931 were still transhipping by rail to Dingxian and overland from there by cart to Anguo, a process which took them first either through Beiping, Shijiazhuang, or Tianjin. The problem lies in explaining why it took so long for traders to switch from a market center that could only be reached by overland cart during the rise of modern rail systems during this period.

Costs were clearly a factor. (See above, pp. 122, 123.) Shipping by cart, to be sure, took time and time in this market was money. Speed and costs varied depending upon weather, the availability of draft animals from local farms, the volume of returning cargo, the presence of bandits, and so forth. Shipping by rail was fast and much cheaper provided one could take advantage of economies of scale. For traders dealing in light-weight goods that were bulked in 100-catty units, shipping by the metric ton sometimes afforded almost no savings in money. To illustrate I cite one of the few cases for which Zheng's study gives actual costs for both overland and rail shipping.

It cost 12¥ to ship 100 catties of herbs overland by cart from Bozhou, Anhui, to Anguo (see Map 1). An alternate route transferred the cargo to the Beiping-Hankou line at Zhangde, took it from there by rail 309 kilometers to Dingxian, and again by cart another 35 kilometers from Dingxian to Anguo. Assuming that shippers of smaller loads could take advantage of tonnage rates on the railroad, optimal rail charges on 100 catties from Zhangde to Dingxian ranged from .5¥ to 1.9¥. Cartage fees from Dingxian to Anguo added 4.5¥. Assuming that the estimated remaining 300 kilometers overland cost about half the 12¥ total for an overland trip of 600 kilometers, the total freight charge for a combination of rail and overland shipping came to between 11 and 12.4¥. Shipping partially by rail could thus cost slightly more than straight overland cartage, if classified in the most expensive grade.

Despite this, Zheng's survey shows that in 1932 all major bang trading at Anguo were shipping by rail (see Map 1). Choosing between rail and traditional
overland transport required considering factors other than monetary cost. Speed must have been the main reason for the preference for rail shipping by the early 1930s. The faster shippers could sell their goods, the more rapidly they were able to reinvest capital. Profits in this trading system depended not on a high markup on goods when they were sold, but rather on a rapid turnover of goods sold at a low unit profit margin. The credit system (one-to three-month loan cycles) made it possible for a trader with no capital to borrow, purchase, sell, and repeat the process two or three times over before he had to repay his initial bank loan, by which time he was able to double or triple his original investment even by selling goods at cost. On the other hand, there were still reasons to forego the advantages of railway shipping during the early 1930s. Zheng's informants told him that bandits preying on the rail lines made rail shipping too risky in some areas. Back roads could be safer on such trade routes as the road between Bozhou and Anguo.

We are now in a position to offer some explanations for the continued decline of the Anguo Fair after 1935 and its displacement by Tianjin in the post-war period. The rise of the four market towns on the periphery of Anguo (see above, p. 117) followed the imposition of the brokerage taxes levied by the Hebei provincial government. These taxes, as we have seen, were collected by the Anguo Chamber of Commerce, which protected its constituents in its role as tax farmer. Nonetheless, any decline in the number of brokers and in the volume of trade would have increased the tax burden of the remaining individual companies at Anguo as long as they were held to the government quota, unless prices rose. This process would have created a spiral of decline as more and more traders sought less regulated markets in lower-level towns. Furthermore, the flight of traders to lower-level markets suggests that even a light tax burden of 2% or less on trade cut into the narrow unit profit margins that made the difference to these businessmen.

After 1937, the Tianjin trade report tells us, the overland routes leading into Anguo were severed by the Japanese occupation. At the same time, we can surmise that the occupation forces protected the railway lines to
to ensure food and military supplies for occupied cities. This situation offered unprecedented security for rail shippers and enabled Tianjin businessmen to begin building Tianjin as the new center of the medicine trade in North China.

Thus the economies offered by efficient rail transport, and the desire to avoid taxes, caused medicine traders to look elsewhere for markets for their goods in the 1930s and 40s. The changing economic climate at Anguo in turn undermined the privileges of its business elite by constricting the resources under their control. The local banking system must have been particularly vulnerable to the shifting market. Its capacity to supply credit at other major medicine trade centers made reliance on Anguo banks an imperative for merchants in this market without access to cash. With rail and telegraph speeding the turnover of goods and cash, the old credit function of the native banks lost its importance.

These same new opportunities for quicker profits also lessened the importance of the personalized brokerage in the Anguo system. New markets with access to telegraph and rail service offered higher stakes, but also required traders to turn to new professional banking and transport services based more on contract and less on personal acquaintance.

Local Merchant Elites in Traditional Society: The Power of a Historically Invisible Class

If political and military China were as well organized as commercial China, the foreign department of her government would not be so continually embarrassed by the demands of Western nations for spheres of influence and concessions of territory.26

So remarked one early 20th-century China hand in a book on Chinese law and commerce, proceeding then to catalogue the notorious organizational capabilities of the Chinese guilds, from their power to assess and levy their own taxes to their dead hand in labor strikes to their control
over competition, fraud, weights, measures, interest rates and prices—all maintained through the exercise of what he termed "inquisitorial" rights over the business of members.

Organized merchants in China, like large-scale lineages and gentry networks, constituted one of the most formidable obstacles to the penetration of state power below the county level during the late empire. The Republican government sought, with limited success, to control merchant organizations through laws and regulations taxing trade and governing Chambers of Commerce and trade associations. In its early years, the government of the PRC dealt cautiously with the local capitalist class, proceeding to nationalize private commercial wealth in stages so as not to disrupt production. The gradual transition to socialism in the business sector therefore involved a preliminary stage in which the state became the purchasing agent for commodities produced by private enterprise. Only later were local businesses reorganized as joint state-private concerns prior to the creation of state-owned companies. Only in 1956-57 was local private enterprise fully submerged in state organizations.27

As powerful as these local merchant groups were, I have presented evidence that changes in the twentieth century economy and government were beginning to undercut their position prior to the forcible intrusion of government policy under the PRC. Solinger (1979) argues that PRC policies toward merchant organizations succeeded not through a direct frontal attack on merchants and their organizations, but rather by systematically destroying those aspects of local economic organization that enabled traditional merchant associations to flourish. The case of the Anguo county medicine fair suggests that changes in the environment of traditional merchant groups began before they were forced by post-1949 government policy. These changes, like PRC policy, produced an environment hostile to the traditional organization of trade, and they occurred in two ways: as an indirect result of KMT government tax policy toward business, and as a consequence of processes of modernization, particularly improved transport networks.

One reason why KMT policy did not control merchants more effectively was that merchants concealed
themselves well from direct government scrutiny. Despite
the notoriety of the Four Great Families and the big
bureaucratic capitalists of the Republican era, little
is yet known of the size, composition, and wealth of
local entrepreneurial groups. The two Ch'ing period
gazetteers for Anguo county, dated 1756 and 1906, can be
read cover to cover without more than a passing reference
to the semi-annual medicine fair. There is no mention of
merchants and trade organizations in either work. Zheng
Hecheng, the survey researcher who collected data for
the 1932 study on which this paper was based, was told
frankly by one of the few members of the local Chamber
of Commerce who would speak with him that he was welcome
to find out whatever he could by keeping his ears open,
but that no merchant would report anything for fear of
drawing government attention to a source of untaxed reve­
nue. ("The minute they heard the word 'survey'--diaocha--
they assumed we were tax collectors.") Figures, even
tax estimates rounded to units of 50 yuan for each busi-
ness, were not to be had. Zheng contented himself with
the aggregate annual tax quota reported to the govern-
ment.

The materials Zheng did manage to collect nonethe-
less present important information about merchant roles
in 20th century local politics and about the erosion of
their claims to autonomy. The Anguo system provides a
good example of traditional trading systems. It supplied
a domestic market that catered to traditional tastes and
consumption patterns. It was impervious to most of the
effects of treaty port supply and demand that affected
many rural markets during this period. Anguo's traders
and bankers conducted their business in traditional
fashion, through the companies (hang), regional asso-
ciations (bang), native banks (yinhao), and brokers
(jingji) found in all of China's regional trading systems.
Furthermore, the semi-annual fair stood at the apex of a
local political economy in which eleven counties partic-
ipated in a regular semi-annual cycle of credit and cash
flows.

However, changing transportation networks and new
taxes by the eve of the Japanese occupation had reduced
the central flow of Anguo's old medicine trade and pulled
it out in four directions into surrounding market towns, closer to major transport arteries and away from the organizational framework that had drawn the attention of the government tax collectors. These changes eroded the spatial and financial advantages long enjoyed by Anguo bankers and by its Chamber of Commerce. In 1949 leading trade organizations of North China's medicine trade confronted the government of the People's Republic not in Anguo County, but in the city of Tianjin.

If in fact similar rural-urban shifts in the centers for marketing other commodities with a national market occurred during the 1930s and 1940s, then the task of the PRC after 1949--changing the "structural and cultural environment" of traditional trade systems--was made easier. Standardizing weights, measures, prices, and the grading and sorting of goods for a national market was a simpler task when the government could work through a national products association located in a major urban center on a rail line. As Solinger points out, far from fighting to stamp out the influence of county-level merchant elites, one of the main goals of the early PRC government became the temporary resuscitation of rural trading systems in order to restore the health of the economy.30

NOTES

1. By the 19th century, the distinction between "gentry" and "merchant" elites was increasingly difficult to draw in many parts of China. The leaders of the Chamber of Commerce in this study were called "gentry" (shen) by the person who interviewed them. Chang Chung-li, in his study of gentry income sources, argues that "gentry" income from commerce (particularly pawnbroking and native banking) was significant by the 19th century (Chang 1962, 149-98). He estimates gentry income from "mercantile activities" to be 113,600,000 taels, slightly more than half their estimated income from landholding (220,000,000 taels).

2. See Zheng 1932-1933 for the study on which much of this paper is based. This invaluable field survey is one
of those listed in a useful bibliographic note on "Neglected historical sources on the late Ch'ing and early Republican rural economy," by David Faure, in Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i 4.1 (June 1979), 58-93. I am indebted to Thomas Rawski for discussions that helped clarify many of the issues raised in this paper, only a few of which are noted below. He of course is not responsible for the errors that remain. Robert G. Hertel prepared the base map from which Map 3 was taken.


8. Dorothy Solinger has done the pioneering work on this transition, and I am grateful to her for calling her recent articles to my attention. See Solinger 1979 and references below. Cf. her "Socialist goals and capitalist tendencies in Chinese commerce, 1949-1952," Modern China 6.2 (April 1980), 197-224.


10. I am indebted to Tom Rawski for culling these last figures from the Ji Cha diaocha (1936). Figures for local industrial wages may be found in Hebei sheng gong-shang tongji (1929), "Industry" (Kongye), p. 62.


25. I am indebted to Tom Rawski for conversations clarifying this point. See also the explanation of the "profitless sale" in Crow 1937, 46-66.


27. See Hsueh et al. 1960, 225-6. This transformation is described in detail in Solinger 1979.

28. Qizhou zhi 1756, 2:22a; Anguo xian xin zhi gao 1906.


30. On changing the structural and cultural environment of trade, see Solinger 1979, 187; on restoring rural trade, see the same article, pp. 180-6. On the recent resuscitation of the medicine trade at Anguo, see China reconstructs 29.8 (August 1980), 42-43. The article, entitled "Anguo--Medicine City," includes a photograph of the restored Yao Wang Miao.
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Qizhou zhi [A gazetteer of the Department of Qi], compiled by Wang Kai. Qianlong edition of 1756.


GLOSSARY

An Ke Tang 安客堂
Anguo 安國
bang 幫
bao yao lou zi 抱藥簍子
Bozhou 亳州
da che 大車
Dawunuzhen 大午女鎮
diaocha 調查
Dingxian 定縣
fa tsai 發財
gan miao 閣廟
hang 行
hui 會
Jung Show Zonghui 經手總會
jingji 經紀
Liqinguzhen 李親顧鎮
qi huo dian 起火店
Qingfengdianzhen 清風店鎮
Qizhou 祁州
Shang Hui 商會
Shanhuo 山貨
Shifozhen 石佛鎮
Shijiazhuan 石家莊
Tanhuai 覃懷
ti ba 提拔
Tong Ren Tang 同仁堂
Wurenqiaozhen 伍仁橋鎮
Xibozhangzhen 西伯章鎮
Ya Ji Ju 羊紀局
Yao Wang Miao 藥王廟
yinhao 銀號
Yuzhou 烏州
Zhangde 彭德
Zhangjiakou 張家口
Zheng Hecheng 增合成
DESTRATIFICATION IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

by William L. Parish

To this thirsting for a truly egalitarian society, China once seemed to provide new hope. From the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 through the fall of the Gang of Four in 1976, there was a radical attempt in China to reduce the authority of teachers, technocrats, and older administrators, to narrow the income gap between high and low status positions, to reward with moral rather than material incentives, and to substitute political commitment for achievement as a basis for educational advancement and later occupational placement. Since 1976, the new leadership in Peking has begun to systematically dismantle this experiment in destratification. In schools, achievement measured by examinations has become the principal basis for promotion. Young political activists who rose to power during the 1966-76 decade have been shoved aside and demoted. Experienced teachers, technocrats, and other bureaucrats have been restored to authority. Salary increases have been reinstalled for some higher level positions, and the talk is all about how China, still being a socialist rather than full communist society, needs material incentives to reward and motivate workers.

The radical experiment of the 1966-76 decade and its subsequent reversal pose two questions. First, during the radical decade did China really become all that different from other societies? How much was just propaganda puff and how much was real change? Second, to the extent that there was change, what has brought about the recent counter policy? Did the radical attempt at destratification really cause problems for the society? Or, is the new policy simply the result of the pre-1966 bureaucratic and intellectual elite, the "new class" in Djilas' terms, trying to restore its privileges?
Data

This paper attempts to deal with these two questions using data from interviews conducted in Hong Kong with 133 emigres from 50 cities and towns scattered throughout China.* Most of these emigres left China, some illegally as refugees, others legally with exit visas between 1972 and 1978, thus providing data on Chinese society at the end of the radical destratification experiment and at the start of the restratification policy. The units of analysis are not the emigres themselves, for they surely are a biased sample—too young, too many males, too many intellectuals, and so on. Rather, the units of analysis are, first, 2,843 of the emigres' former neighbors for which we have such census characteristics as education, occupation, and income. These characteristics provide the answer to the question of how egalitarian China became in its radical decade. Second, the emigres provide data on their work units and how their fellow workers responded to the attempts to narrow income discrepancies and to replace material with moral incentives. These data help answer the question of whether there were real pressures from below which would favor an attempt to re-stratify the society and to provide more material rewards.

The emigres hold a range of political opinions. Some of those with legal exit visas, who can and sometimes do go back for visits, remain defensive about washing China's dirty linen in public. They hesitate to mention negative events in their past experience. Others, more often the refugees, are committed to doing just the opposite. The primary check on veracity is to press for concrete details of daily life in the emigre's former neighborhood and work unit. Questions about the age of a neighbor's child, his education, and current occupation are likely to be immune to political position. Questions about recent events in the emigre's former work unit are less immune to bias. But by sticking to concrete events, one develops a picture of the 1966-76 decade which is generally consistent across emigres of different persuasion and which, by the way, is more moderate than the extremely negative story presented in today's official press.

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Additional checks on veracity and the representativeness of our sample are possible. Figures on average incomes are most encouraging. The part of the sample which covers the drainage basin of the West River running through Kwangtung and Kwangsi—the Lingnan Region—includes the widest range of occupations, cities and towns of different sizes. When weighted by population size to approximate the distribution of cities shown in the atlas for this region, this sample of 807 employed individuals has an average income of 46 yuan per month in the state sector and 39 yuan per month in the non-agricultural collective sector prior to 1978. These two figures are only slightly below a published pre-1978 average for all of China of 50 yuan in the state and 39 yuan in the collective sector of the economy. Similarly, 79% of the sample is in the state sector while published figures note that 78% of workers through China are in the state sector.¹ Thus, in the economic area, with which we are most concerned, sample and published results are quite similar. It is on the basis of this similarity and on the basis of good results in an earlier village study using the same study techniques that we are so bold in generalizing from the results that follow.²

Equality of Condition

The traditional hope for socialist societies has been that they would reduce overall inequality of personal conditions and give formerly dispossessed groups a new chance to participate fully in society. The counter fear has been that socialist societies would only substitute one elite for another, shoving new groups to the bottom and denying them equal opportunity for social mobility. How has China developed in terms of this twin set of concerns about overall inequality and opportunities for mobility? And, in considering equality of condition, how does China distribute both income and material goods?
The Chinese system for distributing income was not born afresh in either 1949 nor in the 1966 radical reforms. It borrowed both from China's own past and from the Soviet Union, with later patching and amending by the new revolutionary government.

Starting in 1949, former high government officials were kicked from office. In time, landlords and capitalists lost their property and some professionals lost their private practice. But many people including engineers, doctors, and professors were kept on at salaries similar to what they had been earning before. In 1956, a Soviet-style wage system was adopted. The old revolutionary free supply system was abandoned for a strict grading of administrative personnel into over twenty salary grades, of technicians into seventeen grades, and workers into eight grades, plus prizes and bonuses for exceptional performance. The Chinese were never very happy with this system, and began to soften some of its harder material aspects soon after its adoption. By the late 1950s, in the Great Leap Forward, the use of piece rates in industry was sharply curtailed. By 1963, the top salaries for government officials were reduced from some 600 yuan a month to a little over 400 yuan a month—compared to an average worker's salary of about 50 yuan a month. Yet, the system remained essentially intact until the 1966 Cultural Revolution when radicals gained control of the government and tried to restore the revolutionary equality and elan of the pre-1949 revolutionary period. All piece rates, bonuses, and prizes were eliminated. Higher and middle salaries were frozen, and some managers and administrators were de-moted for a time. The only general promotions after 1963 were around 1971 and 1973, and then they were given only for a minority of low-wage, medium-seniority workers. There were no merit raises. A few political activists moved into leadership positions, but in theory even they were to retain their old worker salaries. Thus, the system we are sampling in the early 1970s is one which has been largely constant since the early 1960s except for the promotions of some low-wage workers and the elimination of bonuses for workers at all levels.
What was the net result of this system for income inequality? By the early 1970s, China was considerably more equal than other developing societies. Those states which remained under a market system provided less for their urban poor and more for their rich than did China (table 1). The poorest 40 percent of China's urban households got 25 percent of the total income distributed in cities, while in 24 developing market states, the poorest 40 percent got only 15 percent of urban incomes. A similar story is repeated with other measures of income distribution. China's expropriation of income-earning property in the 1950s, its restricted wage scales, and policy of equalization after 1966 had a definite impact on the urban distribution of income.3

But how does China compare with other socialist states which have also expropriated property and forced people to move into the public sector? Is the expropriation of property and socialization of labor sufficient to produce China's level of equality? Or did it take the special measures of the Cultural Revolution to produce China's income distribution? On the whole, China is slightly more equal than the average socialist state (see table 1, last row). And in state by state comparisons, China is at least as equal as the most egalitarian states of socialist Europe (table 2). Under Stalin in the 1930s and 1940s, Russia was a highly inequalitarian society. Egalitarian reforms in the late 1950s and mid-1960s narrowed income gaps in Russia, but still in 1970 Russian workers at the ninetieth percentile were earning 3.2 times as much as those at the tenth percentile. The states of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Romania were considerably more equal with the high income earners receiving only 2.3 or 2.4 times as much as the low income earners. China was at least as equal or more equal, with high income earners receiving only 2.3 to 2.2 times as much as low income earners. Given that economic development tends to increase equality and that the European socialist states used for comparison are all much more highly developed, the Chinese accomplishment is impressive. China is not a copy of the Soviet Union which it mimicked for a time in the mid-1950s.

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TABLE 1

URBAN INCOME INEQUALITY BY TYPE OF COUNTRY AND MEASUREMENT UNIT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of Total Income Received By:</th>
<th>Cini Index of Inequality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poorest 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China b</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing market states c</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist states d</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a The measurement units are: HH = households by total household income; PC = population by per capita household income; and EAP = economically active population by personal income.

b The three Chinese weighted samples include 305 households, 1374 total population, and 899 economically active population.

c Nations with a 1970 gross national product of U.S. $1200 or less, giving a total of 24 nations for HH, 3 for PC, and 3 for EAP mean figures.

d Five nations--see Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Decile Ratios</th>
<th>Gini Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ca. 1970</td>
<td>ca. 1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>USSR</strong></td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poland</strong></td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yugoslavia</strong></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hungary</strong></td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bulgaria</strong></td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Czechoslovakia</strong></td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rumania</strong></td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>China: Economically active population</strong></td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>China: State employed population</strong></td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\*Decile ratio = ratio of earnings by workers and staff at the 90th percentile to earnings by workers and staff at the 10th percentile.

Sources: 1972-78 Chinese Urban Survey.

Shail Jain, *Size Distribution of Income*, *op. cit.*, Circa 1964 Gini data.

While the Soviet Union was becoming more equal in the 1960s, China moved even faster to avoid the more egalitarian aspects of the Soviet model and to adopt reforms of its own to become one of the most egalitarian of socialist states.

The overall distribution of incomes among individuals is more revealing than the distribution of income among occupational groups. Much of the inequality in income is among people in the same occupation rather than between occupations. Nevertheless, the distribution of income by occupational group provides a visual characterization of how resources are distributed (see figure 1). In China, there is no self-employed group of doctors, lawyers, and engineers to boost professional incomes. Yet (1) higher professionals are second in income only to (2) government administrative cadres (xing-jeng gan-bu). Next, (3) factory and store manager (ye-wu gan-bu) incomes are considerably lower. Personal incomes continue on down through (4) teachers, accountants, nurse, and other lower professionals; (5) office clerks, postmen, cashiers, and sales clerks; (6) drivers, transport workers and other skilled workers; (7) barbers, cooks, waiters, and other service personnel; (8) ordinary and semi-skilled blue collar workers; to (9) street cleaners, apprentices, housemaids, and other unskilled and casual laborers.

With minor exceptions, this progression is similar to that found in other states. It is somewhat flatter than that found in the United States—Chinese laborers on the bottom make 46 percent as much as administrators and managers while U.S. laborers have a mean income only 31 percent as high as administrators and managers. 4

This describes the personal or individual distribution of income. The distribution of income by household is somewhat different. With many women working and with some coresident sons working as well, family income tends to be averaged among several laborers working in different types of jobs. The result is a per capita household income distribution which is considerably more equal than the personal income distribution (figure 1).
FIGURE 1
MONTHLY INCOME BY OCCUPATION

Unweighted
N = (31) (184) (26) (73) (32) (104) (50) (29) (49)
1 = High professionals 4 = Low professionals 7 = Service workers
2 = Administrative cadres 5 = Clerical & sales 8 = Ordinary & semi-skilled
3 = Managerial cadres 6 = Skilled manual 9 = Unskilled & marginal

Source: 1972-78 Chinese Urban Sample, Weighted Sub-Sample of Economically Active Males.
It is only the higher professionals with exceptionally few children and the administrators with their high personal salaries who stand out from the rest of the population. It is this relatively equal distribution of per capita household income which is a frequent referent in later analysis.

Consumption

In considering equality in socialist states, one cannot rest content to examine only reports of income distributions. Even when income is available in socialist states, one may not be able to buy goods and services which are siphoned off by the bureaucratic elite before ever reaching the open market. In China, our informants suggest, special stores for the elite are rare outside the capital, Peking—or at least our informants are unaware of more than a few special sundry stores within bureaucratic offices providing better grades of cigarettes, soap, and other daily items. But what of special housing? And can the distribution system which is heavily rationed be subverted covertly, even if not so overtly as in the Soviet Union?

Housing is perceived as being extremely scarce in China's major cities. Only a small proportion of housing remained private in the major cities in the early 1970s, and the rest was allocated either through one's neighborhood housing office or work unit. The waiting lists for residential units are long. A young couple having registered to marry can easily expect a one to three year wait before a place will open up for them, and many give up and simply move into cramped quarters with their parents. Our more cynical informants argue that personal connections can be used to gain better housing allocations from the neighborhood housing office. Others assert that favoritism plays no role, noting that people with larger apartments have been forced to accept those in greater need—especially during the Cultural Revolution. Leaders, these informants argue, get slightly better places only because they have more money to pay the rent and because they were around in the 1950s when more places were available.
The statistics on housing density and facilities give qualified support to the egalitarian description of Chinese urban housing. The number of rooms per person (always less than 1.0 in these countries) rises less steeply or regularly with occupation than in Poland or Hungary (see figure 2). Similarly, personal income in China is less tightly linked to housing density. The correlation between rooms per person and personal income is 0.19 in China while it is 0.24 and 0.33 in Finnish and Polish cities. Neither are bathing and toilet facilities so closely linked. The absolute figures are not strictly comparable. Chinese bathing facilities may include just a tub in one's own kitchen or in the toilet. And our figure on toilet facilities is the inverse of the number of households using the same toilet, which is often a communal facility. It is, however, the differential between high and low status occupations which is of most interest, and this shows both a more irregular and a more equal pattern than in other socialist states (figures 3 and 4). These figures all point towards relative equality of housing conditions in China.

Other more detailed tabulations show that this is a qualified equality, however. The most important determinants of both housing density and housing facilities are the administrative level of the city in which the dwelling is situated, the ownership of the dwellings, and per capita household income (table 3). Dwellings in Peking and provincial capitals have fewer and smaller rooms but better facilities. Privately owned and occupied houses (more common in small towns) are better all around except for water and bathing facilities. Greater income buys larger, but not necessarily better-equipped dwelling space. Once these elements are controlled in regression equations, higher professionals and government administrators fare no better than anyone else in getting space and rooms for their family. They fare somewhat better in getting a kitchen, toilet, and bath to themselves, for these often come in official quarters in which they are housed. In the early 1970s, then, Chinese urban housing did not contribute seriously to material inequality. Partly as
FIGURE 2
HOUSING DENSITY BY OCCUPATION AND COUNTRY

China
1 = High professionals 4 = Low professionals 7 = Service workers
2 = Administrative cadres 5 = Clerical & sales 8 = Ordinary & semi-skilled
3 = Managerial cadres 6 = Skilled manual 9 = Unskilled & marginal

Poland and Hungary
1 = Intelligentsia 4 = Clerical 7 = Skilled workers
2 = Professional non-manual 5 = Physical mental workers 8 = Semi-skilled workers
3 = Technicians 6 = Foremen, etc. 9 = Unskilled workers

Sources: 1972-78 Chinese Urban Survey, Economically Active Males,
Walter D. Connor, Socialism, Politics, and Equality. New York: Columbia University
Press, 1979, p. 162.
FIGURE 3
BATHING FACILITIES BY OCCUPATION

China
1 = High professionals
2 = Administrative cadres
3 = Managerial cadres
4 = Low professionals
5 = Clerical & sales
6 = Skilled manual
7 = Service workers
8 = Ordinary & semi-skilled
9 = Unskilled & marginal

Poland and Hungary
1 = Intellectuals
2 = Professional non-manual
3 = Technicians
4 = Clericals
5 = Physical-mental workers
6 = Foremen, etc.
7 = Skilled workers
8 = Semi-skilled workers
9 = Unskilled workers

Sources: 1972-78 Chinese Urban Survey, Economically Active Males.
Figure 4
TOILET FACILITIES BY OCCUPATION

Proportion of households with own toilet in Poland and toilets per households (= inverse of number of households per toilet) in China.

China
1 = High professionals
2 = Administrative cadres
3 = Managerial cadres
4 = Low professionals
5 = Clerical & sales
6 = Skilled manual
7 = Service workers
8 = Ordinary & semi-skilled
9 = Unskilled & marginal

Poland
1 = Intellectuals
2 = Professional non-manual
3 = Technicians
4 = Clericals
5 = Physical-mental workers
6 = Foremen, etc.
7 = Skilled workers
8 = Semi-skilled workers
9 = Unskilled workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Administrative Level of City</th>
<th>Self-Owned House</th>
<th>Per Capita Household Income</th>
<th>Male Occupations</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living area per person (square meters)</td>
<td>-.33*</td>
<td>4.04*</td>
<td>.186*</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.34 (662)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rooms per person</td>
<td>-.02*</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.009*</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.18 (730)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room differential(^a)</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
<td>.87*</td>
<td>.018*</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.32 (396)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchens per household</td>
<td>-.04*</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.15 (696)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilets per household</td>
<td>.08*</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.002*</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.31*</td>
<td>.12 (680)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water in building</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>-.20*</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.29 (645)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own bath</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>-.04*</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.27*</td>
<td>.20 (576)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)See the text for explanation of indices.

\(^p \leq .05\)

a result of occupying better official quarters, rather than public or private housing, higher professionals and government administrators had somewhat better kitchen, toilet, and bathing facilities. But they shared meager space and few rooms just like everyone else.7

What of differences in other areas? Have administrative and technical elites been able to gain special access to scarce goods? Or does the distribution system serve everyone equally? Some goods are much easier to buy and more widely distributed than others. Though still rationed, bicycles are common, as are watches and radios (figure 5). Ninety-two percent of all households have at least one watch and 76 percent a bicycle. The variability among households comes more in the number of bicycles and watches owned rather than in the presence or absence of these goods (see the right hand scale of figure 5). Sewing machines, electric fans, cameras, and televisions are scarcer. Sewing machines, like bicycles, continue to be rationed through work units. Electric fans, cameras, and televisions are unrationed and high priced.

Visual inspection of the raw figures in figure 5 suggests, first, that the scarcer goods are more tightly tied to income and occupation than other goods. Second, it suggests that the distribution system may be subverted more by sales workers than by the new administrative elite. There is a saying in the city of Canton that every family should maintain relations with three valuables (san-bao)—a doctor, truck driver, and sales clerk. The doctor can help one beat the lines and medical shortages at hospitals. The truck driver can get cheap goods from markets outside the city. The sales clerk can notify one when scarce goods like electric fans, televisions, and better clothing is about to arrive on the market. The consistency of the upward bump down the middle of figure 5 suggests that the clerical and sales workers are indeed blessed.

This problem can be examined in greater detail with statistical controls. Large families with a good income in major administrative cities acquire the most possessions (table 4). Once these background conditions
FIGURE 5.
FAMILY POSESSIONS BY OCCUPATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>Watches</th>
<th>Radio</th>
<th>Bicycles</th>
<th>Sewing Machine</th>
<th>Electric Fan</th>
<th>Camera</th>
<th>TV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = High professionals</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = Administrative cadres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = Managerial cadres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = Low professionals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = Clerical &amp; sales</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 = Skilled manual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 = Service workers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 = Ordinary &amp; semi-skilled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 = Unskilled &amp; marginal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Watches and bicycles are indexed on the right-hand side, the rest on the left.

Source: 1972-78 Urban Sample, Economically Active Males.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Administrative Level of City</th>
<th>Per Capita Household Income</th>
<th>Number of Household Members</th>
<th>Male Occupations</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>( N )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watch and/or radio</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>.31*</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle and/or sewing machine</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.02*</td>
<td>.21*</td>
<td>.60*</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fan, camera, and/or TV</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>.01*</td>
<td>.06*</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.30*</td>
<td>58*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \( p \leq .05 \)

are taken into account, neither sales work nor high position causes one to get more of the widely available watches and radios. However, administrative position and sales and clerical positions do aid one in getting rationed bicycles and sewing machines. Rationed through work units, clerical and sales workers, and to some extent government administrators, seem to be able to meddle in the distribution system for their own ends. Administrators and sales and clerical workers may also intervene to some extent to get scarce electric fans, cameras, and television. But it is the high professionals who purchase the most relative to their income and household situation, suggesting that a cultural taste for televisions and cameras may be as important as special access to these goods.

Again, we conclude that though the new administrative class is able to turn the system in its favor, this is only a limited distortion. Clerical and sales workers of only middling status are able to do just about as well as the higher status administrators and professionals. The Chinese distribution of goods seems more equal than in some other socialist states. And there seems to be little necessity to amend the conclusion drawn from the income data that urban China has been exceptionally egalitarian.

Equality of Opportunity

The discussion of equality of condition by itself is excessively static. By focusing on inequality at one point in time it misses change in the stratification system that was only beginning to emerge under the post-1966 radical reforms. It deals neither with whether the old under-classes were beginning to rise in society nor with whether a new elite class had begun to reproduce itself.

Class Labels

In China, from the early 1950s to late 1970s, it was not too hard to tell whether the old class order was being inverted, since everyone carried a class label marking their class origin. In cities, the process of class
labeling was never completely systematic, but in a series of political campaigns in the early 1950s, families gradually began to be identified with a label such as capitalist, merchant, peddler, worker, or poor peasant. Professionals, minor bureaucrats, and other intellectuals took the nebulous label of "staff" which remained a relatively neutral label through the early 1960s. Other labels were more highly charged, with worker and poor peasant being the more esteemed labels while capitalist, landlord, and "bogus staff" (for higher level bureaucrats in the previous government) labels were officially despised. Some labels could be earned, including the positive one of "revolutionary cadre" if one or one's father became a substantial administrative official and the negative ones of "counter-revolutionary" or "rightist" if one was found in error in one of the myriad of political campaigns of the 1950s. The precise emphasis on these labels ebbed and flowed with the political wind, but with Mao Tse-tung's injunction to "never forget class struggle," they were never forgotten.

From the radical's point of view, one's class label should affect all one's life chances, from education, through occupation, to one's rate of pay and promotion. In the early years of the regime, the educational differences among those of different class label did narrow quite rapidly (figure 6). Continuing a process begun by the 1930s and slowed only by the Japanese invasion in the 1940s, urban residents of peddler, worker, and peasant origin began to approach the educational level of the formerly dominant capitalists, staff, and similar classes. By the early 1960s, in the children's generation, class was even less of an indicator of educational achievement. Yet, while the gaps between people of different class origin were narrowing, the rank order of educational accomplishment remained, with one major exception, the same. By the early 1960s, the children of the new elite administrative cadres began to get the most education, attending elite boarding schools, which later in the Cultural Revolution came to be attacked as "little treasure pagodas." And with admission as much by rigid academic exams as by recommendation, the cadre children were often joined in these special schools by the sons.
FIGURE 6
YEARS EDUCATION BY CLASS LABEL AND YEAR REACHED AGE TWENTY

Source: 1972-78 Chinese Urban Sample
of old professional and other intellectual staff members as well as by the sons and daughters of former capitalists. China was falling short of the goal of inverting the old class order and in danger of quickly adding a new elite class on top of the old. Worker, peasant, and peddler children continued to get fewer years of education and were relegated to second level schools which often combined work with study and had smaller budgets than the elite schools.

The issue of educational sorting came to a head in the 1960s as the state began to run out of urban jobs for new school graduates. The early 1960s was a time of retrenchment with many unprofitable factories being closed in the wake of the 1958-59 Great Leap. Much as in American academia today, most of the best jobs in China had been taken by a young cohort in the 1950s. In the 1960s, that earlier cohort was far from retirement. There was little career mobility, and very few openings at the bottom for new entrants into the labor market. Those jobs which continued to be given, were again given to a goodly extent on the basis of academic merit and recommendations from one's middle school. And as in other societies, the children of the old elite, doing the best in school, continued to get the best jobs (see figure 7). The pre-1949 order was never thoroughly inverted even in the first years of the regime. Capitalist parents from the 1930-49 generation were hindered in getting and keeping the best jobs. But their children regained part of their lost advantage in the 1950s and continued it into the 1960s (figure 7).

Meanwhile, the children of workers and peasants got the poorer jobs or no jobs at all. With increasing urban unemployment, the administration turned to sending youth to the countryside, and it was often the worker and peasant children with poor academic records who were sent first. Under these circumstances, there was ever more serious debate over the proper emphasis on academic achievement, political commitment, and class origin. Emphasis on political commitment or on "serve the people" might be ideal, but it was hard to measure and the children of intellectuals and capitalist, it was feared,
FIGURE 7
CURRENT OCCUPATIONAL RANK BY CLASS LABEL AND YEAR REACHED AGE TWENTY

Source: 1972-78 Chinese Urban Sample.
were good at dissembling proper attitudes. Class origin had its drawbacks as well, as some very committed people would be left behind.

Nevertheless, the answer of the Cultural Revolution was that academic excellence was to be abandoned since it selected careerists and people of bad class origin. Class origin was to be the principal screening device, with staff children now being declared suspect along with capitalist and other bad class children. After initial screening on class origin, promotion was to be on the basis of political commitment which could best be measured by how one performed at lengthy stints of factory and farm work both while in school and for a number of years afterwards. Work periods during school were increased, and the total number of years of pre-collegiate education were abbreviated from twelve to nine or, in some places, ten years. College enrollment was drastically curtailed.

There were loopholes in the college admission and urban job selection procedures which relied on class origin and recommendation by leaders in the work unit where one proved dedication to serving the people. Urban children of intermediate class origin could get themselves declared peasants after a few years in the countryside and reenter urban universities under new peasant quotas. Cadres could get their children favored by intervening in the recommendation process, and increasingly in the 1970s the press accused them of doing just that—of "going by the back door." Nevertheless, the new policy had much of its intended effect. Everyone moved rapidly toward the new norm of nine years education (see the final points in figure 6). With special schools closed, and exams watered down, worker, peasant, and other good class children were simply passed through the school system for their allotted number of years. Staff and cadre children continued to do somewhat better than the rest, but capitalist children were more positively discriminated against and lost their former favored position.

Similar trends took place in the occupational world. The few urban jobs that were open tended to be jobs as workers or similar ones with low starting salaries
(figure 8). Indeed, jobs as blue collar workers in factories began to be esteemed. Even the children of intellectuals and capitalist began to seek blue collar factory jobs, as such jobs provided both relief from the rigors of the countryside and long term security free from the dangers of political attack which so threatened bureaucrats, teachers, and other intellectuals. As was intended, capitalist and other bad class children suffered the sharpest reversal, losing their favored occupational positions to others. Staff and other intellectuals' children got jobs no better than peasant children. And, as unanticipated, but later signaled in the press, cadre children gained in the occupational world the advantage they had formerly gained in education. With the minor exception of cadre children, the new radical policies were having their intended effect of narrowing and inverting the class order.

Some of the regression towards mean educational levels and mean occupational levels seen in figures 6 and 7 could have occurred just as a matter of course as a few elite sons and daughters fell into lower positions and a few low status children became educated and rose into higher position. That is, the observed process could represent no more than individual social mobility which left the greater social order unchanged. Also, some of the apparent decline in occupational levels and income could be no more than the inexperience of the young who had yet to rise into the prime of their occupational careers. Can we show that more than this was occurring—that Chinese policy intervention was indeed able to reshape the social order?

A comparison with trends in the United States suggests that more was occurring—that there was positive social intervention. The data are for individuals rather than class groups. In the U.S., average occupational prestige and average income levels have been relatively constant across generations (table 5, rows 5 and 6). Educational levels have risen steadily (row 4). But in China, there has been a sharp decline in both occupational rank and income (rows 2 and 3). After rising for a time, average educational levels began to decline in the late 1960s. The Chinese pattern is distinctive.
FIGURE 8
CURRENT INCOME BY CLASS LABEL AND YEAR REACHED AGE TWENTY

YUAN PER MONTH

Parental Generation Year Transitional Children's Generation

Source: 1972-78 Chinese Urban Sample.
TABLE 5
AVERAGE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS BY GENERATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Reached Age Twenty:</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Sample</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Age in 1972-78:</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Years education</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Occupational rank</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Income</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (occupation)</td>
<td>(84)</td>
<td>(162)</td>
<td>(222)</td>
<td>(233)</td>
<td>(294)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in 1962:</th>
<th>55-64</th>
<th>65-54</th>
<th>75-64</th>
<th>25-34</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Index of Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Years education</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Occupational prestige</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Income</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Patterns of variability about these averages also support our earlier generalizations of narrowing status differentials (table 6). Expressed as the standard deviation of a distribution divided by its mean, the coefficient of variation shows the extent to which there is great inequality in a population or a wide spread between those with much and little education or much and little income. A high figure indicates great spread or great inequality—a small figure the reverse. In the U.S., the variability in occupational prestige remained relatively constant across time. Inequalities in education and income declined only slightly. In China, in contrast, there has been a very sharp narrowing of educational and income inequalities, and occupational inequalities declined slightly as well. The reshaping of the social order in China, then, was more than just apparent; it was real, with old inequalities being drastically reduced and with education, occupation, and income levels being brought down at the same time.

Parental Occupation and Education

Children in China have been influenced not only by the class label which marked their fathers' position as of about 1949 but also by their fathers' current occupation and education. Class label is an imperfect indicator of occupational status which shifted quite radically for some people after 1949. Examination of father's current education and occupation and the status attainment of children age 16-39 (the generation that reached maturity since 1949) provides a better estimate of the extent to which post-1949 status groups are reproducing themselves.

The data are divided between children who reached age 20 by the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 and those who did so afterwards. Prior to 1966, even if in muted form, the Chinese process of status attainment resembled patterns found around the world (table 7). Fathers in higher paying positions with more education produced children who got further in the educational system. Better positioned fathers produced sons who got better jobs, and, as we have already seen, those with
### TABLE 6  
**SOCIAL VARIABILITY BY GENERATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Reached Age Twenty:</th>
<th>Chinese Sample</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generation</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937-39</td>
<td>1940-49</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1950-59</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1960-66</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1967-78</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Sample</td>
<td>1960-66</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1967-78</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coefficient of Variation = standard deviation/mean.**

**TABLE 7**

DETERMINANTS OF EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AND INCOME BY YEAR REACHED AGE TWENTY

(Metric Regression Coefficients)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Father's</th>
<th>Child's</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-1966 cohort</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>.46*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-1967 cohort</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupation</strong></td>
<td>- .41</td>
<td>.29*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-1967 cohort</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-1967 cohort</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Class dichotomized with the old high status labels of "staff," merchant, and capitalist = 1, the others = 0.

*Education = years of education. Occupation = mean income of 32 occupational groups. Income = yuan per month.

\*p \( \leq .05 \).

negative class labels continued to do well in the occupational world. Better education and better jobs were turned into higher incomes for high status families. The patterns are familiar. Familial influence over the education and status attainment of children is difficult to erase.

After 1966, however, the Chinese came very close to doing just that. The numbers confirm what informants often report—that after 1967 there was very little that an upper-middle class parent could do to help his children succeed in school or find a better job once they were out. Education was no guarantee of occupational success (table 7, row 4). Government policy to break the reproduction of status groups was indeed effective, and it had the side effect of reducing male advantages in education, occupation, and income as well.

Comparison of China with other countries further confirms China's unique position. Even when the pre-1966 generation is included, there has been extraordinarily little intergenerational transmission of status in China (table 8). Whether compared to the socialist state Poland or to the market states Finland and Norway, upper status Chinese parents have been able to do very little to improve their children's future. Indeed, the factor which stands out most clearly in the Chinese figures is that to get ahead, the best thing a Chinese child could have done was to be born early, getting educated and employed in the 1950s before the vigorous destratification policies of the 1960s.

Evaluation

What are we to make of these changes? The Chinese press is busy these days castigating the 1966-76 destratification regime. Trying to justify their own regime, they have every reason to do so. Can we, using reports of emigres who lived through these years, draw our own conclusions? The reports by emigres vary by social group, each responding in the area where their interests were most severely affected.
### TABLE 8

**DETERMINANTS OF STATUS ATTAINMENT BY COUNTRY**

(% Change Coefficients)\(^a\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable and Country</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Father's Education</th>
<th>Father's Occupation (^b)</th>
<th>(R^2)</th>
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<td>Lower Non-Manual</td>
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<td>2*</td>
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\(^a\) Metric (unstandardized) regression coefficient divided by the mean education and income of each county to indicate what percent change about the mean is induced by one unit's change in an independent variable.

\(^b\) Dummy variables with semi-skilled and ordinary workers being the deleted referent.

*\(p \leq .05\)

**Sources:** 1972-78 Urban Survey, Economically Active Population Age 16-39, N = 329.

Not surprisingly, intellectuals and others in authority were the ones most alarmed by the 1966-76 decade. They objected vehemently to the capriciousness of justice during the decade. They feared that some previously forgotten aspect of their past might be brought up by this or that rebel faction to be used against them. In 1968-69, significant numbers of families with negative class labels were now accused of political crimes on the pretext of their background and dispatched to the countryside. Whole families never before exposed to rural life suddenly had to make do with drastically lower incomes and grain diets in villages where they were not always welcome. Back in the city many others were demoted or remained under a cloud of suspicion. With the judicial system in shambles, as a result of its being attacked as a source of obstructive rules that protected bourgeois privilege, there was no avenue of appeal for what were felt to be unjust charges and punishments meted out by ad hoc rebel groups and non-judicial administrative bodies.

The upper status groups were also very concerned about what was happening to their children. Their concern originated over the fear that they could not provide their children an adequate education or job. But this concern became much more general as the negative consequences of both the rural sending down programs for youth and the new education system became more apparent. With all but one of the children in a family required to go down, virtually everyone became involved. Even after 1949, the norm of family life had continued to be that children support their parents financially, or at least send token amounts signifying the duties owed by a loyal child. But after being sent to the village, children in their late teens and early twenties were not able to earn their keep. They could not cope with the heavy demands of physical labor in agriculture nor earn the extra income off family pig, private plot, and other sidelines which is necessary to economic survival in such a large part of rural China. Many had to turn to their parents for a monthly allowance to make ends meet, an action often interpreted as personal failure. Others drifted back into cities to lounge aimlessly about the streets. Younger children were not
immune. Seeing no point to studying when they faced only a future in the countryside and when there were neither serious examinations nor teachers with any authority, school children ceased studying and joined their older siblings in the street. Boys began smoking by the sixth or seventh grade. There was an outburst of bicycle thefts, pickpocketing on buses, rumbles by gangs protecting their turf, and in one year a wave of school window smashings. Though still tame by U.S. standards, to Chinese parents accustomed to juvenile obedience and complete safety in the streets, these crimes were exceedingly threatening.

There was little that intellectuals could do about either their own personal or their children's situation. Considered politically suspect—the "stinking ninth category," the newest politically suspect group—they could not overtly resist. Instead, many turned to just soldiering on the job—going through the motions but avoiding responsibility for actions that might get them in trouble. In new collective leadership arrangements, managers tried to pass the buck to others, or so we are told by both the press and emigres. Teachers abandoned discipline and strict academic standards lest they earn the enmity of children of good class background or new supervisory committees that could attack them. Intellectuals withdrew effort from work and rushed home to spend their time raising flowers, goldfish, and birds or to engage in other diversions. In some circles of Canton City, this new flurry of hobbies came to be known as the "mass movement" because it rose from below rather than descending from above as did all the other political movements of the time. Alternatively, it was known as the "army, air force, navy" activity, with crickets being the army, birds the air force, and goldfish the navy. Untold hours which might have been spent on work were diverted to other activities.

Not all these concerns and responses were restricted to higher status groups. With their children likely to join gangs or other deviant activity, working class parents were as much alarmed by some of the consequences of China's radical decade as anyone. Workers were also directly
affected by events at their place of work, and these events provide an acid test of the consequences of the Cultural Revolution. Workers along with peasants were supposed to be major beneficiaries of the Cultural Revolution. And workers, along with peasants, were supposed to embody the revolutionary virtues which everyone else in society were to emulate. In industry, they were to lead the way as moral replaced material incentives and political replaced technical leadership.

The elimination of piece rates, bonuses, and merit raises severely curtailed material incentives, as did the elimination of demotions and firings for non-performance on the job. Political study and small group criticism and self-criticism were to provide daily and weekly moral encouragement. Quarterly and annual lists of outstanding workers and work groups, with small red flags by their names, red banners to hang on the wall, commemorative tea mugs to take home, and photographs at the entrance to the factory were the symbols that were to replace the monetary rewards of the past. China had always tried to instill some level of political commitment in the average worker, but the Cultural Revolution made this attempt more massive. On the average, groups of a dozen or so workers in a single work group under a foreman met two or three times per week for an hour to half-hour's study after work. Every month or so the whole factory assembled for a meeting led by the factory's party secretary and factory head. In both total factory meetings and work group meetings, the worker heard at least as much about the latest policy line from Peking as about concrete production problem. Though many workers were not interested in the details of these policy lines, a few political activists could be counted on to pick up current political themes and discuss them vigorously. Even the more reticent were forced to join in at times. "Usually, only a few would do most of the talking and others would just listen," said a worker from a scrap steel plant, "but periodically everyone would have to speak out on what their understanding of an article was." Even if the worker's expressed "understanding" was just a rehash of yesterday's editorial in the People's Daily or the party secretary's speech from the day before, new policies were quickly disseminated
to the total factory population.

When this system worked well, such as before the Cultural Revolution, workers were concerned as much about building a strong nation and a new way of life as about their individual economic welfare. This appears in a comparison to work in Hong Kong by an emigre from a lock factory. "Hong Kong workers have no aspirations other than earning more money. Chinese workers pay much less attention to money. Prior to the Cultural Revolution, being influenced by communist thought, young workers in China were much more concerned about the collective good, the future of the nation, and so on. They were very idealistic." Similarly, those emigres who could have left legally in earlier years because of foreign kin ties report that in the difficult Great Leap years of 1959-61 when they seldom had enough food to fill their stomachs, they nevertheless served contentedly and never thought of leaving because of a sense of participating in a common cause of building a new nation.

Despite this early idealism, emigres report paradoxically that idealism was increasingly absent in the wake of the Cultural Revolution. With an ideology of class struggle, in which one group necessarily attacks another, workers became wary of making political mistakes or speaking to the wrong person, lest they themselves be attacked. Workers began to shy away from frank political discussions, preferring to mouth the correct slogans when necessary and otherwise stick to safer mundane topics of family life and everyday events of the work place. With the emphasis on political commitment rather than high productivity for building a strong nation, some of the former unity of purpose was lost. And without frank political discussion it could not be easily regained. Where factions were left over from the most turbulent 1967-68 years, these too continued to inhibit unity in the early 1970s, and in a few places (now ballyhooed by the press) led to outbreaks of violence and work stoppages in 1975-76.

Moral incentives also proved incapable of being the sole support for work effort. Productivity began to decline, especially among the new Cultural Revolution generation of workers. In the lock factory, "There were
quite a few lazy ones, at least during and in the wake of the Cultural Revolution. People would arrive late and then go out to shop once they were there. We had study meetings daily after work for about half an hour. In these meetings the work group head would sometimes bring up the name of someone who was constantly late and lagging on the job. Occasionally, even the party secretary for the whole factory would look up someone who was lazy and have a little personal talk. Nevertheless, if one's name were brought up just in a study meeting after work, one would not worry about it, for most workers already having worked many years felt secure in their job."

Much as in the U.S. Post Office, some of the problems of laziness were exacerbated by a generous health benefit system. In a scrap steel plant, "After the Cultural Revolution many people were taking a day off from work--some were taking off on their own affairs, some for illness, some were just lazy. Some with doctor acquaintances got [dubious] sick certificates. One gets full pay for sick leave only after eight years of work. [But] if one uses just two hours in going to see a doctor, there is no deduction in pay. So many workers who were late for other reasons would simply say that they had been to see a doctor." A similar situation is reported in other factories, particularly among young workers who had come of age in the Cultural Revolution rather than in the more spartan work-committed 1950s and early 1960s.

With great security of work and little incentive to perform effectively, workers began to agree informally to control output, punishing the rate busters and hiding output much as in Western industry. In a metal works factory, "Every work group has a set amount it was supposed to produce each day. If the group fell short, the leaders might call the group into a meeting to discuss why they fell short. But in their hearts everyone knew the number they were supposed to complete, and once through they would start drinking tea, telling jokes, and so on. The group leaders did not care as long as the daily quota was met. Since there was no longer any bonus, there was no reason to keep working past the quota. Everyday we would just produce a little more or less than the quota so as to average out around the quota or just slightly
above it. When we got near the end of the year, there were meetings to discuss the work quotas for next year. Workers were not willing to report too high a level since this would make it hard for themselves. So it took several meetings to hammer out an agreement." In a textile factory, "The factory set output quotas per group and per person. The workshop head kept a record of personal output. But the quotas were fairly easy to meet and some would stretch out their work so that they just did the quota and no more."

This pattern will sound familiar to readers who know Western industry, yet the Chinese have had one technique for breaking this pattern that is generally unavailable in the West. They could use political activists, who out of political commitment or a desire to toady to leaders chose to side with management rather than their fellow workers. In a scrap steel plant, which our informant estimated to be a fifth party members, youth league members, and other activists (a rather high proportion), "The activists were faster workers than the others. Except for production drives, things were pretty calm, but when the factory started a production high tide the workers sped up, not because they were personally enthused but because when one's neighbor speeds up one would look politically backward if one did not keep up with him. And one does not want to stand out as a potential target."

The activists did not always have such an easy time of it, however. The work of the activists could make them sufficiently unpopular for them to be excluded from normal social relations and for their personal influence to be weakened. In the scrap steel factory, "We were more careful in talking when the activists were present." In the metal works factory where workers tried to keep quotas low, "There were some activists calling for higher quotas [at the end of the year], but with others not supporting them they could not get agreement on this. They were somewhat isolated." And in the lock factory, "The activists got a little more information on quotas and they would respond to these calls by speeding up a little about the time of the month we had overtime. Some of the other more timid workers would speed up to emulate them,
but only while the supervisors were present. As soon as the supervisors left the room, everyone except the activists would slow down again. The bold workers would speak to the activists, saying things like, 'Eh, you're trying to make shop head, huh?" Political activism and more general political campaigns provided the Chinese factory manager an extra handle on worker effort, but one that fell far short of the radicals' goals of remaking society on a worker-peasant base.

Emigre workers were decidedly ambivalent about the events of these years. Some experienced them as rather comfortable. Since the early 1950s, Chinese state factories have had several warm, embracing features that are reminiscent of large Japanese enterprises. With lifetime employment and a wide range of fringe benefits including health care, pensions, hardship allowances, and occasionally housing and vacation tours, work units provided a strong sense of security. Work units are further involved in personal life by being the source of purchasing coupons for bicycles, watches, and sewing machines and approving and disapproving marriages and divorces as well as controlling family planning. Union and work group leaders often visit seriously ill workers at home or in the hospital or delegate fellow workers to do the same. With lifetime employment and little mobility among jobs, workers come to know each other well. Workers often inquire about the health of one's family members. The absence of similar concern among Hong Kong workers often leads to indistinct comparisons by emigres. In the Cultural Revolution, when it was difficult to discipline workers or demand performance by varying material reward, some workers found life in the factory even more comfortable. The pace of work, they report, was much slower than before the Cultural Revolution and considerably slower and less hectic than the pace they find in capitalist Hong Kong factories where the piece rate reigns supreme. Fear of political attack concerned a few, but overall, they reported a general feeling of security and some warmth. If short term worker security and freedom from stress is the goal, then there was something to recommend in the Cultural Revolution years.
If the goal is long term national growth, however, one's evaluation may be quite different. And since that was the goal of many older workers who had come of age in the 1950s, they were often distressed by what occurred in these years. They shared the goal (held most strongly by intellectuals) of making China strong and able to stand up to the Western world for the first time in a century. This was one of the major rewards the revolution was to bring and a goal in which everyone could participate regardless of social background or depth of political understanding. They were distressed by the diversion from this goal and by rewards to workers who did not contribute to its attainment. Material rewards themselves had an evaluative content. Income was a symbol of personal worth, and either equal income for all or pay increases to young, less productive workers were indicating worth for the wrong people. Old workers began to think more of their own income levels. Having remained constant since the late 1950s or early 1960s, even while there was mild inflation and family responsibilities were growing as children reached maturity, the incomes of older and middle age workers were perceived as increasingly inadequate. And, in disgust, some old workers began to protest in the only way they knew how—through slacking off in their own work.

Older workers were particularly distressed by young political activists who rose to power over them. To them, these were not people to be respected. The workers in a restaurant had a poor impression of the new party secretary, an army veteran appointed to the restaurant in 1966. His problem was that "He couldn't talk without politics spilling out while at the same time had had no understanding of concrete work problems." In a water plant, an older worker reported that the old party members who entered the party before 1966 "were the backbones of production. They had a lot of prestige among workers. The workers relied on them to solve all sorts of production problems. But those joining the party after the Cultural Revolution were all unacceptable. They were political upstarts who got into the party mostly by attacking others in political campaigns. We thoroughly disliked them." This feeling was exacerbated because many of the new
recruits were former peasants and their only qualification was service for a time in the People's Liberation Army, where they acquired political legitimacy but not the technical competence so respected in factories. Political skills divorced from technical skills were not respected.

Neither were workers overly impressed with the Cultural Revolution's efforts to bring leaders and led closer together through requirements that cadres work at least once a week on the shop floor and that workers, technicians, and managers combine in special three-in-one technical innovation groups. Work on the shop floor was useful at times. Some emigres expressed admiration for leaders who wore patched clothes, avoided bureaucratic airs, and dealt with actual production problems. This attitude reflected the respect for production skills. The irony of this politically inspired program was that many non-political managers who did not necessarily have good political credentials were already at work on the shop floor. It was the political managers, the party secretaries and their like, who had to make a special effort to come to the shop floor. And with some political managers being so unskilled at jobs needed on the shop floor, workers who would otherwise never have thought that executive officers should do production work began to think of their political leaders as hypocritical bumpkins. The widely touted three-in-one technical groups tended to have been formalistic. If they functioned at all, they tended to bring together skilled repair workers and technicians who would have been talking to one another anyway. These programs too, then, were less effective than might have been anticipated. Most emigres indicated a "ho-hum" attitude towards these participatory innovations.

Conclusion

There are, then, definite costs to a program of radical destratification. Not all parts of the 1966-76 Chinese program may have been necessary. The unpopular rural sending-down program for a youth with so many negative consequences might have been avoided in China, and can be easily avoided in countries without China's urban
unemployment problems. Other features seem less avoidable. If the goal is not only to narrow the gap in material well-being between haves and have-nots, but also to invert the old class order and break the chain of inheritance between privileged fathers and privileged children, then large segments of the Chinese program may be necessary. The education system will stress goals other than academic excellence. Technical, legal, and all other kinds of professional expertise are likely to be questioned. Zealotry of one sort of another will have to be tapped. The costs in ill-will and lessened productivity may well not seem worth the rewards in increased security for lower performance workers or in increased feelings of righteousness for principled idealists.

More intermediate models may well appear to provide a better compromise between the goals of equality and those of national economic growth. Prior to 1966, China had already achieved a significant degree of equality while continuing to maintain popular support and growth. Income gaps were significantly reduced while material goods were rather equally distributed relative to income. Within this narrow range, if the retrospective judgments of emigres can be trusted, material rewards were effectively linked to performance. And there was a judicious admixture of moral reward and idealistic commitment—not commitment to pure political ideals of class struggle or the ultimate egalitarian state, but to the goal of national growth for the sake of a strong people and nation—the very goals to which the Deng Xiao-ping/Hua Guo-feng leadership are now appealing.

Existing theories about the functional necessity of stratification are too simplistic. They fail to specify the degree of inequality necessary for what kinds of occupations under what kinds of conditions. They give too little attention to job sorting and work reward devices other than the individualistically material. They fail to note how existing elites develop public rationalizations and other devices to protect their privilege and the privilege of their children, thus reproducing a given stratification system regardless of changing societal needs. Yet, in spirit, the functional
theories may still be correct. And in China and several other socialist states such as Czechoslovakia and Cuba, which have retreated from radical destratification, we may well have critical tests of the extent to which differential reward is necessary for societies in the modern world. Judging from these experiments, the prospects for radical destratification on a societal scale are not encouraging. The prospects for more moderate equality such as found in the states of Eastern Europe or in China before 1966 are more encouraging. If these are the proper models of what is possible, then egalitarian states of the future will not break the chain of generational inheritance any better than do capitalist societies, but they will provide a significant degree of equality of condition and a degree of security for those on the bottom that deserves serious study.

NOTES

* Funded by National Science Foundation Grant # SOC-7707888 A02 and National Endowment for the Humanities Grant # RC-25746-76-1200.


3. Note throughout that the generalizations in this paper apply to the urban sector alone. The rural-urban average income gap is a tremendous three to one and gaps among different villages are large as well. See Parish & Whyte, Village and Family . . . , p. 376.


6. The administrative level is scored 2 to 6, with 2 being for commune seats and 6 for national municipalities like Peking and Shanghai. The room differential is the actual number of rooms in a dwelling minus the Chinese architectural ideal of a separate room for each married couple plus a separate room by sex for children age 13 and over. A grandmother should live with teenage children of either sex.

7. We have made no allowance for the rent subsidy implicit in public and official unit owned housing—a subsidy which works to the advantage of professionals and officials.

8. A note of caution: Our sample includes few of the rank 13 and above cadres who have access to such perquisites as a chauffeured car and special high cadre wings in hospitals. These are the cadres against whom charges of special privileges are often lodged within China. China is relatively equal, but that equality should not be overstated.

9. Figure 6 combines negative labels such as counter-revolutionary and landlord under the capitalist label, intermediate labels such as middle peasant under the staff label, and so on.

10. Throughout, occupations are ranked into 32 groups on the basis of the average monthly income of each group, giving a scale which runs from 22 to 103, thereby
approximating the standard occupational prestige score which covers a similar range.

11. Though given the small cadre sample sizes--7 before 1966 and 18 afterwards--one should not make too much of this trend, even if it does coincide with occasional press reports and impressions of some emigres.

12. The tension between growth and equality is not unique to Chinese ideological thinking. For an account of the long history of tension between these two ideals in socialist thinking, see Benjamin Schwartz, "China and the West in the 'thought of Mao Tse-tung,'" in Ho Ping-ti and Tang Tsou, eds., China in Crisis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 365-79.


An average people's commune in China contains fifteen production brigades and one hundred production teams, with populations averaging about 15,000, although many of the communes from which informants for this study came were much larger, having as many as twenty to forty thousand residents. Frequently commune headquarters are located in a market town which conveniently is a transportation center for the whole commune. Even so, travel times from the commune to the brigade can be great. It may take one or several hours to walk to remote brigades. Over the years many communes have gradually built and improved roads connecting commune headquarters and the brigades. Now most brigades can be reached by car or truck. Widespread use of bicycles has made it easier for commune cadres to visit the villages, where land is flat, and informants report that telephones have been installed in all brigade headquarters.

Looking at the commune, as opposed to the brigade which is basically a large natural village, we are no longer faced with a Party secretary and a small committee coordinating the affairs of a socially integrated rural community, but instead with a more highly formalized bureaucracy that administers a wide range of organized functions and subordinate units. The greater number of personnel and relatively high degree of structural differentiation make management problems at the commune level considerably different from those found at the team or brigade. Cadres who work at the commune receive salaries. Most are paid by the state and receive state-guaranteed welfare and retirement benefits. Although some commune cadres may be native to the commune, usually its top leaders will be outsiders delegated by the county. Many commune departments have activities that keep them very busy and, as a consequence, relatively isolated from managerial problems at lower administrative levels. These activities vary in the degree to which they are integrated with functions performed at higher or lower levels, and they also vary in the degree to which
### Units of Local Administration

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<th>Unit</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>COUNTY</td>
<td>Headquarters in small city. All staff are state-paid cadres. Approx. 2,000 counties in China.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRODUCTION Brigade</td>
<td>Large village or several small villages. Av. pop. ~ 920; 220 families. Lowest level of Party organization. Cadres are from local area. Av. 15 per commune; 375 per county.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRODUCTION TEAM</td>
<td>Farming collective which owns land. Village or section of village. Av. pop. ~ 145; 33 families. Av. 7 per brigade; 100 per commune; 2,500 per county. Approx. five million in China.</td>
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FIGURE I
they are integrated with other activities performed at the commune.

Communes are frequently viewed as playing a key coordinating and managing role in local administration, as well as occupying a pivotal point in the administrative system between state and collective economic sectors. Communes are described as the lowest level of administration that performs governmental functions and the highest level of the collective economy. While this is true to formal aspects of administrative structure, an examination of how the commune level actually operates does not give the impression that its role in local administration is somehow more distinctive than that of other levels of administration. It is larger than production brigades and smaller than counties, but if anything, this in-the-middle size tends to decrease the overall administrative importance of the commune. It is much larger than meaningful, natural community structures, and contains too many sub-units (on the average 15 brigades and 100 production teams) to keep tabs on the day to day activities of its subordinates. On the other hand, its small size relative to the county, means that its resources are relatively limited and planning capacity similarly restricted. It lacks sufficient expertise or materials to plan and execute large projects alone. Rather than viewing the commune as a distinct integrated unit, it makes more sense to view it as simply one administrative level in the hierarchy from production teams to Peking that has its own distinctive capacities and limitations. True, China has given much publicity to what it calls the "commune system," and China's leaders have projected that eventually the commune level will become the basic accounting unit at the last stage before transition to ownership by the whole people. But whatever lies ahead, the commune system of administration as it now operates does not entail an unusually distinctive role for the commune level per se in coordinating the activities of its subordinate units.

But, by focusing on the commune level, we can address an important organizational problem. Although the commune may not serve as a key unit for coordinating
activities involving teams and brigades, it does play an important role in coordinating the activities of bureaus and departments operating at the commune level. Many of these bureaus and departments receive primary management from functional specialists in county or higher levels of administration, working in, for example, the Education Bureau or the Commercial Bureau. These bureaus are responsible for the performance of more narrowly defined functions, while the commune's top leaders have a more general charge to look after the well being of the commune as a whole. Often commune leaders may ask these bureaus and departments to perform tasks that interfere with the performance of functions that are felt to be of more central importance to a particular bureau or department. Many functional specialists seem to prefer a more rigid administrative system in which commune cadres do not have authority to interfere with department activities. But flexibility to draw on resources located in various local departments enhances the commune's ability to accomplish ad hoc projects. Thus, the question of administrative rigidity versus flexibility appears here and later in our study as one of central importance.

We shall examine commune administration by focusing first on how the commune monitors and supervises the activities of its administrative subordinates—the brigades and teams—and then by examining how commune level activities are budgeted and managed. Our data on commune level administrative activities come principally from two informants who served as commune cadres in different communes in the Pearl River Delta. One of these informants was a Party member on the Revolutionary Committee. Throughout this article we will refer to these communes as Commune A and Commune B.

Supervising the Brigades

The commune must see that its subordinate units implement Party policy, follow rules, broadly conceived, and meet quotas and production targets. The commune keeps track of its brigades through reports from brigade cadres, usually given at commune-level meetings or over the phone,
and also by sending out commune cadres to check in person on what happens in the villages. Whereas brigade cadres may walk for a few minutes and reach almost all production teams under their jurisdiction, commune cadres may have to walk for one or several hours. Available means of monitoring the brigades make it difficult for the brigades to ignore completely major policies and rules in the long run, but in the short run, most brigades do not have to worry about commune cadres looking constantly over their shoulders. Commune cadres expend great efforts to make frequent personal visits to the brigades and teams, but because of the large number of brigades, and especially teams, visits to individual units may seem few and far between. Some team members report never having seen commune cadres in the teams. Commune cadres only stopped by occasionally to chat with brigade cadres, and nothing more. Other communes however maintained a more regular system of sending cadres down for inspections.

The key figure who is supposed to set an example for taking active leadership over brigades is the commune Party secretary. Although the Party secretary has responsibility for all activities that take place at the commune, he has no routine administrative duties that necessarily tie him to commune offices. He attends county meetings, looks into various commune affairs, meets and escorts higher-level visitors, and leads meetings. These activities may keep him fairly busy, but for a minimum of 60 days per year he is supposed to be in the production brigades and teams, helping to solve problems and working in the fields. The commune Party secretary is supposed to "grasp models" (zhua dianxing), which means that he should find a relatively backward production brigade or team and attempt to improve its leadership and economic performance. This unit can then serve as a model for other units in the commune to emulate in order to solve their own political and economic problems. Whenever the commune secretary has free time, he will go to this unit and do what he can.

The opinions of informants about what made a good commune secretary depended partly on how well the secretary fulfilled his responsibility to create a model
Commune secretaries who spend a lot of time in the brigades and teams, mix easily with ordinary commune members, and do not hesitate to perform manual labor, quickly earn wide respect. According to one informant:

Secretary Yan did not [especially] understand agriculture, but he placed great importance on cadre participating in agricultural labor. He frequently took time to go to the fields and labor together with commune members, inquire about production, inquire about their life [i.e., living standard], and become one with the commune members.⁵

Or again:

Secretary Yan was very energetic, understood how to take advantage of the seasons, and clearly differentiated what was principal and what was secondary in agricultural production. During agricultural slack season he rationally arranged for commune members to repair water works. This is very important. During agricultural busy season he led commune members to actively transplant or harvest. Because his own family was intellectual, he only had a little knowledge about agriculture. [But] he humbly asked for instruction from the poor and lower middle peasants. He frequently talked with a brigade Party secretary, asking for instructions on questions of agricultural production. Secretary Yan went personally with the secretary of this brigade to "squat" [dundian] at the team whose production was the worst, and eat, live, and labor together with the poor and lower middle peasants. They studied the existing production problems of this team and adopted some solutions, which caused the team's production to improve.⁶

Although the informant had great praise for Secretary Yan, the Secretary was not without his faults. He enjoyed eating and drinking in a "bourgeois" (i.e., lavish) style, which eventually got him into political trouble. The informant felt, however, that this shortcoming did not
interfere with the Secretary's ability to lead the commune effectively.

One former commune cadre described the work of his commune's Party secretary in leading the production brigades:

"[Besides administrative work] the commune secretary will go to the brigades to grasp the "points," usually backwards brigades. The routine daily work will be taken care of by office personnel and for problems that the office clerks cannot handle, they will telephone the brigade where the secretary is working and ask for instructions. In one year, the secretary will spend about half of his time going to the brigades to "squat" [dundian]."

Leading the production brigades is considered much more difficult than working at commune headquarters:

The secretary's work is "facing toward the villages" [mianxiang nongcun]. The work of each commune department will be grasped by the leaders of the department. They work actively and on their own initiative. The self-consciousness and discipline of commune workers is superior to the weak sense of self-consciousness and discipline of the peasants. Regardless of whether they are brigade or team cadres, they mostly are born from peasant families, and naturally infected with a style of work which is disorganized and weak in discipline. Thus, comparatively speaking, when the secretary is working in commune offices, it is easier than going down to work in the villages.

This commune had one brigade with a poor performance record:

Beizhou Brigade's production output was going down each year, and they owed grain to the state. The members' labor activism was not high, and there were serious spontaneous tendencies toward capitalism. They did not pay attention to collective
production and were only willing to plant in their private plots and sell produce on the free market. Furthermore, the brigade cadres' ability and enthusiasm were limited. This brigade had many members who worked outside the brigade and there were many escapes [to Hong Kong]. After the secretary went to this brigade, he shook up [zhengdun, lit. rectified] the brigade revolutionary committee, got rid of some committee members, and promoted some cadres with work ability and enthusiasm in order to strengthen the leadership of the committee. Some of the brigade members who had serious tendencies toward capitalism had to make confessions at a brigade mass meeting. The commune aided this brigade with some fertilizer, and production output rose.10

The informant felt this commune secretary was very capable:

Our commune's secretary is good. He has a strong ability to accomplish and has an enterprising spirit. . . . He handles problems with determination and is daring in his work. In the past some commune cadres went to Beizhou Brigade to "squat" [dundian] but did not dare to get rid of brigade cadres who were not capable. But when he went to "squat" he immediately shook up the brigade revolutionary committee, and made the entire brigade march together. Only with capable leadership can the entire brigade be led to improve and turn around its situation. But he also has shortcomings. For example, he does not concern himself enough with the "thought" of commune cadres, with their living conditions, or family affairs. He does not care enough, and doesn't pay enough attention to it.11

Not all commune secretaries, however, earned such praise from commune members:

Our commune secretary did an okay job, but there was nothing outstanding about his work. The commune secretary should grasp models, cultivate models
by going down to "squat" [dundian] and making a backward unit change into an advanced one. The secretary in my commune selected a brigade and a team and tried to improve them but was not very successful. He would go down to work in the team for a few days, but would always have to leave to attend meetings and could not put in any sustained effort. Mostly he would give them political and leadership help, and not material aid. However, since this team was short on fertilizer he would supply extra to them. . . . [Most of the fertilizer was distributed according to the acreage of the fields in each team, but there was some left over to use at discretion.] By rule, the commune secretary was to work in the fields for sixty days per year, but sometimes the secretary would just go to the team for about five minutes and the team head would mark it down as a full day of labor. Who would dare to oppose the commune secretary? Then at commune meetings he would be able to say that he had fulfilled his quota for labor.12

Although a commune secretary cannot possibly give thorough, concrete leadership to all production brigades, his demonstrated ability to enter individual brigades or teams and effectively deal with problems increases his prestige and helps to establish an atmosphere of vigor throughout the commune's core of leaders. Other commune cadres may also spend a good portion of their time working in the brigades and teams. Some of this work involves checking up on the performance of specialized activities. For example, if the commune has a Women's Federation, the head of the commune Federation and her assistants will make frequent trips to brigades to check up on "women's work." Cadres from the Armed Forces Department will inquire about militia work, and cadres from the Production Group may help implement a crop-watching system by making regular inspections of cultivated fields. Other cadres may be sent out on a short or long-term basis to check up on problems in individual brigades in a manner similar to that of the commune Party secretary.
Depending on the assigned responsibility of a commune cadre, he or she may not have regular duties in commune offices, or work needs may fluctuate according to the seasons or political events. When work requirements at the commune are lighter, cadres will frequently be sent down to investigate and help the brigades. One informant described the duties of the head of the commune Political Work Group:

Usually, he accompanies the commune secretary to the brigades to "squat" [dundian]. Each member of the Political Work Group has concrete work allocated, and it is obvious how they should do it. The group head does not need to be at commune offices working that often. When the Group head stays at the commune, he will help the clerks carry out policy, but will not hold meetings of all the clerks in the Political Work Group. He will just meet and talk with the clerks and exchange opinions. During movements, the Group head has responsibility for supervising the work of clerks, and during this time he will go less often to the brigades to "squat."13

This same situation often applies to cadres in the Armed Forces Department or the Education Department. Although often these assignments are short term, some communes have implemented a system of sending commune cadres to stay at brigades for long periods of time, of one year or more. Some brigades may have one commune cadre always stationed (chang zhu) there, although the assigned cadre changes from time to time. One informant explained how the presence of a commune cadre helped to overcome cadre favoritism toward lineage members:

From 1955, there was already a commune cadre staying in my brigade for a long period of time. . . . The commune was afraid that the brigade cadres would have favoritism, and not work according to policy. For example, we have a rule that if members steal sugar cane, eat it, and are discovered, they must pay a fine of 2 yuan. The fine is paid
to the person who reports the stealing. One time, over ten persons in the other village stole cane and were discovered by someone from my village, and he went to the brigade and accused them. At that time the security chief was partial, and did not make them pay the fine. All of the brigade cadres from my village did not dare say anything. Just at that time the commune cadre stationed in the brigade was away at a meeting. After he returned, I reported the situation to him. He supported me and afterwards they had to pay the fine. When there is a commune cadre stationed at the brigade, the cadres do not dare to engage in lineage conflict.

When the brigade has production planning meetings, the commune cadre will participate, and his opinion is very important because the brigade's quota is assigned by the commune through the cadre stationed in the brigade. Thus, production plans are usually arranged by him. He will deal with the plans suggested by brigade cadres according to the spirit of the commune's directive, and he will report to the commune. But, within the brigade, daily affairs are handled by the brigade secretary. 14

Although probably a minority of brigades have commune cadres permanently assigned to supervise them, this arrangement is not uncommon. Some informants report that cadres assigned for long periods in the brigades tend to be those who have committed a political error, or those who do not have administrative skills useful to the commune, but this does not seem to affect seriously their ability to serve as impartial observers of brigade affairs. They still represent the authority of the commune.

Even so, commune cadres often find problems not easily amenable to outside interference:

There were also commune cadres who came to my team to "squat" [dundian]. A cadre named Jian from the commune Armed Forces Department came to my team to "squat," but he did not live in the team. He
stayed at the brigade and usually came to the team during the day. He could not solve any problems, and did not achieve anything worthwhile because my team is of one mind toward outsiders.  

In this team, relationships between former landlords and team members and cadres were fairly good. Old fashioned "feudal" marriage customs were the object of the commune cadre's efforts, but lineage solidarity among team members prevented outsiders from successfully reforming such practices.

The range of issues with which commune cadres deal in teams and brigades is broad. Minor questions will normally be handled by the brigades themselves, but if a problem impinges on the commune's interests they will intervene quickly. These issues may include control over members of disfavored classes, production questions, or policy questions. For example,

Team seven planted over ten mu of cane land in hemp. This was a serious problem. The brigade and the commune cadres went down to "squat" and take hold of the problem. The team members had to have more political study sessions. When they take hold of the problem, they will emphasize class struggle, and analyze whether or not class enemies secretly caused the disruption. But in this case they had not because the team head had made the decision. The error was the team head's.

When such problems erupt, the commune can get to the root of it by sending its own cadre to investigate.

In comparison with the brigade, the commune is much more remote from its subordinate units. Brigade cadres are able in most cases to maintain intimate contact with teams and their cadres. Commune leaders, on the other hand, cannot do so. They have, on average, twice as many brigades as brigades have teams, and travel distances are much greater. While communes maintain staff so that they can intervene quickly if necessary, they do so usually in response to a problem after it arises and is reported by a brigade leader or filters its way to the
ears of commune leaders through other channels. Thus, as long as most brigade leaders maintain the appearance of implementing policy, the commune will not likely interfere.

The Commune Party Committee

As with the team and brigade, the commune is defined by territorial boundaries. Formally, the commune revolutionary committee exercises administrative power over all functions performed within this geographic space. Its status as an "administrative unit" gives it at least nominal control even over specialized functional systems that have independent budgeting and strong vertical leadership from higher cadres in their own respective hierarchies. Nonetheless, in practice, revolutionary committees exercise little control over functions such as banking, supply and marketing or tax collection. In fact, in the communes where our information is good, the revolutionary committees performed virtually no administrative functions at all. They met en masse on a scheduled basis, perhaps once a month, principally for the purpose of political study. But at times, because of busy schedules, the normally allocated time of one whole day had to be truncated to a hurried evening meeting. Informants explained that membership on the revolutionary committee was too broad to make it an effective decision-making unit and members did not conceive of it as such.

The commune Party committee, on the other hand, met frequently and informally to handle issues on an ad hoc basis, and made decisions when the commune needed action in its role as an administrative unit.

The commune Party Committee was both the formal and actual center of political power in both communes for which we have good data. Any important decisions affecting the commune as a whole or the commune level of administration were made by the Party committee or at least reviewed by the committee. The secretary of the committee unquestionably exercised the greatest authority. Informants frequently reported that when any nonroutine type of problem was encountered, the quickest way to get action was to appeal to the commune Party secretary for
help, even if a specialized department usually handled this type of question.

The Party committee of the commune is elected by a congress of Party members in the commune and approved by the county Party committee. Outside analysts have usually stressed the "rubber stamp" nature of the elections, since county authorities have veto power and assign and transfer commune level Party members who are state cadres. While such a conclusion is probably correct if one wishes to assess whether the selection of local officials is democratic, it may not capture the significance of local-level elections as perceived by the participants. Even refugees interviewed about commune-level elections often stressed their "democratic" aspects, and did not seem to feel that this was invalidated by transfers of commune level cadres by county leaders. It seems, thus, that participants may carry different assumptions and expectations concerning the purpose of an election.

Article 18 of the 1977 Party Constitution states that Party committees should be set up in People's Communes "in accordance with the need of the revolutionary struggle and the size of their Party membership, subject to approval by the next higher Party committees." Committees are to be elected bi-annually, although the next higher level of Party committee may hold an early election or postpone it. According to Article 9, "Delegates to Party congresses and members of Party committees at all levels should be elected by secret ballot after democratic consultation and in accordance with the five requirements of successors in the revolutionary cause of the proletariat and with the principle of combining the old, the middle-aged and the young." These articles correspond fairly closely to the election process described by informants.

In neither Commune A nor Commune B did the county Party organs exert direct initiative by suggesting a slate of candidates for election to the commune Party Committee. They limited their initial role simply to specifying how many Party members should be on the committee, based on a percentage of the number of Party members in the commune. For communes that had 100 Party members, the committee would be composed of 8% of the
members, and this figure would decline slowly as the num-
ber of Party members increased. 20 (The informant specu-
lated that if there were 200 Party members, the committee
would have about 14 members.) In addition, the county
would stress that central policy would have to be imple-
mented as to the composition of the committee, and the
members would have to include representatives who were
old, middle aged, young, and female. In the case of Com-
mune A, the county specified that 30% of committee mem-
bers should be women. 21

All the commune's Party members had the right to
cast votes and the right to be elected to the committee.
Nonetheless, there was no campaigning and we have no
cases where elections were contested. The election pro-
cedure worked slightly differently in each of the com-
munes. In Commune A, Party branches met separately in
the brigades, discussed and voted on a slate of nominees.
These votes would be combined and tallied by the old
Party committee, and the results announced to a general
meeting of Party members. In Commune B, each of the
Party branches elected representatives who would go to
the commune to select and discuss a list of candidates.
They took the list back to their brigades for discussion,
and then finally voted on the slate.

After voting on the new slate, the old Party com-
mittee would send the list to the county for approval.
The informant from Commune A could offer no cases in
which the county had rejected the results of such an
election in his or any other commune. In Commune B, how-
ever, the county rejected the results of the first elec-
tion after the Cultural Revolution since the list in-
cluded no women or young persons. 22 In the case of Com-
mune A, the county had precluded such an outcome by
specifying a clear minimum quota for representation of
women. In spite of these controls, there is no evidence
that the counties in either case tried to manipulate
elections by applying pressure as to who specifically
should or should not be on the committee. Informants re-
ported that the commune Party members were completely
free (suiyi) to select individual committee members. 23

After approval of the list, the new commune Party
committee would meet to divide job assignments among
themselves--secretary, vice-secretary, organization, propaganda, etc.--and forward their selections to the county for approval. Apparently the county takes more of an interest in this phase of the selection process and may make prior recommendations as to who should take on what post. The informant from Commune A offered an example in a neighboring commune where the county had rejected the commune's nominee for Party secretary on the grounds that he was too old and his "disposition to struggle" (douzhengxing) weak. The county recommended a younger, more energetic committee member and the commune agreed to the change. The informant explained this move as simply implementing a new Party policy after the Cultural Revolution that called for promoting "new blood" into the Party and into leadership positions.

The opinion held by one informant, however, that Party members in the commune are "completely free" to elect whom they want to the committees, seems to contradict the fact that most Party committee members are state cadres, some of whose native places are in other communes or counties, and that the county transfers these personnel at will, a fact well known to the informant. The county may transfer commune cadres for a number of reasons. After the Cultural Revolution, a relatively large number of commune Party secretaries had to be transferred. Many had come under severe attack by red guards, and had lost much esteem in the eyes of the commune members. This is a common reason given by informants when asked to explain why their commune secretary was switched. Many of these cadres were simply rotated to other communes, while others were given positions in the county bureaucracies. The assignment to positions in the county bureaucracy, in general, was neither a promotion nor a demotion, since the rank of a commune secretary is more or less equivalent to that of a section chief or bureau vice-chief of a county. In fact, serving as head of a commune may even be more appealing since, as one informant explained it, "as head of the commune they have greater power than they would as vice-head of a bureau." As political tensions died down after the Cultural Revolution, the county reassigned many of these cadres to lead communes again.
Occasionally, the county removes or transfers a commune head because of poor performance or political errors. For example, in one commune, the vice-secretary prepared a report against the secretary charging that he abused his position to indulge in feasting and drinking. Investigation proved the charges correct, and the county transferred the commune secretary even though in other respects he had been an effective leader. According to the informant's interpretation, the county reasoned that while the charge might not be that serious, the fact that the vice-secretary filled the report indicated a poor working relationship among cadres. The subsequent Party secretary, who was the former vice-secretary who originally filed the charges, was transferred two years later because of inability to lead the commune effectively during several flood and drought crises. After several more transfers and jockeying around, the original Party secretary was reassigned, perhaps cured of his original habit.28

The point here is that the county does transfer and appoint these secretaries at will, in spite of the fact that they are "democratically" elected.

Is there a contradiction between election and appointment? We do not argue that severe conflicts between county and commune levels never occur in the election of commune officials,29 but there is no evidence that they are more than occasional exceptions to the normal situation. Instead we argue that through a careful selection process and continuous socialization ("party life"),30 disagreements between county and commune-level officials about the nature of leadership questions has been minimized. Formally speaking, commune leaders are elected not to represent their constituents, but instead to serve as the instrument for carrying out Party policy. Party members seem to have accepted the overpowering role of the Party in setting policy and the value of selecting leaders who can work effectively with higher administrative levels. This is not to say that Party members will support every aspect of Party policy, but since the role of the Party secretary is to serve as a general administrator rather than a policy advocate for lower level constituents, conflicts over policy questions will not necessarily spill over into personnel questions.

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Moreover, as indicated in the above example, the county takes an active interest in finding a commune secretary capable of working effectively with other commune-level cadres. Thus, the ritual of election and appointment serves to build and affirm consensus among commune Party members and with higher level Party administrators, rather than provide a channel by which local interests can be expressed.

The Administration of Commune Functions

Figure II outlines the wide variety of functions performed at the commune level. Unfortunately, from the point of view of ease of presentation, a single detailed chart will not apply to all communes (possibly not to more than a few communes) since different communes slice up their administrative tasks differently. Some of the variation appears to result from different administrative policies fixed at the county level in response to more general directives from above, and some of the variation reflects differences in tasks performed in different communities. The table outlines the administrative structures of Commune A and Commune B. For Commune A, the pre-Cultural Revolution administrative structure has been presented for comparison.

The chart illustrates that formal divisions of different communes vary significantly. In Commune A, the departments handling organization work (personnel matters), propaganda, civil affairs (registrations, licenses, certification, and record keeping), and culture and education were merged into a single Political Work Group, while in Commune B, the departments remained disaggregated, and the Political Work Groups (Party and non-Party) handled propaganda activities. Commune A had no Women's Federation, while the Women's Federation in Commune B was very active. Similar differences appear throughout the list of departments. These superficial differences, however, should not obscure important similarities in the overall structure of administrative power.

The Communist Party in Soviet-type systems is frequently viewed as an outside elite core exercising
### Commune A (pop. 40,000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-1968</th>
<th>Post 1968</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party Committee</td>
<td>Party Committee (8, 2 alt.)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Committee</td>
<td>Revolutionary Committee (16)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Department</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Civil Affairs Department</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Propaganda Department</td>
<td>Political Work Group (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture &amp; Education Dept.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Security Special Agent</td>
<td>Security Group (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces Department</td>
<td>Armed Forces Department (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Department</td>
<td>Production Group (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Department</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Commune B (pop. 34,000)

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party Committee (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary Committee (15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization Supervision Dept. (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commune Office (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Work Group (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Party Political Work Dept. (3)</td>
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<td>Culture &amp; Education Dept. (3)</td>
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<td>Security Group (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Armed Forces Department (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Production Group (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women's Federation (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commune Farm:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Science Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather Station (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Construction Headquarters (7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of personnel who are members or staff, or part of the leadership group of each unit when known.

**FIGURE II**
State-run Middle School
Commune-run Agricultural Middle School

Broadcast Station (7)
Hospital (3)
Credit Cooperative (4)

Finance & Trade Dept.: Supply & Marketing Coop. (5) Department Store Grain Station Market Management Committee Bank Tax Office Transportation Coop

Post Office

Pedlars & Merchants Committee (4)

99 posts 66 persons
64 on salary 17 non-native

State-run Middle School
Commune-run Agricultural Middle School

Broadcast Station (3)
Hospital (8)
Credit Cooperative (5)

Commercial Group (5):
Supply & Marketing Coop. Department Store Grain Station (6) Market Management Committee Bank (4) Tax Office (5)

Post Office (6)

107 posts 81 persons
69 on salary 42 non-native

FIGURE II
(contd)
control over a semi-independent government hierarchy. We argue here, however, that in China, at least at the local level in the countryside, the Party has become the administrative-governmental authority. Party organs make virtually all important decisions for territorally defined units. Functionally specific bureaus and departments operating within commune jurisdiction are staffed and led by Party members from within. Leaders of all functional hierarchies have long since been coopted by the Party, and authority within functional systems is inevitably exercised by Party members. The Party maintains its own separate administrative system for housekeeping purposes, but this strictly Party bureaucracy does not exercise direct administrative control over units defined on a different basis.

For these reasons, issues of conflict and control among administrative bodies do not carry any connotations of Party versus non-Party conflict. The important lines of division in local administration fall between those cadres who have general administrative duties for the entire territorial unit, versus those whose responsibilities are defined functionally. In more familiar terms, the issue is vertical versus horizontal rule, and not red versus expert.

The commune is referred to by the Chinese as an "administrative unit" (xingzheng danwei), a term used for units whose jurisdiction is defined territorially and whose principal responsibility is the supervision of other units defined on a different basis. Because of its greatest number of organizational sub-components, commune level administration is more highly formalized than the brigade or team (which are not technically "administrative units" but "production units"), yet at the same time it is remarkably flexible. Some understanding of the commune's administrative role can be gained by examining terminology that the Chinese commonly use when referring to administrative relationships.

"Administrative units" in China include provinces, prefectures, counties, communes, municipalities, cities and towns. There are also, in many locales, districts (qu) set up between the county and the commune. These
do not exist in Guangdong, but are common in Hunan and some other provinces. The administrative power of the prefecture and the district, however, is relatively limited. In introducing the 1978 "Constitution of the People's Republic of China," Ye Jianying pointed out:

On the question of state organs, another point to be mentioned is that the draft explicitly stipulates that our country in the main applies a three-level system of local organs of political power, namely, at the provincial, the county and commune levels. Prefectures under the provinces and autonomous regions, with the exception of national autonomous prefectures, are not classified as a level of political power. There instead of people's congresses and revolutionary committees, administrative offices will be set up as agencies of the revolutionary committees of the provinces or autonomous regions, and administrative commissioners and deputy commissioners will be appointed. Where districts are set up under counties, they likewise are not a level of political power, but are agencies of the county revolutionary committees. These stipulations are aimed at trimming the administrative structure and raising efficiency. 32

An administrative unit exercises what the Chinese call "administrative leadership" over all sub-groups located at that administrative level, as well as supervises any lower-level units. This leadership extends to all enterprises, cooperatives, or other organs directly attached to that level, as well as to enterprises, bureaus, and departments managed by higher administrative levels but physically located within the territorial jurisdiction of the administrative unit. The scope of administrative leadership fluctuates over time and according to local and national developments. This scope has usually included powers for temporary and permanent transfer of personnel among sub-units, organization of political study, or organization of work teams for campaigns. Power over sub-units directly attached to the administra-
tive unit is greater, since the administrative unit controls and allocates funding. The scope of "administrative leadership" will be made clearer when we examine how individual levels and systems operate.

Juxtaposed to administrative leadership is "functional management" (yewu guanli), which refers to the management of tasks performed by a unit, both daily tasks and those spanning a longer period of time. In the case of the Supply and Marketing Cooperatives, for example, functional management takes place almost exclusively within the system of cooperatives, which have relatively little interaction with territorially defined administrative units where they operate. In other cases, for example, the commune Armed Forces Department, the Security Group, or the Education Department, functional management closely follows the leadership of higher level bureaus, but is also coordinated with other activities of the commune. The Chinese refer to this relationship as "dual leadership." Finally, some commune departments are managed almost exclusively by commune-level leaders, such as the Production Group, the Commune Office, or the Political Work Group.

Another important descriptive term is that for a "directly attached unit" (zhishu danwei). This term applies to units located at one administrative level, but nonetheless under the direct jurisdiction of a department or bureau of the next higher administrative level. The Tax Office or the Bank are frequently assigned to this category by informants. The term implies a more extreme degree of administrative independence from the administrative unit where an organ is located, and frequently such organs are actually monitoring the activities of the administrative unit of that level. This relationship can sometimes be seen in the organization of "Party life," as frequently Party members in "directly attached units" report to the next higher administrative unit for political study instead of belonging to a study group at the lower level, as is most usual.

It should be stressed, however, that these descriptive terms are general rather than precise in meaning. Informants were usually able to give specific examples that clearly illustrated each term, but frequently had difficulty when asked to assign a single organ to one or
another category. The ambiguity of administrative structures controlling specific organizations reflects the general haziness with which China's leaders have set administrative law. Thus, many observed relationships reflect customary practices that have grown up over the years in response to originally imposed (and possibly more clearly articulated) administrative structures, changing political pressures in the intervening years, and the local administrator's experience of what "works" (or perhaps what he can get away with).

Thus, Chinese local administration is both highly formalized and very flexible. It is formalized in the sense that cadres are given titles, and assigned to different organizations that individually seem to have fairly clear authority structures, reporting procedures, and rules for operation. It is flexible in that these titles, authority structures, reporting procedures, and rules for operation may not provide a good description of actual observed administrative practice. This is because for any task performed there are overlapping jurisdictions, and general escape clauses to meet special contingencies. In fact, virtually all operational rules can in principle be bent by the Party secretary of the administrative unit under the general policy that at the local level all functional systems must serve the needs of the administrative unit. For virtually every reform proposed during the past ten years, whatever its nature, People's Daily has recommended that it be implemented by putting the function under the close purview of the Party committee, and entering the responsibility into the "daily agenda" of the committee.

The overall rationality of having a system where rule bending is a norm can be examined after we have described in more detail how the system actually operates, but we should at least temporarily suspend any preconceived views that effective administration always needs clear, precise, rules and highly articulated divisions of authority that will make authority clearly consistent with assigned responsibility. Jerry Hough, in his study of Soviet prefects, makes this point effectively, arguing that in developmental administration, the fact that a major preoccupation of local prefectural authorities
(equivalent to our "administrative units") is that of helping industrial and other units evade rules, may not point to any irrationality in the system. Coordination of local-level activities may be at least as important as the enforcement of general rules that do not, and cannot, take into account the vagaries of local developmental needs. On the other hand, we should bear in mind that the manner in which local authorities have bent rules has not always pleased Party leaders in Peking, thus leading to intermittent campaigns to enforce specified rules (and at least temporarily to ignore other rules that contradict them). Rational or not from the point of view of administrative effectiveness, the tension between central control and local exercise of discretion has been a political problem in China. It is best viewed as resulting from the structure of power embodied in China's system of "administrative units."

To a large degree, it turns out that the extent of actual administrative control that the commune exercises over any of its departments depends on the degree to which the commune can control a department's finances. Where this control is total, the department is tightly integrated with other commune functions and closely controlled by the Party committee. Where budgeting is completely independent, as is the case with the Supply and Marketing Cooperative or the bank, communes cannot exercise very much leadership. Thus we begin our examination of the commune administrative unit by looking at its accounting arrangements.

Commune Finances

At the height of the Great Leap Forward, communes established unified budgetary control over all economic activities performed in the commune. When the unit of account descended to the brigade, and finally to the team in the early 1960s, the commune found its economic resources sharply truncated. For this reason, many outside analysts felt the commune structure had become an empty shell. Nonetheless, the commune level continued, and continues to employ a fairly large number of people paid by the state, and many communes' small factories have
expanded over the years, accompanied by gradual improvements in services and aid to agricultural production in the teams. How does the commune pay for this activity?

Funds to support commune-level activities come from a variety of sources. Since in Chinese administrative parlance the commune is an "administrative unit" and not a "production unit," all enterprises owned by the commune are budgeted and managed independently, with only net profits and losses requiring payment to the commune or payment from the commune respectively. (In teams and brigades, which are "production units," all economic activities appear on the regular account books along with administrative expenses.) In many communes these enterprises are rapidly becoming an important source of income, but principally as a supplement to funds supplied by higher administrative levels. The following list summarizes all sources of commune income:

1. Funds from the state to pay for salaries of state-paid administrative cadres at the commune and operating expenses. (Operating expenses include office expenses, cultural/recreation expenses, and benefits.)

2. Salary and operating expenses from functionally specific bureaus to fund activities under their own jurisdiction at the commune level of administration.

3. Funds from the county for capital construction.

4. Profits from commune-owned enterprises.

5. Management fees paid to the commune by commune-wide cooperatives.

Commune-level financial, commercial, and production units have independent budgets and maintain their own bank accounts. These units include the credit cooperatives, merchants and peddlers cooperatives, or transportation cooperatives. Branches of state-run economic organizations, such as the bank, the tax office, the supply and market
cooperatives, or the department stores maintain completely separate systems of budgeting and financial control. Other organs occupy a hazy middle ground, receiving some kinds of disbursements directly from the county (transferred through the bank as always), yet turning to the commune for other categories of expenditures. The broadcast station in Commune A falls into this category.

In addition to the great number of independent budgetary arrangements at the commune level, the commune as an administrative unit is also an independent accounting unit (duli hesuan danwei), meaning that it maintains its own accounts and can own property. The commune has an accountant and a cashier who maintain small cash balances for petty expenses and issue vouchers and receipts for larger ones so that holders of these papers may pick up cash at other locations. Each month the cashier and accountant prepare summary statements for the Party committee of the commune, which makes recommendations to the accountant for financial plans based on previous performance, such as to cut costs.

In addition to accounts maintained by commune cadres, though, the state maintains a more or less continuous monitoring procedure through a representative of the finance and trade system. In Commune A the bank performed this function, while in Commune B cadres from the Tax Office filled the role. The Office had to approve all large expenditures, and also maintained cash on hand for disbursement. The informant from Commune B explained that prior to the Cultural Revolution this job was performed by an independent Financial Section in the commune, but in the movement for "crack troops and simple administration," higher levels abolished this section and transferred responsibility to the Tax Office.

In each commune, the Tax Office and the Bank performed their control functions in very similar ways. Since virtually all transactions of the commune and many of its subordinate units with independent accounts passed through the control agent, the agent was able to enforce some budgetary regulations set by the county. These regulations included getting specific county approval for expenditures over a specified size for each of several different categories. In Commune A, any funds drawn from
an account established for construction funds needed such approval. Let us examine item by item the categories of income and expenditure characteristic of each commune.

As noted, monthly salary disbursements are passed down from the county level through the bank. For the Culture and Education Department, the Security Group, the Armed Forces Department and the broadcast station these funds come from the county bureaus responsible for those functions. However, in the process of distributing salaries the handling of actual monies frequently becomes mixed with those salaries that support general administrative cadres who may work in the Production Group, or on the staff of the Commune Office. Although we have no direct evidence for this, circumstantial evidence indicates that the higher-level bureau in question may decide the disbursement procedure. In Commune A all salary money for the cadres in the Armed Forces Department was picked up at the bank by the commune cashier. The head of the Armed Forces Department then collected the money and distributed it to cadres in his Department. Although the source of funding is analogous in the case of the broadcast station of Commune A (i.e., it is funded by the county broadcast station), the station maintained its own cashier who drew money directly from the bank. In this case, the salaries of broadcast station personnel never passed through the accounts of the commune administrative unit. (It is not fully clear how the commune would have to account for the simple relaying of salaries for the Armed Forces Department.)

Administration of salary distribution is a relatively uncomplicated task since there is virtually no ambiguity about how this money should be used. It is earmarked for a cash payment to a named individual in a specific department. Thus, these payments are not subject to manipulation. In other categories of state funds, however, the county has a tougher time enforcing control.

Commune A maintained four sets of offices—for the commune Party Committee, the Revolutionary Committee, the Production Group, and the Political Work Group. Commune B had offices distinguished only as Party and Commune. After the Cultural Revolution higher level authorities continually stressed the need to cut office expenses.
Based on a directive from Guangdong Province, which made recommendations on how communes should draw up their budgets, county authorities in both cases fixed maximum expenditures for office expenses. In Commune A the limit was 30 yuan per year for each full time office worker, while in Commune B the limit was 2 yuan per month, or 24 yuan per year. This money, distributed monthly to the commune, covered the cost of paper, writing instruments, and other miscellaneous expenses.

Both communes found, however, that allocated funds were insufficient to cover expenses. The chief reason was that this category of income was to cover all propaganda-related expenses, and since the frequency of propaganda activities increased during and after the Cultural Revolution, naturally propaganda expenses rose sharply. In Commune A, in the flurry of political activities that accompanied the Cultural Revolution, commune accounting officials dipped into an accumulated construction fund of 40,000 yuan and used a further 10,000 yuan from other sources. While technically against county regulations, the infraction was so wide-spread at the time that guilty officials were only asked to write self-examinations. In Commune B, the accountant set up a separate account for propaganda in violation of a central directive prohibiting separate accounts. By setting up the account, the commune was able to report that the low maximum for office expenses was being kept to, which would have been impossible had they drawn propaganda expenses from the same source.

Commune A received from 200 to 300 yuan per year from the county, which the commune cashier disbursed for cultural and recreational activities (wenyu fei). This fund covered the costs of purchasing commune owned televisions, radios, and musical instruments, of visiting other units to learn from their experiences (can guan), or of showing movies.

Both communes received an annual allowance from the state for welfare or benefits (fuli). In Commune A, the amount totaled 1,000 yuan per year. The fund covered salary supplements for commune cadres and employees with family difficulties, a cold drink allowance of .80 yuan per cadre each month from May to August, and a special
supplement for cotton cloth (which had very few applicants and required special county approval). For all supplements of over 30 yuan drawn from this fund, the commune had to submit a special application to the Welfare Group (fuli zu) of the County Party Committee Office. The informant reported that Commune A successfully economized in the use of this fund and at the end of each year returned all unused portions of the original allocation.

Both communes received annual allowances for the purposes of capital construction, but each county administered the funds somewhat differently. In Commune A, the county allocated 10,000 yuan each year but deposited it in a frozen bank account. For each use of the fund, the commune needed specific approval, which was not automatic. In one year the county rejected a request to use 6,000 yuan to renovate commune offices. The county sent down an inspector who concluded that the commune could get by without the project. This decision was consistent with a provincial directive that prohibited the construction of new housing, dormitories, or office space unless the old ones could no longer be used. In other cases the funds were used to plant trees along roads, build and maintain roads, construct bridges, and expand a state-run regular middle school. As can be seen from the nature of these projects, the county disbursements for capital construction were used principally for non-income earning projects. For large-scale projects, Commune A would have to save over several years, or pitch in with income from its own enterprises. In Commune B, the county distributed a smaller annual amount, but the commune could apply for additional funds for large-scale projects. This allowed the county to redistribute income in at least a marginal way since wealthier communes with greater income from commune-level enterprises received smaller or no special allowances for individual projects.

The above categories encompass the entirety of budgetary allowances obtained from state sources. Each month the commune accountant presented statements to the Party committee. Inevitably, the committee would "approve" (pizhun) the statement, but might criticize the accountants for some practices. For example, in Commune A, the accountant, being a "good natured person" (laohaoren),
fully reimbursed the agricultural middle school for a trip they had made to another commune to see a dramatic performance, and in doing so used up the entire cultural/recreation allowance. Sometimes the committee will simply recommend that the accountant and cashier keep more careful control over certain categories of expenditures to avoid cost overrun. In Commune B, however, the accountant reportedly avoided such problems by juggling funds among different categories in order to meet the planned budgetary allotments. The accountant would never receive criticism since it was not "corruption," and was nearly impossible to trace anyway.

As a check against excessive "juggling," or simple cost overruns using funds from state sources, the Bank in Commune A or the Tax Office in Commune B might refuse to release funds without county approval. In one example in Commune A, the Commune committed itself to paying 60% of the construction cost of a bridge in a brigade. The brigade estimated that the total cost would be from 30,000 to 40,000 yuan, but when the project was finished it had spent a total of 100,000 yuan. The commune tried to withdraw 40,000 yuan more from the bank to cover costs, but the bank refused and referred the problem to the county. The county Party committee decided that the brigade should not have built such a large bridge and refused to release state funds to pay for the project. The commune finally had to use the bank deposits of all its enterprises to make up the discrepancy. The informant from Commune A described the relationship between the bank and the commune as subtle, since on the one hand the bank was to exercise a supervisory function over the commune, while on the other hand the bank was technically under the administrative leadership of the commune. This meant that the bank tended to exercise its control function only when it detected gross violations of budgetary norms, rather than more benign manipulations. In Commune B, however, the referral of problems to county administrators was more routine. For example, the commune wanted to purchase a movie projector, which was expensive enough to cause its cultural allowance to be overspent, and necessitate drawing funds from other accounts. The Tax Office referred the question.
to the county Culture and Education Bureau. In this case the Bureau refused to approve the purchase since the commune had recently purchased a projector. The problem handled by the higher level, in this case, involved both control over commune budgetary disbursements (i.e., approval for juggling accounts) and also control over distribution of movie projectors. In Commune B, any expenditure over a specified ceiling of several hundred yuan needed county approval.

Control over budgets, particularly in Commune B, was not rigorous. Whereas in Commune A, the county Party Committee Office reviewed major expenditures, in Commune B, the county bureau under whose jurisdiction that particular expenditure fell assumed responsibility for reviewing the proposed expenditure. On the surface of things, it doesn't make much sense for the Culture and Education Bureau to be the agent to approve larger-than-ordinary cultural expenses. Presumably they would move often than not approve more money for the improvement of services offered under their jurisdiction. The informant reported, however, that with Bureau approval, the Tax Office was relieved of further responsibility.

This approval system at times led to bickering among county bureaus. In one case in Commune B, the Industrial and Transportation Bureau approved a very large appropriation for a boat, which necessitated committing several years of construction funds and drawing a large bank loan. Later in the year, the Export Corporation at the county directed the Industrial Cooperative to set up a palm leaf processing factory, but the bank had no money to lend. This system reveals, we conclude, that county authorities did not feel a need to institute very strict, uniform controls over commune expenditures. The county bureaus monitored the allocation less to police the balancing of commune accounts than to assess whether the commune really needed to spend money in an area where the bureau had expertise. In other words, the functional bureau is called in because it can evaluate whether the purchase of an extra projector, or the building of a new office makes sense in terms of what the commune already has in that area, rather than its relative importance in relation to other expenditures. The commune must then assume responsibility for its overall accounts.
Surprisingly, neither commune had a regular system for auditing accounts, where books would be checked against receipts and requisitions. Only in movements were the books checked in this manner. Nonetheless, the commune filed financial reports with higher authorities. Organizational units at the commune (jiguan danwei), including the commune plus individual departments such as the Armed Forces Department or the Culture and Education Department, submitted annual reports to the county Party committee office, while other units performing economic functions (jingying danwei), such as the Marketing Coops, submitted monthly reports.40 (The economic sub-units also had more stringent auditing procedures.) In this manner, county officials could maintain a good understanding of the commune's financial position.

The above description applies only to those sources of funding supplied by the state. In addition, the commune obtains funds from the profits of its enterprises, management fees from cooperatives, and finally, bank loans. While People's Daily constantly exhorts local officials to use the profits of small industries in a manner conducive to the achievement of Party goals, no formal system was uncovered by which higher level officials continuously check to see that communes follow these guidelines. The systems of control by county authorities over budgetary commitments seem to apply only to those funds actually supplied by the county. This can be seen in part from the fact that commune officials may use locally generated funds to pay for projects that county cadres have rejected. In the above example where county officials rejected Commune A's request to spend 6,000 yuan for office renovation, I asked the informant if the commune might have gone ahead with the project anyway. He responded: "If the commune wants to use the income from profits of commune enterprises for construction, the county doesn't care (buli)."41 The commune's only problem if it chose to proceed with the project, would be to obtain sufficient construction materials, since the county would not distribute them for rejected projects. However, frequently such construction materials can be obtained outside of state distribution channels.
Although the county does not have procedures to review overall planning for a commune's locally generated income, it does not adopt an entirely passive position. It may, for example, issue directives requiring that communes invest their funds in commune-run middle schools, machinery repair facilities, or other industrial projects. It may also issue regulations concerning the operation of the facility after construction is completed, for example, requiring that repair shops set very low prices to encourage teams and brigades to maintain machines properly. These directives may not be entirely appreciated by commune-level cadres, but there seems little question that higher administrative levels have the authority to issue them.

The commune handles management fees paid by commune-wide cooperatives in the same manner as the profits from enterprises that it owns itself. The commune headquarters in Commune B was located in a market town containing a variety of small factories. After the revolution, these factories combined into an industrial cooperative, pooling ownership of factories and allowing the market town Party branch to make unified decisions concerning wages, benefits, and investment policy, of course, under guidelines set by higher-level authorities. The commune provided political leadership for the cooperative in a manner similar to the leadership provided for production brigades. The cooperative retained profits generated by its factories for reinvestment, aside from taxes paid to the state and a fixed fee paid to the commune for management (guanli fei). Although exact figures are not available, the informant from Commune B indicated that these cooperatives supplied the bulk of the commune's independent budget.42

Finally the commune may apply to branches of the state bank or to its local credit cooperative for loans. Strictly speaking, loans should not be viewed as income since they must be repaid (with interest). Nonetheless, we include them here since loans provide an important source of capital allowing communes to expand their income-generating capacity. Loans are issued to communes only for projects that will earn income. Loans are made, according to informants, strictly on the basis of the
feasibility of a project and its income-earning potential so that the loan can be repaid in a reasonable amount of time from the income of the project. For large projects, communes must turn to the bank rather than the credit cooperatives, whose capital is more limited. Bank branches receive quotas from higher-level bank offices for loans that may be disbursed in different categories. Applications for such projects will be forwarded to the county for approval, in the case of Commune A to the office of the county Party Committee. When the allowance for a particular category has been exhausted, no more loans can be issued. In Commune B, this limitation caused a sharp conflict between the commune leaders and the Party branch of the industrial cooperative. As mentioned, one year the commune bought a large boat costing 20,000 yuan. The boat was purchased with a very large bank loan, which was to be repaid from several years of the commune's construction allowance plus the income from operating the boat. After the loan had been issued, the county directed the industrial cooperative to set up a very profitable palm-leaf processing factory, but the cooperative was informed by the bank that all available funds had gone to finance the boat. Arguments developed since the factory would generate income very quickly while the boat would not earn very much money, but the bank could not adjust its policy and the cooperative had to turn elsewhere. Loans did not contribute to the commune's operating budget, but the income generated by enterprises after the loans had been repaid did.

Although some profits earned by commune enterprises were accumulated for further investment, much of this money entered the commune's central budget and paid for expanded administrative services or other non-income earning projects. After the Cultural Revolution, the state consciously tried to reduce the numbers of new cadres on the state payroll at the commune level. Instead of making all commune-level cadres into state-paid personnel, many new cadres were paid from commune-earned funds at a rate below that of the lowest level state cadres. Commune funds were used to supplement the operating funds for functional departments sent down from higher levels. The Women's Federation in Commune B provides a good example.
of the complicated budgetary arrangements that ensued. The chairman of the Federation was a state cadre, appointed in the mid-1960s. Her assistant, the "women's clerk," received her salary from commune sources. Normal operating expenses for Federation activities such as propaganda or mass meetings came from commune revenues, although for special projects and events, they could apply to a special fund established for the county Women's Federation. In the case of the Broadcast Station in Commune A, the county broadcast station sent down funds to pay for the salaries of the broadcasters and technical personnel who operated the station, even though they were not state cadres. Only the station head was a state cadre, paid from regular county disbursements. The county also paid for clerical expenses and employee benefits. Although the county planned for distribution of equipment for operation of the station, the commune had to foot the bill from its own income. For the regular upper middle school in Commune A, the state provided all funding, although construction and repair costs might come from the general construction fund sent down by the county. However, the agricultural middle school in Commune A was ineligible for any state support. Even the construction funds for general use by the commune could not be used to maintain the school. Although the school did generate some income from tuition and from operating its experimental fields, the commune had to pay for the rest from income earned by its enterprises.

Several interesting conclusions emerge from examining budgetary practices in these two communes. First, apparently neither the center, Guangdong Province, nor Foshan Prefecture has fixed standardized rules that counties must follow when monitoring commune budgets. Since both communes are located in Foshan Prefecture in Guangdong, such standardized rules would apply to both cases. Thus, we can conclude that the counties are responsible for setting budgetary control systems themselves. While the general categories of income and expenditure are very similar, the specific procedures by which communes obtain approval for expenditures varies, in some cases giving communes great ability to manipulate funds among sub-accounts, and in other cases keeping
the commune on a fairly short leash. Clearly China's leaders have sought a system that both insures adherence to central policy pronouncements while allowing for flexibility to adapt to local conditions. The system is predicated on basic voluntary adherence to central policy by commune-level cadres.

Second, since funds distributed by the state are subject to much more stringent controls, it follows that communes with greater abilities to generate income themselves, would expand their administrative independence from higher administrative levels. This difference emerges very strongly in the sense of degree of autonomy conveyed by informants from different communes. Commune A, which was much wealthier than Commune B, seemed to take greater initiative across a broad range of issues than Commune B, which turned to the county more frequently for relatively small questions. There are other possible explanations, but financial independence appears to be a strong factor encouraging administrative autonomy.

Control over Commune Personnel

As Figure II illustrates, we have been able to identify 66 persons with positions in Commune A, and 81 with positions in Commune B. The actual number however is greater. We do not have personnel information on commune departments that do not have figures listed. Furthermore, this list includes mostly leadership cadres. Regular clerks in the Department Store or the Supply and Marketing Cooperative are not included, nor are workers in granaries or commune factories, doctors and nurses from the hospital, nor teachers from commune middle schools. If we included all of these persons in the list, the number of persons working at the commune level might easily total several hundred. As it turns out, however, most of these persons work for independently budgeted and managed units and generally the commune Party secretary and committee do not have to worry about their day-to-day activities. Those departments listed toward the top of the table are those that manage political affairs and are most closely controlled
by the Party committee. The commune Party secretary may almost at will reassign personnel from those departments as he sees fit to manage work that arises. Some members of these departments, however, perform routine office tasks that require daily attention. Cadres in the Organization Department must maintain and protect the security of dossiers on Party members, and the commune clerical secretary must stay in his office to affix the commune seal on documents. Although other cadres departments such as the Production Group must see to other more general responsibilities, such as monitoring and improving production techniques, their work schedules tend to be more flexible.

Moving down the table, roughly speaking, departments tend to be financially and administratively more independent of the commune. They have daily work requirements that prevent personnel from being easily reassigned to other tasks. Some would incur financial loss from the reassignment of personnel without compensation. The bank tends to be most independent of all. In both communes all four regular bank cadres were non-local to the commune, and were Party members whose Party activities followed the lead of the county bank rather than the commune Party committee. (The fifth bank employee in Commune A was a messenger from the local commune.) Their salaries also tended to be higher than cadres in other departments.

Of the personnel accounted for, about one-fourth in Commune A were non-native to the commune, while about one-half were non-native in Commune B. In both cases, three out of the ten members of the Party committee (including two alternates in Commune A) were non-native including, very significantly, the Party secretary and the vice-secretary responsible for political affairs. The vice-secretaries responsible for production both were native to their communes. Thus the most powerful leaders in the commune were outsiders delegated by the county. This practice helped insure that the secretary would not face conflicts of loyalty. There is no indication, however, that commune cadres or members were highly conscious of or resented the fact that they were led by outsiders. Most outsiders were native to the
county or came from a nearby county, so there were no obvious cultural or linguistic barriers to overcome. When these cadres performed well in office they had no trouble earning the respect and obedience of commune natives.

Commune personnel received their salaries according to at least four different payment systems. The most commonly used system was the salary grade system for state cadres. Prior to the Cultural Revolution this system included thirty grades with salary and rank increasing in the lower grades. Commune cadres rarely were graded higher than 20. Once assigned to a grade, a cadre would receive a fixed monthly salary which varied according to the county where the cadre was assigned. Some areas, such as Hainan Island, were designated as "hardship" areas and salaries were higher. The belt of wealthy counties surrounding Canton also tended to be relatively high. After the Cultural Revolution, however, the grades from 26 to 30 were eliminated from the scale. Previously these grades were occupied by unskilled custodial workers or low-grade clerical workers.

Originally there was an exact correspondence between salary ranks and cadre ranks (ganbu jibie), but after the Cultural Revolution these sometimes became inconsistent. Cadres who were promoted rapidly, often young activists who distinguished themselves during the Cultural Revolution, sometimes received cadre rank promotions without a corresponding increase in salary. These cadres were nicknamed "helicopters" because of their rapid vertical ascent. Presumably, they were promoted to increase their political authority, but the state wanted to limit increases in the amount of money allocated to cadre salaries. Although several informants confirmed the existence of inconsistencies between cadre grades and salary grades, the purpose of increasing the cadre grade is not entirely clear. The source of a cadre's power lay in his assigned administrative position such as section chief or vice-chief, and not his numerical grade. In the past, documents issued by the Party Central or the State Council have specified which grades
of cadres could read them, but informants reported that after the Cultural Revolution these documents specified administrative level and position. Possibly, cadre ranks were increased only as a means of giving official recognition to political status or, possibly, to match more or less the guidelines for correspondence of rank and position specified in the original salary system.

In addition to the regular grade system for state cadres, workers and managers in state commercial organs, such as the Supply and Marketing Cooperatives or the Department Stores had their own grade system. One informant referred to this grade system as "operations grade" (jingying ji), although this appears to be a locally-used name. This grade system contained eleven grades, in which salaries increased with the grade numbers. There was also a separate grade system for teachers.

In addition to the official grade systems, some commune cadres who received salaries did not have any grading. They were not formally state cadres and did not receive state-guaranteed welfare and retirement benefits. Most of these cadres were young and were recruited locally after the Cultural Revolution. They may have been activists during the Cultural Revolution, rusticated urban youth sent out from the cities, or recent graduates of the commune middle school. Had they been recruited prior to the Cultural Revolution, they probably would have been assigned to the state cadre grade system in the ranks from 26 to 30. They received relatively low salaries, around 30 yuan per month, and their salaries usually came from income earned by the commune and not from state disbursements. These cadres are perhaps likely at a later date to enter the official grading system.

The methods of grading offer a neat system that on paper clearly specifies who pays for what, and how cadres in different functional systems will be compensated. In practice the system tends to get mixed up, however, as cadres in the commune are transferred back and forth among different departments at the commune level itself. Cadres tend to be paid according to the grade system where they began work rather than the grade system that
would normally apply in their current job assignment. Sometimes, a cadre may be transferred to work in a completely different department, yet his old department will continue to pay his salary. Also, if a cadre does shift grade systems, it is a matter of principle that salaries never go down. Thus, if the new grade to which he is assigned would not normally pay a salary as high as that previously earned, the commune must make up the difference from its own funds.

The above description makes the system appear messy, but cadres who ran the system did not appear uncomfortable with it. The state in any event paid the salaries in all official grading systems and non-graded commune cadres were never transferred from the control of the commune Party committee, so the commune never lost control over cadres it paid from its own funds. In one instance, the county requested the temporary use of one such commune cadre, but the commune secretary refused to release the cadre who he claimed was badly needed at the time. The only recourse for the county would have been to promote the cadre into the state grading system after which it could transfer the cadre at will. The county was not willing to go that far.

Occasionally, however, commune departments objected to having their personnel temporarily or permanently transferred by the commune Party secretary to perform other work. This became a real bone of contention in the case of teachers from the commune middle schools. Teachers were frequently drawn out to do propaganda-related work, and they claimed that it interfered with their duties as educators. One informant described a transfer among departments that she felt was typical:
The commune broadcast station was set up in 1970. . . . The station head is a demobilized soldier. . . . Originally he was assigned to work in the Post Office, but he was transferred over because someone was needed and in the army he had acquired the necessary skills. The Post Office will report this to the county. The Station head still receives his salary through the Post Office. . . . Naturally the Post Office was not happy about
losing him, but the commune just explained that it was necessary for current work and was serving the revolution, so there was nothing the Post Office could say back. They had five persons working there, and four were basically enough to do the job. The commune is an administrative unit whereas the Post Office is an "enterprise unit" [chiye danwei]. At the local level, enterprise units are instructed to serve the administrative units.

If the Post Office objected seriously to the transfer of its employee, they would have appealed to the county Post Office. The county Post Office would then appeal to the county Party secretary who, if he sympathized with the case, would have placed pressure on the commune Party secretary. In this instance, the objection did not seem to be very strong or well substantiated.

The way the system operated gave commune leaders greater flexibility to reassign commune personnel to meet pressing needs as they saw them. This flexibility also extended to other areas. We previously explained how commune leaders could subtly manipulate their budgets to allocate funds to desired categories. They can also re-allocate material supplies destined for other projects. In Commune A, the commune appropriated (with compensation) electrical supplies that the county had allocated specifically for the commune's broadcast station. The head of the broadcast station objected, but could do nothing. While we view this flexibility of the system as a basic strength, it must have prevented higher level officials from obtaining a very clear picture of how, in the aggregate, resources were being allocated at the commune level. The formal system of salary disbursement and assignment of personnel did not correspond with practice, which would make it difficult for county or provincial officials to attempt to rationalize their use. But the overall advantages of maintaining great flexibility become apparent when we examine the commune's participation in capital construction projects.
Commune Administration in Action: Construction Projects

With material and technical support from the county, communes can take advantage of flexible administrative procedures in order to combine resources to execute relatively large scale construction projects. Commune B participated in a project that provides a good illustration of how the commune can draw on and coordinate work with its various departments as well as with the brigades and teams. The example illustrates both the capabilities of the commune and its need to rely on aid from the county.

This county had a large amount of mountainous land unsuitable for cultivation. In the late 1950s, when communes were formed, none of this land was assigned to individual communes. In 1972, the county initiated plans to develop the entire area:

Under a directive from the county in 1972, the commune set up the Mountain Construction Headquarters [shanqu jianshe zhixiubu]. The county has an organization of that same name that was set up earlier. The county Headquarters first surveyed the entire county and drew up detailed maps of the terrain. Specialists then formulated plans to develop the whole area. As the mountainous land was divided up among the communes, each commune was assigned to complete a portion of the planned project. For my commune, the county planned that we would construct five reservoirs, with hydroelectric generators at each one. There were also plans for reforestation.

The commune Party secretary first attended a special county briefing at which the project was explained. After returning to the commune he held meetings of leading commune cadres to create the new commune Mountain Construction Headquarters, which consisted of a "commander" in charge and a regular staff of five. Under the control of this staff were 3,000 laborers drawn from the brigades and teams.
The commune planned and executed actual construction, and later was to receive all income accruing from the project, but the county actively supervised the commune:

After the county assigns the project to the commune, the commune will draw up a detailed work plan. For example, they will select which reservoir to construct first. In my case the commune planned to use 3,000 workers. They had to open a road to the site, build a ten room dormitory, and construct a dock at the end of the road for delivery of food from the commune. They also have to plan for the use of materials, such as cement, and must draw up detailed specifications for the dam. Only the county can supply the cement. After drawing up this plan it is sent to the county Headquarters for approval. The county may reject the plan. For example, they may feel that the first construction site should be different since it may not need the construction of a dock; it may lie closer to a highway and thus ease transportation problems. It also might be easier for the county to inspect the site. Perhaps it would only take, say, three months instead of five months and would begin to earn money through electricity generation at an earlier date. The commune may still choose to ignore the county rejection, but this is impractical since the commune depends on the county for the supply of materials. If the commune did not follow the county's advice, the county would not help out if it ran into trouble. The commune simply lacks the resources to undertake such a project on its own.48

The county also held training sessions for the commune's technicians,49 and regularly inspected the work site. County technicians were present for the execution of the project's first phase, but later were withdrawn since commune technicians gained sufficient experience to execute later projects on their own.
The project was planned so that it could begin earning money as quickly as possible. After income began to flow in, the Headquarters would gradually assume payment of all staff and workers' salaries, but in the mean time it needed a large influx of financial aid. The county provided some funding in the form of an interest free loan, and also provided a small grant, but the project still needed more funding. At one point they had to turn to the commune Credit Cooperative for money to buy an electric generator:

The Mountain Construction Headquarters wanted to purchase a hydroelectric generator that cost 10,000 yuan. The commune Credit Cooperative, however, reported that it could lend only 2,000 yuan, so the Headquarters appealed to the commune Revolutionary Committee to help solve its problem. The commune then ordered the cooperative to lend 5,000 yuan, but this was still not enough. Then they went to the county Mountain Construction Headquarters for help. The county sent someone down to "mobilize" [dong yuan] the commune Credit Cooperative into lending the money. The Cooperative complained that it would tie up too much of their funds, but it eventually came up with 8,000 yuan, which was still not enough. Finally, the Headquarters had to go to the county Credit Cooperative for the other 2,000 yuan.50

The Construction Headquarters drew its staff from various departments in the commune, and some staff members continued to receive pay from their original departments:

The commune had three technicians working for the Headquarters. One was a technician who worked for the Water Conservancy Group. He at first received his wages from the largest irrigation station, even though he was not head of the station and was not permanently attached to it. At the construction site he was in charge of the actual technical plans for the dam—how much of what kind
of materials, dimensions, etc. After the first electricity generating station was completed, he received his wages there. The other two technicians came from a commune factory and the commune boat factory. They were leadership cadres and continued to receive their salaries at the factories. One cadre was responsible for drawing labor from the brigades and assigning them to work on the dam. He only worked there for one year, however. He had a personality clash with the "commander" and they had constant disagreements. After the dam construction was finished, he went to work in the Commerce Department at the commune. While he worked for the Command, he received his wages from the income from the electricity generator, and not through normal commune channels. Originally he was an ordinary commune cadre. After he went to work for the Commercial Department he continued to receive his wages through the commune Tax Office, even though the Commercial Department was under the administration of the county and had its own accounting and payment system. In 1973, this cadre was replaced by a brigade Youth League secretary. He was not a state cadre and the county had no role in his appointment.51

Thus the commune was able to put together a staff rapidly without extra expenditures by borrowing cadres who continued to receive their salaries through other channels.

When the commune requisitioned team members to work on the construction, they would be paid in brigade work points for which the commune would pay money to the brigade. In addition, laborers also received directly 1.20 yuan for each cubic meter of earth of stone moved. One Headquarters' staff member worked full time on recruiting labor from the brigades, and his job was not always an easy one:

Sometimes the production brigades would refuse to send laborers to the construction site during busy season. This was solved by going down to the
brigade and holding meetings and talking them into it. Inevitably the brigades would send laborers, but the staff member might have to go back a week later and repeat the same process. 51

The informant, who spent some time doing political work at the project site, compared the Headquarters' political status to that of a production brigade. It had its own Party branch and secretary, and operated as an independent economic unit with its own bank accounts and the ability to borrow funds. Political activities at the site were regular:

I worked on the site doing political work in 1974. I served as Youth League Secretary of the site. Of the 3,000 workers over 2,000 were League members. I also did miscellaneous work involving statistics, finances and legal work. There were various problems that arose such as theft, fights, and an accidental death due to misuse of explosives. I also handled the work of the Party branch since they were all busy with the construction work. From 1973 I began to work for the commune and received a salary there. I worked for the Youth League committee and did general work for the Commune Propaganda Department. I received wages as the Women's Federation clerk. 53

The ability of the commune to recombine its resources and execute a large project shows very clearly why flexibility is a basic strength. The commune could with a minimum of fuss reallocate finances and personnel to support the project. Headquarters' staff often continued to be paid by other organizations that in effect subsidized the project. When the commune pressured the Credit Cooperative to lend more money to the Headquarters, they in effect reduced the financial allocations to other organizations. Were all departments independent and rigidly autonomous, following accounting and personnel procedures as they appear on organization charts, this kind of project would be much more difficult. Thus, the system
of "administrative units" is strong because it allows local leaders to adjust to the needs of their communities.

As economic development proceeds the activities that a commune can support gradually expand. The two communes examined here may be especially active because their headquarters are located in old market towns in the relatively commercialized Pearl River Delta surrounding Canton. Nonetheless the expanded functions of the commune do not bring it any closer to the brigades and teams which Chinese publications continue to refer to as the "basic level" or the "front line of agriculture."

Parish found that over time a process of village en-cysting has occurred. As brigade-level social services improve there is less and less reason for villagers to go to the commune for ordinary daily business. As agricultural mechanization proceeds, brigades are gradually acquiring their own tractors and other large machines and do not need to rely as heavily on commune tractor stations. The commune's responsibility to supervise brigades and teams is an important and necessary one, but its overall political role may not be as important as one might conclude from examining Chinese propaganda about the commune system. One former county official made the following generalization about the commune's political role:

Actually, the commune has almost no independent power. In every matter it follows the lead of the county. If a commune is unusually rich, it may be slightly more autonomous, but still it has very little autonomy. The county, on the other hand, has a great deal of autonomy to make policy decisions.

This summation matches closely with the opinion of several informants that for questions of importance affecting the teams and brigades the commune would have to obtain county approval before making any decision.

With the data available it is difficult to support conclusively these assessments of the commune's role, but it fits with our general impression of what the
commune does. It provides an administrative link between the county, which plays a major role in interpreting policy formulated in Peking, and the brigade, which oversees actual implementation in the production teams and serves as the focus of many community activities. The commune level itself is busy managing its own affairs.

NOTES


2. Much of the data for this study are drawn from a series of interviews with emigrees from China conducted in Hong Kong in 1977. References to these interviews include a number given to each informant, a letter given for each interview session, and page numbers of the session transcript. If an English translation was prepared, the reference is to the English version. For a more complete description of the interview method, see my dissertation, "Conflict and Decision-Making in China's Rural Administration, 1969-1976" (Columbia University, 1980).


4. For an analysis of the "large" size of communes, see William L. Parish, "China--Team, Brigade or Commune?" Problems of Communism, March-April, 1976.

5. 13Bp3.
7. "Points" (dian) refers to the few units in the commune where it is felt political work is especially important.

9. Ibid. This informant was from a middle peasant class background.

17. It was announced that the name "revolutionary committee" was in June 1979 changed to "people's government." This change in name, however, does not appear to alter its functions. See "Strengthen Legal System and Democracy," Beijing Review 27 (6 July 1979): 34.

18. The term "administrative unit" (xingzheng danwei) has a technical meaning in Chinese that will be discussed shortly.

21. Ibid.
22. 17Hp1.
23. 16Ep2.
24. 16Ep2.
25. 16Ep3.
26. 18Dp5.
27. Ibid.
28. See interviews 13A and 13B.
30. "Party life" (dang de shenghuo) refers to the regular small group study sessions in which all Party members participate.
31. Our discussion of the commune's administrative functions should not obscure the important economic functions also performed by communes, which are rapidly expanding their small-scale industrial activities. For illustrative purposes, we have defined the various terms discussed here fairly precisely, perhaps more precisely than many Chinese administrators would feel comfortable doing because communes, like other units in China, are multi-functional.
34. The finance and trade system (caimao xitong) refers to the collection of organizations under the general supervision of the Finance and Trade Ministry. They include the bank, the Tax Bureau, and various commercial organs.

35. 16Fpp7-8.

36. 17Jp1.

37. 16Hp20.

38. 17Hp7.

39. 17Kp5.

40. 16Fp8.

41. 16Fp7.

42. 17Ip2.

43. 16Fp7.

44. 17Kp5.

45. 17Kp5.

46. 17Gpp3-4.

47. 17Hp4.

48. 17Hp4.

49. These "technicians" were personnel drawn from commune factories and pumping stations who had practical building skills and experience.

50. 17Jp7. The county Credit Cooperative mentioned here is part of the bank.
51. 17Hp3.

52. 17Hp3.

53. 17Hp4.


POLICY CHANGE AT THE NATIONAL SUMMIT
AND INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL: 1
THE CASE OF TACHAI AND HSIYANG COUNTY IN THE POST- MAO ERA
by Tang Tsou, Marc

Blecher, and Mitch Meisner

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Events since the death of Mao on September 9, 1976, to the present have made it clear that the Third Plenum of December, 1978, was a decisive turning point in the history of the Chinese Communist regime since 1948, the history of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) since 1935, and the history of 20th century China since the May 4th Period. The Chinese Revolution which led first to the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911 and finally to the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 is over. Revolution has been replaced by a search for a distinctively Chinese path toward economic development, "socialist democracy," and "socialist legality." The progressive expansion of political control over all spheres of social life and individual activity has been superseded by a trend toward giving various social groups and individuals a larger sphere of autonomy free from arbitrary interference by the Party or the government. This trend has been accompanied by a drastic change in the substance of party policies and the methods of party leadership in the direction of paying greater heed to the felt needs and immediate material interests of groups and individuals. The Party's deeply rooted practice of using political movements and administrative fiat to promote economic development has come under constant criticism. It has been replaced by an emphasis on "objective economic laws" and "natural laws" in the formulation of economic policies and in the reform of the economic system. The use of material incentives, the assignment of an increasingly larger role
to market mechanisms, the acceptance of limitations im-
posed by existing economic conditions, the recognition of
the severe constraints of China's high population-land
ratio, and the constant emphasis placed on the variations
in natural environment in different parts of China have
become prominent ingredients in the making of decisions.
In virtually every sphere of concrete policies in domestic
affairs, the programs initiated by Mao since the second
half of 1957 have been drastically reversed. The mistakes
of the Cultural Revolution, now called the "ten years of
calamity" have been traced not only to certain tendencies
within the Party from the very beginning but also to cer-
tain aspects of Leninism, not to mention Stalinism. The
Party has been engaged in a re-examination and reinter-
pretation of its own ideology, the political system it
built, and its past programs and policies—all in the
context of a re-evaluation of its earlier interpretation
of Chinese history after the Spring and Autumn and Warring
States periods. Few nations have undergone such a drastic
reversal of direction and such a comprehensive search
for answers in so short a period of time.

This reversal of direction and the changes in con-
crete policies in the context of a search for answers
about the past, the present, and the future have produced
new information which enables us to look at the formerly
sacrosanct programs of Mao and the new emergent designs
of the current leadership in a different light and from
a larger historical perspective. To be sure, these changes
have been initiated from above. But they have been wrought
in response to what the survivors of the Cultural Revolu-
tion feel to be the spontaneous demands and felt needs
of individuals and groups at all levels of society. More-
over, the impact of the new policies and the accompanying
reforms reaches down to the lowest level of society and
affects every individual in all sectors. Thus, this period
of reversal of policies gives us an opportunity to ob-
serve the relationship between macro-political changes
and the responses which these evoke at micro- and indi-
vidual levels.

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(1) The rise and fall of the leaders of Tachai and Hsiyang

Among the best places to observe this linkage are Tachai brigade and Hsiyang county. As national models, Tachai brigade and Hsiyang county reached the zenith of their prominence in the period after the two national conferences on building Tachai-type counties held in September, 1975, and December, 1976.

Ch'en Yung-kuei, the party secretary of Tachai village since 1952 or 1953, had been the most powerful figure in Hsiyang since 1967 in his capacity as the Chairman of the Hsiyang Revolutionary Committee and a member of a party core group. In March, 1967, he was identified as one of the vice-chairmen of the Shansi Revolutionary Committee, one of the first two revolutionary committees organized after Mao's call for the seizure of power in January, 1967. From 1971 on and after the system of party committees was re-established, he also served as the secretary of the Hsiyang county party committee, the party secretary of Chinchung district, and a secretary of the Shansi provincial party committee. At the national level, he was elected a member of the Ninth Central Committee of the CCP in April, 1969, and a member of the Politbureau of the Tenth Central Committee in August, 1973. He was appointed a vice-premier in January, 1975, at the time of the first session of the Fourth National People's Congress (NPC). In August, 1977, he was reelected a member of the Politbureau of the Eleventh Plenum. Ch'en's youthful protégée, Kuo Feng-lien, became a member of the standing committee of the Shansi Revolutionary Committee in 1967. She served under Ch'en as a deputy secretary of the party branch of Tachai brigade in 1971. After Ch'en was first elected to the Politbureau in 1973, Kuo replaced him as the secretary of the Tachai party branch. In March, 1977, she was identified as a deputy secretary of the Hsiyang party committee. In August, 1977, she was elected an alternate member of the Eleventh Central Committee. In March, 1978, she was elected a member of the Standing Committee of the Fifth NPC.
But in December, 1979, Ch'en Yung-kuei was removed without any publicity from his position as the secretary of the party committee of Hsiyang county to be replaced by Liu Shu-kang, who had served for several years prior to that time as a deputy secretary in charge of industry. In August, 1980, he was only identified as a member of the party branch at Tachai. In September, Ch'en's resignation from his position as vice-premier was approved at the Third Session of the Fifth National People's Congress amid severe criticisms of Tachai and Hsiyang made by the delegates, some of which were published in the official newspapers. During this period of time, important changes in personnel occurred at all levels of Tachai brigade, Chinchung district, and Shansi province. Ch'en lost his positions in the provincial and district party committees. So did his deputies on the Hsiyang and Chinchung party committees and many of his supporters in the provincial-level units and other counties of Shansi.

In Late June, 1980, Kuo Feng-lien was transferred to work at the county seat as a cadre of the twenty-third grade at a monthly salary of ¥47.5 with her specific job assignment to be determined at a later date, as she herself frankly and calmly told Tsou in an interview lasting three hours. At the time, this nominal promotion from the secretary of the party branch of a brigade earning eight work-points a day to the position of a cadre at the county level earning regular salary meant that she could no longer represent Tachai and serve as a spokesman for the peasants at national-level politics. In retrospect, it foreshadowed a fundamental change in the past policy of promoting model peasants and workers to high posts at various levels of the political system. Having come to terms with the nation-wide political development, Kuo talked quite cheerfully of her intention to begin her career again as a cadre of the twenty-third grade, hoping to enroll in a party school or a special training institute and shifting her work to other fields such as women's and youth affairs.

From mid-June to November, the Hsiyang party committee and later the "principal responsible person in Hsiyang county," were accused of all sorts of mistakes in methods of leadership, principally but not exclusively revolving around two major decisions made by Ch'en: first, the inauguration in 1975 of the project of diverting a large part of the water of a river flowing westward to the east to benefit Hsiyang county and second, the falsification of the total grain production figures of the county from 1973 to 1977.
A report published in *Jen-min jih-pao* on November 13, 1980, identified Huo Shih-lien, the former minister of agriculture, as the first secretary of the Shansi provincial party committee. Huo, who had replaced Wang Ch'ien, a strong supporter of Ch'en, told a meeting of the secretaries of district and city party committees that "to raise the economic work of Shansi province to a higher level, we must continue to liberate our thinking, criticize the ultra-Leftist line and appropriately solve the problems left over from the work of learning from Tachai in agriculture and the work of checking [on the local cadres]."  

According to a broadcast in Peking reported in the *Foreign Broadcasting Information Service* on April 16, 1981, Tachai's party members had by secret ballot elected in December, 1980, a new party branch committee. The former deputy brigade leader Chia Ch'ang-so, who had been dismissed for experimenting with small work contracts, was elected secretary of the party branch. Three members of the old party branch (Sung Li-ying, Liang Pien-liang, and Chia Lai-keng) were re-elected. The other three of the new seven-member party committee were newcomers. Referring indirectly to Ch'en Yung-kuei, the broadcast said that because he had committed leftist mistakes and had not made a self-criticism, "naturally he was not elected this time."

On February 12, 1981, *Jen-min jih-pao* published a report on the self-criticism, made by the provincial party committee of Shansi under its new first secretary, of the "Leftist" errors which it had committed in guiding the movement to learn from Tachai in that province. But it also criticized both Tachai and Hsiyang for having pushed forward the "so-called continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat." A commentary by the Party Center was published alongside this self-criticism. It asserted that since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, Tachai had become a model in 'implementing the Leftist line' and that the movement to learn from Tachai had created serious consequences."  

Thus, the cycle of the rise and fall of Hsiyang county and of Tachai brigade as the sole national models at two different levels of governance and production has been completed. So has the reversal of Mao's policies of agricultural and rural development throughout the nation. The moderate leaders and the economic planners who had bided their time and who had during their period
of enforced leisure gradually worked out their ideas of reforming the economic system and new economic policies have now triumphed.

We are still too close to the events to answer with confidence most of the questions which the rise and fall of Tachai and the movement to learn from Tachai inevitably raise in the minds of outside observers. For example, how should the former claims of successes in Tachai and Hsiyang be evaluated in the light of the current charges? How should we evaluate some of the current charges? How can we account for the total repudiation of the Hsiyang experiment and the Tachai experience after the beginning of the Cultural Revolution? Hence, we shall restrict ourselves to two tasks: first, a tentative outline of the history of the rise and fall of Tachai and Hsiyang mainly since 1975 in the context of the political struggle at the national level; second, we shall attempt to trace the changes in institutions, policies, and practices in Hsiyang and Tachai since 1979 in the context of the reversal of the Party Center's rural and agricultural policies. In the course of our description, we shall also make some passing comments on the events which reflect some of our reactions to these developments. In undertaking these two tasks, we are acutely aware of the serious limitations which confront us because of the inadequacy of source materials and because of the press of time in meeting our deadline. Our justification for beginning to write this paper in December, 1980, is that the movement to learn from Tachai had just been terminated in September, 1979, and the total repudiation of Tachai was in sight. Indeed shortly after the first draft had been completed, the final self-criticism of the provincial party committee and the commentary of the Party Center were published. We believe that a preliminary account, however hastily done and inadequate, will be a useful first step in a re-examination of our views on the Chinese revolution, particularly the period of "socialist transformation."
Tachai and Hsiyang in national politics: the specific features of Tachai as distinguished from the "basic experience" of Tachai and the criteria of Tachai-type counties (1964-1975)

The seeds of the total repudiation of the "movement to learn from Tachai," Hsiyang as the first Tachai-type county, and Tachai itself for the period during and after the Cultural Revolution must be sought in the political processes which gradually developed after the anti-rightist campaign of 1957, which took definite shape during the Cultural Revolution from 1966-1976, and which had their roots deep in the history of the CCP and indeed in Imperial China. When in 1964, Mao called on the nation to learn from Tachai, Tachai not only became a national model, but was also pushed into the maelstrom of national politics which was then rapidly developing and was to engulf the whole nation during the Cultural Revolution. The point of departure of this political development was the slogan "never forget class struggle," a slogan distilled from remarks made by Mao at the Tenth Plenum in 1962. Later, this class struggle was specified as a struggle between two lines, socialism and revisionism, and its targets were first identified as "the capitalist roaders in authority within the Party" and still later as "the bourgeoisie within the Party."

Among other reasons, Mao elevated Tachai into a national model in 1964 in order to counter the "Taoyuan Experience," an experiment to revitalize agricultural development and to reimpose order and discipline in the rural areas. This experiment was undertaken by Wang Kuang-mei, the wife of Lui Shao-ch'i, at a brigade in Funing county, Hopei. In retrospect, it was inevitable that Tachai's position would suffer once Mao's ideological and political lines, as well as his specific policies on agricultural development, were reversed. Indeed, the demise of the movement to learn from Tachai, the public attack on "the principal responsible person in Hsiyang county," and the final repudiation of Tachai itself have been part and parcel of this drastic reversal in which Maoist orthodoxy as it emerged in the period of Tachai's prominence has been discarded and reformist ideas in almost all spheres of socio-economic life have been rapidly
put forward and adopted. What needs to be described, analyzed, and explained is the process leading to this outcome in Tachai and Hsiyang and the linkage between the macro-political transformation and the institutional, policy, and personnel changes in the micro-units of the county and the brigade.

But the reversal of the fortunes of Tachai and Hsiyang was not merely a matter of power struggle pure and simple. Tachai and Hsiyang represented a specific approach to agricultural and rural development at a definite stage of China's economic growth.

The specific features of this approach are outlined by us in our article in an earlier volume of these proceedings. Briefly summarized, these were: the use of the brigade, rather than the production team, as the basic unit of account; the collective cultivation of private plots; the sharp restrictions imposed on rural markets and their total elimination in some places; the attempt to develop collective raising of pigs; the prevention of the outflow of agricultural labor to the towns and cities seeking gainful employment either as individuals or under collective auspices; the total mobilization of underemployed labor to undertake basic farmland construction; the system of labor management and remuneration known as "self-assessment and public discussion" to determine the number of work-points earned by a peasant; the use of the same system for grain distribution; the building of collectively-owned housing; the imposition of an upper limit on work-point values to enlarge public accumulation for the purpose of re-investment and collective provision of public welfare; and finally (and specifically confined to Tachai commune), preparation for a transition to the commune as the basic unit of account.

These measures formed a coherent whole. In the sphere of organization, the idea behind these measures was that the collective unit should assume as many functions as was feasible in production, distribution, the supply of facilities and services to satisfy individual needs (such as housing, medical care, sewing, etc.), and the provision of social welfare while the role of individuals should shrink except insofar as they work through organizational channels for the collective unit.
To put it simply, the collective sector of socio-economic life should expand and the private sector should contract as much as possible. In terms of the relationship between production and income, the major principle was that economic growth had to go hand in hand with "common prosperity" for everyone, which was to be achieved not merely by the provision of a floor under the most disadvantaged groups and individuals but also by narrowing the gap between the most productive and the least productive persons, by expanding the scope of collectively provided goods and services, and by keeping the cash income of the individual peasants in the richer villages at a lower level than warranted by the rise in the collective income of these villages as a result of economic growth. The relationship of growth and increased equality was seen to be reciprocal; economic growth would provide the material base for increased equality, while the latter was also considered to be a positive factor in contributing to a rise in production. An idea implicit in both the ideals and the organizational structure was that the larger the unit of account, the higher was the level of equality and production which could be achieved.

As we also noted in our previous paper, Tachai village, which adopted these specific measures in agriculture and rural development over a period of seventeen years starting in 1960, was a product of very special historical, political, and ecological factors which did not necessarily exist elsewhere. But after 1964, particularly after the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, the notion that there should be only one national model in agricultural development became a "guiding idea." The idea of one national model was extended to industrial development through Mao's slogan, "in industry, learn from Taching [oilfield]." The eight model works in the sphere of theatrical performances reflected the same mentality. This idea of "one model" stood in sharp contrast to the wide variations in China's natural environment, the complexity of modern socio-economic life, and the diverse strands in China's own tradition. The renewed recognition of China's great diversity accompanied by a re-emphasis on the importance of tailoring policy to local conditions, specific circumstances, and special characteristics in various areas of human activities, all
themes in Mao's own thinking in his early years, led to the downgrading of the Taching approach to industrial development and the virtual disappearance of the eight model works as well as the repudiation of Tachai and Hsiyang as the only national models.

Insofar as the movement to learn from Tachai was concerned, the moderate Chinese leaders at the very top, economic planners, many cadres at the local levels, and most peasants at the grass roots had realized from the very beginning that many of the specific features adopted by Tachai at different periods could not be successfully implemented elsewhere in China. Thus, attempts were made to interpret the model of Tachai at a very high level of generality without mentioning its specific features. This interpretation of the meaning of Tachai as a national model had to satisfy at once Mao's call for "learning from Tachai" and allow the various local units to adopt programs suitable to their natural environment and the stage of their economic and political development. The first attempt was made by Chou En-lai. In his "Report on the Work of the Government" made to the first session of the Third National People's Congress held in late 1964, Chou made what was called a "scientific" summary of the Tachai experience in terms of three very broad principles: first, the principle of putting politics in command and letting ideas take the lead; second, the spirit of self-reliance and hard struggle; third, the Communist style of loving the state and loving the collective units.11

In 1967, Ch'en Yung-kuei seized power in Hsiyang county, not with the support of students from outside or even in that county itself but by organizing a coalition of local cadres, mainly at the commune and brigade levels, and local peasant leaders, and by coopting some cadres at the county level. Indeed, Ch'en protected local cadres against the attacks of the marauding students from outside by organizing his own rebel groups of peasant youths—a pattern of seizing power which differentiated him from the methods adopted by the Cultural Revolution Small Group under the leadership of Ch'en Po-ta and Chiang Ch'ing.

But Ch'en Yung-kuei's seizure of power also stemmed from long-standing conflicts between him and the two previous secretaries of the county party committee. Thus,
it involved a purge of these leaders and their immediate supporters. After Ch'en's seizure of power in Hsiyang, many of the brigades and communes in that county gradually adopted some but not all of the specific features of the Tachai model. By 1970, Hsiyang had become the first county in the nation which had, in the view of the more radical leaders, successfully learned from Tachai in the preceding three years. A conference on Agriculture in the Northern Region was held in 1970 to push forward the movement to learn from Tachai and Hsiyang county. What occurred at this conference remains something of a mystery to outside observers. But it is clear that many leading officials opposed the extension of the specific measures of Tachai to the whole country. In a report on the conference, the State Council, where the influence of the moderate leaders remained strong, made a basic distinction between the fundamental experience of Tachai, which should be emulated, and its concrete measures, which should not be copied by other units "without regard to their own conditions." This warning was reiterated in a directive issued by the Party Center on December 26, 1971.

The first national conference on building Tachai-type counties was held in September, 1975, when the conflict between Teng Hsiao-p'ing and Chiang Ch'ing was rapidly coming to a head and when Chiang Ch'ing was launching a fierce counterattack against Teng, as we shall show. The conference was organized under the leadership of Vice-Premier Hua Kuo-feng and held first in Hsiyang county and later in Peking. Ch'en naturally played the most prominent role in the conference after Hua.

In his concluding report at the conference, Hua listed six criteria for a Tachai-type county. These six criteria did not include the specific features of the Tachai model such as brigade-level accounting, self-assessment and public discussion, the abolition of private plots, or the restriction of free markets. Rather, they were: (1) the existence of a leadership nucleus in the county party committee which firmly implements the line and policies of the Party; (2) the establishment of the dominant position of poor and lower middle peasants and the ability to struggle resolutely against capitalist
activities and to supervise and reform class enemies effectively; (3) the participation in labor of the cadres at the three levels of the county, commune, and brigade in collective production like the cadres in Hsiyang; (4) rapid progress and good results in basic farmland construction, mechanization in agriculture, and scientific farming; (5) the continued growth of the collective economy, with the production and income of the poor communes, brigades, and teams reaching or surpassing the present levels of the communes, brigades, and teams in the middle range of their localities; (6) all-around development of farming, forestry, animal husbandry, sideline production and fishery, great increases in production, great contributions to the state, and gradual improvement in the livelihood of the members of the commune. 13

Of these six criteria, only the second had ominous ideological and political implications and could be used to justify ultra-leftist policies and the arbitrary use of political power. But the various local units could still subtly evade these consequences by their own definitions of what constituted "capitalist activities." The third criterion cited Hsiyang as a model in cadre participation in labor, but did not mention the specific practice of Hsiyang under which the county-level cadres were supposed to spend 100 days in agricultural labor, the commune-level cadres 200 days, and the brigade-level cadres 300 days. The fifth criterion underscored the need for raising the income and production of poor brigades, but did not put any upper limit on the work-day value in rich brigades as was the practice in Hsiyang. The fourth and sixth criteria had to do with the rapid development of productive forces and said nothing about the changes in the institutions and relations of production which had occurred in Hsiyang or were more in accord with the radical ideas of the "gang of four." In talking about the "basic experience" of Tachai, Hua adopted the modified version of Chou's three principles which had been widely used during the Cultural Revolution: "firmly upholding the principles of putting proletarian politics in command and letting Mao Tse-tung Thought take the lead, the spirit of self-reliance and hard struggle, and the Communist style of loving the state and loving the collective units." 14
In his concluding report, Hua apparently endeavored to effect a compromise among the views of the moderate leaders as expressed in the Party Center's directive on agriculture in December, 1971, the ultra-leftist ideas underlying Chang Ch'un-ch'iao's article in Hung-ch'i in April, 1975, and the specific features of the Tachai-Hsiyang model. He carved out for himself a middle position in the political struggle. This middle position satisfied the moderate leaders because they could continue to pursue their current policies by emphasizing the fourth and sixth criteria while biding their time, further working out their own reformist ideas about agriculture, and waiting for a more opportune moment to turn these ideas into party policies. It rallied the support of Tachai leaders because they were now given a prominent position in the formulation and implementation of national policy in agriculture.

Moreover, cadres in Tachai told Tsou in 1977, that for many months before the conference, the influence of Tachai had declined, the number of visitors to Tachai had decreased, and national officials and cadres elsewhere had showed little interest in Tachai. Obviously, the conference marked a turning point in the fortunes of the brigade and the movement to learn from Tachai. Furthermore, the Tachai leaders could and did consider these six criteria as minimum standards which should not be lowered and should be surpassed by various local units in learning from Tachai, as Ch'en himself indicated in an interview in November, 1977. This interpretation was communicated to the party secretaries in charge of agriculture in various provinces in a meeting attended by them.

But the results of the conference did not satisfy the "gang of four." The full text of Hua's speech was not published in Hung-ch'i, the theoretical journal of the CCP then under the partial control of Yao Wen-yuan. According to Ch'en Yung-kuei's retrospective account in December, 1976, Yao personally eliminated Hua's report after it had been listed in the table of contents. The political significance of the First Tachai Conference was that Hua took over leadership of agricultural development, established a close relationship with Tachai leaders,
once again identified himself as an orthodox Maoist while keeping himself some distance from the "gang of four," and carved out a middle position between the moderate leaders and the ultra-leftists. The willingness of the moderate leaders to go along with Hua in contrast to the dissatisfaction of the "gang of four" was probably one of the factors which led Hua to ally with the moderate leaders in arresting the "gang of four" after Mao's death.

(3) Tachai and the "gang of four" (1975-1976)

But the relationship of Tachai Leaders with the "gang of four" on the one hand and the moderate leaders on the other deserves further analysis. The specific features of the Tachai-Hsiyang model was much more in line with the general outlook of the "gang of four" (of which Chang Ch'un-ch'iao's article on the need to restrict "bourgeois right" was an important though somewhat muted statement) than with the basic philosophy of the moderate leaders which has now found concrete expression in the new agricultural and rural policies of the past four years. To use the words of Mr. Liu Shu-kang, the new party secretary of Hsiyang who replaced Ch'en Yung-kuei in November, 1979, the Hsiyang county leadership under Ch'en "implemented the ultra-Leftist line, to say the least," and "to put the matter more strongly, the Hsiyang model was the concrete embodiment of the ultra-Leftist line."15 Presumably, Mr. Liu's remarks reflected the views which were taking shape in the provincial party committee of Shansi and the Party Center and which were to be publicized six months later in greater detail in the former's self-criticism and the latter's comments on it. But Liu never suggested that there was any organizational link or close personal ties between Tachai's former leaders and the "gang of four." Nor did the Shansi provincial party committee in its final self-criticism or the Party Center in its commentary make such an allegation. Moreover, one may observe that the Tachai model's combination of a stress on the link between increased production and radical socio-economic programs was different from the "gang of four's" obsession with power struggle.
at the very top and their willingness to effect a change in the superstructure and production relations even at the expense of production. Nor was it in accord with the moderate leaders' inclination to increase production and to push forward the modernization of China with the most cost-effective methods whether or not they conflicted with the ideological and political line established by Mao during the Cultural Revolution or with other collectivist measures. To the extent that the blunt, forceful, irascible, intelligent but poorly educated leader of Tachai understood the intricacies of power politics at the summit, Ch'en seems to have used them for his own purposes and to promote what from his very limited knowledge and intellectual horizon was the correct approach to China's agricultural and rural policies. Considerations of personal authority and prestige must also have influenced his actions. He gave the impression that he was totally loyal to Mao and personally close to Chou En-lai. He apparently believed that he was applying Mao's ideas to solve concrete problems.

It is true that in 1974, Ch'en Yung-kuei cooperated with the "gang of four" in ousting Hsieh Chen-hua, the first secretary of Shansi, who admittedly opposed the extension in Shansi of "Tachai's Leftist way of doing things." But there is presently no available evidence that any one of the "gang of four" personally attempted to establish any special ties with Tachai brigade before 1975, although the trip made by Chang T'ieh-sheng to Shansi shortly after the first national conference on building Tachai-type counties suggests that they had tried to win over Tachai and Hsiyang to their side. Instead, Chiang Ch'ing's favorite model was Hsiaochinchuang, a village near Tientsin where the peasants were said to excel in literary, theatrical, and artistic activities and in expressing a high level of revolutionary consciousness. But as the succession struggle intensified, Chiang Ch'ing personally sought to win Tachai leaders to her side and to turn them against the moderate leaders by invoking Mao's authority. This is the only possible interpretation of Chiang Ch'ing's two trips to Tachai. During her first trip in September, 1975, to attend the first national conference on building Tachai-type counties, Chiang Ch'ing
tried to curry favor with Tachai by criticizing the decision of the moderate leaders that the first secretaries of the provinces need not attend the conference and by suggesting that their absence reflected a neglect of agriculture. Chiang's remark implied that the moderate leaders were slighting Tachai and Hsiyang. She also circulated a speech which offered an interpretation of Mao's recent remark on the novel *Water Margin*. In it, she accused by implication the moderate leaders of undercutting Mao's authority. Thus, she endeavored to show that she held Tachai and Hsiyang in higher regard than the moderate leaders and appealed at the same time to the loyalty of Tachai leaders to Mao in order to turn them against the former.

Shortly after the end of the conference, the political struggle for succession took a drastic turn against Teng and in favor of the "gang of four." It is to be recalled that in spite of the all-out opposition of the "gang of four," Teng was appointed a Vice-Premier of the State Council in January, 1975, to take charge of all its work on behalf of the seriously ill Chou En-lai. He downgraded Mao's call for class struggle and put it on a par with the need to preserve "stability and unity" and a program of economic development. He and his followers worked out three documents to reform the system of research and education, to accelerate industrial production, and to spur economic growth. In this same period of time, Chiang Ch'ing's political fortunes suffered a decline. It was rumored in China that she had been repeatedly criticized in the Politbureau and by Mao himself for her interview with Roxanne Witke and for Witke's draft of her biography, known at that time in China as "The Lady Ruler in the Red Capital," which had been obtained by the Chinese. Then Chiang Ch'ing launched a counterattack on the basis of Mao's remark on *Water Margin*. Meanwhile, Mao had serious disagreements with Teng's program of economic development which downgraded the revolutionary class struggle. In November, a campaign to "beat back the Right-deviationist wind of trying to reverse correct decisions" was launched. Teng was the target of severe criticism although his name was not mentioned. It was later said that the campaign had been personally initiated and led by Mao himself.
The death of Chou En-lai in January, 1976, made Teng's position utterly untenable. In February, 1976, Hua was appointed the Acting Premier of the State Council. Teng disappeared into limbo. Two days after the T'ien-an men incident on April 5th, Teng was dismissed from all his positions but was allowed to keep his party membership. Hua Kuo-feng was appointed the First Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee and the Premier of the State Council to take over the leadership of the Party and government under Mao's general guidance. The balance of power shifted sharply to the left with the "gang of four" as the most united and vociferous power bloc in the Politbureau. Afterwards, a campaign to criticize Teng by name moved toward a crescendo in the spring and early summer. It pushed the movement to build Tachai-type counties back stage. Moreover, many officials probably also realized that the "gang of four" did not approve of the movement as defined at the conference in 1975.

As was the usual practice, all of the well-known units in China had to take a public position either through articles published under their bylines or through articles written by correspondents of official newspapers reporting their denunciations of Teng and his policies. Not surprisingly, an article published on June 2, 1976, in Jen-min jih-pao under the byline of Tachai brigade attacked Teng's remark: "In order to limit bourgeois right, there must be a material foundation. Without the latter, how can we limit bourgeois right?" It asserted that to the contrary, Tachai had self-consciously put a limit on "bourgeois right" even when it was extremely poor; its cadres had always participated in physical labor in production and shared weal and woe with all its members. Thus, Tachai adopted the slogan first raised by Chang Ch'un-ch'iao as early as 1958 and expounded in his article prominently published in the authoritative journal Hung-ch'i in April, 1975. Moreover, Tachai's article reproduced Mao's remark on Water Margin which had formed the basis of Chiang Ch'ing's attack on the moderates. In a report published three days later in Jen-min jih-pao on Hsiyang's campaign to "beat back the Right-deviationist wind of trying to reverse correct decisions," Teng was accused of never mentioning Tachai's basic experience,
which was now defined in the report as "taking class struggle as the key link." Tachai leaders were apparently following the usual practice of "drawing the line" between Teng and themselves, thus "keeping in step" with the Party Center. They were adjusting themselves to the political current. So did other famous brigades in Hsiyang: Nannao, Hsip'ing, Hohsi, and Hsikupi.

After Tachai and Hsiyang fell into line, Jen-min jih-pao published a dispatch which summarized the experience of the Hsiyang party committee in criticizing Teng, "beating back the Right-deviationist wind of trying to reverse correct decisions," and promoting the movement to learn from Tachai in the past five or six months. The publication of this dispatch signified that the Party Center, with the "gang of four" as its most united political bloc, now renewed its support for the movement to learn from Tachai. With obvious approval, this dispatch reported the Hsiyang party committee's criticism of those who counterposed the campaign to "beat back the Right deviationist wind of trying to reverse correct decisions" to the movement to learn from Tachai, who considered the former the matter of paramount importance at the present time, who therefore believed that the movement to learn from Tachai should no longer be pushed forward, and who feared that to push forward that movement would be committing a mistake. Through this report on the Hsiyang county committee, Jen-min jih-pao linked together the struggle against Teng and the movement to learn from Tachai, suggesting that the former had actually pushed forward the latter.

This rapprochement between Tachai and the "gang of four" furnished the background for Chiang Ch'ing's second trip to Tachai on September 3rd. She told Tachai leaders that she had come to struggle against revisionism. She was apparently trying to discredit the moderate leaders by accusing them of "revisionism" and to win Tachai over completely to her side at a time when Mao was gravely ill and had for several months ceased to receive foreign dignitaries. No contemporary account of her visit exists. But given her urban style of life, haughty manners, terrible temper, lack of tact in handling human relationships, and peculiar habits in daily living, it is quite possible
that as the retrospective account of the Tachai leaders asserted, Tachai cadres and peasants compared her unfavorably with Chou En-lai and other leaders who had visited Tachai several times in the past ten years. It is not known to what extent the ideological affinity between the Tachai model and the ultra-leftist line of the "gang of four" provided a basis for the establishment of a closer relationship than before, now that Chiang Ch'ing herself had made another effort to win Tachai over. Most likely, Ch'en Yung-kuei took a wait-and-see attitude while attaching himself firmly to Hua, Mao's designated heir.

(4) Tachai and Hsiyang at the height of their prominence (1975-1979)

Mao died on September 9th. On October 16th, the "gang of four" was arrested according to a decision made jointly by Hua Kuo-feng, Yeh Chien-ying, and Wang Tung-hsing and supported by most party and military leaders at the top. With the removal of the "gang of four," Hua and many of the leaders who had risen to the top from the middle and lower levels during the Cultural Revolution came to represent the Maoist ideological and political line as it had developed during those ten years. They now occupied the left side of the political spectrum.

From then on to the present, political development in China has revolved around the conflict between two political tendencies. One is the tendency to uphold the Maoist line in virtually all spheres. The other is the tendency to reform the political process and the political system as they have developed since 1957 and, with regard to some specific features, even before that time. The reformists are those who had suffered one kind of persecution or another since 1957, particularly during the Cultural Revolution. For some time, they had fully realized that there was a crisis of legitimacy in the political system, a crisis of faith in socialism as it was defined and practiced in Mao's last years, and a crisis of credibility in the regime's pronouncements, promises, and policies. They had been searching for practical answers to the concrete problems confronting China. Now, they have attempted to repudiate the ideo-
logical and political lines and socio-economic programs of the ultra-leftists without a total condemnation of Mao, a rejection of Mao Tse-tung Thought, and of socialism as they understood it. They started out hesitantly and without very specific or firmly fixed plans or programs. It is at times like this that fresh ideas are developed which break the fetters of past ideology, that new ventures are launched as experiments, and that foreign practices are adopted and adjusted to Chinese conditions.

For a time, Hua and the more moderate orthodox Maoist leaders stood at the center of the political stage in China. The legitimacy of their political authority rested upon Mao's legacy and Maoist orthodoxy in ideas, programs, politics, and styles of work developed during the Cultural Revolution, but without the ultra-leftists' design of calling on revolutionary rebels to seize power in every unit and their intention of overthrowing all veteran political and military leaders at every level who did not accept their ideological and political line and submit to their leadership.

Following the lead of Hua, who was elected Chairman of the CCP by the Politbureau in October, Ch'en Yung-kuei supported the arrest of the "gang of four." Thus, his political influence was further enhanced. A second national conference on building Tachai-type counties was convened in December, 1976. The purpose of the conference was to combine a condemnation of the "gang of four" with the perpetuation of the Maoist approach to rural development of which "learning from Tachai" was a key element. In repudiating the program of the "gang of four," Hua's speech to the conference also incorporated the moderate leaders' program of the four modernizations and rejected the ultra-leftists' contention that the program was based on the erroneous "theory of productive forces"—a theory which posits productive forces as the sole determinant of political development and, therefore, their development as the primary policy goal of socialist governments and the main criterion of their success. The conference also gave Tachai leaders a chance to explain to the nation their relationship with the "gang of four," particularly during Chiang Ch'ing's two visits to Tachai. They played up Yao Wen-yuan's and Chiang Chun-chiao's criticism of Hua's com-
promise report without mentioning the ideological affinity and points of agreement between the ultra-leftist views of the "gang of four" and the Tachai model. They underscored in graphic, earthly detail their dislike of Chiang Ch'ing's personal and political style as displayed in her visits. They popularized their actions of having condemned the "gang of four" since late October.

Ch'en's speech combined an emphasis on increasing production through mechanization, scientific farming, basic farmland construction, the development of commune-owned industries and sideline production with orthodox Maoist slogans such as "unless one blocks the capitalist road, one cannot take a long step toward socialism" and with the Maoist policy of firmly correcting "the tendencies to enlarge private plots, to expand free markets, to increase the number of small enterprises or collective units with sole responsibility for their profits and losses, and to fix farm output quotas for individual households" with each on its own. At this conference, the locally developed experience in Tachai coincided with the ideological and political line which gained temporary predominance at the highest level.

As for Tachai's party branch, it continued to adhere in its ideological stance to the leftist position which it had taken in June, 1976, when the anti-Teng campaign had been in full swing. Just before the second national conference on building Tachai-type counties, it defined its basic experience as "firmly upholding class struggle as the key link . . . and firmly upholding the continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat." But it also strongly attacked the "gang of four" for their neglect of production, for their promotion of revolutionary change at the expense of production, and for their caricature of their opponents' view as a theory which regards productive forces as the sole determinant of historical development. Above all, it underscored the paramount importance of sheer hard work under the slogan of "hard effort produces great changes," but balanced this emphasis on labor mobilization by mentioning the need for scientific farming.

After the conference, the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties was once more in the limelight of national publicity. To push forward this
movement, the People's Publishing House of Shansi published in June, 1977, a book entitled The Tachai Experience which represented one of the best efforts to rationalize the Tachai experience in terms of Mao's ideas as developed in his last years, but which also contained much new information on Tachai's specific features. It was used widely in training classes organized by the General Agricultural Office of Shansi Province, which was then dominated by officials closely connected with Ch'en Yung-kuei. Apparently, Ch'en was making preparations not only to take another major step nationally to push forward the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties as defined in the two national conferences, but also to urge other rural units to adopt the specific features of the Tachai model. During 1977, the number of visitors who came from all over China to Tachai to learn from its experience reached a new high. A new guesthouse of five stories with modern plumbing was completed to accommodate foreign and Chinese visitors. A huge dining hall which could easily hold 400 guests in a banquet was under construction.

According to the self-criticism made in 1979 by deputy secretary Li Hsi-shen of Hsiyang county, the county cadres in explaining the experiences of Hsiyang in eliminating private plots and rural markets also implicitly or explicitly criticized Chinese visitors for not adopting these specific features. At a discussion meeting called by the Party Center and held at the end of 1977 to popularize the work of building Tachai-type counties, the representatives of Hsiyang county forcefully pressed other participants with the question: "Why can't other localities do what we have been able to do?" In asking this question, they specifically referred to "the system of labor management," i.e., the system of self assessment and public discussion. Interviews in Szechuan province conducted in August, 1980, suggested that visits to Tachai in the late 1960's and the 1970's usually affected the visitors' views and led them to suggest the implementation of some specific features of the Tachai model in their own localities although their suggestions were not always followed. Interviews of emigrés and refugees from Kwangtung conducted in 1978 in Hong Kong gave Marc Blecher the same impression, as we shall show in another paper.

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At the height of its influence in 1977, Tachai commune began in August a serious discussion among the masses of the advantage of a transition from the brigade to the commune as the basic accounting unit. The rationale given for the desirability for the transition was that brigade accounting was no longer suitable to the changed conditions brought about by past efforts in economic development. Projects of basic farmland construction which could be undertaken by a single brigade had been completed. Larger projects could only be undertaken by the commune as a whole, which had more material and manpower resources at its command. Moreover, commune accounting would enable the various brigades to specialize in certain types of agricultural tasks most suitable to their natural conditions. For example, part of the sown acreage in the hilly brigade of Nannao could be utilized to plant trees for producing fresh and dry fruits or for use as lumber while its loss in grain production could be made up by the commune under a system of commune accounting. Self-sufficiency in grain would then become a task to be achieved not by any single brigade but a commune. The construction in 1975-76 of 500 mu of good cropland on the sandy and stony banks of a river at Kaochialing and the planting of hundreds of thousands of trees in Mengshan brigade in August, 1977, by 6,000 peasants from various other brigades were mentioned as examples of the merits of raising the level of the unit of account.

The cadres at Tachai commune believed that the income gap between the rich and poor brigades within the commune ranging from the work-day value of ¥ 1.40 at Tachai brigade and ¥ 1.00 at Mengshan was too wide and might even increase if the transition were not made soon.

In the transition, brigade enterprises would be transferred to the commune, but the commune would compensate the brigades for these enterprises at a "fair price to be discussed." In agricultural production after the transition, the commune would assign quotas to be fulfilled by the brigades based on averages of their production for a number of years in the past. One idea advanced was that the brigades would keep everything produced above their quotas for themselves. The commune would establish a wage system of 12 grades, ranging from ¥ 9 to ¥ 45 with a difference of ¥ 3 between each grade, covering supplementary labor and
full labor. An individual's wage could be lowered or raised every three months or every year, depending on his work contribution. A system of retirement would be instituted for peasants when they reached the age of 60. It was said that in the view of "the masses," the time was ripe for the transition. They were now waiting for the approval of the state. In an interview conducted on November 4, 1977, Vice-Premier Ch'en asserted that since the income of the commune enterprises consisted of more than 50% of the total income of the commune and brigades, further development of production would be hindered unless a transition was made to the level of commune-accounting. This attempt to make the commune the basic accounting unit was sharply criticized after 1978.

(5) The emergence of the rural program of the reformers (1976-1980)
Side by side with the continuous ascendancy of Tachai and Hsiyang, a political and ideological counter-current rapidly developed. Almost invisible at the beginning, it was to become within four years a tidal wave sweeping everything before it. The political forces in this counter-current consisted of the following elements: almost all of the leaders and cadres at every level who had been disgraced, persecuted, or pushed aside during the Cultural Revolution and during the purge of anti-Party elements after the Lushan Conference of 1959; all intellectuals, scientists, technical personnel, educators, and other professionals who had suffered from one kind of denunciation or another since 1957; and those moderate leaders who had reluctantly gone along with the ultra-leftist policies of Mao during the Cultural Revolution, and had tried to keep the economy and the political system functioning as best they could under the protection of Chou En-lai. These leaders and cadres enjoyed the diffuse and inarticulate support of the overwhelming majority of the urban population and many peasants in different localities--persons who had lost faith in the ability of the Party and government to improve their livelihood. The rehabilitated officials and cadres
took the lead. The intellectuals and specialists in all fields contributed new ideas and fresh approaches. The masses gave their support through silent approval of the reformist measures and passive resistance to the continuation of the ultra-leftist policies. As time has moved on, it has become clear that the target of the reformers was nothing less than Mao's role in the political system and the policies and ideas associated with him as they developed after 1957, particularly during the Cultural Revolution. Because Mao's role and the Maoist line in his last years occupied the central place in the political system and the Party's ideology, the reformers' aim was nothing less than the restructuring of the whole system while endeavoring to maintain continuity with the past by affirming and reinterpreting the four general principles underlying the Party-regime: socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the leadership of the Party, and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought.

The agricultural and rural program of the reformers has now gradually taken form, but many of its components are still tentatively held. They are still waiting to be fully developed, partially adjusted, appropriately modified, or even totally abandoned as they are being tried out. This is not the place for a full discussion of this program. Only certain of those principles and practices which have direct bearing on the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties will be briefly outlined as a prelude to an account of the downfall of Hsiyang and the final repudiation of Tachai.

First, the aim of economic development, particularly agricultural production, is to meet the immediate material interests and felt needs of the peasants, lifting them up from abject poverty and from the subsistence level and raising their standard of living as fast as the Chinese economy permits. "Production increase is a means. The improvement of the people's livelihood is the aim."29

Second, this aim is to be achieved not through the strengthening of the collective economy alone, but also through the encouragement of individual initiative and effort outside the collective sector of agriculture so long as the collective sector is maintained to perform those functions which it has effectively discharged in the past.
Private plots are to be protected and in some cases enlarged. Sideline production by peasant households is encouraged. All preexisting free markets have reopened and most of the restrictions have been removed. Peasants are permitted to seek gainful employment individually or under collective auspices in their spare time and in slack seasons. Increases in peasants' income from family sideline production or individual economic activities have been popularized and praised rather than condemned as a form of "capitalism." In short, the private sector should expand both in relative and in absolute terms as a supplement to the collective sector.

Third, in the collective sector, the production team is considered to be the key in farming activities while the commune and the brigade take charge of small-scale enterprises in processing agricultural products and other tasks which the team is not able to undertake alone. The autonomy of the production team in planning agricultural production is protected so long as state targets and general guidelines are met.

Fourth, production teams are encouraged to divide themselves into permanent work-groups so long as the land and major agricultural implements are collectively owned by the teams. Under certain conditions, a team can conclude contracts with its individual households for the delivery of certain amounts of agricultural produce. Everything produced above the quota specified in a contract belongs to the household, while failure to meet the quota is subject to penalties. The responsibility for fulfilling the state quota is thus subdivided among, and devolved to, smaller and smaller units.

Fifth, the peasant's reward must be closely linked to his work. This linkage must be immediately obvious to the peasants. "Piecework" is preferred over "time work" whenever the former can be used in agriculture. Grain distribution to the peasants should be linked partly to work performance.

Sixth, cost effectiveness must be taken into account not only from the viewpoint of the state and collective units but also from the standpoint of the individual peasant. Cost-benefit analysis must be a part of economic planning and a basis for judging the peasants'
economic activities. To decrease cost is one of the many methods used "to lighten the burden of the peasants."

Seventh, a logical corollary of cost effectiveness is that the plans of agricultural development in different localities must be guided by a realistic understanding of the vast variations in the natural conditions of China. "Adopting suitable methods in light of local conditions" has replaced the use of a single national model. "Taking grain as the key link" is given less emphasis, while "all-around development" in the planting of other crops, forestry, animal husbandry, sideline production, and fishery is underscored. Localities where the land and climate are best suited to agricultural production other than grain will be supplied with grain by the state obtained from grain-producing areas. In effect, the policy that all local units, ranging from the production team to the province, should give first priority to self-sufficiency in grain supply has been abandoned.

Eighth, the idea that mechanization is the best method for agricultural development and should thus be given the first priority in economic planning has been abandoned. Its place has been taken by the use of new seeds, better fertilizers, and the more effective use of biological and chemical methods.

Ninth, ecological considerations must be taken into account in all projects of farmland construction and reclamation.

Tenth, the trend toward the expansion of the public sector in housing, medical care, and social welfare has been checked. An individual's loss of social benefits and his increased responsibility to provide for his own needs are compensated for by raising his income.

Eleventh, mass movements and mobilization have been abandoned as methods of agricultural development. Day-to-day and routinized work by individual peasants and collective units of all levels should not be interrupted. Policy vacillation from one extreme to the other is to be avoided so that the peasants' expectations can be stabilized and regularized. Political movements are not to be launched. Tumultuous class struggle on a large scale is now considered a thing of the past. Most landlords and rich peasants have been reclassified as
regular members of the teams, brigades, and communes and should no longer be subjected to discrimination. All of their descendants are to enjoy the same privileges as everybody else.

These principles and practices which are specifically related to agricultural and rural development are linked to the general economic program of "readjustment, restructuring of the economic system, consolidation, and improvement." They are ultimately justified by the epistemological principle that "practice is the sole criterion of truth" and the idea that economic work must be guided by laws of economics which like other laws of nature cannot be changed by human will or political decisions.

The reformist ideas outlined above were not the product of any one person, any one group, or a particular organized movement. Instead, they had diverse origins. Some came from the minds of individuals reacting to the revolutionary line, policies, and events of Mao's last years. Some were even derived from the peasants' actual but partly concealed practices in the countryside. Some harked back to the resolution on the development of agricultural producers' cooperatives adopted in December, 1953. Some were directly derived from the practices adopted during the period of recovery from 1961 to 1963. Some were guidelines contained in documents on agriculture and the people's communes adopted by the Party on May 12, 1961, September 27, 1962, and December 26, 1971. A few gained support from newly-acquired knowledge about other countries at a time when importation of ideas and technology from abroad no longer incurred serious political risks. Most were merely common sense which had been submerged or discredited by ideas and practices heralded as "revolutionary" and "in conformity with Mao Tse-tung Thought." These reformist ideas and principles were discussed and worked out among informal groups of like-minded officials, cadres, and intellectuals. Some were tried out in practice and found to have produced desirable results. Over a period of four years, they finally triumphed over doctrinaire Maoism of which the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties formed an integral part.
The transformation of reformist ideas into the Party's ideological and political lines and official policies involved a slow attrition of the Maoist line as understood by Hua Kuo-feng and Wang Tung-hsing. It was also the result of a process of the shift in the balance of political forces in China. This process began slowly at first but rapidly gathered momentum, and has by now become an avalanche. Its concrete expression was the rehabilitation of officials, cadres, intellectuals, and specialists. Teng Hsiao-p'ing was rehabilitated at the Third Plenum of the Tenth Central Committee in July, 1977, which restored all his positions lost in April, 1976, including those of Vice-Chairman of the Party, Vice-Premier of the State Council, Vice-Chairman of the Military Commission, and Chief of Staff of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). A large group of highly respected officials who had gone down with him in 1976 was also rehabilitated and was soon rapidly promoted to key positions in the Party, government, research and educational institutions. They then worked for the posthumous rehabilitation of P'eng Te-huai and Liu Shao-ch'i which means the rehabilitation of thousands of high- and middle-level cadres implicated in these two cases and their return to important positions. These newly rehabilitated officials were joined by others who had been disgraced in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution and rehabilitated in the later phase, mainly after the death of Lin Piao on September 13, 1971. The Party's re-evaluation of the anti-rightist campaign of 1957-58 led to a series of steps to correct its mistake in labelling many intellectuals and cadres "Rightists." One by one and sometimes in a group of related persons, virtually all these persons were brought back into important positions or encouraged to play an active role in political life.

Side by side with the rise of the reformers in the Party and government was the decline of the influence of virtually all the officials who had acquired important positions during the Cultural Revolution. Some resigned or were removed. Others retained their formal positions but have lost their power and influence. These changes in personnel, the emergence of reformist ideas, and the adoption of new policies have gone hand in hand, each
reinforcing the others. These reformist transformations had at first the appearance of a process of incremental change. But at the appropriate moment, they were followed by decisive steps which consolidated these changes and moved the process into a new phase of further reform. These decisive steps were: the rehabilitation of Teng in July, 1977; the Third Plenum in December, 1978; for the Tachai movement, the Fourth Plenum in September, 1979; the Fifth Plenum in February, 1980; the Third Session of the NPC in August-September; and the work conference of the Party Center in December, 1980. The Sixth Plenum and the Twelfth Congress to be convened in 1981 promise to be yet another milestone.

(6) The undercurrent of opposition to the movement to learn from Tachai (1977)

The emergence, development, and triumph of the ideas of the reformers inevitably entailed the progressive decline and final repudiation of the movement to learn from Tachai and Tachai itself after it had been dragged into the maelstrom of national politics. This process of decline and fall began almost invisibly and gathered increasingly greater momentum until it reached a crescendo in the second half of 1980 and ended with a final judgment rendered by the Party Center in February, 1981. Even during 1977 when Tachai and Hsiyang were at the height of their influence and the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties was still being characterized as the only way to raise agricultural production in China, an undercurrent of opposition was setting in. Many ideas which conflicted with the specific features of Tachai appeared sporadically in the official press.

As early as November 13, 1976, Jen-min jih-pao published an article which attacked the "gang of four" for forcibly closing the rural markets in localities where it was impossible for the sales-and-supply cooperatives to provide peasants with the necessary commodities and to purchase their privately-produced goods, although it still recognized the negative effects of rural markets on the movement to learn from Tachai.31 An editorial in
Jen-min jih-pao published on August 9, 1977, on the subject of basic farmland construction stressed that conditions among the provinces and within the counties were different and that the method of resolving a problem must be suitable to the localities concerned. In farmland construction which covered more than one brigade or commune, the labor exchange between these units must be equal in value. Shortly after the Eleventh Congress in August, 1977, another editorial in Jen-min jih-pao urged the rural cadres to implement correctly the socialist principle that each person should do his best according to his ability, that the distribution of rewards should be proportional to his work performance, that he who labors more should receive more rewards, and that he who does not labor should not eat. They were asked to carry out a fair and rational method of calculating rewards according to work performed and to establish a system of responsibility for labor management. In a report on a brigade in Kwangtung, a correspondent of Jen-min jih-pao attributed its rapid economic growth to the decision of the cadres to abandon an exclusive emphasis on grain production and to promote instead the growing of industrial crops and the development of other types of productive activities in the rural areas. He criticized the past tendency of the cadres to regard private sideline production as "the tail of capitalism" which had to be curtailed or cut off entirely. He characterized this erroneous view as the product of the lingering influence of the ultra-leftist line of the "gang of four" in spite of the fact that cutting the "tail of capitalism" constituted a specific feature of the Tachai model.

In November, 1977, the Anhwei provincial party committee under the new leadership of first secretary Wan Li adopted a regulation which permitted the production team to divide itself into temporary or fixed work-groups which were assigned fixed tasks, fixed standards of quality, fixed time periods of work, and fixed work-points. Even more startling to the orthodox Maoists, it also allowed the assignment to a specific individual of tasks which could be performed by one person. The
above examples show that even at the height of the movement to learn from Tachai, many localities openly adopted measures which ran directly counter to the specific features of the Tachai-Hsiyang model.

(7) The decline of Hsiyang and Tachai: the practical implications of two abstract postulates in epistemology and economic development (1978)

The decline of Hsiyang and Tachai was preceded by the publication of two major articles which formed the ideological justification for the complete destruction of the Maoist line of the Cultural Revolution period. These articles also marked the beginning of the end of the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties, although few persons realized this implication at the time. The first article, "Practice is the Sole Criterion for Testing Truth," was published on May 11, 1978. It was implicitly endorsed by Teng Hsiao-p'ing in an important speech on June 2nd. The significance of this article was that it provided the epistemological postulate for the refutation of the leading guideline of the orthodox Maoists that "whatever the decision made by Chairman Mao was, we will resolutely support; whatever Chairman Mao's directive was, we will unswervingly obey." In other words, Mao's decisions and directives must now be judged by a basic epistemological postulate which was derived from Mao's notion of the unity of theory and practice itself. If they are found to be incorrect, they should be rejected. Mao's ideas are no longer sacrosanct. This epistemological postulate was to become the ultimate justification for a total re-evaluation of Mao's role in China's political development after 1957, particularly during the Cultural Revolution. The other article was "Observe Economic Laws, Speed up the Four Modernizations," a speech given by Hu Ch'iao-mu in July, 1978, at a State Council meeting. For our purpose here, its pertinent argument is that political decisions can bring enormous damage to economic development, if they are not made in conformity with "objective economic laws" which, like the laws of nature, cannot be changed by human will.
Interviews conducted in Tachai and Hsiyang show that the implications of these two abstract, theoretical articles were not grasped by local cadres at the time.

Meanwhile, the Party Center launched an indirect criticism of the specific features of the Hsiyang model. In early July, the Party Center sent down a document on the "experience in Hsianghsiang county" in Hunan in decreasing the burdens of the peasants. Among other things, it denounced the former practice of the upper-level units in using the labor power, funds, and material resources of the production teams without compensation as well as the enormous increase in non-productive personnel, work, and expenditures. It criticized the over-extension of the scale of basic farmland construction beyond the ability of the teams and the peasants to undertake these tasks. It showed how the elimination of these abuses had led to an increase in the income of the teams and the peasants.

In response to this document, the Hsiyang party committee made its first officially published self-criticism. In it, the county party committee admitted the existence of the following problems: Its method of labor management gave rise to inefficiency in the use of labor. Many brigades did not seriously assess the work of the peasants in awarding them work-points. There was a tendency toward "equal-divisionism," i.e., granting the same number of work-points to peasants whose contributions to collective work were widely different. There were too many non-productive personnel in many communes and brigades who, unlike the cadres at Tachai, did not engage in labor. Obviously, basic farmland construction also imposed a heavy burden on the brigades and the peasants. In interviews conducted in August, 1980, the officials of the county admitted there had been in 1978 4,800 of the county's best workers in "the special task force for basic farmland construction" at a time when the total labor force of the county, including both male and female and full-time and part-time workers, had numbered only 76,000 persons. The work-points earned by these peasants and the food consumed by them were given by the brigades while the county paid only a daily subsidy of ¥0.40 per person each day. By 1979, the number
had been reduced to slightly over 3,000. By 1980, it had decreased to 1,600 and further reduction was being planned.

Another document which the Party sent down condemned some of the cadres in Hsün-yi county in Shensi province for having violated laws and discipline in dealing with the peasants. They had beaten and scolded them. They had imposed fines on them and deducted grain rations for their minor mistakes. As a result of these arbitrary and coercive measures, some peasants had committed suicide, others had been driven insane, and still others had been badly hurt. This rough treatment of the peasants was frequently the result of the cadres trying to prevent the peasants from engaging in selling household sideline products in the rural markets or in other private activities for personal gain.39 The cadres in Tachai told Tsou in 1980 that this document had had little impact on Tachai itself. At that time, they still felt that the position of Tachai was quite secure.

With regard to the problem of rural markets, a member of the standing committee of the Hsiyang county party committee declared in June at a national conference on "learning from Taching and Tachai in matters of finance and trade" that although the Party's policy was to use rural markets to supplement socialist commerce at the present stage of economic development, Hsiyang county had, since 1967, put into practice the method of setting up supply-and-sales cooperatives in the communes, and branches and shops in the brigades to purchase from and sell to the peasants, thus gradually replacing rural markets with commerce handled by the state and cooperatives. According to him, this method was workable in Hsiyang because of the concrete conditions in that county.40 Thus, Hsiyang county at this time was still trying to preserve as many of its special features as possible in spite of the overall national tendency toward liberalization. That "conditions are different in various localities in the nation," which Tachai and Hsiyang leaders had underemphasized prior to this time, was now used in defense of their own special features.

But the decline of Tachai and Hsiyang as national
models became obvious during this period. Although Ch'en Yung-kuei still chaired the national conference on basic farmland construction held in July-August, 1978, it was Vice-Premier Li Hsien-nien, a moderate leader, who gave the opening speech. Although Li asserted that to develop agriculture to a higher level, the Chinese had to rely ultimately on learning from Tachai, he also noted that many mistakes had been made in the movement and suggested that all advanced units "including Tachai and Hsiyang" had to adopt the correct attitude of "dividing one into two" and of continuously developing their achievements and overcoming their shortcomings. He reiterated the Party's policy of allowing the peasants to enjoy "small freedoms." He warned the cadres against arbitrary interference with the peasants' private plots and sideline production. He told them not to eliminate rural markets wantonly. It was Chi Teng-k'uei who gave the concluding speech. He had apparently replaced Ch'en Yung-kuei as the leading official in charge of agriculture under the general guidance of Hua and Li. In contrast, the national conference on the same subject in July-August, 1977, had been held part of the time in Hsiyang; and Ch'en and Kuo Feng-lien had made speeches. It is apparent that the position of Tachai and Hsiyang had begun to slip and that Ch'en's influence on agricultural policy had declined.

Paralleling this gradual decline was a growing debate over the epistemological principle that "practice is the sole criterion for testing truth." The reformists had to win this ideological battle not only to destroy the Maoist ideological and political line of the Cultural Revolution period but also to free the Chinese from the fetters on their thinking and to open up a new era of intellectual and institutional development. For our analysis, it is important to note that this epistemological postulate, as well as the leading idea that "objective economic laws" must be obeyed in making economic decisions and policies, was indeed used as the basic justification for a re-evaluation of the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties. A meeting of economists and persons engaged in economic work was held in Peking in July, 1978, on the theme that "Practice is the criterion for testing economic theory and economic policy." One of
the main points in the discussion of agricultural problems was that a distinction must be made between the basic experience of Tachai as defined by Chou En-lai and the specific features of Tachai. Although the Chinese must learn from Tachai's basic experience, some of the specific features of Tachai in management and production technique were only suitable to local conditions there; some of them could be immediately applied elsewhere; and still others could be successfully implemented only when certain conditions were present, even if these features were advanced institutions and measures. In learning from Tachai, the various units should take their own local situations as a point of departure and integrate Tachai's experience with their own concrete conditions; they should not mechanically copy Tachai's specific features. Even Tachai itself had to confront the problem of how to achieve agricultural modernization in the present stage of economic development.41

The August issue of Ching-chi yen-chiu, which had resumed publication in 1978 and was a leading organ of the reformists, also published an article which publicized and justified in terms of this epistemological principle and the need to obey economic laws the new agricultural policies which had been implemented in Anhwei since 1977 mentioned above. It criticized the former provincial leaders for adopting such measures as making the brigades the accounting units when necessary conditions for doing so were not present, the abolition of private plots, the restrictions imposed on free markets, the neglect of industrial crops, forestry, animal husbandry, etc., and the misuse of the labor power of the production teams in projects of basic farmland construction. It did not directly identify these measures as the specific features of the Tachai-Hsiyang model. Instead, it attributed the mistakes of the former provincial leaders to the influence of the "gang of four," particularly to the idea of Chang Ch'un-ch'iao that the transition from the system of team-level accounting to the system of brigade-level accounting could be successfully made even by poor teams through reliance on their spirit derived precisely from their conditions of poverty.42 In effect, it was an indirect
criticism of the movement to learn from Tachai and Hsi­yang as it had been pushed by Ch'en Yung-kuei and his
supporters.

A meeting of functionaries engaged in theoretical
and practical work in economic affairs from 17 prov­
inces, cities, and autonomous regions was held in October
in Peking to discuss the problem of the distribution of
rewards according to work done.⁴³ Although there were
defenders of the Tachai method of awarding work-points,
the majority of the participants reported that it could
not be successfully implemented in their localities and
that their units had adopted other methods, mainly "award­
ing work-points according to fixed work-quotas" (ting-o
chi-kung) and "management by fixed quotas" (ting-o
kuan-li). Many teams had also been divided into work­
groups. But they reported that in some places they had
encountered opposition to these new measures. The re­
port in Kuang-ming jih-pao devoted most of its space to
criticizing the tendency toward egalitarianism or "equal
divisionism" in the distribution of rewards. In this
discussion, Yu Kuang-yüan, one of the vice-presidents
of the Chinese Academy of the Social Sciences and the
head of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse­
tung Thought, and Hsueh Mu-ch'iao, the most influential
economist in China today, played a prominent role.

On November 4th, the official newspaper of Chin­
chung district in Shansi province which has jurisdiction
over Hsiyang published what amounted to a self-criticism
by its first deputy secretary, Li Han-so, who had served
as a deputy secretary of Hsiyang and had been promoted
to run the district while Ch'en had concurrently been
its secretary. Li asserted that the district committee
had to resolve correctly the following problems in guid­
ing the movement to learn from Tachai. First, the dis­
trict committee had once stated in a document that if
the cadres of the district entertained certain degrees
of doubt about the "concrete experiences" of Tachai and
Hsiyang one after another and did not seriously promote
them, they would turn the movement to learn from Tachai
into an empty slogan, they would be merely pretending
to learn from Tachai, and they would even be sliding down
the road of opposing Tachai. This statement had been a

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mistake, Li admitted, because many of Tachai's specific measures, such as the method of assessing work-points, could be used effectively in Tachai but not elsewhere. These concrete practices were not the basic experience of Tachai. Second, he admitted that it had been a mistake to criticize "capitalism within the collective economy." For this criticism had inhibited the expansion of sideline production and small industrial enterprises. Third, the district party committee had exclusively underscored "politics in command" and rejected the principle of the importance of material interests. Actually, it was not true that Tachai did not talk about material interests, for under the guidance of the principles of "letting politics take command" and "letting Mao Tse-tung Thought take the lead," Tachai implemented the principle of material interests and raised the standard of living of its members. Fourth, the district committee had overemphasized the principle of "from each according to his ability" but had not paid enough attention to the principle of "distributing rewards according to work done." It had tried to popularize the Tachai method of labor management, regardless of the level of political and ideological consciousness of the inhabitants and material conditions in other localities.44

In the December, 1978, issue of Ching-chi yen-chiu, Hsü Ti-hsin, the head of the Institute of Economic Research of the Academy of the Social Sciences and an economist who serves as one of the four or five most authoritative spokesmen for the economic reformers, gave a succinct summary of their ideas.45 He once again underscored the autonomy of the teams in the use of their collectively-owned property and the need to respect the sanctity of the system of property ownership by them. He asserted that the transition from the system of ownership by the teams to that by the brigades could not be totally justified on theoretical grounds and could not be very successfully implemented in practice. There were other ways to mechanize and modernize agriculture. He asserted that management of agriculture by a system of fixed quotas for various kinds of work and giving specific
numbers of work-points according to the fixed quotas was a reasonable method. Without mentioning the movement to learn from Tachai or the specific system of giving work-points used in Tachai, he noted that the attempt to popularize the Tachai system of "self-assessment and public discussion" had not worked in many localities and that it had merely become a system of giving basic work-points to a peasant according to the number of days he worked. It resulted in "equal divisionism" which was not in accord with the principle of distribution of rewards according to work performance. This was called ta-kai-kung, i.e., "giving work-points according to rough estimates"--the Chinese characters for this system immediately reminded the Chinese of the Tachai system, Ta-chai kung. Ta-kai-kung had been a derisive term frequently used by officials, economists, cadres, and peasants in previous years.

By December, the debate over the epistemological principle that "practice is the sole criterion for testing truth" had largely but not completely been won by the reformists. Between May and December, 1978, over 500 articles on the subject upholding the slogan were published in newspapers and journals all over China. Following Chinese political custom, the leaders or party organs of all the twenty-nine provincial-level units and eleven military regions took public positions one after another endorsing the slogan with various degrees of enthusiasm, concurrence, and comprehension of its meaning.46

Wang Ch'ien, the first secretary of Shansi since 1974 and a strong supporter of Ch'en Yung-kuei, fell into line rather late in the debate. In an article published on November 6, 1978, in Jen-min jih-pao, Wang directly linked the epistemological principle and the need to observe "objective economic laws" with agricultural development in Shansi. In what amounted to a rather ambiguous self-criticism, he admitted that for many years, the officials in the province had erroneously criticized the sideline production of the brigades and communes (including the sideline production of the commune members' households) as "a spontaneous capitalist tendency." He
noted that although grain production had gone up, the production of industrial crops had declined and that forestry and animal husbandry had not developed very quickly. With regard to rural markets and private plots, he observed that the restrictions imposed on the "small freedoms" of the peasants had been slightly too rigid and that these problems were now being gradually resolved. He officially revived the distinction between the "basic experience" of Tachai as defined by Chou En-lai and its special features. He argued that in learning from Tachai's "concrete experience," the various localities had to take account of differences in conditions and adopt only those measures which had proven effective, should not use a single standard to measure everything, and should not try to impose uniformity in all matters in every locality when local conditions were different from Tachai's.47

(8) The Third Plenum: the adoption of two draft documents on agricultural development and rural institutions

The Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee meeting from December 18th to December 22nd was a turning point in Chinese political development since the May 4th period as we noted at the very beginning of this article. It was also another important step in the decline of the movement to learn from Tachai. The Plenum placed a "higher evaluation on the discussion of whether practice is the sole criterion for testing truth."48 It repudiated "book worship." These statements represented an official recognition of the important though not a final victory of the reformists in the debate. There was "a discussion in detail of the questions of agriculture," to use the words of the official communique. According to a Hong Kong newspaper, Chi Teng-k'uei's report on agriculture still adhered to the orthodox line. It underscored achievements and failed to mention shortcomings. In the debate on the movement to learn from Tachai, the reformists underscored the mistakes of Chi and Ch'en in blindly pushing forward that
movement and in using a small village of eighty house-
holds as a model for eight hundred million people. They also noted that for China as a whole, increase in agricultural production had lagged far behind the increase in inputs such as chemical fertilizer as well as the increase in manpower in the rural areas. It was said that Chi had been forced to make a self-
criticism and to submit a report asking to be relieved of his work. Interviews in Hsiyang in 1980 confirmed that shortly afterward, Wang Jen-chung replaced Chi as the person in charge of agriculture. In his capacity as a vice-premier, he also assumed the chair-
manship of the State Committee on Agriculture.

More importantly, the Plenum agreed to distribute to the provincial-level units for discussion and trial use two decisions. These were: "Decisions on Some Questions Concerning the Acceleration of Agricultural Development (Draft)" and "Regulations on the Work in Rural People's Communes (Draft for Trial Use)." The first draft document reaffirmed the mass movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties. It told the cadres and peasants to continue to uphold the "basic experience" of Tachai which was now defined merely as the "revolutionary experience of self-reliance and hard struggle." But at the same time, it strongly urged them to implement firmly the Party's agricultural and rural economic policies and to learn from useful experiences at home and abroad. It fore-
saw the emergence of many new models. Tachai and all the other advanced units of the nation were told to recognize their own shortcomings as well as achievements, and to score new successes and create new experiences.

Although the movement to learn from Tachai was reaffirmed, many of the Party's concrete policies on agriculture and the rural economy as mentioned in twenty-five points ran counter to the specific features of the Tachai-Hsiyang model. Point three urged the collective units at all levels to implement the principle of distributing rewards in proportion to work done, to correct the mistake of "equal divisionism," to permit the production teams to assign production
quotas to work-groups, and to give the latter bonuses in case they exceeded their production quotas. It gave distinct preference to the system of grain distribution under which 30% to 40% of the grain is distributed in proportion to the work-points earned by the peasants, which was not the practice in Tachai and Hsiyang. Point four asserted that private plots, family sideline production, and rural markets are necessary supplements to socialist economy and should not be criticized as "the tail of capitalism"—a direct reference to a slogan popularized by Tachai. Point five asserted that the production team was the foundation of the system of ownership of means of production by units at all three levels. This system should continue to be stabilized. It was impermissible to raise the basic unit of account from a lower level to a higher level when conditions were not ripe—another implicit reference to the actions of Tachai-Hsiyang leaders and other officials who pushed the Tachai movement beyond the six guidelines adopted in 1975.

The second document was a revision of a document with the same title adopted in September, 1962, which had authorized most of the concrete measures used at one time or another in the period of 1959-1961 to overcome the agricultural crisis. The effect of the Cultural Revolution could still be discerned in the new document. For example, the size of the private plot should be limited to 5% or 7% of the total cultivated areas of a production team whereas the 1962 document had allowed the individual peasants to have three different kinds of privately cultivated lands taking up from 5% to 10% in general and 15% at a maximum of the total areas. But the adoption of the new document still represented a clear victory for the reformists and the moderates. From the long perspective of political development, the most significant provision was Article 50. This article provided that those peasants coming from the families of landlords and rich peasants should all be regarded as members of the commune, enjoying the same rights as other members, and should not be discriminated against and that all their children should no longer be treated as persons of landlord and rich peasant origins.
(9) The termination of the Tachai movement: the national political context

The important but not total victory of the reformers at the Third Plenum over the question of the criterion for testing truth drastically changed the terms of the ideological and political debate, just as the Central Committee's decision to shift the stress of the Party's work to modernization and the election of Ch'en Yun, the veteran moderate leader specializing in economic work as a vice-chairman of the Party, at once reflected and accelerated a fundamental change in the direction of China's economic and political development. The Plenum decided "to cancel the erroneous documents issued by the Central Committee in regard to the movement 'to beat back the Right-deviationist wind to reverse correct verdicts.'"

This decision was a complete vindication of Teng Hsiao-p'ing's policies, adopted in 1975. The Plenum also rehabilitated P'eng Teh-huai, T'ao Chu, Po I-po, Yang Shang-k'un and others. It declared that no revolutionary leader, including implicitly Mao himself, can be "free of all shortcomings and errors."

The reformers lost no time in exploiting this victory, in further developing their ideas, and in rapidly pushing forward their programs. In an editorial in Jen-min jih-pao on January 16, 1979, Lin Piao and the "gang of four" were accused of pushing an "ultra-Leftist, counterrevolutionary, and revisionist line"—thus implicitly but officially repudiating the earlier characterization of their ideas, programs, and actions as "ultra-Rightist" or as "Leftist in form but Rightist in essence." More importantly, the reformers applied the criterion for testing truth to examine Mao's decisions, to reevaluate Mao's role in Chinese politics, and to reassess the Cultural Revolution in an even more thorough-going manner than before. The decisions made by the Third Plenum, the adoption of two draft documents on agriculture and the commune system, the re-evaluation of the Cultural Revolution, and the increasing momentum toward reform provided the context for the final termination of the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties.
As far as outside observers know, one of the first party leaders to analyze, systematically and openly within the Party, Mao's role in the Cultural Revolution and his leftist tendencies from 1957 onward was Wang Jo-shui, the deputy editor of Jen-min jih-pao, which had become the mouthpiece of the reformers. On February 13, 1979, at a meeting on the theoretical work of the Party Center, he made a pathbreaking speech entitled "The Important Lesson of the Cultural Revolution Is That the Cult of Personality Must Be Opposed." This speech contained many ideas which would subsequently find expression in official statements. For the first time in any available document, the Cultural Revolution was characterized as a "calamity." Such a characterization came as no surprise to outside observers. But it directly challenged not only the public acclaim always given to the Cultural Revolution but also Mao's admission in March, 1976, in an internal document that the Cultural Revolution had had a score of 70% in achievements and 30% in mistakes. Wang minced no words in his attribution of responsibility. The Cultural Revolution had been initiated and led by one person, Chairman Mao. Without him, Lin Piao and "the gang of four" could not have created such a turmoil. Chairman Mao had over-estimated the danger of "revisionism" and invented the concept of "capitalist roaders within the Party." He had thought there would be a counter-revolutionary coup d'etat. He had called for a rebuilding of the Party. He had believed in 1966 that he could no longer control the Party and had no real power and that few people worshiped him.

According to Wang, Mao's views in 1966 stood in sharp contrast to those which had been expressed by him in his original speech "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" delivered on February 27, 1957. Mao had said without qualification in that talk that "class struggle has basically been concluded." But in the second half of that year, he not only launched an anti-rightist campaign but also over-extended it. In the Great Leap of 1958, in the attack on P'eng Teh-huai in 1959, and in raising the slogan "never forget class struggle" in 1962, he adopted a series of leftist policies. After 1962, he increasingly emphasized class
struggle and used that slogan to deal with those who disagreed with him. With the help of Lin Piao, the "gang of four," and K'ang Sheng, this line of thought later developed into the concept of "continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat." In 1963, he changed his views on the cult of personality. After that, he allowed the cult of Mao to develop. Without this cult, Mao could not have launched the Cultural Revolution. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao did not totally lose sight of the danger of the ultra-leftist trend of thought and he once wanted to correct it. But he did not try to solve this problem by attacking its root cause. He continued to stress class struggle and to criticize as rightist the view that downgraded its importance. The leftist ideas in the thinking of Mao could be utilized by Lin Piao and the "gang of four." Mao's mistake was that he wanted the people to agree completely with his ideas and sentiments and to give him absolute loyalty and that he used complete agreement and absolute loyalty toward him as the criterion separating Marxism from revisionism.

Wang observed that the cult of personality has deep roots in Chinese history and society. China is a society in which small producers have predominated for a long time, and the force of their habits is strongly implanted. Up to the present time, the patriarchal style of the rural cadres and their habit of making policy decisions all by themselves and refusing to listen to others' opinions are still serious problems. Chinese society has not gone through a stage of capitalism. There has been no democratic tradition. On the contrary, the idea of "feudal" rule by an emperor and despotic government held sway for a long time. Wang's article must have stirred up serious controversies within the Party. But it did raise some basic problems about the nature of the Chinese political system and processes as well as fundamental questions about China's heritage.

It is not known to what extent Wang Jo-shui's speech reflected the views of the top leaders of China, what the relative power of the reformers and the orthodox Maoists was, or what the precise political alignments were. But
his views soon found expression in official journals. An article in the February, 1979, issue of Hung-ch'i criticized the tendency to believe that "it is better to be on the 'Left' than on the Right," and that "'Left' is better than Right," as well as the stubborn insistence to call "Rightist" what is obviously "Leftist." Two months later, another article asserted that the "Revisionist" line of Lin Piao and the "gang of four" was not an "ultra-Rightist" line, nor a "line which was Leftist in appearance but Rightist in reality," but rather that it was a genuinely "Left-opportunist line," or an "ultra-Leftist line." To outside observers, this characterization merely confirms what they have been saying all along. But its significance in Chinese politics should not be underestimated. From then on, the ultra-leftist line of Lin Piao and the "gang of four" could be related to the leftist error of Wang Ming from 1931-35. It could be traced to the leftist errors which were made during the anti-rightist movement of 1957-58 and were increasingly magnified afterwards, particularly during the Cultural Revolution. Since the "gang of four" had been widely hated in the urban areas and since ultra-leftism was now identified as the source of the errors of the past, what the ultra-leftists had denounced as rightist errors could now be objectively re-examined on their own merits and in accordance with the criterion for testing truth. Moderate, orthodox Maoists like Hua and Wang Tung-hsing were put on the defensive because they were closer in their views to the ultra-leftists than the reformers.

Another article directly attacked the view, at least partly endorsed by Hung-ch'i in March, 1977, that whatever Chairman Mao had said or decided to do must not be changed, that conversely whatever Chairman Mao had not said or had not decided to do cannot be done, that in sum, past decisions cannot be changed, and future actions should simply follow them. It charged that Lin Piao and the "gang of four" deified the leader and absolutized his authority. They had launched a movement "to create god" and to turn Mao Tse-tung into "an isolated god." Deification of the leader conflicted with Marxism-Leninism and
Mao Tsetung Thought. It changed the character of the leader of the proletarian party because it separated him from the masses. Ultimately, it would lead to a directly opposite result; superstition would become total distrust because the myth that the leader can never commit an error could not be sustained.

The reaffirmation in the May, 1979, issue of Hung-ch'i of the four basic principles of socialism (the dictatorship of the proletariat, the leadership of the Party, and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought) may have been intended by some party leaders to check the reformist development. But the reformers were quite ready to work within these limits for they could still develop their own interpretation of these broad principles. They may also have sincerely believed in these very broad guidelines. Thus, the reformist movement continued to develop.

By September, the reformists had scored another victory. Hung-ch'i published an article of self-criticism. It admitted to a "serious mistake," i.e., its failure for half a year in 1978 to publish any article on the discussion of the criterion for testing truth, which had had an extremely bad influence. It also characterized as an error the view of "some people" who regarded the reaffirmation of the four basic principles as an endeavor to correct the deviation made by the Third Plenum and who unwarrantedly found fault with the effort to emancipate the mind, with the development of democracy, and with the discussion of the criterion for testing truth.

At the end of the month, the Fourth Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee took place. It made two major decisions. First, it discussed and approved the speech to be delivered by Yeh Chien-ying on behalf of the Party Center, the Standing Committee of the NPC, and the State Council at the meeting to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic. Second, it "unanimously approved" "the Decisions on Some Questions Concerning the Acceleration of Agricultural Development." Thus, the draft document approved in principle by the Third Plenum was turned into an authoritative document.

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In his speech as delivered on September 29, 1979, Yeh characterized the Cultural Revolution as a "calamity for our people" and "the most severe reversal to our socialist cause since the founding of the People's Republic." This declaration came only nine months after the Third Plenum had decided to shelve the problem of summing up the shortcomings and mistakes of "this great revolution." It meant that a new evaluation of the Cultural Revolution had been reached, even if Yeh did not make detailed analyses of all the important decisions and events during those ten years. It contained the word "calamity" used by Wang Jo-shui. Yeh denounced Lin Piao and the "gang of four" for deliberately concocting and pushing an "ultra-Left line." He observed: "Leaders are not gods. They are not infallible and should therefore not be deified." He went beyond the communiqué of the Third Plenum in declaring that the Third Plenum had "explicitly confirmed the unshakable, fundamental Marxist epistemological tenet that practice is the sole criterion of truth." The reformists had won another decisive battle.

At this point, let us note an interesting feature of the political process in this period of transition and the shift of the balance of power in favor of the reformists. The article, "Practice is the Sole Criterion for Testing Truth," was first published in Kuang-ming jih-pao, an official newspaper which devotes more space to educational, scientific, and literary matters than other official dailies, which is read by intellectuals, and which probably reflects their views. The article was published under the byline of "a special commentator." It was republished the next day in Jen-min jih-pao. As noted above, its theme was then supported by Teng and numerous articles written by intellectuals, but was initially opposed by Hung-ch'i, the Party's theoretical journal which, according to a report from Hong Kong, was then controlled by Wang Tung-hsing before the Third Plenum and which subsequently underwent a change in control and editorship presumably sometime after December, 1978. Throughout this period, Hu Yao-pang successively headed the Organization and Propaganda Departments and was elected to the Politbureau at the Third Plenum.
(10) The termination of the Tachai movement: the direct attacks on the Tachai-Hsiyang model (December, 1978-September, 1979)

After the draft document adopted in December, 1978, on the acceleration of agricultural development had been sent down to the basic levels for study and trial use, a propaganda campaign was launched to urge its implementation. In addition, this campaign in the press criticized all the slogans and specific features of the Tachai-Hsiyang model as well as the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties. An important editorial in the January 22, 1979 issue of Jen-min jih-pao asserted that all economic units at the three levels of the commune must implement the principle of the "distribution of rewards according to work done" and overcome "equal divisionism." They must not wantonly interfere with the private plots, sideline occupations, and rural markets. They must regard these as necessary supplements of the collective rural economy rather than as "the tail of capitalism." They must not arbitrarily change the system of three-level ownership with the production team as its foundation and should absolutely not attempt to make the brigade or commune the basic unit of account when the peasants and the various units were still very poor. Meanwhile, the press carried many reports which gave specific examples in various parts of China of the disasters brought about by "equal divisionism," by the attempt to make the brigade the basic accounting unit in a hurry, by the adoption of leftist policies in agriculture, and by the suppression of the peasant's sideline occupations and the rural markets. These reports also underscored the positive results achieved after the reversal of these decisions.

This propaganda campaign in the press was accompanied by the appearance of articles in the various theoretical journals which carried the same message. A special commentator of Hung-ch'i wrote in the February, 1979, issue that the foremost task in quickly developing agriculture was to implement firmly the Party's various economic policies in the rural areas, obviously referring to the specific contents of the 25 articles. He no longer said that it was to push forward the
movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties. On the contrary, his discussion of the paramount importance of giving autonomy to the production teams contained an implicit criticism of most of the important specific features of the Tachai-Hsiyang model. In an article on Chou En-lai's views under the byline of a joint writing group of all four ministries concerned with agriculture, Chou was said not only to have correctly summarized the "basic experience" of Tachai but also to have pointed out the shortcomings of Tachai. More importantly, the article asserted that Chou had encouraged all localities to cultivate and popularize their own models and that in February, 1972, he had told the local cadres of Yenan district in Shensi province not to visit Tachai constantly but to popularize quickly the examples established in their own district.

A system of linking responsibility for production to the quantity of the actual yield, or a "system of production responsibility" for short, was advocated, although it had been condemned in the past. The division of a team into work-groups and the assignment by the team to its work-groups of "fixed labor power," "fixed parcels of land," "fixed production quotas," "fixed cost," and "fixed work-points" with bonus for exceeding production quotas was rationalized. This system could also be applied to a single person in certain types of agricultural work which required specialized skill.

In an article, Wang Jen-chung, now in charge of agriculture, stressed the importance of making the best of local conditions, the need to achieve the aim of reducing costs, increasing benefits and producing quick results, and the need to strengthen agricultural research and education. Even Hua Kuo-feng did not mention Tachai and the movement to learn from Tachai in his official report on government work to the second session of the Fifth NPC. These articles in the Party's theoretical journal were paralleled by more sophisticated articles in Ching-chi yen-chiu, the journal of the economists and persons engaged in economic work. These need not detain our narrative.
The propaganda campaign and these theoretical analyses furnished the immediate context for the termination of the Tachai movement. Shortly after the Third Plenum, Kuang-ming jih-pao took the lead in openly and forcefully attacking the movement to learn from Tachai. It suggested that henceforth people should no longer shout such slogans as "unless the capitalist road is blocked, advance toward socialism cannot be made." Instead, it asserted that they should now grasp the "central task" of reforming and improving their agricultural techniques. It directed its attack first on the Tachai movement in Shansi province, the most vulnerable target among the 29 provincial-level units in China. It charged that the Tachai model had been deified in Shansi and that the label of "opposing Tachai" had been used as a bludgeon to attack many cadres from the provincial to the basic levels. In effect, it endorsed the accusation contained in a letter written to the editors by four cadres in a brigade under the jurisdiction of Yangch'ian city that even in 1977 and 1978 the leaders in Shansi Province had regarded the concrete experiences of Tachai as "laws" to be implemented in the province with the result that production in their brigade had declined, that its leadership had collapsed, and that the system of management and labor discipline had been thrown into confusion.

This article was published at roughly the same time that an enlarged meeting of the Shansi provincial party committee was held to sum up the lessons of the movement to learn from Tachai according to the spirit of the Third Plenum. At this meeting, the same accusations were made against Shansi leaders. Many participants charged that the provincial party committee had allowed the people in various localities to "chant only the scriptures of Tachai and Hsiyang" and nothing else, and had stressed the necessity for the whole province to do what Tachai did. On behalf of the standing committee of the provincial party committee, First Secretary Wang Ch'ien accepted the responsibility of the provincial party committee and his own principal responsibility for the problems which had emerged in the
movement to learn from Tachai. He admitted that there had been mistakes in two documents on the movement to learn from Tachai adopted in 1978 by the provincial party committee and that these mistakes should be corrected in accordance with the spirit of the two documents on agriculture adopted by the Third Plenum. This meeting of the provincial party committee was attended by a newly appointed second secretary of the provincial party committee, Lo Kuei-pao, who had served as one of the vice-ministers for foreign affairs at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution and had ceased to play an active role in public affairs in 1972.75 Meanwhile, at the Party Center, Wang Jen-chung replaced Chi Teng-k'uei as the person in charge of agriculture.

The position of the Hsiyang county party committee was even more vulnerable than either the provincial party committee or Tachai. For the whole movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties could be stopped and totally refuted if it could be shown that the first Tachai-type county had committed many mistakes and never been a model of advanced development as orthodox Maoists had claimed. Again at about the same time, the deputy secretary of the Hsiyang county party committee, Li Hsi-shen, made a self-criticism on behalf of the committee even as it also affirmed its own achievements. Most damaging of all the seven self-criticisms was the admission that the committee had falsified the production figure for 1973, when the county had been suffering from a serious drought. The others dealt with the attack on leading cadres from the provincial to the county levels in struggle meetings staged in 1967, the transition to brigade-level accounting, the suppression of sideline production, excessive stress on production of grains, particularly high-yield varieties such as maize, "equal divisionism" in income distribution, and over-emphasis on top-to-bottom leadership.76 The question of falsification, as well as the seizure of power in 1967 and the related problem of policies toward cadres, will be systematically discussed in a later section on the destruction of the Hsiyang model.

But the Hsiyang county party committee also reached the conclusion in March and April that the peasants did
not want private plots to be returned to them. In May and June, it still did not want "to criticize the ultra-Left line" as a whole. At the time, some Tachai cadres thought that the reaffirmation of the four basic principles in March and May would once more strengthen Tachai's position. As the first secretary of Shansi province, Wang Ch'ien was to note in June that among party leaders in that province, it had been relatively easy to achieve a consensus on the four fundamental principles, but even now they still had to make very great efforts to emancipate their minds further and to resolve the problem of rigidity or semi-rigidity in their thinking. He admitted that some people in Shansi had considered the line followed by the Party in the first few months after the Third Plenum a mistake and a disaster.

By August, the national tide could no longer be resisted. The standing committee of the party committee of Hsiyang called a series of meetings to resolve the various problems of rural economic policies on the basis of the tenet that practice is the sole criterion of truth. A deputy secretary proposed at one of these meetings that the ultra-leftist line should be criticized as such. The county party committee finally recognized that it had to keep in line with the Party Center and to liberate itself from the constraints of the Tachai-Hsiyang model. Nine decisions were made. These decisions were published in Shansi jih-pao on September 24th, but were not reported in the national newspapers until October 3, 1979. They will be discussed in the next section on events after the Fourth Plenum.

Thus, by the time that the Fourth Plenum met in late September, the ground had been fully prepared for the termination of the movement to learn from Tachai. The draft document on "Decisions on Some Questions Concerning the Acceleration of Agricultural Development" was adopted as a definitive statement of policy. It contained several changes which are important from our point of view. Unlike the draft, the now definitive document no longer told "party committees at all levels" that "they must continue to grasp well the mass movement to learn from Tachai and to popularize Tachai-type counties." It merely urged them to continue to guide the vast number of cadres and peasants in learning from the "basic experience" of
Tachai, which was now defined in the words of Chou En-lai rather than the modified formulation widely used during the Cultural Revolution. In contrast to the draft document, it did not flatly prohibit the assignment of production quotas to individual households. Indeed, it said that "except for special needs of certain sideline production and single households living in remote hilly areas without easy means of transportation," the system of assigning quotas to single households was not to be used. This exception turns out to be rather important for there are many areas in China and many types of sideline production which can be easily subsumed under it, if it is interpreted liberally as is now the case. Thus, the system, which had once been used during the three years of economic difficulty and for which Liu Shao-ch'i had been unjustly criticized, was again given a measure of legitimacy. By late 1980, 20% of the production teams in China had adopted this system, as we shall show.

The new document made no change in the provision which permitted the teams to award work-points to a peasant according to fixed work-quotas attached to different kinds of farm tasks or to award work-points on the basis of time spent on farm work plus appraisal of the quality of work done. Like the draft document, it also gave permission almost as an aside to the teams to divide themselves into work-groups, to assign work-quotas to the latter, to link the rewards received by the latter to the actual yields produced, and to give bonuses for above-quota yields. This third form of distributing rewards was to become a matter of controversy among cadres at the local level. But at the end of 1980, it was forcefully advocated in the press.

According to the cadres interviewed at Tachai, soon after Wang Jen-chung had replaced Chi Teng-k'uei, he proposed that the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties should now be discontinued in accordance with the general policy of not launching any political movements. The failure in the document adopted at the Fourth Plenum to urge the party committees to continue to push forward the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties merely represented the formal ratification of Wang's proposal, after the movement had for all practical purposes ceased to exist for some months.
Thus, the movement to learn from Tachai launched by Mao in 1964 and the movement to build Tachai-type counties unofficially begun in 1970 and officially proclaimed in 1975 were for all practical purposes terminated in September, 1979.

(II) The repudiation of the Tachai-Hsiyang model
(September, 1979-February, 1981)

Within a week after the Fourth Plenum and even before the official publication of the "Decision on Certain Problems Concerning the Acceleration of Agricultural Development," the termination of the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties was made known to the public through a report published in Jen-min jih-pao. This news dispatch reported a series of nine decisions which had been made by the Hsiyang party committee in meetings held since August when they had applied the criterion for testing truth in examining the ultra-leftist errors committed in the movement to learn from Tachai. First, the party county committee had decided that all private plots were to be given back to the peasants for self-cultivation after the fall harvest. Second, the "system of management by fixed quotas" should be adopted throughout the county and the system of dividing a production team into work-groups which would sign contracts with the team to fulfill production quotas should be allowed. Most importantly for our purpose, the party branch of Tachai was reported to have said that Tachai would also implement the "system of management by fixed quotas." In effect, Tachai itself had fallen in line with the Party Center and decided to give up its famous system of "self-assessment and public discussion" in assigning basic work-points to a peasant. Third, rural markets had gradually been reopened in Hsiyang since July. Fourth, the county should actively promote the industrial and sideline production of all communes and brigades. In this context, the report revealed that according to an unwritten rule, no other units should be allowed to surpass Tachai in any kind of work and thus they had not dared to develop fully their potential or at least to claim superiority over Tachai.

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Actually, many brigades had surpassed Tachai in developing industrial and sideline production, forestry, and animal husbandry. The county party committee asked: "Why should we not learn from them?" Sixth, the privately grown trees which had been collectivized should be given back to the peasants. Seventh, the county party committee had revealed that in building "new villages" according to the Tachai model, many brigades had torn down old houses but failed to give the owners adequate compensation or sometimes any compensation at all. It had decided that readjustment should be made in these cases. It also compared residential units of a row-house style unfavorably with old-style houses because they provided no space for raising chickens or pigs. Everyone knew that this was a reference to Tachai-type architecture. Seventh, the county committee had decided that in the distribution or rewards after the autumn harvest, the system of "self-assessment and public discussion" both in determining the basic work-points of the peasants and the distribution of grain should be discontinued in all brigades within the county. Eighth, it had criticized the overextension of the coverage of social welfare and ordered a retrenchment. Ninth, it had decided to correct the abuse of giving too many work-points to cadres.

On November 3rd, the party committee of Chinchung district published a thoroughgoing self-criticism of its implementation of the movement to learn from Tachai. A comparison of its self-criticism with the self-examination made by Hsiyang county in August shows how fast and how far the ideological and political line had shifted in the direction advocated by the reformers. The district party committee admitted the error that it had deified Tachai and mistaken the Tachai model in agricultural development for "a brilliant model of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat" and for "a model of all-around dictatorship, thus magnifying the class struggle in the countryside." It had turned the movement to learn from Tachai into a political movement in class struggle and a struggle between two lines. One of the results had been to consider Tachai the model in all other fields as well, for instance, in education, public health, finance
and trade, physical education, and cultural affairs. In sum, the "Tachai experience" had been regarded as "universal truth," omnipotent and all-inclusive.83

The committee also revealed several interesting details about the Tachai movement in the district. The percentage of the brigade-level accounting units had increased from 39% in 1973 to 71% in 1977. By 1978, 99% of all private plots were cultivated by collective units. The private sideline production of the peasants had been subjected to severe limitations. In some places, it had been limited to "one pig, one tree, one chicken, and one rabbit." Some kinds of trade in rural markets had been outlawed; and some rural markets had been closed altogether. In undertaking farmland construction in the four years up to August, 1978, the district had appropriated 11,000,000 jin of food grain, ¥ 1,400,000 in cash, 15,000,000 work-days in labor power, and ¥ 1,200,000 worth of materials from brigades which had not received any benefit from these public projects. Like Hsiyang county in August, the district party committee decided to abandon its past policies. Thus, the Hsiyang-Tachai model was in the process of being dismantled.

But Tachai itself as distinguished from Tachai as a model was still listed as one of the three hundred and fifty-one advanced units in various fields throughout China in the year-end list.84 Tachai had a bumper crop in 1979. It was developing two new brigade enterprises. It raised its work-day value to ¥ 1.80. Above all, it was in the process of trying to keep in step with the Party Center but not without some difficulties as we shall see.

Changes in personnel occurred rapidly after November. As noted at the beginning of this paper, Ch'en Yung-kuei was replaced by Liu Shu-kang as the party secretary of Hsiyang county.85 Li Hsi-shen, the deputy party secretary, was allowed to retain his position but his authority was restricted to finance and trade. He lost his position altogether in the spring of 1980. By this time, Ch'en had also been removed as a party secretary of Shansi and as the secretary of Chinchung district. The Chinchung district party committee had also been reorganized. As of 1980, Ch'en's only position in Shansi was that
of a member of the Tachai party branch. Meanwhile, Second Secretary Lo Kuei-po, a victim of the ultra-leftist line during the Cultural Revolution, was elected governor of Shansi province in December, 1979.

The Fifth Plenum of the Central Committee met in February, 1980. Prior to the meeting, many outside observers had predicted that Ch'en Yung-kuei would be removed together with Wang Tung-hsing, Chi Teng-k'uei, Wu Teh, and Ch'en Hsi-lien, from his positions as a member of the Politbureau and a Vice-Premier of the State Council. But this did not happen in Ch'en's case, although the Plenum did decide to approve the requests to resign made by Comrades Wang Tung-hsing, Chi Teng-k'uei, Wu Te and Ch'en Hsi-lien and also "decided to remove and propose to remove them from their leading Party and state posts." The Plenum made other sweeping changes in the institutional arrangement and personnel at the summit of Chinese politics. It reestablished the secretariat of the Central Committee which had disintegrated during the Cultural Revolution and whose functions had been taken over partly by the General Office of the Central Committee and partly by the Cultural Revolution Small Group. It elected Hu Yao-pang as the general secretary to head this new organization of eleven men. This decision is considered by many observers the most important event in Chinese politics in 1980. Hu was also elected to the standing committee of the Politbureau, together with Chao Tzu-yang. Outside observers soon learned that Wang Jen-chung had replaced Hu as the head of the Propaganda Department. Wang's job in charge of agriculture had been taken over by Wan Li, who had been promoted to the newly established secretariat. Prior to his promotion, Wan had been the first secretary of Anhwei province and had taken the lead in changing the policies and institutions in the countryside in that province in a direction directly opposite to the movement to learn from Tachai.

The fact that at the Fifth Plenum, Ch'en Yung-kuei presumably did not submit his resignation from his top posts in the Party and the State Council may in part explain subsequent events. After several months of silence, the official newspapers in China began on June 15, 1980,
a series of sharp attacks on various policies and programs of Hsiyang county. On July 7th, the responsibility for all the mistakes was publicly attributed to "the former principal responsible person in Hsiyang county," i.e., Ch'en Yung-kuei, whereas prior to this time the published criticisms of Hsiyang county and the movement to learn from Tachai had not used this indirect reference to Ch'en and all the self-criticisms had been made in the name of the party committees concerned or by Ch'en's supporters or followers. In contrast to the case of Wang Ch'ien, the first secretary of Shansi, no self-criticism by Ch'en has been published in the national newspapers up to the time of writing. In August, 1980, cadres in Shansi, many of whom had been long-time associates or supporters of Ch'en said in sadness rather than in anger or disdain that Ch'en was an old man with a peasant's mentality, that his cultural level was low, that he could not understand the new concrete problems, and that he could not comprehend the new situation. Quite probably, Ch'en still believes in the correctness of his views and entertains an appraisal of the Tachai movement very different from the Party Center's.

In the public attacks on Ch'en after June, all aspects of Ch'en's leadership were severely condemned. These ranged from such concrete and undeniable charges as the falsification of the figures on grain production through the problems of leadership style to the basic question of his approach to agricultural development. It is obvious from these attacks that the reformists were determined to destroy the Tachai-Hsiyang model completely with or without Ch'en's cooperation. Since this model stood as a concrete embodiment of the ultra-leftist line, its survival would have blocked the way of sweeping reforms in agricultural development and rural life. As the Tachai movement from 1964 onward was part and parcel of the Maoist program as developed in Mao's last years, it had to be totally discredited in the process of a re-evaluation of Mao's role and a re-examination of its roots in Chinese society and history.

Thus, in February, 1981, the Party Center made public its final judgments on Tachai and the movement to learn from Tachai, presumably after it had fully prepared the ground for such a move. These final judgments were embodied
in a self-criticism of the Shansi provincial party committee and a commentary by the Party Center, as noted above in passing. But in contrast to the practices of political struggle and its resolution during the Cultural Revolution, the provincial party committee not only assumed publicly the responsibility for the "Leftist" errors committed in the movement in Shansi but also absolved all the lower-level party organizations and the "vast number of cadres" of any responsibility. In turn, the Party Center attributed the "principal responsibility" for the mistakes made in the nation-wide movement to the "Party Center at that time." It affirmed the achievements in production and reconstruction of the "overwhelming majority" of the advanced units in learning from Tachai. As for Tachai, it used the Cultural Revolution as a line of demarcation. While it affirmed Tachai as an advanced model in agricultural development prior to that time, it condemned Tachai during and after the Cultural Revolution as the model in the implementation of the "Leftist" line. The use of the term "Leftist" rather than "ultra-Leftist" may have significant implications. The Party Center then expressed the hope that Tachai would "revive its good style and tradition of self-reliance and of initiating an enterprise through hardship."

In summing up the lessons, the provincial party committee asserted that the "Leftist" tendencies in Tachai and Hsiyang had found concentrated expression in the "so-called three basic experiences," i.e., "to make an all-out effort to criticize revisionism," "to make an all-out effort to criticize capitalism," and "to make an all-out effort to build socialism." These three "basic experiences" were summed up by the provincial party committee in one point: "so-called firmly upholding the continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat." The contents of this "continuing revolution" were described as follows: (1) to create "class struggle" uninterruptedly and artificially and thus to magnify it; (2) to transform relations of production uninterruptedly and to make a transition to a higher level of collective ownership and accounting in spite of the poverty of the local units; (3) "to cut the tail of
capitalism" and "to block the path of capitalism" uninterruptedly; and (4) to promote "equal-divisionism" (p'ing-ch'un chu-i) and to destroy the system of distributing rewards according to work done.

The provincial party committee summed up its own major errors as follows. First, it had proposed that all rural units must not only learn the "basic experience" of Tachai but also the "whole set of concrete experiences of Tachai." Second, it had bestowed higher and higher praise on Tachai and boasted about Tachai in increasingly mysterious terms as if Tachai was an advanced unit in everything. As a result, units in all sorts of work had also called for learning from Tachai. Third, it had raised the slogan that "to learn from Tachai or to oppose Tachai is the concentrated expression of the struggle between two lines and two roads in the countryside in our nation." It had mixed together a movement in agricultural development with all sorts of political movements, leading to criticism and attack on many persons. Fourth, to popularize the experience of Tachai, it had promoted in one step the basic-level cadres in Hsiyang to leading posts at various levels. Their lack of suitable ability and experience had caused damage in the work of their units. Fifth, in its connection with Tachai and Hsiyang, it had for a period of time departed from the normal relationship between superior and subordinate units. It had given them special treatment in the allocation of funds and material resources.

It should be noted that most of the Tachai-Hsiyang slogans criticized by the provincial party committee were adopted, raised, or popularized by Tachai leaders after the campaign to criticize Teng in the spring of 1976,89 while many of the concrete practices and policies adopted by Tachai, Hsiyang, and Shansi preceded that time. It is obvious that the concrete features of Tachai and Hsiyang could easily be used or manipulated to promote what is now labeled the "Leftist" ideological and political line once Tachai was drawn into the political maelstrom.

On its part, the Party Center observed that like everything else, an advanced model undergoes continuous
development and change. When it cannot continue to be an advanced model, it should not be maintained artificially either by outside aid or by deception which harms others while hurting oneself. The variations in conditions in China make it necessary to discover and cultivate all kinds of advanced models. To use a single model for agricultural development was a serious error. The Party Center suggested that all advanced techniques and methods of management administration must be popularized gradually after having gone through trial and experimentation. They must be able to promote the economic interests of the local peasants, to yield economic results, and to gain voluntary acceptance. Administrative, coercive, and political measures must not be used. Finally, the Party Center condemned the practice of selecting labor models to fill leading posts in state and party organs or mass organizations because they had proved unable to discharge these tasks satisfactorily and at the same time they could no longer function as labor models.

These two reports represented a total repudiation of developments in Tachai and Hsiyang after 1966. They did not mention any redeeming merits. They represented the tragic end not only of the Tachai model but also the inevitable outcome of the idea and practices of the two-line struggle. What the Chinese can and should see in the history of the movement to learn from Tachai is not so much the tragic fate of Tachai itself but more importantly the disastrous effects of mechanically applying the notion of the two-line struggle to resolve all kinds of conflicts, as well as the tendency to believe that everything is either totally correct or totally wrong, totally good or totally bad. How the reformers now in power can put an end to these practices and ideas without themselves becoming infected by these systemic defects which the Chinese polity shared with some other Communist movements and regimes remains to be seen.

We have in the above pages given as detailed an account of the history of the movement after 1977 as time and space permit. In following parts, we shall examine the Party Center's detailed criticism of some of the specific practices of Tachai leaders and the projects undertaken by them. We shall also report on the rapid changes in the institutions and practices in Tachai and Hsiyang themselves.
The problems of cadre policy, leadership style, and political power

In cadre policy, in leadership style, and in the pursuit of power, Ch'en and the Hsiyang party branch after 1967 followed some of the prevailing practices which were being developed and became established during the Cultural Revolution. They could not but be influenced by the long bureaucratic and patriarchal tradition of China. In the latter aspect, the actions and policies of Ch'en and his followers in Hsiyang show that even poor and formerly oppressed peasants at the bottom of China's bureaucratic society would consciously or unconsciously take over the political style of the past and succumb to some of the traditional abuses of power after they have risen to positions of authority in a revolution, even if they are simultaneously pushing forward revolutionary, egalitarian, and leftist socio-economic programs which benefit poor peasants. In a society with a long continuous history like China, the persistence and pervasiveness of its established tradition cannot be and still has not been overcome even by the most protracted and most profound revolution such as the revolution in China in the 20th century.

When in early 1967 Ch'en Yung-kuei seized power in Hsiyang county and participated in the seizure of power at the provincial level, he followed the prevailing practice of dragging out the "capitalist roaders" at the three levels of the province, the district, and the county and brought them to Hsiyang to be criticized and struggled against at mass meetings, as he himself proudly said in a talk of which a transcript was sent down to all provincial level units for reference by the Party Center and the Cultural Revolution Small Group on November 17, 1967. 90

When a re-examination of all aspects of the Cultural Revolution was intensified after the Third Plenum and particularly when earnest efforts were made to discover the faults of the political system and processes and to reform them, the seizure of power at Hsiyang came to be viewed in an entirely different light. At
an enlarged meeting of the Hsiyang county party committee held shortly before March 7, 1979, deputy secretary Li Hsi-shen admitted the error that from February, 1967 onwards, there had been four occasions on which the leading cadres at the provincial and county levels had been dragged to Hsiyang, had been criticized, and had been struggled against together with the pre-1967 leading cadres of the county. It was later disclosed that the county party secretary from 1962-1964, Chang Jun-huai, had been jailed for two years; the county party secretary from 1964 to 1966, Yüeh Yao-hsien, had died after having been struggled against. They and fourteen other former cadres, at the county and commune levels were rehabilitated only in September, 1980 after Ch'en had fallen from power. During the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, 141 persons, of whom 90% were mere peasants, were reported to have died or committed suicide as a result of political struggle. According to a leading cadre, 1,372 persons in the county had been struggled against. Moreover, when Ch'en was in control, he expressed the view that these kinds of criticism and struggles had been the proper methods to be used and he refused to implement the new policies of correcting wrong decisions and rehabilitating the victims.

That the practices widely used during the Cultural Revolution continued to be employed afterward is revealed in another case. Between 1967 and 1969, nine cadres in Chinchung district wrote the Party Center and other units concerned to report on "the historical and the factional problem" of Ch'en Yung-kuei. After the fall of the "gang of four" and in the movement to oppose and criticize them, "some comrades" in the district bypassed the party standing committee and secretly established a "special investigation group" to persecute these nine cadres. At the time when Ch'en Yung-kuei was a vice-premier and a member of the Politbureau, these nine persons were charged with "collecting black materials on leading comrades at the Party Center." This type of charge had been frequently used by the "gang of four" during the
Cultural Revolution. It continued to be used after their fall and even in the movement to expose and criticize them and their mistakes. One of the nine was sentenced to five years in prison. Another died as a result of the persecution. One attempted suicide but was saved. It was not until May, 1980, and sometime after the reorganization of the district party committee that the case was cleared up and the nine persons were rehabilitated.96

Another case of this nature occurred in Pingting county. That county was controlled after October, 1975, by its secretary, Li Su-shou, who had been the secretary of the party branch at the small brigade of Nannao in Tachai commune. A worker at the county broadcasting station wrote a series of twelve letters from 1974 to 1976 to the Party Center, criticizing many of Ch'en's policies as implemented in Hsiyang and Tachai as well as Ch'en's abuse of power. One of his letters written in March, 1976, to Chairman Mao expressed his opinion on "the campaign to beat back the Right deviationist wind to reverse correct verdicts" and the problem of "criticizing Teng Hsiao-p'ing"--an opinion which at that time was opposed to the policy of the Party Center. Ironically, he was convicted in April, 1977, as an "active counter-revolutionary" and sentenced to eighteen year imprisonment at a time when the demands for the rehabilitation of Teng were gathering momentum. The prisoner was released in February, 1979, but he was totally rehabilitated only in August, 1980. Kuang-ming jih-pao took the lead in exposing this case.97

It was also charged that Ch'en was not above using his powerful position to do favors for his friends in violation of legal procedures or common propriety. Ch'en's second wife is a woman who divorced her husband after he, a school teacher, had been convicted of raping six young girls and sentenced in 1966 to imprisonment for twenty years. She was introduced to Ch'en by Wang Chin-tzu, her former brother-in-law and the brother of the convicted rapist. A cadre in a commune in Hsiyang, Wang joined Ch'en in the seizure of power in 1967 and rose rapidly in the party hierarchy until he became a
deputy secretary of the county and, as the person in
actual charge, gave one of the principal addresses at
the first national conference on building Tachai-type
counties in September-October, 1975. In 1973, Ch'en
and Wang intervened in the case of the convicted rapist.
Reportedly, they used both threats and promises of gain
to induce the victims and their parents to retract
their original accusations. In 1974, the county courts
with the approval of the intermediate-level court,
rallied the original conviction and Wang's brother
was released, appointed a cadre at a commune, and given
a compensation of ¥ 1,500.

Shortly after the Third Plenum, the Department
of Organization and the Committee on Discipline of the
Central Committee together with the corresponding or-
gans at the provincial level began an investigation of
the case on the basis of a signed letter sent to the
General Office of the Central Committee. According to
a correspondent of Kuang-ming jih-pao, which again took
the lead in breaking a case involving Hsiyang, Ch'en
had written two deputy secretaries of the county com-
mittee, asking them and their colleagues to give the
same account on all matters whenever any investigation
team came to Hsiyang. As a result, the investigation
had produced no definite conclusions. But after Ch'en
had been removed in late 1979 from his position as
secretary of the county party committee and after his
followers also lost their power in 1980, another in-
vestigation was initiated in September, 1980, by the
higher court of Shansi province. Free from fear of
the power of Ch'en and his followers, the victims of the
rapes and molestations reverted to their original ver-
sions of events and told the investigators of the cir-
cumstances under which they had retracted their original
accusations. The county court reopened the case, and
the reversed decision was once more reversed.98

Another charge involving Ch'en also reflects one
of the worst traditions of China which has been per-
petuated under the revolutionary regime and which the
reformers are still trying to demolish but without total
success. Ch'en's oldest son by his first marriage,
Ch'en Ming-chu, left Tachai brigade to work in the
county office of propaganda after the seizure of power and was eventually promoted to the position of the head of the propaganda department of the county committee. In October, 1980, it was charged that relying on his father's high position, he had abused his power and influence to molest many women, to beat and oppress ordinary people, and to use public property for private enjoyment. He was dismissed in June, 1980. In other words, nepotism and the misbehavior of children of high officials have continued to be the bane of Chinese politics.

As the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties developed, cadres from Hsiyang county and Tachai commune were promoted all over Shansi province and in at least two known cases to important positions outside of the province. So long as Tachai and Hsiyang were considered national models, this personnel policy seemed reasonable and justified as these cadres had had actual experience in building these models. In an interview in November, 1977, Ch'en Yung-kuei himself proudly noted that Hsiyang had sent more than forty cadres to other localities in Shansi, mentioning in particular the secretaries of the county party committees of P'ingting, Yutz'u, Chiaoch'eng, Hungtung, and Linhsien. The first cadre of Hsiyang to be sent outside to be a county secretary was Chang Huai-ying, who had served at one time as the party secretary of Tachai commune. He was transferred in 1974 to serve as secretary of the party committee in a neighboring county (Shouyang) and promoted to be the first secretary of Yunch'eng district in 1975. Most of the other party secretaries in other counties were sent out after the first national conference on building Tachai-type counties. Li So-shou was promoted in October, 1975, from the position of secretary of the party branch in Nannao brigade to the position of secretary of P'ingting county. Li Ch'i-mao, the secretary of the party branch of Hsikupi brigade was promoted to be the secretary of the party committee of Yutz'u county. Ch'en Yu-tang, the secretary of the party branch of Hsip'ing brigade was promoted in 1977 to be the party secretary of Chiaoch'eng county, the home
county of Chairman Hua. Ch'iao Su-hsiang, who had once served as the party secretary of Tachai commune, was promoted to be the party secretary of Hsiyang county. Liu Nai-chu, the manager of the agricultural machine factory in Hsiyang, was promoted to be secretary of the party committee of Linhsien. In addition, Li Han-so, who had served successively as the party secretary of Tachai commune and a deputy party secretary of Hsiyang, was promoted to be the party secretary of Chinchung district, which has jurisdiction over Hsiyang county. Fan Hsi-feng, who had served as a deputy party secretary of Hsiyang, was promoted to be the deputy party secretary of Yunch'eng district. The most famous case of all was that of Wang Chin-tzu mentioned above. Sometime after the first national conference on building Tachai-type counties, he was promoted to be a provincial level cadre, later became a secretary of the Shansi provincial party committee, and in 1978 was appointed a party secretary of the province of Heilungkiang.

In November, 1980, this policy of promoting cadres from Hsiyang was frontally attacked in Jen-min jih-pao which announced at the same time the transfer of some of these "incompetent" cadres from their high positions. According to this report, 491 cadres from Hsiyang had been transferred to other parts of the province in the period from 1966 to December, 1979. Of these, thirty-eight had occupied the position of deputy secretary and vice-chairman of the revolutionary committee of the county and above. Of these thirty-eight persons, twenty-eight had been demoted. Most of these transfers had taken place in the first half of 1980. Wang Chin-tzu had been transferred back from Heilungkiang and had not yet been given an assignment. Li Han-so had been removed. Li Hsi-shen, the deputy secretary of Hsiyang itself had been replaced. Li Ch'i-mao had been transferred back to the county to serve as the deputy secretary of the commune from which he came. Li So-shou was under strong attack in the press in the second half of 1980.

Thus, the Tachai-Hsiyang network of cadres collapsed, although a few were still to be transferred or demoted. Here, one finds a repetition of a traditional
pattern with some important modifications. Personal networks in China are perhaps still more important than in most other societies. These networks are built on relationships between kin, between superiors and subordinates, between colleagues, and between persons from the same localities. The patriarchal style of leadership of which Ch'en was accused is an integral part of this tradition.

But a new element is added. These networks are also based on some common experience in a rapidly changing society—common experience shared by a relatively small circle of persons, but not by others whose situations and experience in a revolutionary period are quite different. They are bolstered by shared general orientations, attitudes, values, and purposes which are articulated with familiar ideological, political slogans interpreted differently by different groups and understood with varying degrees of sophistication. The revolutionary, sometimes dictatorial, methods used to push forward their programs stem from this new element and further reinforce the traditional patriarchal style. Power and policy are more intricately intertwined than in traditional China.

These modified personal networks also operate within different contexts. Whereas the traditional networks were set within a stable society with firmly rooted political and legal institutions and processes, the new ones function in a rapidly changing revolutionary society where similar institutions and processes have not been firmly established and, during the Cultural Revolution, were almost totally destroyed. Thus, these new networks are less subject to institutional restraints and more likely to produce abuses at a time when their importance in the society and within the Party and government is greatly enhanced. Personal networks as informal structures to support and supplement the functioning of formal institutions and organizations are a necessary part of all human societies. But they will continue to produce serious abuses in China, unless the reformers who themselves are members of these networks can establish an institutional and legal framework within which these networks must operate and which are beyond their power to challenge.
As early as the winter of 1979, the Hsiyang county party committee admitted that it had falsified the grain production figure for 1973, as we noted above. In its report on this self-criticism by deputy secretary Li Hsi-shen, Jen-min jih-pao did not mention the role played by "the principal responsible person" of the county, i.e., Ch'en Yung-kuei. This self-criticism may have been considered satisfactory by the Party Center at the time. But by the summer of 1980, the political balance of forces continued to shift in favor of the reformers, while Ch'en Yung-kuei apparently still adhered to his own views on past and present policies in the rural areas. Thus, on June 15th, the public campaign to destroy the Hsiyang model and to discredit Ch'en's leadership was renewed with a vengeance. It attacked the "west-to-east water diversion" project of Hsiyang county, as we shall see in the next section. Even while this attack was continuing, another blow was struck on July 7th. It hit Ch'en in his most vulnerable spot, the falsification of grain production figures at his personal command. Jen-min jih-pao revealed that the county committee had falsified the grain production figure not only in 1973 as Li had admitted earlier but also in every year from 1973 to 1977. In these five years, the county overstated its grain production by 272,000,000 jin or 24% of the total of the actual yields. In 1973, the second consecutive year of drought, Ch'en set a lofty tone at a meeting of commune secretaries on reporting grain production figures in order to show that Hsiyang "has never before seen such serious drought, has never before made such a great effort" and "has never before reaped such a bumper harvest." When added up, the figures submitted by the commune secretaries at that meeting overstated the actual yield by 50,000,000 jin. Ch'en was not satisfied with this figure. Ultimately, the county committee decided that the total grain production for that year was 239,000,000 jin, overstating the actual yield by 90,000,000 jin.

Several interviewees in China in 1980 gave a slightly different story. The production figure had been adopted in the spring and summer of 1973, as a target or
an estimate of the probable yield, and had been reported to higher levels. The drought turned out to be more serious than had been anticipated and the actual yield fell short. But after the harvest had come in and a final report was made during the early months of next year, the county committee did not report the shortfall. Instead, it either allowed the original estimate to stand or reported that the target had been fulfilled, presumably because of its fear that such an admission would affect the prestige of Hsiyang and its leaders. Still another version was that the falsified figure of 1973 had represented the estimate of the total grain yield made in October and November and reported to the central government. But Hsiyang failed to correct its erroneous estimate in the final report which was submitted every year after February.

No matter which version of the events is true, the failure to report accurately the actual yield after the harvest was a mistake. More seriously, the production figures of the following four years were also falsified, thus compounding the earlier error. The grain production figure for 1978 which was, following the customary practice, reported to the upper levels in the early months of 1979 was accurate. By then, the Third Plenum had altered the political situation to the disadvantage of the Hsiyang model and had emphasized the importance of seeing things as they were and of seeking truths from facts. Let us also recall it was at this time that deputy secretary Li admitted the falsification of the figure of grain production in 1973. Moreover, it was now revealed in Jen-min jih-pao that in a report to the Party Center, Ch'en had admitted overstating the actual yield by only 70,000,000 jin, while Hsiyang county had actually overstated its yield by 90,000,000 jin. In the county, deputy secretary Li had made arrangements in the various communes to change the figures in the account books of the communes for these years according to the falsified total grain production figures submitted by the county to the central government. After the replacement in late 1979 of Ch'en Yung-kuei by Liu Shu-kang as the party secretary, the Hsiyang
county committee and the communes ascertained the actual grain yields over the years, audited the official accounts, and corrected the erroneous figures. The result of this audit furnished the basis of the renewed public campaign against Ch'en Yung-kuei.

Several reports printed outside China on this episode frequently confused Hsiyang county with Tachai brigade. In fact, officially published reports in China did not charge Tachai brigade or any other brigade in Hsiyang with the falsification of its production figures. The new county party secretary cleared all the brigades of any responsibility when he told Tsou in August, 1980, that the brigade leaders had not been consulted on this matter. The former county party committee, including himself, had been solely responsible. The commune leaders knew about the falsification. Kuo Feng-lien, who had just been transferred from her position of secretary of the party branch, told Tsou that Tachai brigade had not been consulted and that Tachai had not falsified its records. Other brigade leaders made similar assertions.

In 1980, Tsou was furnished with the correct figures of the actual yields and the falsified figures for several years. These figures are reproduced here, together with the figures for 1973 used by deputy secretary Li Hsi-shen in his self-criticism as reported on March 15, 1979 (see Table I).

The figures in the table point to two interesting facts. First, Tachai suffered a serious drought in 1972, as well as 1973. The actual yield in 1972 declined by 90,860,000 jin but Ch'en reported the decline accurately. In 1973, Tachai increased its yield by 3,816,900 jin. This was no mean achievement in a second consecutive year of drought. But this time, Ch'en falsified the record by overclaiming 89,793,100 jin. Second, by making the large overclaim for the grain yield in 1973, Ch'en found it necessary to falsify the figures for the following years until the political situation made it impossible for him to continue to do so. Moreover, the vast overclaim made in 1973 and the series of false claims afterward concealed Tachai's achievement in continuing to increase grain production by large amounts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Actual Yield (jin)</th>
<th>Falsified Figures</th>
<th>Overclaims</th>
<th>Figures Used by Li in 1979</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Actual Yield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>87,365,200</td>
<td>. . . .</td>
<td>. . . .</td>
<td>. . . .</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>200,250,000</td>
<td>. . . .</td>
<td>. . . .</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>236,250,000</td>
<td>. . . .</td>
<td>. . . .</td>
<td>. . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>145,390,000</td>
<td>. . . .</td>
<td>. . . .</td>
<td>. . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>149,206,900</td>
<td>239,000,000</td>
<td>89,793,100</td>
<td>148,965,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>211,646,900</td>
<td>239,270,000</td>
<td>27,623,100</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>257,023,400</td>
<td>300,650,000</td>
<td>43,616,600</td>
<td>. . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>252,929,900</td>
<td>304,500,000</td>
<td>51,570,100</td>
<td>. . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>270,544,300</td>
<td>330,561,100</td>
<td>60,016,800</td>
<td>. . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>214,720,000</td>
<td>. . . .</td>
<td>. . . .</td>
<td>. . . .</td>
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<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>271,960,000</td>
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</table>
after the droughts of 1972 and 1973. According to the falsified figures, the average annual growth rate of grain production in Hsiyang from 1973 to 1977 was 8.4% while the correct figures give a rate of 16%. The latter rate was an outstanding record, well ahead of the national average of 1.7% for the same period. For the period of 1966-1977, the annual growth rate was 10.8% in comparison with the national average of about 2.6%. 107 Thus, even Jen-min jih-pao in reporting the falsified figures acknowledged that Hsiyang had made "relatively rapid progress" in agricultural production and obtained relatively large increases in grain yield.

This outstanding production record and the good yield in 1973 despite the drought make the falsification of the grain production figures rather puzzling. It is even more surprising in view of Ch'en Yung-kuei's repeated refusals in his early years as a secretary of Tachai party branch or head of the cooperative to exaggerate Tachai's claims, or even in view of the publicity to that effect because this publicity suggests that Ch'en realized the seriousness of falsification and the importance of accurate reporting. Yet the falsification of grain production figures is perfectly understandable as an element in the practice of using one national model in agriculture when the success or failure of the model is linked to the rise and fall of the political influence of its promoters. Not only did Hsiyang falsify its grain production figures, but also the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties contributed to the tendency on the part of a number of teams, brigades, communes, and counties to do so, because they could then stake out a claim to be recognized as advanced units in learning from Tachai and as Tachai-type units.

This sad episode also suggests that the pursuit of power can easily corrupt leaders from the grass roots who have sterling reputations for honesty. Hsiyang county in 1973 was not Tachai before 1964, for by then the movement to learn from Tachai had been drawn into the vortex of the politics of the Cultural Revolution. In August, 1973, Ch'en was elected a member of the Polit-
bureau. He had to maintain and enhance his prestige and reputation. Thus, the temptation to prove that Hsiyang could achieve "an unprecedented yield" despite an "unprecedented drought" was difficult to resist. Moreover, Ch'en had built up a system of personal political networks within Shansi and at the top of national politics. He may have believed that this system would be adequate to protect him from being discovered or at least from being attacked for falsifying the grain production figures. The falsified record was corrected only after Ch'en had been removed from his position of party secretary of the county and his political influence at the Party Center had progressively declined since his heydays in 1977.

But this episode in Hsiyang must be seen in the context of the nation-wide tendency for revolutionary zeal to overwhelm respect for facts which found expression in unrealistic targets, exaggerated claims of successes, outright lies, and clever cover-ups. It first raised its head in 1958, the first year of the Great Leap and it was resisted at that time by Ch'en in his capacity as a cadre at the grass roots. It again became a nation-wide affliction during the Cultural Revolution. But this time, it overcame Ch'en in his capacity as a rising party leader of national stature. Moreover, there was also a tendency to protect the reputation of a national model by covering up its mistakes and by giving it preferential treatment. Ch'en may have taken advantage of this tendency.

Had the falsification of the grain production figures by the county party committee adversely affected the livelihood of the peasants in Hsiyang, as a short comment by Hsü Hsun charged? This question cannot be answered by a visitor from abroad who was not given any information on the subject in his brief sojourn. But it is doubtful that it had been as satisfactorily answered as Hsü's comment asserted. In order to show that the falsification had an adverse effect, we must have evidence for one or more of the following assertions. First, the falsification led the state to increase its quota of grain purchased under the fixed price and thus lowered the amount of grains which the brigades could sell to the state at above-quota prices. But interviews in 1977
suggest that the state had not changed its purchase quotas in these years in the several brigades on which information was available. Second, the falsification led the county and the various brigades to sell so much grain to the state at whatever prices that they had to reduce the amount of grain distributed to the peasants. There is at present no evidence to support this assertion. Third, the falsification compelled the county and the brigades to lower the household incomes of the peasants or to put a lid on them to compensate for lost income resulting from the falsification. But the decision to put a lid of ¥1.30 on the work-day value of all brigades (except Tachai whose limit was ¥1.50) was made in 1971. Thus, the failure of the peasants' household incomes to keep pace with production increase in these years may have been the result of policy decisions and institutional arrangements adopted to enhance accumulation in the brigades and to promote economic equality among them.

(14) The "west-to-east water diversion" project

Since 1953, Tachai village achieved fame first within the county, then within the province, and finally throughout the nation largely as a result of a rapid increase in grain production made possible partly by an unprecedented mobilization of labor power and other resources to undertake basic farmland construction. In the 1960's, basic farmland construction took the form of projects to combine small parcels of land into larger pieces and to turn loess soil into what was known as "sponge-like fields." In 1970, Tachai brigade began its project of constructing "man-made plains" by razing the small mounds in the seven gullies to fill and level up the gullies themselves. In so doing, the "sponge-like fields" which had taken years of hard work to build were covered up by immature loess soil. Basic farmland construction included irrigation projects as a necessary component. With the acknowledged help of army units and other outside assistance, Tachai built a system of irrigation ditches and aqueducts to link
newly-built pools with the Kuochuang reservoir. In the early years, basic farmland construction was undertaken through the use of underemployed labor and locally available materials. The actual and opportunity costs were minor. But by the seventies, the costs had become very high. In 1976, Tachai's public accumulation reached 26.3% of its total gross income. Much of it was used in expanding production and basic farmland construction.111 In 1975 and 1976, the total investment in basic farmland construction and irrigation amounted to ¥ 120 for each individual at Tachai.112 Between 1955 and 1967, production costs had been around 20% of the total gross income, but by 1976, they had grown to 31.8%. Tachai leaders were well aware of the high costs. But they believed that long-term benefits, both economic and non-economic, would justify these large expenditures.113 Following Tachai's example, the other brigades also incurred high costs in their projects. The outstanding case was Nannao brigade which reclaimed 30 mu of land at a cost of ¥ 30,000, i.e., ¥ 1,000 per mu. It will take well over a decade to recoup this investment.

In trying to build up Hsiyang county, Ch'en Yung-kuei also relied on revolutionary zeal, particularly on labor mobilization. He was equally unconcerned about actual and opportunity costs. Acting on his instructions, one of his deputies in Hsiyang suggested to the provincial authorities in December, 1974, the idea of "west-to-east water diversion." This project involved the diversion of part of the water of the Hsiao River so that it would flow east to irrigate the land of five communes in Hsiyang county rather than following its natural course in flowing westward for the benefit of other counties. This idea was proposed after Ch'en had become a member of the Politbureau in August, 1973, and after the two consecutive years of serious drought in 1972 and 1973 had underscored as never before the importance of irrigation and water conservancy projects. At Ch'en's insistence and over the opposition of the Bureau of Water Conservancy of Shansi province, the party committee in May, 1975, approved the project and work on it began soon afterwards. It was to be completed in 1980.
After the Third Plenum, the State Council had adopted the policy of "readjustment" (i.e., a policy of economic and financial retrenchment in order to achieve balanced economic growth and to raise the income of the people), the Water Conservancy Bureau of Shansi proposed that the project be closed down. It was overruled by the provincial party committee as a result of Ch'en's opposition. It then proposed the postponement of the project. In January, 1980, at a time when Ch'en had been removed from his position as party secretary of Hsiyang and from his other positions within Shansi as well, the provincial party committee finally approved the proposal for postponement. But there was no publicity about the matter.

The establishment of the party secretariat at the Fifth Plenum in February, 1980, and the appointment of one of its members, Wan Li, to take charge of agriculture at once reflected and further accentuated the growing power of the reformers. The Party Center (most probably the newly established secretariat under Hu Yao-pang) and the State Council directly intervened in the question of the "west-to-east water diversion" in Hsiyang in addition to the problem of Tibet, the plan for the reconstruction of the nation's capital, and the question of responsibility for the sinking of an offshore oil-drilling rig. On June 15th, Jen-min jih-pao published for the first time in its pages a lengthy report on the decision of Shansi to postpone the "west-to-east water diversion" project. A strongly worded editorial entitled "Don't Ever Again Do Such Foolish Things Like the 'West-to-East Water Diversion'!" accompanied the dispatch. This was the opening salvo in a sharp escalation of attacks on the already dismantled Hsiyang model and on Ch'en Yung-kuei, although the indirect reference, "principal responsible comrade in Hsiyang county," was still not used in the first dispatch. Within a month, Jen-min jih-pao announced that the party group of the Bureau of Water Conservancy of Shansi recently decided to close down completely the project after it had studied the editorial of June 15th and its accompanying dispatch. On July 22nd, the Shansi party committee made a self-criticism of its approval of the various plans submitted by Hsiyang county.
To put the decision on the Hsiyang project in a proper perspective, one must also note that the authorities in Shansi had closed down or postponed thirteen large water conservancy projects in 1979 and six projects in 1980.118

The devastating attacks on the "west-to-east water diversion" project brought out two fundamental differences between Ch'en's Maoist approach and the reformists' basic outlook. First, Ch'en was severely criticized for having totally neglected the high actual and opportunity costs of his pet project. A report in Jen-min jih-pao asserted that according to the plans submitted by Hsiyang and approved by the provincial party committee, the completion of the project would have enabled Hsiyang to develop ¥ 72,000 mu of irrigated land and to improve 15,800 mu of existing irrigated fields for a total of about 90,000 mu. From May, 1975, to July, 1980, when the project was closed down, the provincial party committee had appropriated ¥ 92,000,000 for the project. So the estimated cost per mu of newly developed and improved irrigated land was more than ¥ 1,000 per mu. This estimate did not include most of the cost of 11,000,000 work-days in labor and of the conveyance system.119 It was far higher than the average cost of ¥ 500 per mu for turning dry land into irrigated fields in hilly areas in Shansi and ¥ 200-300 per mu in the plains.120

Moreover, the project could not be carried out according to schedule. At the end of 1979, one year before its planned completion date, only 38.3% of the project had been completed.121 Up to July, 1980, when it had been closed down, ¥ 51,000,000 of the appropriated funds of ¥ 92,000,000 had been spent. There had been cost overruns. According to the original estimate, the cost per mu was to be only ¥ 300, a figure well within the range of existing practice, in contrast to the final estimate of more than ¥ 1,000 per mu. Jen-min jih-pao noted that in 1978 and 1979, the province had appropriated for the project more than 10% of its total funds available for water conservancy projects. Considering the fact that there are 101 counties and seven munici-
palities in Shansi, one cannot but be impressed by the lion's share given to the Hsiyang project. A report in Jen-min jih-pao calculated the opportunity costs of the project and arrived at the conclusion that if the ¥ 51,000,000 already spent had been properly used, it would have enabled other areas in Shansi to increase their grain production more than thirty times the projected increase brought about by the Hsiyang project.122

The second major attack on Ch'en and his colleagues was related to another fundamental problem confronting China: the relationship between political power and expertise as embodied in the relationship between party leaders and technical personnel. The technical problems encountered by Tachai brigade in farmland construction in its early years were simple ones which were overcome without too much difficulty by the methods of trial and error used by the ingenious peasant cadres. But after he endeavored to develop Hsiyang county, Ch'en was confronted by complex technical problems and by opposition to his plans on technical grounds. Ch'en was strongly criticized for having used his political power and influence to overrule the repeated opposition of engineers to the project as well as their other suggestions to cut costs after their opposition had been overruled. Moreover, work on the project began before engineering plans had been completed—a feasible procedure in basic farmland construction in a small village like Tachai, but a totally unworkable method in large-scale, expensive, and difficult projects such as the "west-to-east water diversion" project. Ch'en and his colleagues were also accused of having repeatedly changed their minds over technical matters, allegedly because they did not have adequate technical knowledge. More importantly, Ch'en endeavored to increase the scale of his project during the construction period, disregarding questions of cost effectiveness and overlooking the potential serious damage to the irrigation projects and grain production in the counties to the west of Hsiyang. As Vice-Premier Wan Li neatly summed up the matter in a national meeting in October on water conservancy, all projects must be strictly designed according to the laws of
nature and economics; the views of scientists and engineers must be respected.\textsuperscript{123}

As Ch'en had been determined to push through his project in the face of opposition based on cost-benefit analysis and technical efficiency, he had had to resort to the arbitrary use of political power and to rely on his political network for support. Many of the engineers and officials in charge of technical matters were dismissed. Any opposition to the project was attacked as deviation from the correct ideological and political line. Thus, the two major errors were said to be related to Ch'en's "patriarchal rule," which was "a kind of feudal idea."\textsuperscript{124} After Ch'en had been relieved of all his positions in Shansi, the dismissed engineers and technicians were rehabilitated. Meanwhile, their positions in the governmental system had been undergoing a fundamental change. According to officials at the Water Conservancy Bureau in an interview in August, the engineering and technical personnel in the past could only make suggestions. Now, they are responsible for planning and design, and bear the responsibility which comes with their new authority. The Party now recognizes that technical problems cannot be resolved by administrative orders and that politics cannot interfere at will with technical decisions and certainly cannot decide everything.

The limitations imposed on agricultural development by the low level of scientific and technical knowledge of the leading cadres in Hsiyang and by the failure to utilize the best available specialists in engineering and water conservancy in the province were demonstrated in two other construction projects. In 1974, Hsiyang began work on a large reservoir in Paiyangyu commune in the southernmost part of Hsiyang. An elaborate and extensive network of irrigated ditches and aqueducts was constructed to channel the water to many brigades. While the system of irrigation ditches and aqueducts was beautifully and successfully built by the peasants, as all visitors travelling in that part of the country could see, no water was running through them to irrigate the fields when the growing maize needed it most. Because
the site had been selected without proper consideration for the geological formation and other factors, the reservoir did not hold much water. The investment was largely wasted. According to the retrospective account of officials in the Water Conservancy Bureau, the county had rushed headlong into action and mobilized the masses without authorization by the Bureau and without proper planning which took technical problems into account.

Another episode involved the most important reservoir in Hsiyang, the Kuochuang reservoir in the heart of the county. Work on this reservoir had begun in 1958 and was completed in early 1960. For a number of years, it served well several communes in the central and northern parts of Hsiyang. But a process of silting began. In 1976, the county started a project which included the use of a huge and powerful pump to draw the silt from the bottom of the reservoir at a strategic point. It was completed in 1980. But a re-examination of the project showed that it was built on a soft sand foundation. Its use would involve considerable risk that the reservoir would collapse at this strategic point. So a total of ¥2,000,000 had been wasted.

What ensued from this failure points to another aspect of the problem of utilizing scientific and technical knowledge to serve as a supposedly infallible guide for making policy. The use of uncertain knowledge to make decisions is an art which can only be learned over a prolonged period of time. Even then the vagaries of nature will still frequently confound the best man-made plans. The Kuochuang reservoir had originally been designed to hold 20,000,000 cubic meters of water. By 1980, however, its maximum capacity had declined to only 12,000,000 cubic meters, and the project to remove the silt and thus to improve its capacity had miscarried. In June, 1980, the reservoir had 8,000,000 cubic meters of water which could be used to irrigate a large area of farmland in case of drought. But in early July, the Central Water Station forecast that throughout July there would be heavy rainfall in the lower Yellow River region and that there might be floods in part of the region. This forecast occurred at a time when the
Hsiyang county committee had been studying the Jen-min jih-pao editorial on the question of the "west-to-east water diversion" project and had been engaged in self-criticism. Responding to the forecast and the political pressure to which it had been subjected in the past several years, the party committee organized a group to inspect some water conservancy projects. With regard to the Kuochuang reservoir, it made a decision which was to have disastrous consequences. In order to avoid the risk of overflowing or the collapse of the dam which would cause serious damage to the most fertile fields in Hsiyang, it decided to release 5,000,000 cubic meters of the water. But instead of heavy rainfall, Hsiyang experienced a serious drought up to mid-August, which was more devastating than that in 1972 and 1973. Of the remaining 3,000,000 cubic meters of water, half had to be retained to save the fish in the reservoir. Even if the fish were to be sacrificed, the total water supply would be only three-eighths of the amount available, had the project to remove the silt been properly constructed so that the 5,000,000 cubic meters of water did not need to be released. By mid-August, cadres in many communes believed that even if rain came soon, only 50% of their crops would be salvaged. This drought followed a poor harvest of winter wheat. Only 30% of the expected wheat yield had been harvested in some brigades. Thus, in the first year after the destruction of the Hsiyang model, the vagaries of nature combined with past and present mistakes to deal Hsiyang a devastating blow precisely at a time when new institutions and practices were being tried out and had to prove themselves.


In July, 1979, Hsiyang county began to change one by one the policies, practices, and institutions which it had adopted since 1967. In several areas, changes could, by this time, be made without much controversy.
First, the four traditional rural markets at the county seat, Yeht'ou, Kaolo, and Tienshang were reopened with peasants coming to trade twice every ten days as in the past. In addition, there was at Tuchuang a special trade fair for horses, donkeys, and mules. On August 1st, the anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army, a trade fair on an unprecedented scale was held at the county seat and lasted several days. The cadres conceded in 1980 that the rural markets were not attended by as many peasants as they had been prior to the Cultural Revolution. The special annual trade fair held in August, 1980, appeared less thriving with activities and transactions than a regular rural market town on an ordinary market day in Szechuan. Even so, the removal of many restrictions on rural trade and the staging of an annual trade fair marked a sharp reversal in policy.

The second change was the abandonment of the upper limit of ¥ 1.30 imposed on the work-day value and the "unwritten rule" that no other brigades should surpass Tachai in anything or at least that their superiority in any undertaking should not be popularized. In 1979, two brigades gave their members ¥ 2.00 for one work-day and another ten brigades adopted work-day values which were either equal to or above Tachai's ¥ 1.80.

Third, many small scale enterprises which had been transferred to the commune level were given back to the brigades. The small coal mine at Shihp'ing brigade was a prominent example.

Fourth, the brigades began to expand the scale of sideline production in existing or newly planned enterprises. For example, Hohsi brigade began to construct a small factory at a cost of ¥ 200,000 to produce compressed oxygen. Tachai itself planned to build a small distillery and a workshop to make wine, bean paste, and vinegar. These small enterprises are expected to increase the collective income of the brigades while the loss of labor power to agriculture will be compensated by the improvement of the work efficiency of the peasants under the new system of labor management.

Fifth, the system of "self-assessment and public
discussion" in the distribution of grain was abandoned in all brigades which had used it. In 1979, in Tachai itself, 70% of wheat and soybeans were distributed to its members as a basic ration (chi-pen k'ou-liang) while 30% was distributed according to the number of work-points received (kung-fen k'ou-liang). Millet was distributed to all persons above age seven. Two-thirds of the maize was distributed to everyone on an equal basis, but one-third was distributed to farm workers according to their total work-points. This change was a necessary corollary to the reopening of the rural market and the newly granted permission to sell grain. In comparing the present and past systems, several Tachai cadres noted that the present system spurred the peasants to work harder and was welcomed by households with many hands but caused households with few hands some difficulties. In short, they said that each system has its merits and flaws.

Sixth, various brigades adopted different policies toward collective pig raising. Tachai maintained its collective practice intact. But it now gave peasants permission to raise pigs as a sideline occupation and planned to give them small parcels of land to build pigsties. In Hohsi brigade, the collective pig-pens were kept but the number of privately-raised pigs grew rapidly. In another brigade, the number of privately-raised pigs doubled in 1979, while the number of collectively-raised pigs remained constant from 1977 to 1980. In Tungyeht'ou commune, thirty-three of the thirty-five brigades discontinued collective pig husbandry and sold all their pigs to individual households. The overall trend is toward private pig raising.

Seventh, former restrictions on raising chickens and animal husbandry were lifted and peasant households were encouraged to develop sideline production of all kinds.

But the fundamental change in Hsiyang and Tachai involved the internal structure of the brigade and the method of distributing rewards to the peasants. As the brigades in Hsiyang are relatively small with an average of approximately 550 persons per brigade, the county
party committee decided to retain the brigade as the basic accounting unit. As the new party secretary said in an interview, the basic problem lay not in the use of the brigade as the basic accounting unit, but in the internal structure of the brigade and the method of distributing rewards, or to be specific in the implementation of the "system of responsibility for farm production."

(b) The evolving system of labor management and the adjustment in relations of production in rural China: "the system of responsibility in farm production"

To understand the changes in Hsiyang and Tachai and put them in the national context, one must try to ascertain the meaning of the "system of responsibility for farm production." According to Beijing Review, the sixth of ten major events in 1980 in China was that "the Central Committee of the C.P.C. issued a document on strengthening and improving the system of responsibility for farm production." Unfortunately, this document cannot be found in the journals or newspapers published in China surveyed by us. So we must try to piece together available information in Chinese journals and newspapers to find out some concrete details about the system.

This term "responsibility system" (tse-jen chih) encompasses a wide variety of forms, because some of these forms emerged spontaneously in various localities and because the Party Center now encourages various brigades and teams to adopt those forms which are most suitable to their own levels of production, traditions, and strength or weakness of their leadership and organizational ability. What it definitely excludes is the system of "self-assessment and public discussion" in awarding work-points. It must also be distinguished from the system of "fixed [basic] work-points given inflexibly" to the peasants for putting in a day of work (shih-fen shih-chi or ti-fen shih-chi) as well as the system of basic work-points plus flexible appraisal (ti-fen huo-p'ing). These three systems of distributing rewards are believed to be ineffective in establishing a direct and visible link between work and compensation,
thus becoming a drag on the productivity of the individual peasants and making management of collective farming a matter of constantly issuing commands and frequent supervision.

The various forms of the "responsibility system" differ according to the degree of directness and effectiveness to which they link the individual peasant's reward and self-interest with his or her work, though obviously the latter question of effectiveness must be somewhat conjectural and subject to further examination. Some of these forms were developed as far back as the beginning of the movement to establish cooperatives in 1953. Others were used at one time or another in some localities since the establishment of the advanced agricultural producers' cooperatives in 1956-57. Still others are new. Some of these forms emerged or re-emerged spontaneously at the grass-roots level since 1977 and were later authorized by the authorities at the county, provincial, and national levels at different times.

These forms of the "responsibility system" can be classified in a number of ways, but basically they involve two logical components. One of these pertains to the way in which individuals are remunerated for their labor within any relevant group that shares an assigned task or tasks. The second involves the level of assignment of responsibilities for production and the methods for regulating the assignment and concomitant economic exchanges between the assigning body (usually the production team and, in a small number of case, the brigade) and the relevant responsible group or party (i.e., a single household or an individual).

In reference to the methods of individual remuneration for labor, the first form to be practiced on a large scale and officially promoted after Mao's death was the awarding of work-points to a peasant according to fixed work-quotas (ting-o chi-kung). For example, a peasant who transplants rice seedlings in one mu of land earns a specific number of work-points. In many places, there are roughly 300 different quotas for agricultural production activities. Thus, the "basic work-point" is eliminated, and "task-rate" is in effect substituted.
This system was first officially authorized and sanctioned in Anhwei in November, 1977, although it had been used in various parts of China without much publicity. It is also known as **ting-o chi-ch'ou** and **ting-o pao-kung**. In a refinement of this system, fixed work-quotas can also be assigned to a series of tasks related to each other at one time or in a series of steps. This is known as "**hsiao-tuan pao-kung, ting-o chi-ch'ou**." A system of management using one or both of the methods described above is called management by fixed quota (**ting-o kuan-li**). At the end of 1980, this system was used in 50% of the teams in China.

The "responsibility system" implies that production responsibilities will be assigned by a larger collective unit to a smaller subgroup or party. There are three possible levels of subdividing responsibilities for production tasks depending on the size of the subgroup. The first level involves the division of a production team into work-groups. This division into work-groups makes the collective unit of responsibility smaller and is an important first step in relating work performance and rewards more directly (in addition to reforms in individual labor remuneration procedures), in making supervision more intimate and easier, and in ameliorating the problem of the "free ride."

At this level, there are three subtypes. The first subtype operates in the following manner. The production team can define for a work-group its task (output quota), the standard of quality of its produce, and the time limit in which the task is to be completed. In return, the team gives a specific number of work-points to a work-group for the completion of this task according to the specifications. The work-group will distribute the total work-points received to its individual members either by an appraisal of their work performance or according to the fixed work-quota which they have fulfilled. This subtype is called "**one work-group with four specifications**" (**yi-tsu szu-ting**). Under this system, the peasants' reward is linked with output, although still quite indirectly.

In the second subtype, the relationship between the production team and its work-groups undergoes an important
change, incorporating an element essentially the same as that used in the system of san-pao yi-chiang adopted in some of the advanced cooperatives and later during the last two years of agricultural crisis in 1960 and 1961. This element is the provision of bonus and penalty for the over-fulfillment or non-fulfillment of the obligations specified in an agreement or contract between the team and the work-groups. The number and content of these obligations vary from place to place. A common form is szu-ting yi-chiang (four specifications and one bonus).

Under this system, the work-group guarantees the fulfillment of a fixed quota of agricultural output at a fixed cost while the team assigns a fixed number of workers to the group and promises to give the group a fixed number of work-points. If the group obtains a higher yield than its output target (presumably staying within the limit of cost), it will get a bonus; but if it fails to reach the target, it will have to pay a penalty. The bonus or penalty is calculated in terms of the percentage of above-target yield or shortfall, but the percentage given to the work-group as a bonus is always higher than the percentage of shortfalls paid by the work-group as a penalty. Bonuses can be as high as 80% or 70% while the penalty can be as low as 20% to 30%. In case of drought or flood, the penalty is usually waived or reduced, depending on the seriousness of the natural disaster.

In spite of the division of the team into work-groups, the team remains the basic accounting unit. It adopts a unified production plan for the whole team. It allocates labor power among the work-groups. It fixes the work-day value or the work-point value for the whole team on the basis of the value of agricultural products (which are handed over by work-groups) after deducting taxes, expenditures, accumulation funds, welfare funds, and other levies. It gives the bonuses or penalties to each work-group by increasing or decreasing the work-day value of the members of that particular work-group. Thus the system of unified distribution of rewards by the team is preserved. The relationship between the work-group and
the individual peasants is governed by one or the other method of ting-o kuan-li mentioned above, or both in various combined forms. In some localities, this second subtype is called fixing output quotas for each work-group (pao-ch'an tao-tsu).

In the third subtype, all above-target yields belong to the work-group while all shortfalls must be made good by the group from its grain reserve and that of its members.

The fourth subtype, to which the term pao-ch'an tao-tsu is also applied, is more accurately called in some localities "contract work in a big way" (ta pao-kan) by the work-group. The most publicized case of a county using this form is Fengyang, Anhwei, which has long been known for its poverty. In this specific case, a contract is concluded between a team and each of its work-groups. A work-group guarantees to fulfill the production plan, the quotas of farm and sideline products to be sold to the state, and the duties to turn over certain amounts of accumulated funds and other levies to the team. After having discharged these obligations, the work-group retains all other produce for distribution among its members. But it must also make good all shortfalls. Although the team provides guidelines for the distribution of rewards by the work-groups among the members, unified distribution which obtains in the second and third subtypes is presumably not practiced.

Fengyang began to use this system in 1978, without the official sanction of the Party Center, but with the support of the party secretary of the county. In 1979, 83% of the teams in that county adopted this system. In 1980, 93% did so. The distribution of rewards by a work-group to its members is still handled either under the system of appraisal of work done or under the system awarding work-points according to fixed work-quotas.

Devolving production responsibility to the level of the work-groups below the production team has generally gone by the designation of pao-kung tao-tsu or pao-ch'an tao-tsu (fixing work-or-production quotas for each work-group). It should be recalled that both the draft document on the acceleration of agricultural development
adopted by the Third Plenum in December, 1978, and the definitive document adopted by the Fourth Plenum in September, 1979, permitted almost as an aside the adoption of the first two subtypes but was silent on the third and the fourth. But toward the end of 1980, all four subtypes were promoted by the authorities and widely used in various parts of the country.

Pao-ch’an tao-tsu represents another step toward a more direct and effective linkage between an individual peasant's reward and self-interest and his work. But in various localities, this linkage is still considered not sufficiently direct. Moreover, if team management is not strong enough, the work-groups become in effect small teams, assuming all the functions of the team, and the original team is, for all practical purposes, divided into several small teams.

Hence in some localities, the number of teams using the system of pao-ch’an tao-tsu decreases as time goes by and the responsibility is devolved to still lower levels: the household and individual.

In this development, production tasks are assigned to the household; and production and payment arrangements are made with it. This is the second level of the devolution of responsibility. It is known as the fixing of farm output quotas for each household or the household production contract, pao-ch’an tao-hu. There are three subtypes at this level. Under the first, output quotas for only specific kinds of produce are assigned to the household. Under the second, all the lands belonging to a team and the output quotas for all farm produce are assigned to households. Under both of these subtypes, the team still retains its function of unified accounting and unified distribution. Presumably, a system of bonuses and penalties is used. Under the third, the household retains all its produce after paying taxes and selling its grain to the state under the system of unified purchase and after handing over to the team its share of "collective accumulation" and welfare funds, and other levies. This is known as contract work by the household, pao-kan tao-hu, which is also called ta pao-kan but which must not be confused.
with *ta pao-kan* by the work-group. *Ta pao-kan* by either the work-group or the household is based on the same principle of incentive (similar to that contained in the agricultural tax system that freezes obligations at fixed amounts of produce calculated in terms of the low yields of the early 1950's): the fixed floor of obligation is an inspiration to produce as much as possible above that amount. The government recognizes that this subtype seems to be a step backward from the system used in the advanced agricultural producers' cooperatives. But it stresses that this can bring into play the activism of the peasants and encourage them to cultivate their land meticulously and to get a greater yield.\(^{138}\) Twenty percent of the teams throughout China use one of these three subtypes of fixing output quotas for each household,\(^{139}\) a practice which was used in some localities in China during the three years of agricultural crisis but which was banned and condemned from 1964 to late 1977 and 1978.

*Pao-ch'an tao-hu* was at first used in places where the peasant households belonging to a team are scattered widely in relatively poor hilly regions.\(^{140}\) But there has been a tendency for this form to spread in areas where teams were badly managed or led, peasants were very poor, and agricultural production stagnated. This tendency has not only been permitted but also encouraged by the government in some provinces. In Funan county in Anhwei province, more than 70% of the teams have adopted this system. A two-part dispatch in *Jen-min jih-pao* gave strong endorsement to the widespread use of this system in five districts in Anhwei, Honan, and Shantung. Through the mouths of the local authorities or in their own words, three correspondents of the Hsinhua news agency asserted that, of all forms of the responsibility system, *pao-ch'an tao-hu* establishes the most direct link with the peasants' interests, makes their responsibility most concrete, and represents the easiest method to use. For these reasons, it was very appealing to peasants living under straitened circumstances. It sprang up spontaneously in 1979 in these five districts. In 1980, it spread rapidly and has become a major form of the "responsibility system" there.\(^{141}\)
In a commune in Chiashan county in this region, some single households, some groups of three or four households, and some work-groups used their own savings to purchase walking tractors. Thus, this important and most expensive farm implement used at the lowest level is privately owned. In one case in province, a production team adopted in 1980 the system of pao-ch'an tao-chu but supplemented it with an allocation of some of its lands to the households for them to produce their grain rations.

The third level of assignment that has appeared in recent experiments with the "responsibility system" is the fixing of an output quota for a single farm worker, pao-ch'an tao-lao. An example of this form was given in Jen-min jih-pao. A team in Shensi had only sixteen households, a population of sixty-four, twelve male farm workers, and eight female farm workers. Its 310 mu of cultivated land were divided in 1979 into eight parts. Eight experienced male farm workers were selected to cultivate one of the eight parts of land under a contract. Each farm worker was obligated to produce 6,500 jin of grain for the collective (i.e., 168 jin per mu). Everything produced above this quota belonged to him but he also had to make up for all shortfalls from his private reserve. The other farm workers were assigned other kinds of specific jobs such as raising goats and basic farmland construction.

One variant of pao-ch'an tao-lao is known as lien-ch'an tao-lao. A description of this system was reported in Jen-min jih-pao. Of the 370,000 teams in Honan, 60% have adopted this system. According to these reports, this system has a dual advantage. On the one hand, it preserves the integrity of the team as the basic accounting unit, without any division into work-groups. On the other hand, it links the individual peasant's reward most directly and effectively to his work. The team undertakes unified planning, unified tilling of the land, unified investment, and unified allocation and employment of labor, draft animals, and farm machinery and tools of large and medium sizes. All farm tasks which are not easy for the individual peasant to do are done by the
team which organizes persons with specialized skills or small groups to undertake these tasks. These tasks include ploughing, harrowing, raking the soil, building ridges for vegetable gardens, sowing, irrigating the fields, insect control, nursing seedlings, and basic farmland construction. The daily management of the field throughout the year is assigned to individual farm workers. Each farm worker is held responsible for managing a specific sector of the land for one to three years. He is obligated to fulfill the production quota which is generally fixed on the basis of the year before this system goes into effect. He is provided with a fixed amount of chemical fertilizer, insecticides, seeds, and other material inputs. He is given a fixed number of work-points for the accomplishment of his tasks. But there is also a provision for bonus for over-fulfillment of the production quota and penalty for non-fulfillment. The system under which the farm worker retains all the above-quota yield and pays the full penalty for the shortfall has gradually replaced the system under which he retains only a proportion of the above quota-yield and pays the penalty for only a proportion of the shortfall. In case of natural disaster, bonuses and penalties are calculated in terms of readjusted production quotas in the light of the seriousness of its effects. This system has been clarified and stabilized after the Party Center's directive on the "responsibility system" in rural areas was sent down in 1980. The important article by the commentator of Jen-min jih-pao suggests that this system is most suitable for those communes and teams which are neither too poor nor too rich.146

In Tibet alone, the peasants in isolated areas who are confronted with great difficulties are permitted to "go it alone" (tan kan). Under this subtype, an individual household has no obligation toward the collective unit. It owns its means of production and bears the responsibility for its own losses and profits.147

As we move down the levels of the responsibility system, beginning with the case in which teams still manage production and pay workers according to the
"ting-o" system, to the various subtypes of work-group responsibility, and then to the levels of the household, and finally to the level of the individual worker, the linkage between individual efforts and rewards would appear to be progressively more direct and visible. (This point is somewhat obscured at the household level since household management of internal work and pay relations becomes a more private matter; the link between individuals within the household and household management of the responsibility system would need further examination.) In addition, the subject of responsibility moves from the team to the individual at the lowest level, and the peasant's planning initiative and individual incentives are more heavily relied upon. But there is the risk of weakening the collective unit and neglecting collective undertakings including water conservancy and public welfare. In extreme cases, there is the danger of simply dividing the land and collectively-owned machinery and tools among the households. These problems are noted in the press. Measures are undertaken to solve them as in the case of the system used in Honan.

There remains one version of the responsibility system which cuts across the logical scheme described above since it involves specialized work that is available for assignment to any of the three levels mentioned above, utilizing a contract system involving rewards and penalties. This system is known as chuan-yeh ch'eng-pao, lien-ch'ang chi-ch'ou (contract work for specialized tasks, linkage of rewards to yields). Under this system, special tasks in farming, forestry, animal tending and husbandry, fishery, sideline production, and industry and commerce that require specialized skills are assigned to a special work-group, a household, or an individual. A contract is concluded between them and the team with provisions for bonuses for exceeding the contractual obligations and penalties for failure to meet them. A simple example of this system is the assignment of milk production by several cows to a household. In more economically developed localities, there is a tendency for the teams to make the transition from using the system of contract work for a small number of related tasks to the system of chuan-yeh ch'eng-pao, lien-ch'an chi-ch'ou.
One of the frequently used forms of the "responsibility system" seems to combine szu-ting yi-chiang and ting-o chi-ch'ou or hsiao-tuan pao-kung, ting-o chi-ch'ou. The former is used to regulate the relationship between the team (or brigade) and its work-groups. The latter is used to regulate the relationship between the responsible level and its individual working members. Work-groups, households, and single individuals doing specialized work under contract with the team or brigade can exist together in a single team or brigade. They are used to supplement work-groups organized for ordinary farm work under the szu-ting yi-chiang system.

In such work as basic farmland construction and water-conservancy projects, a system of individual remuneration sometimes considered marginal to the "responsibility system" is still frequently used. This is the system of p'ing-kung ch'i-fen. Sometimes, even ti-fen huo-p'ing is used. There are attempts to use the "ting-o" system in this kind of work. But the systems of ti-fen shih-chi and "self-assessment and public discussion" (tzu-pao kung-yi) are vigorously attacked as contributing to low labor productivity and difficulties in labor management.

(c) Labor management in Hsiyang since 1979

In 1979, all the brigades in Hsiyang used for at least part of their farm work the systems of awarding work-points to peasants according to fixed work-quotas, locally called ting-o pao-kung. According to several cadres in Tachai, this system was adopted for harvesting autumn crops in 1979. As a result, Tachai peasants spent ten days less than in former years to complete that task. Moreover, Tachai was able to dispense with the help which had been given in the past by employees from the county seat. Similar stories were told in several other brigades visited. But at the end of the year, Tachai brigade still used the system of "self-assessment and public discussion" except for the work done during the fall harvest. In 1980, it decided to abandon completely the system of "self-assessment and public discussion" which had been first adopted in 1963. Thus, this famous innovation is now a thing of the past.
Within Hsiyang county, there were 419 brigades in 1980, four more than in 1979, and eight more than in 1976. With a few exceptions, all the brigades are divided into several teams which are roughly equivalent in function to the work-groups described in the above scheme for the whole nation. With a few exceptions, the brigades, not the teams, are the basic accounting units. For large brigades, the teams are further divided into work-groups. Of the 419 brigades, 247 brigades (59%) adopted in 1980 the system of szu-ting yi-chiang, under which each brigade assigns to its teams a fixed amount of land and labor on the one hand and a fixed target of yields in both quantity and quality and a target of investment or cost on the other with a provision for a bonus of 40%, 60%, 70%, or 80% of above-quota yields and a penalty of 40%, 30%, or 20% of shortfalls. Thirty-five brigades (8%) have adopted the system of ta pao-kan under which all above-target yields will belong to their work-groups. One hundred and one brigades (24%) have adopted a system of linking the yields of the teams to the work-points given by the brigade to the teams. For example, a team will be given ten work-points for producing a certain amount of grain. Thirty-six brigades (9%) have adopted a system under which the team will hand over to the brigade a fixed amount of its profits, its share of public welfare funds, its share of grain reserves, and a certain amount of grain for special use by the brigade. After having discharged these duties, the team keeps all its produce. The various brigades also have specialized work-groups and specialized households for such tasks as forestry, coal mining, raising oxen, etc. The county authorities hope that in a few years 30% of the rural population will become members of specialized households or specialized work-groups. They also plan to open up the mountain slopes to the peasants, to give each peasant a number of mu, and to allow him to keep whatever can be produced.

The division of the brigade into teams began in early 1979 after the draft document adopted by the Third Plenum in December, 1978, had been sent down. Of the
eight brigades visited in 1980, seven were divided into production teams and used the system of szu-ting yi-chiang, which was conceded by the cadres to be essentially the same as the once-condemned system of san-pao yi-chiang. Tachai did not adopt the system until early 1980. The eighth brigade, Kauchialing, was a small village with 306 persons and served also as the site of the experimental farm for Tachai commune. It was not divided into teams even in 1980. Nor were four other small brigades in Tachai commune.

Interviews with the leading cadres in all three other communes visited--Kaolo, Santu, and Lichiachuang--suggest that a majority of the brigades there have been divided into teams and used the system of szu-ting yi-chiang in their relations with the teams. For purposes of illustration, let us give a more detailed account of three brigades, Wuchiap'ing, Ch'ingyenti (in Kaolo commune), and Tachai, which are different from each other in some respects. Wuchiap'ing is a large brigade with a population of 1,315 persons. In early 1979, the brigade decided to set up seven specialized work-groups totalling seventy-seven persons for mining coal, forestry, making bricks, manufacturing explosives, operating tractors and other machinery, raising vegetables, and raising pigs. The rest of the population was grouped into four production teams for farming, each with approximately 300 persons and more than forty male and female full-time and part-time workers. Teams were further subdivided into work-groups with about fifteen farm workers each. In describing the relationship between the brigade and the four teams, the leading cadres in Wuchiap'ing openly called it by its old name san-pao yi-chiang (three guarantees and one bonus, i.e., a labor-production-cost contract with rewards and penalties) and szu-ku-ting ("four fixed specifications," i.e., fixed quantities of land, labor, draft animals, and farm tools assigned by the brigade for the use of the teams). If a team obtains a yield above the agreed target of production, 40% of the above-quota yield will be retained by the team and 60% will be handled over to the brigade. This stands in contrast to the system used from 1966 to 1978 under
which all produce had to be given to the brigade for unified distribution. The team assigns work-quotas to the work-group and a specific number of work-points for their fulfillment. There is no provision for bonuses or penalties. In turn, the work-group assigns work-quotas with attached work-points to the individual peasants. For some agricultural work, e.g., farmland construction, to which this method is difficult to apply, the system of awarding work-points after appraising work performance is used instead of the system of work-quotas. This appraisal is not done by "self-assessment and public discussion" and "political consciousness" is no longer taken into account. It takes place within the team, not the brigade, in a meeting attended by its members.

At the end of 1979, the work-day value for the whole Wuchiap'ing brigade before the awarding of bonuses and the imposition of penalties was set at ¥ 1.60. Table II shows how the system of bonuses and penalties worked. The table shows that all of the bonus was applied directly to distributed income through increases in the work-day value. (For example, in the second team the ¥ 760 bonus divided by the 15,030 work-days comes to almost exactly ¥ .05, which, added to the base work-day value for the brigade of ¥ 1.60, results in the team's work-day value of ¥ 1.65.) Nevertheless, despite this direct connection between bonus and remuneration, the system of fixed quotas with bonuses and penalties does not seem to have provided a significant new incentive for greater efforts in production. Total grain production in Wuchiap'ing increased 6.4% in 1979 over 1978, but this was largely due to very good weather and to the fact that 1978 was not a particularly good year (itself only 2.4% over 1977). The brigade's base work-day value of ¥ 1.60 in 1979 was only 14% above the 1978 figure of ¥ 1.40, despite the fact that the state procurement price for grain had risen by 20% in 1979. The inequality among the teams in distributed income (as measured by the work-day value) occasioned by the new responsibility system was marginal, though it may have stood as a warning for the future to teams which do not make efforts to raise production commensurate with other teams. The evidence suggests, in
Table II
The System of "Four Specifications and One Bonus" in Wuchiap'ing, 1979

A. Fixed Targets for All Four Teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Work-days</th>
<th>Fixed Production Target</th>
<th>Fixed Cost*</th>
<th>Fixed Labor Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15,000 for each team</td>
<td>920 jin per mu for the approximately 500 mu assigned to each team</td>
<td>The brigade granted each team ¥ 13-14 per mu to be spent on seeds, fertilizer, insecticide, etc.</td>
<td>40-odd able-bodied farm workers and semi-able-bodied farm workers. Labor power was fixed on the basis of the assumption that one able-bodied farm worker or his equivalent in semi-able-bodied farm workers was responsible for 14 mu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Fulfillment or Non-fulfillment of Targets With Bonuses and Penalties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>No. of Work-days</th>
<th>Production Target</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Fixed Labor Power</th>
<th>Work-day Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>15,030</td>
<td>Slightly below target, but the difference was so small</td>
<td>No underdraft or overdraft</td>
<td>As planned</td>
<td>¥ 1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Yield</td>
<td>Surpassed the target</td>
<td>Penalty or Bonus</td>
<td>Price</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>15,030</td>
<td>by a total of 18,000 jin. 40% of the above-quota yield was given as a bonus or ¥ 760 in cash.**</td>
<td>¥ 1.65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>14,600</td>
<td>by a total of 6,868 jin. ¥ 290 was given as a bonus.</td>
<td>¥ 1.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>15,030</td>
<td>by a total of 5,684 jin. ¥ 240 was given as a bonus.</td>
<td>¥ 1.61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The fixed cost does not include the various costs incurred by the whole brigades or miscellaneous costs incurred by the teams themselves.

**The figures show that the bonuses in this heavily maize-producing region are being calculated at a rate of ¥0.106 per jin, which corresponds almost exactly to the official state procurement price for number two yellow corn of ¥ 0.1072 as of 1979. The price figure is from U.S. Department of Agriculture, Asia Branch, International Economics Division, Economics, Statistics and Cooperatives Service, People's Republic of China Agricultural Situation, Review of 1979 and Outlook for 1980 (Washington, D.C.: Department of Agriculture).
short, that either because of its novelty or its specific features (or some combination of both), the system of fixed work-quotas with bonuses and penalties did not do much to spur incentives and production in its first year of operation in Wuchiap'ing brigade.

Thus, the cadres of the brigade were considering two alternatives for 1981. The first was to replace the present system with the system of ta pao-kan, under which all above-target yields would be retained by the team. This would be a rather drastic measure for Wuchiap'ing. The second was to apply the present system to regulate the relationship between the work-groups and the team. As the work-group was three times smaller than the team, the linkage between the efforts of the individual peasants and their rewards would be more visible to the peasants. In other words, the guiding idea that the peasants must be given greater material incentives would be pushed one step further.

The second case was cited by top county officials as a sterling example of their success in implementing the new system and of the virtue of making the units in the responsibility system as small as possible without destroying the brigade as an accounting unit. Ch'ing-yenti brigade in Kaolo commune had in 1980 a population of 530, which was slightly larger than Tachai's. But it had 1,374 mu of cultivated land, while Tachai had only 846 mu. In 1979, the system of szu-ting yi-chiang was implemented to govern the relationship between the brigade and the two teams plus one work-group into which the brigade was divided. The work-group consisted of only five households with 28 persons, five male farm workers and four female farm workers. The members of all the households are kin, with the common surname of Chu. The male heads of three of the five households are brothers. All five households live closely together in a small hollow some distance from the highway. This natural unit, known traditionally as Chuchiachuang, is surrounded by 137 mu of terraced fields which are separated by topographic features from the fields cultivated by other teams. These 137 mu of land were assigned by the brigade to be cultivated by
these five households. Thus, the cultivated land per person amounted to 4.9 mu in comparison with the average of 2.4 mu per person for the other two teams. In 1979, Chuchiachuang obtained a yield of 103,483 jin of grain in comparison with 70,000 jin in 1978 (a year of bad weather) and 90,000 jin in 1975. Table III summarizes the quotas and actual figures for 1979. The above-quota income less the cost overrun comes to a surplus income of ¥ 1,948.13. For reasons which elude us, but which may be related to the diversion of some of the surplus to cover Chuchiachuang's own production costs or accumulation, only ¥ 1,696.59 was made available for distribution in the form of an increment to the work-day value. At the time Chuchiachuang was visited, the policy of distributing only 60% of the surplus income (or ¥ 1,017.95) was in effect, so Chuchiachuang's work-day value for each of the 2,639 work-days was increased (over the brigade base of ¥ 1.40) by ¥ 0.38 to ¥ 1.78. In comparison, the bonuses for the first and second teams were respectively ¥ 0.01 and ¥ 0.02. A change in bonus policy, under which all of the surplus income would be distributed, was being considered at the time; if implemented, the remaining 40% (or ¥ 0.25 per work-day) was slated to be returned by the brigade to the work-group for distribution, bringing Chuchiachuang's work-day value to ¥ 2.03. Whatever the outcome, county authorities decided as a further reward for Chuchiachuang's strong efforts in production to build a power line to supply it with electricity; the peasants there were talking about purchasing television sets.

Though we cannot answer it fully, we can now pose the question of the successful operation of the new responsibility system (at least in terms of the stated goal of spurring production) in Chuchiachuang compared with the other two teams in Ch'ingyenti brigade as well as with Wuchiap'ing brigade. The differences were probably related to the differences in settlement patterns, specifically that Chuchiachuang, an isolated grouping of only five households, is far smaller and more compact than the teams in the Ch'ingyenti or Wuchiap'ing brigades. One goal of the new policies on rural organization and management is to increase the
## TABLE III
Quotas and Actual Figures Under the System of "Four Specifications and One Bonus" in Chuchiachuang, 1979

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Costs borne by the brigade*</th>
<th>Work-days</th>
<th>Income Target**</th>
<th>Cultivated land (mu)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quotas</td>
<td>¥ 1,488.50</td>
<td>3,300</td>
<td>¥ 8,207.00</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year-end account</td>
<td>¥ 1,913.60</td>
<td>2,693</td>
<td>¥ 10,580.23</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>¥ 425.10</td>
<td>-607</td>
<td>¥ 2,373.23</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These costs include only seeds, fertilizer, insecticides, and a few minor items.

** The income target represents the income to be achieved by the work-group after it has repaid the brigade for the costs borne by the brigade (¥ 1,488.50) and has handled over to the brigade the work-group's contribution to the brigade's public accumulation fund, welfare fund, agricultural taxes, and other levies.
directness of the link between effort and reward by reducing the size of the collective units. Such smaller units are far better suited to the historical context and human-geographic environment of Chuchiachuang. The contrast with Wuchiap'ing may also have something to do with the relatively higher level of collective institutions, practices, and social relations there; Wuchiap'ing was, after all, the first brigade in Hsiyang to emulate Tachai.

At the end of 1979, Tachai fell into line and proceeded to divide into production teams. According to one cadre in Tachai, even Ch'en Yung-kuei agreed with the plan. In March, 1980, the arrangement was completed. The brigade was divided into three teams with an equal number of farm workers of equal capacity for work on each team. All brigade members were first classified into groups according to the basic work-points which they had earned for each day of work in 1979, ranging from 5.5 to 10 work-points. They were assigned to one of the three teams by lot. Three young peasants, aged 27, 32, and 37, were selected among seven candidates as heads of the teams. One of the three, a party member, had served as the head of the agricultural science section for several years. He and another team leader are party members, while the third is not. Meanwhile, the revolutionary committee had been reorganized into a management committee of thirteen members. A young man in his thirties, who was a candidate for party membership and who was therefore not a member of the party branch, was selected as the head of the brigade replacing Liang Pien-liang, who as a 16-year-old boy had joined Ch'en's first mutual aid team in 1946 and who was now 50 years old and not in the best of health. But the party branch had not been reorganized at the time. Thus, there was a greater degree of separation between the management unit and the party branch than in the past.

The system of "four specifications and one bonus" (szu-ting yi-chiang) was adopted to govern the relationship between the brigade and the team. In addition, specialized work-groups were set
up under the direct supervision of the brigade to handle forestry, animal husbandry, vegetable gardens, and sideline production. Seventy-odd male and female farm workers were assigned to these specialized work-groups, with the remaining 120 farm workers divided among the three production teams. A system of bonus and penalty was also applied to the specialized work-groups. Thus, Tachai reverted to the system which had been used at one time or another before 1960. Although the re-establishment of a system eliminated twenty years ago was the result of the decision to keep in step with the Party Center, several cadres in Tachai, particularly those directly responsible for production, conceded that this revived system made labor management easier because of the reduction in the size of the management unit and the more obvious linkage between reward and the work done by the peasants. A team is now managed by a team leader, a deputy team leader, and four work-point recorders.

As for the method by which the team pays the peasants for work done, Tachai cadres still find the system of payment by fixed work-quotas, which had been abolished for all farm work in 1963, difficult to implement, although they now adopted it again for several kinds of farm work, for example, hoeing, applying fertilizer, and harvesting. But for a majority of farm work, the system of granting work-points after appraising work performance continued to be used. The basic work-points for a peasant were still to be decided once a year, but in a meeting of the members of the team rather than the brigade. In describing this system, the cadres gave the impression that it was essentially the system of "fixed [basic] work-points [for a person] plus flexible appraisal [of work done]" (shih-fen huo-p'ing). But the system of "self-assessment and public discussion" using political consciousness as one of the four criteria for determining work-points was definitely abandoned after it had been applied to all kinds of farm work for seventeen years. Tachai cadres recognized that they had to implement the principle of distributing income according to work
done, as decreed by the Party Center. But they did see the negative implications of the new system of fixed work-quotas and of appraising work performance. They noted that households without adequate labor power and old, sick, weak, and crippled peasants would be adversely affected although they themselves would have a higher income at the end of the year. It is clear that the original system had enjoyed strong support among the peasants in Tachai and that even those with physical strength and technical skills had internalized the attitude of looking at the interests of the village as a whole rather than considering their own self-interests exclusively.

In contrast to Tachai, all the other brigades and communes visited used the system of giving work-points according to fixed work-quotas in a majority of farm work. In Tungyeht'ou and Lichiachuang commune, it was applied to 80% of all farm work. In Santu brigade, the system of giving work-points after an appraisal of work done (p'ing-kung chi-fen) was replaced completely by the system of giving work-points according to fixed work-quotas (ting-o chi-kung) and another system which involved the use of work-quotas plus bonuses and penalties.

(d) Returning private plots to individual cultivation

Tachai cadres also encountered difficulty in implementing the Party Center's policy of giving private plots back to the peasants to cultivate themselves. In early 1980, the brigade cadres decided to do this. But the members of the brigades refused to accept their private plots and the responsibility of cultivating the private plots was taken over by the teams. Three explanations were given for the peasants' refusal. One was that the peasants had lost the habit of cultivating private plots which had been collectivized in 1963. Another was that the peasants were supplied with adequate amounts of vegetables and grain at low prices by the brigade and did not want to incur the trouble of cultivating private plots. For example, the prices of tomatoes and green onions were fixed by the brigade.
at half the official prices which were in turn lower than market prices. Third, the work-day value of the brigade is high. Working on private plots may not produce as great an income as spending the same amount of time in collective farm work. Still, Tachai cadres decided that after the fall harvest in 1980, they would try once more to return private plots to the peasants. Obviously, they were under strong pressure to keep in step with the Party Center.

Similar sentiments were expressed by cadres in several other brigades and communes. Kaolo commune cadres decided to return private plots to the peasants in early 1979. Twenty percent of the peasant households did not want to take them back, some because of a lack of labor power and others because of the trouble involved in cultivating the plots. It was only in the second year that all peasant households took them back. Many cadres themselves were not enthusiastic about receiving their own private plots because they were too busy with managing the collective units to have much free time to do other things. In many of the units visited, the cadres conceded that the private plots were less well managed than the collective fields and the yields were lower, although the land given back as private plots was slightly above average in quality: i.e., class two and class three lands according to the grading of land into five classes in terms of fertility and productivity.

A comparison with Szechuan (where private plots in most places had never been abolished, have been enlarged since 1977 and now constitute about 10% of the cultivated land) suggests why the private plots in Hsiyang produced a lower yield than the collectivized fields. In Szechuan, the land is fertile and rainfall is sufficient; many crops and agricultural products (like bamboo) grow with relatively less time, effort, and fertilizer than is required in Hsiyang, where the land is poor in quality and irrigation is still a serious problem. Under these conditions, peasants in Hsiyang prefer collective cultivation because of the greater availability of needed inputs from the collective. (A similar argument was made by cadres in Shulu county, on the North China plain in Hopei, which falls between
Hsiyang and Szechuan in natural endowment and is far less collectivist in its political orientation than Hsiyang. But despite the Hsiyang peasants' relative unwillingness to cultivate private plots individually (rooted in their relatively lower capacity to do so successfully given their natural setting), county authorities are still promoting individual cultivation of the plots. A total of 5.3% of the cultivated land had been given back to the peasants. This percentage is just slightly above the lower limit of the 5% to 7% of cultivated land which is to be used for private plots according to the stipulation of the draft document of sixty articles adopted on December 23, 1978. County officials expressed the hope that the peasants would regain the habit of cultivating private plots and that their uncertainty about the future of the private plots would be overcome in time. Apparently, they were trying very hard to implement the Party Center's policies.

(e) **The sale of collective housing to individual households**

In Tachai, difficulties have also been encountered in the attempt to sell collectively-built cave dwellings and row houses to individual households. These cave dwellings and row houses had been given to the peasants for their use with the payment of ¥ 6.00 to ¥ 10.00 per year as a "repair fee" for cave dwellings and ¥ 1.5 for houses. In the plan to sell them, the price of a cave dwelling is set at ¥ 500 to ¥ 600 and a row house at ¥ 300 to ¥ 400. A family of five generally occupies two cave dwellings and one house. The peasants cannot afford to purchase them at a total price of around ¥ 1,500. They prefer to continue to pay the repair fee. None of the cave dwellings and houses have been sold.

In Hohsi brigade, roughly half of the peasant families live in collectively-built houses and the other half live in old private homes. A dispute arose over the pricing of the new houses to be sold. Those living in the new houses wanted the prices low while those living in the old houses wanted the prices high. An impasse developed.
The brigade cadres decided not to sell the new houses for the time being, but to continue to build new houses on a collective basis. They expect that the new houses for the other half of the families will be completed by 1983, when they will re-examine the problem.

In Shihp'ing brigade, where the work-day value for the farm workers reached ¥ 2.00 in 1979, most of the peasants decided that they still preferred to pay the yearly repair fees rather than buy the cave dwellings and houses in which they now live. Only 100 of the 500 cave dwellings and houses (20%) have been sold to the peasants. These new owners were people whose old houses had been torn down to provide space for the new, collectively-built housing or for other uses. They had initially been compensated for the value of their old houses at very low prices. In the last two years, the Party Center criticized this past practice as being unfair to the original owners, and the value of the old houses was re-appraised by the local cadres at a level almost equal to that of the price of the collectively-built houses which were offered for sale. These peasants could now afford to buy them. The other 400 collective units were occupied mainly by people whose old houses had not been demolished, but who had simply expanded into the new housing while continuing to occupy the old; as a result, they had not received any monies from the brigade as compensation for their old houses which could be used to purchase the new ones. In other words, those who purchased the new houses were by and large those who could afford to do so because they had recently come into lump sums of money.

Santu commune was able to implement the Party Center's policy on sales of housing to individual households slightly more fully than Shihp'ing brigade. There are 800 collectively-built cave dwellings and an equal number of collectively-built single-room row houses in Santu commune. Commune-wide, 250 cave dwellings (31%) have been sold off, though only 50 of the houses (6%) have been sold, because peasants in this area traditionally prefer the cave dwellings. Here too, purchases of the collective housing were facilitated by an upward
reappraisal of the already demolished houses. The proceeds realized by the peasants from the reappraisal were used toward down payments, and the balance will be paid over the next two to three years.

Of all the brigades visited, Kaolo most fully disposed of its collective housing. Of 1,700 units, 500 were kept by the brigade to be used as offices, meeting rooms, reception centers, and the like. (The brigade has a population of around 3,000.) The remaining 1,200 were all sold to the peasants at an average price of ¥ 210, which is ¥ 190 below their average construction cost of ¥ 400. The old houses that were demolished were appraised at an average of ¥ 190; but because the old houses were larger than the new ones, peasants require an average of three of the new ones to replace one of the old. Their net cost, then, comes to ¥ 440,154 which they will pay off over ten years. Approximately 300 households, roughly half of the brigade, have purchased new, collectively-built housing in Kaolo.

Whether the upward reappraisals in Shihping and Santu constitute a subsidy from the collective sector to individual households is impossible to say without fuller information on the equity embodied in the original lower appraisals. Certainly Kaolo's practice of selling off collectively-built houses to individuals at below cost constitutes such a subsidy. Whatever the case may be, it appears that these brigades are going to considerable lengths to implement the new policies. They are even going to the point of reversing the former relationship between the collective sector and the individual, which is regarded as having involved disguised subsidies from the individuals to the collective sector in the form of unpaid labor for collective projects, underpaid labor in regular production, and low compensation for the private houses torn down by the brigade. The attempt to reverse the former relationship, particularly the disguised subsidies from the brigades to some but not all of the households, also presents a problem of equity, of which the local cadres are quite aware but for which they have no solutions at the moment.

Actually, the Party Center's policy toward the
construction of housing in rural areas is more flexible than that implemented by some brigades in Hsiyang county. There is no doubt that the Party Center encourages individual peasant households to build or refurbish their own houses and explicitly urges teams and brigades to help the peasants in this undertaking. This method is said to be the best one. In addition, it permits the sale of collectively-built houses to individual peasant families, as has been done in several brigades in Hsiyang. But it should be underscored that it also allows teams and brigades to build collectively-owned houses and rent them to peasant families on the condition that the teams or brigades give adequate compensation to the peasants when they tear down old houses and use the old materials and the site to construct new units. It also urges the teams and brigades to adopt careful plans for both privately and collectively-built housing which take into account the rational use of land and resources. But it opposes by implication the Tachai policy of assigning to the brigade alone the responsibility for building a "new village," thus eliminating privately-owned houses.

(f) Changes in social welfare policies

The change in the ideological and political line since the Third Plenum, as well as the reversal of economic policies, has had a visible effect on social welfare policies in Tachai brigade. The most obvious case involves the system of medical care. Up to 1978, the system of cooperative medical care had been expanding. The peasants paid the brigades ¥ 2.00 per person each year and enjoyed free medical care. The brigade spent ¥ 4,000 to ¥ 6,000 each year to support this system. Tachai cadres recognize that the cost was high, and a great deal of waste was incurred. In 1979, the system was abruptly changed and the brigade paid only half of the expenses incurred by the peasants in seeking medical care. In 1980, the peasants paid the full costs of medical care, with the exception of abortion and sterilization as well as the medical expenses incurred by the single child. They are asked to retain the
receipts of their payments. At the end of the year, the brigade will decide whether and to what extent it will aid the peasants who incurred these expenses. Commenting on this new system as well as the new system of grain distribution, several cadres asserted that they would implement the Party Center's policies but at the same time expressed the opinion that from the viewpoint of the whole village, the old systems were better than the new ones.

Thus, except for the system of dividing the brigade into three teams and the limited use of the system of giving work-points according to fixed work-quotas which they praised without qualification, Tachai cadres still looked back to the old systems with nostalgia and reaffirmed their appropriateness from the viewpoint of the whole village. They did not discontinue the practice of collective raising of pigs. They saw serious problems in selling collectively-built cave dwellings and houses to the peasants. They had encountered difficulty in giving private plots back to the peasants. All of them insisted that Tachai did not receive direct aid from the state and other units except those which they had acknowledged in the past. They still took great pride in their achievements through self-reliance. They regarded the attacks on Tachai in the press as either groundless or highly exaggerated, while they readily admitted that the Hsiyang county party committee and Ch'en Yung-kuei himself had made many mistakes. All these sentiments were voiced more in sadness than in anger. They took the loss of their national status philosophically. They calmly continued their daily work in the midst of the most serious drought since the 1920's. But above all, they were determined to keep in step with the Party Center.

(g) Economic growth and equality since 1976

What had happened in Hsiyang county between 1976, the year in which the movement to build Tachai-type counties was in full swing, and 1979, the first year in which the movement was in full retreat and many changes
in institutions and practices took place? Tables IV and V, supplied by county authorities in 1977 and 1980, give a schematic picture of the increase in work-day values and the growth in income in all brigades. They also suggest some tantalizing questions about the problem of equality within the county.

Tables IV and V show that the peasants' per-capita income from the brigade increased at an average rate of 6% from 1976 to 1979. But the weather in 1979 was unusually good. In 1979, the state increased the procurement prices by 20% for grain sold within the quotas set by the state and an additional 50% for above-quota grain. Moreover, the state set the quota for unified purchase for the whole nation at 5,000,000,000 jin less than in 1979. In Tachai, this policy lowered the quota of unified purchase from 160,000 jin to 120,000 jin, which had the effect of increasing the proportion of grain purchased at the higher above-quota price. Tachai sold the state 600,000 jin, with 480,000 jin at above-quota prices. The county average of ¥ 131 of per-capita collectively-distributed income is far above the national average of ¥ 83.4, the average for Szechuan of ¥ 80.1, and the average of ¥ 96.1 for the rural area of Szechuan's Loshan municipality also visited in 1980. But the peasants in Hsiyang received only ¥ 9.3 per-capita (7.1% of the collective figure) from family sideline occupations. In comparison, a sample survey of 700 households in Szechuan shows that the per-capita income from family sideline occupations in 1979 was ¥ 76.7, while a nationwide sample survey of 10,282 households puts the per-capita net income from household sideline occupations in 1979 at ¥ 44.0. In any case, Hsiyang suffered from a very serious drought in 1980, and agricultural production probably declined. But the county authorities still hoped that the development of various kinds of brigade enterprises, farming, and sideline production would keep the decline in the peasants' income to a minimum.

It is clear from Tables IV and V that the removal of the upper limit of ¥ 1.30 on the work-day value which had been imposed on all brigades except Tachai, the
TABLE IV

Distribution of Work-day Values in All Brigades of Hsiyang County, 1976 and 1979

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work-day value</th>
<th>Number of brigades</th>
<th>Work-day value</th>
<th>Number of brigades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¥ 0.80</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>¥ 0.80 - 0.99</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1.00 - 1.19</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1.20 - 1.39</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>1.40 - 1.59</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1.60 - 1.79</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>1.80 - 1.99</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean of distribution = ¥ 1.18*
Gini coefficient = .075

Mean of distribution = ¥ 1.31*
Gini coefficient = .10

*See notes on the next page.
TABLE V
Distribution of Average Annual Per-Capita Collectively Distributed Income in All Brigades in Hsiyang County, 1976 and 1979

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1976</th>
<th></th>
<th>1979</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average Annual Per-Capita Collectively Distributed Income</td>
<td>Number of Brigades</td>
<td>Average Annual Per-Capita Collectively Distributed Income</td>
<td>Number of Brigades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¥ 40 - 49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>¥ 70 - 79</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 79</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>80 - 99</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 99</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>100 - 119</td>
<td>101</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 - 149</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>120 - 139</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;150*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>140 - 149</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 150*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean of distribution = ¥ 105*
Gini coefficient = .11

Mean of distribution = ¥ 125*
Gini coefficient = .11

*Notes to Tables IV and V: In the absence of population data for the brigades, all calculations were made on an unweighted basis. The means on these tables were calculated from the distributions; hence they may differ slightly from the actual countywide means. The mean per-capita collectively-distributed income reported by county officials for 1976 was ¥ 94, and in 1979 ¥ 131. For the distributions in Table V, "more than ¥ 150" was taken arbitrarily to be ¥ 160. For the 1979 distribution in Table IV and both in Table V, the midpoints of the income categories given were used in calculation.
return of many small enterprises to the brigades, and
the freedom given to the brigades to develop new small
enterprises resulted in no significant increase in in­
come inequality among the brigades. The Gini coef­
ficients for the distributions of work-day values (Table
IV) rose insignificantly from 1976 to 1979, and those
for average annual per-capita collective-distributed
income did not change at all. It is probably pre­
mature to judge the effects on income inequality among
brigades of these policy changes (specifically, those
relating to the brigade enterprises and the limit on
distributed income) which had only been in effect for
an overwhelming majority of the brigades for one of the
years in our data series. We would expect the cumula­
tive effects of these policies over at least their
initial years to result in increased economic inequality
among brigades. One dramatic example has already ap­
peared. Shihp'ing brigade, which received back from
the commune level the responsibility for its coal mine,
was one of only two units in Hsiyang to achieve a work­
day value of ¥ 2.00 in 1979.

(h) Hsiyang looks ahead

What were Hsiyang's plans for the future? County
authorities recognized the defects of the system of
"four specifications and one bonus" in its
present form. Some teams had eighty households. They
were regarded as still too large. They could, the of­
ficials thought, be reduced in size by half and further
be divided into work-groups of about ten households
each. Within the work-group, several households could
sign a production contract and retain all produce
above the quota stipulated in the contract. The guiding
idea was: the more specific and concrete the system of
responsibility, the better. The officials pointed to
Chuchiachuang work-group as an example of success in ap­
plying this principle. They were pushing for the system of
contract work in a big way (ta pao-kan) under which all
above-target yields would belong to the team and also
the system of yield-related remuneration (lien-hsi
ch'an-liang chi-ch'ou) under which the number of work­
points given collectively to a team are linked to the production of a certain number of jin of grain and specific amounts of other produce. All these measures will, they hope, help to overcome the neglect of quality which has been associated with the system of giving work-points according to fixed work-quotas. But the officials stopped short of advocating the system of contract work by individual households (pao-ch'an tao-hu) which is being used in 20% of the teams in the nation and is practiced by 40% of the households in one sub-district in a rural area in Loshan city in Szechuan and more than 70% of the teams in Funan county in Anhwei. This contrast between the policies of Hsiyang county and Loshan city in Szechuan reflects the residential patterns of their respective areas. Except in mountainous areas like Mengshan brigade or some places in Hsichai, the peasants in Hsiyang have traditionally lived in village settlements. The movement to build new villages after the fashion of Tachai has made the villages even more tightly knit than before. In Szechuan, the houses of peasants are more scattered. In hilly areas, single households or tiny groupings of two or three households may exist at quite a distance from each other and from other settlements. The contrast between Hsiyang and Funan arises from the utter poverty and backwardness of Funan and its inadequate leadership and management system.

In spite of all these changes, county officials were still trying to strengthen the brigades by supporting the development of brigade enterprises and sideline occupations. They were still underscoring the indispensable function of the brigades and communes in water conservancy, irrigation work, small industrial enterprises, sideline production, and other undertakings which cannot be initiated and managed by the teams. County officials realistically acknowledged that grain production in Hsiyang would soon reach an upper limit even if the changes in institutions and practices brought about desirable results. They would be satisfied if they could achieve an annual grain production
of 280,000,000 jin to 300,000,000 jin and keep it at that level. Meanwhile, they planned to diversify Hsiyang's economy, reduce the amount of land devoted to grain in order to develop forestry and animal husbandry, and change the composition of grain produced by increasing wheat and soy bean cultivation and cutting down on maize. Above all, they wanted to give the peasants time to rest and recuperate from too many demands and restrictions imposed by cadres of the brigade, the commune, and the county. They hoped that by allowing them a greater freedom of choice and by providing them with greater economic incentives, the peasants would become rich through individual effort or by the common endeavor of closely knit units much smaller than the current brigades or even teams.

(16) Some preliminary reflections

We are still too close to the events described above to be able to draw any definitive conclusions about the rise and fall of the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties. As we suggested in an earlier article, "most probably, the future contains a wider range of possibilities than we can envisage at this time." But as observers of current developments in China, we wish to make explicit some of our tentative thoughts and put down on paper some new information obtained from field research or derived from Chinese publications.

There is no doubt that the termination of the Tachai movement, the repudiation of Tachai's role during and after the Cultural Revolution, and the abandonment by Tachai itself of almost all of the special features and practices developed since 1960 are part and parcel of the almost complete reversal of the policies and programs advocated by Mao in his last years, particularly during the Cultural Revolution. This process of reversal has gone much further in agriculture than in almost any other field. To be sure, the structure of communes, brigades, and teams with the team or, in a small number of cases, the brigade as the basic unit of account has been maintained. But a fundamental change has taken place in the relationship between the basic unit of
account and its subordinate units, involving the yearround work-groups and specialized work-groups, many of which have been newly created or revived. Many of the functions and much of the authority of the basic unit of account have devolved to its subordinate groups and individual households.

Does this devolution necessarily lead to the dismantling of the commune structures? To be sure, there have been discussions of the question whether or not the commune should become solely a unit to manage the collective economy and its political functions should be taken over by a separate local government unit at the same level as the commune and similar to the hsiang government prior to 1958—in other words, whether the dual function of the commune as both a political and economic unit, which is a feature distinguishing the commune system from the cooperatives, should be separated. But at the present time at least, the commune, brigade, and team still retain their functions and authority in many areas of agricultural activities such as water conservancy, farmland construction, the use of large agricultural machinery, agricultural research, small industrial enterprises, some sideline production, and some kinds of farm work which are beyond the capacity of the work-groups or individual households to undertake. This structure is still the channel through which state plans in agriculture and unified purchase of grain by the state are implemented. The team or the brigade is the dominant party in concluding contracts with its subordinate groups or individual households. But the process of the devolution of the function and authority to smaller and smaller groups which began during the three years of the agricultural crisis (1959-1961) and which the Tachai movement endeavored to reverse has now been pushed almost up to its outer limits short of a complete return to the traditional system of family farms and private ownership of land.

An equally basic transformation has occurred in the relationship between the households or the individual peasants and the collective units of various size to which they belong. Its most obvious manifestation
can be found in the system of pao-ch'an tao-hu, particularly ta-pao-kan, as well as the system of pao-ch'an tao-lao. But even the system of awarding work-points by fixed work-quotas has had some impact on this relationship.

In some ways, the institutions and practices in the countryside today represent an uneasy mixture between those developed in the early years of the cooperative movement from 1953 to 1955 and those adopted after the establishment of the commune structure in 1958.

The rationale behind this process of transformation is to use the most direct, obvious, and simple methods to link a peasant's material interests to his work performance so as to resolve the free-ride problem in a collective economy. But these new methods must be congruent with the collective ownership of land and other means of production. In deciding which form of the "responsibility system" to adopt, the local cadres are also told to take into account the successes or failures of the operation of their former methods of labor management, as well as the specific conditions in their locality.

The free-ride problem is also to be dealt with by reducing the scope of collective goods provided by the team, brigade, or commune in the form of public housing, medical care, social welfare, and other collective benefits. The reduction of the scope of "collective goods" is to be compensated by increasing peasant incomes which are derived both from working for the collective units and from private sideline occupations.

It is recognized that the new system of labor management and distribution of income may lead to increased inequality between rich and poor households. Indeed, the peasants are encouraged to increase their own income as much as possible so long as they also fulfill their obligations to the collective units, which have meanwhile being reduced. The attack on absolute egalitarianism or "equal divisionism" in the distribution of income occurs almost daily in the press. But at the same time, serious efforts are still made to help the
poor brigades, teams, work-groups, or households to raise their agricultural production so that they will catch up. Attention is also given to preventing the polarization of a team or brigade into very rich and very poor peasants. Above all, the policy of providing an income floor under the most disadvantaged groups and individuals is being maintained. The government even argues that the initial inequality brought about by the new policies will soon be ameliorated as the rural economy develops. Thus, the ideal of equality has not been given up either in theory or as a long-term goal.

It should be stressed that in Tachai itself and due to its special circumstances, egalitarianism and collectivist organizational changes originated from the local peasants' search for increased production and a higher level of material living, and both egalitarian practices and economic growth have gone hand in hand without special treatment accorded by the state at least before 1964 and with the help of the state up to 1979. But in the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties, the attempt to introduce the egalitarian and collectivist features of Tachai to localities with very different natural and political conditions proved to be an obstacle to increased production and economic growth. All the new methods now adopted throughout China run counter to these features. It is clear that the objective of increasing agricultural production is, in practice, given a higher priority than equality and may be pursued even at its expense. It is in this sense that the current policy represents a reversal of one of the fundamental features of the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties as it was interpreted and pushed forward by the more radical leaders.

Underlying the new set of agricultural and rural policies is an emphasis on labor productivity and the cost-effectiveness of all agricultural undertakings. According to one calculation, productivity per man-hour in grain production did not increase nation-wide from 1957 to 1978. The increase in total grain produc-
tion was mainly the result of the increase in the number of farm workers from 200,000,000 in 1959 to 300,000,000 in 1978. The increasing costs of agricultural production resulted in the failure of the peasants' income to rise in proportion to the increase in total grain production. The new policies in labor management and the accompanying changes in institutions and practices are aimed at solving the dual problems of increasing agricultural productivity and reducing costs.

All the above considerations are justified on the basis of the leading idea that to speed up the four modernizations, one must observe "economic laws." The idea that one must observe "economic laws" was reinforced by the notion that one must observe "laws of nature" and "scientific laws" in all economic undertakings. The converging impact of these two guiding principles undermined a basic idea of the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties—the idea that there could and should be one national model for the whole nation in agricultural development. Given the wide variation in the natural conditions of China, the Tachai movement, which was built on the basis of one small village with very special historical and natural conditions, cannot produce satisfactory results. Although in official documents, a distinction was made between the "basic experience" of Tachai and its specific features, it now appears that this distinction was not observed even by the leaders of Tachai and Hsiyang in their attempt to build Hsiyang into the first Tachai-type county and to lead the national movement. The six loose and general criteria for defining a Tachai-type county adopted in September, 1975, were in practice regarded by Ch'en Yung-kuei and other leaders as minimum standards while they in effect pushed the nation-wide movement to learn from Tachai far beyond these criteria in what is now condemned as "an ultra-Leftist" direction.

A movement using a single national model in the face of the vast variations in local conditions necessarily had several effects. On the part of the various local units, there were persistent and widespread evasions which later developed into a strong undercurrent of opposition to the movement at the grass-roots level.
Alternatively, some local units were subjected constantly to the temptation of falsifying their production records in order to obtain the status of "an advanced unit in learning from Tachai" or "a Tachai-type county." Among many leaders with responsibility for economic work who realized the impracticality of using Tachai-Hsiyang as a single national model, a strong but hidden and diffuse opposition also developed. After the political balance of power had changed in 1978, the opponents at the grassroots and at the upper levels joined forces in 1979 to destroy not only the movement but the Hsiyang-Tachai model itself.

The movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties also suffered from other congenital vulnerabilities. Since economic conditions did not facilitate the spontaneous spread of the Tachai model, political power had to be used to promote the movement. Methods such as mass propaganda campaigns and organized visits became main instruments. Coercive measures were sometimes used, despite efforts to minimize them. Not accidentally, the movement to learn from Tachai achieved success in Hsiyang only after the Cultural Revolution had created the proper political conditions for the seizure of power by Ch'en Yung-kuei in Hsiyang in 1967. From then on and reaching a climax in the two national conferences to build Tachai-type counties, the movement for agricultural development became a political movement as well. When this transformation was combined with the oppressive political atmosphere of the Cultural Revolution, the long history of China's patriarchal style of politics, and the traditional importance of personal networks, some Tachai and Hsiyang leaders of peasant origins succumbed to the temptation of some of the authoritarian practices of those in power.

Moreover, the peasant leaders who rose to positions of leadership at various levels of the government, including the topmost organs of the Politbureau and vice-premiership, lacked the necessary knowledge in science, technology, and economics to understand the complexity of the problems which confronted them. They tended to apply their own limited experiences in seeking solutions.
Tachai achieved great success in basic farmland construction in its early years without much actual or opportunity cost merely by mobilizing the underemployed labor of the peasants and local resources. But as a vice-premier in charge of agriculture under Hua, Ch'en noted that the cultivated land of China consisted only of slightly more than 10% of the total area of China. He asked the rhetorical question whether it could be increased to 20% or even 30% through basic farmland construction. His implicit answer was in the affirmative. The constraints imposed by costs, ecology, and other factors were not taken into consideration. He placed exclusive emphasis on the total amount of grain produced. He believed that by 1980, China's agriculture would not rank second in the world, implying that it would rank first. He would not have been too far off if he had referred to grain yield. But to take account only of the total grain yield without considering the size of population and other agricultural products is a poor measure of the overall performance of agriculture. He was strongly in favor of the project of diverting the water of the Yangtze river to North China before a thorough examination of its feasibility, desirability, and costs had been undertaken. His attitudes and ideas became vulnerable in a subsequent period when stress was placed on the need to observe "objective" economic laws and "laws of nature" and to take scientific and technological knowledge seriously into account in all plans, projects, and undertakings.

But the repudiation of the movement to learn from Tachai and to build Tachai-type counties, particularly the condemnation of many of the specific policies of Hsiyang county, should not prevent us from reaffirming the historical achievements of Tachai village under the leadership of Ch'en Yung-kuei and should not blind us to some of the specific achievements of Hsiyang county. Ch'en's early successes in leading the transformation of an extremely poor village into a relatively wealthy one through sheer human efforts while spreading the benefits fairly evenly among its various households should not be denied. Above all, the spirit of endeavoring to do what
others believed to be impossible, unrealistic, or neglectful of the criteria of cost-effectiveness which has now become one of the causes of his downfall, served at an earlier time the historic function of breaking the fatalistic tradition of Chinese peasants.

As for the charge that only outside assistance by the state made possible Tachai's spectacular development, one must make the following observations. Prior to 1964, Tachai rarely received any special treatment. On different occasions, Tachai publicly acknowledged the assistance given by other units after 1964. According to recent party criticism, there have been other instances of preferential treatment, though the details have not yet been revealed. Here we wish to make two points regarding the assistance received by Tachai and Hsiyang. First, Tachai has established a record which even surpasses that of many prominent model units in repaying in full the value of assistance received. For example, in 1968 Tachai commune borrowed ¥ 50,000 from the People's Bank to purchase 44 mares and one stud with which to undertake horse breeding on its Tahu Animal Husbandry Farm (mu ch'ang); the loan was repaid in full by 1972. By contrast, Shashihiyü brigade of Tsunhua county, Hopei, received ¥ 200,000 from the state starting in 1968 to finance two-sevenths of the cost of its deep well drilling project, which it undertook to begin to repay over a several year period starting only in 1980. Second, as we have argued elsewhere, Tachai demonstrated a strong capacity for making effective use of outside assistance in promoting development. This is probably one of the reasons why it continued to be favored with state aid. Tachai's success in utilizing outside assistance should not be taken for granted or dismissed as unimportant, in view of the vast number of ineffective and even retrogressive rural development projects financed by aid from international donors and national governments throughout the third world. China too is full of cases of localities which lacked the capacity to make effective use of state assistance. For example, the communes, brigades, and teams of Funan county in Anhwei province received from
the state in the period from the mid-1950's to the end of 1978 a total of ¥ 72,000,000 in the forms of state investment in agriculture, agricultural loans, and outright grants. Even if all the communes, brigades, and teams had sold all their collectively-owned properties to repay the state, they would still have owed the state ¥ 35,000,000. In 1978, the county remained desperately poor.\(^{170}\) Aside from the abortive "west-to-east water diversion" project, which did not benefit agricultural production up to the time of its cancellation, Hsiyang was also given much needed aid by the state. From 1967 to 1976, it received ¥ 23,000,000 for projects in farmland construction and water conservancy which constituted 16.8% of the total cost. By 1980, this total reached ¥ 26,000,000. The state also built a chemical fertilizer factory in Hsiyang at a cost of ¥ 11,000,000.\(^{171}\) But Hsiyang did achieve phenomenal growth in grain production from 1967 to 1978. No doubt, Tachai indirectly benefited from the agricultural development of the whole county. But even the new party secretary of Hsiyang who rigorously implemented the new policies of the Party Center noted that the state did not directly give Tachai any outright grants.

A recent article in Hung-ch'i observed:

For many years, the Party Center had issued the call to learn from Tachai. Now, we have been criticizing Hsiyang's errors strictly according to the facts and affirming those achievements of Hsiyang which ought to be affirmed so as to sum up our experience and lessons to be learned. We should not talk about Hsiyang and Tachai as if they were devoid of any merit. All the more, we should not totally repudiate without any analysis those localities and units which learned from Tachai.\(^{172}\)

Whether or not this statement indicates a new twist in the Party Center's policy, stems from a slight shift in the relationship among various political
forces, or merely represents a more detached view of a single author after the political battle, it signals an attempt to arrive at a balanced judgment of Tachai and Hsiyang.

The rise of Tachai as a national model and the movement to learn from Tachai must be further analyzed from a larger historical and political perspective. The resonance between Mao's ideas and the practices spontaneously developed in Tachai in its early years was not a pure coincidence. Both embodied the spirit to do what others believe to be impossible, impractical, unrealistic, or not based on strict application of criteria of cost-effectiveness. Both reflected the egalitarianism prevalent in traditional peasant rebellions, which is characterized by an author in a widely praised article as the core of "rural socialism" in contrast to "scientific socialism." The major force in the Chinese revolution was the peasantry in the border regions and the interior of China far from the city and out of touch with modern civilization. A unique characteristic of the Chinese revolution was that the forces in the vast backward rural regions conquered the modern urban areas. In spite of his knowledge of Marxism-Leninism and his intellectual curiosity about modern science, Mao's instinctive and primordial orientation was basically rural. The vast majority of cadres, at least at the middle and lower levels, also came from the countryside. This was particularly true for the cadres in the army. The prominence of the rural revolution and the eclipse of urban values and attitudes finally culminated in the oppression of the urban intellectuals and the near destruction of science, higher education, literature, arts, and other higher forms of culture during the Cultural Revolution. Here, the problem was not that these leaders with a rural orientation did not appreciate the practical utility of science, technology, higher education, literature, arts, and other higher forms of culture. The problem was they never really appreciated the basic values, attitudes, institutions, and practices which make possible the development in the urban areas of these higher
forms of culture. These basic orientations were con­
sidered "bourgeois" in origin and in nature and there­
fore had to be destroyed.

The repudiation of the Cultural Revolution, the
demystification of Mao, and the overthrow of the "gang
of four" brought about a reversal of the positions of
the urban intellectuals and the cadres of rural origins.
The best indicator of this reversal is the policy that
from now on, the Party will not promote to the positions
of cadres those workers and peasants who are now engaged
in production and who do not have much "culture."174

"Objective laws" governing all areas of human activities
from economics through education to literature and arts
are now to govern the formulation of policies and pro­
grams. The urban intellectuals are the discoverers,
formulators, custodians, explicators, and interpreters
of these "laws." They now perform some of these func­
tions under the leadership of party leaders who are
sympathetic to their basic values and spirit.

At the moment, the Party Center is devoting serious
attention and allocating an increased amount of resources
to agriculture in order to raise the peasants' standards
of living. Still, there is a danger that the analysis
of the historical and social origins of the Cultural Rev­
olution which assigns a decisive role to the values, at­
titudes, and habits of "the small producers," partic­
ularly the peasants, will become a part of a new official
ideology and that this ideology will unnecessarily deepen
the separation between the intellectuals and the peasants.
For in most instances, the peasants provided merely the
latent support for Mao and his followers during the Cul­
tural Revolution. In other instances, they were drawn
into the maelstrom in spite of themselves. In an inter­
view in 1977, Ch'en said that in the early phase of the
Cultural Revolution, he was under attack and told Chou
En-lai that he wanted to retire. Chou encouraged him
to continue his work. Ch'en returned to Hsiyang and
took part in the seizure of power.175 Once Ch'en and
other peasant leaders became involved in top-level
politics, they were swept up in the political practices
of the Cultural Revolution. Thus, the ultimate source
of the patriarchal style, bureaucratic practices, and the methods of unrestrained intra-party struggle must be sought not in the peasants' mentality but the long political tradition of the Chinese ruling class which could not but influence the personal values, attitudes, and habits of the peasants at the grass roots and national leaders who hailed from the peasantry.

One should also not forget that the peasants played a decisive role in the victory of the revolution. In the early years, Tachai's methods of agricultural development produced spectacular results at low cost. They became an obstacle to further development only when they had exhausted their possibilities precisely because of their successful application, only when Tachai was elevated as the sole national model, and only when attempts were made to apply its special features uniformly in localities and units with different natural conditions and without the necessary political and social preconditions.

In retrospect, the reversal in the past three years of the whole approach to China's economic and political development is probably the result of the attempts of Mao and his followers to push to the extreme their revolutionary ideas without adequate regard to reality. The new approach may very well have rescued China from the brink of disaster. It may very well lead China successfully to its goal of building a modern nation. But a balanced assessment of the successes and failures of the past and a proper evaluation of the role of the peasants must accompany this new approach so that it can be put on a solid foundation of mass support in the countryside. Egalitarianism in the distribution of the basic necessities of life has deep roots in China. It is also a modern ideal. It played a part in stifling individual effort and initiative in the countryside only when it was pushed to the extreme in disregard of the level of economic and political development in different localities. Shorn of their extreme manifestations, egalitarian ideals must again be given a proper place in the whole scheme of "socialist modernization."

"Rural socialism" should not be counterposed to "scien-
scientific socialism." On the contrary, a synthesis should be achieved in the search for a distinctively Chinese path to socialist modernization. Such a synthesis would be a signal contribution to the theory and practice of economic development in an agricultural country.

The reversal of rural policies and the restructuring of the institutions in the countryside constitute an integral part of the new epoch-making tendency of reducing the scope and intensity of political control and of according the lower-level, small collective units, the peasants' households, and even the individual peasants a greater degree of autonomy and freedom. The guiding idea of using the market to supplement the system of central planning, and the constant injunction that policies, institutions, and practices must fit variations in local conditions will make China's economy, society, and politics much more complex than at any time in China's long history. China's fate will hinge upon the success or failure of the endeavor to combine this complex system with the goals of political unity and stability and socio-economic justice in a period of unprecedented social change.

NOTES

1. Tang Tsou acknowledges the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities for the project "Political Leadership and Social Change at the Local Level in China from 1850 to the Present" at the University of Chicago. This support made it possible for him to make a field trip to Hsiyang, Shansi and Loshan, Szechuan in the summer of 1980. He also benefited from a trip made by a group of Western scholars, organized by Edward Friedman, Maurice Meisner, and Angus McDonald with the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities to study macro-political changes in China in the post-Mao era.
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3. Throughout this paper, the term "district" rather than "prefecture" is used to translate the term "ti-ch'ü."

4. Interview at Tachai in 1980.

5. Another version of her transfer was given by two readers in a letter to the editor of Jen-min jih-pao. According to them, it was Kuo who took the initiative in asking for a transfer and did so several times. Ultimately her request was approved with the help of Wang Ch'ien, then the first secretary of the province. The letter denounced this transfer as an arbitrary promotion which enabled Kuo to live in leisure. Jen-min jih-pao, December 16, 1980, p. 4.

For our purposes, it is not important whether the initiative came from Kuo Feng-lien or not. In either case, Kuo's transfer reflected the precarious position of Tachai and the difficulty of serving as its party secretary. The writers of the letter also overlooked the fact that the transfer would mean an immense setback in her political career and a change in her profession.

6. Sometimes the term "comrade" was used in place of the word "person" in this indirect reference to Ch'en.


9. Taiwan sources frequently give February, 1964, as the time when Mao issued the call. When interviewed in 1977, Ch'en Yung-kuei said that Mao had issued the call in January, 1967, but he conceded that the precise date could not be found in any published documents. The cadres in Tachai and Hsiyang disagreed on the precise time of the year when the call was made. But most pointed to the reception of Ch'en Yung-kuei by Mao in December, 1964, at the time of the meeting of the Third National People's Congress as the decisive event which established Tachai as the national model. Furthermore, it is difficult to find the precise slogan "learn from Tachai" in documents and articles published in 1964.


11. These words have been frequently repeated but they cannot be found in the published reports of Chou's speech at the time. In official English translation, the term "ideology" is used to translate the Chinese term szu-hsiang. Chung-kuo she-hui k'e-hsueh yuan che-hsueh yen-chiu suo hsieh-pto tsu, Wei-wu pien-cheng-fa tsai Hsi-yang ti sheng-li (Peking: Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1979), p. 1.


15. Interview with Mr. Liu, August 1, 1980, at the Reception Center of Tachai Brigade.


17. While he was in Tachai, Chang attacked the veteran party leaders, saying that they were "the democratic faction" and did not want socialism.


19. For an English translation of these documents, see Chi Hsin, The Case of the Gang of Four (Hong Kong: Cosmos Books, 1977), pp. 204-295.

20. Cadres in Tachai told Tsou in 1977 that the "gang of four" had demanded that Tachai write articles. The first draft submitted by Tachai was returned by Jen-min jih-pao. Presumably, the first draft was not satisfactory.


26. Ibid.

27. Interviews conducted at Tachai in October, 1977.
28. These peasants were paid by their own brigades for work at Mengshan.


30. This process of correcting mistakes should be differentiated from the removal of the label of being a rightist. In September, 1979, the party openly admitted its mistake of having overextended the anti-rightist campaign. See Yeh Chien-ying's speech in a meeting to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the People's Republic of China. Hung-ch'i, 1979, No. 10, p. 7.

31. Reprinted in Ta-kung pao (Hong Kong), December 5, 1976, p. 1.


42. Article by Wang Keng-chin and Ho Chien-chang, *ibid.*, pp. 16-19.


49. By 1977, Tachai actually had about one hundred households.


51. These draft documents have not been published in China. Reproductions can be found in *Chung-kung yen-chiu*, Vol. 13, no. 5 (May 15, 1979), pp. 150-162; Vol. 13, no. 6 (June 15, 1979), pp. 139-152. We believe that these documents are genuine, although there is no way to check if they are totally accurate.

53. Wang was a student of philosophy at Peking University in the second half of the 1940's. His revolutionary activities at that time prevented him from completing his education. He has written articles on the problem of "alienation" and is familiar with the early manuscripts of Marx.

54. This speech has not been published in China. Ming Pao Monthly in Hong Kong obtained the whole text in July, 1979, which had been copied and mailed to Hong Kong in more than ten separate parts in letters to different persons. We believe that the text is authentic, although as the editor of Ming Pao Monthly noted, there are probably errors and omissions due to the method used in transmitting it. Ming Pao Monthly, no. 127 (February, 1980), pp. 2-15. More than any other documents or articles available in the past two years, this speech enlightens us on the views of the reformers and gives us a glimpse into the realities of Chinese politics, as well as a peek into political changes in China before they have occurred.


56. Article by Shih Chu, ibid., 1979, no. 4, pp. 21, 26.

57. For example, Yu Kuang-yuan's interpretation of the principle of "the dictatorship of the proletariat" in Hsin-hua yueh-pao (wen-che-pan), no. 6, 1979, pp. 22-31. Widely known is Chao Tzu-yang's interpretation of socialism as containing only two principles: first, public ownership of the means of production and second, "distribution of rewards according to work done." In May or June, 1980, a third principle was added: the existence of a planned economy.


60. Ibid., October 5, 1959, p. 17. Hua Kuo-feng himself had fallen into line. In his speech in June to the NPC, he had used the term "ultra-Left line" to characterize the ideas and program of Lin and the "gang of four."
61. Ibid., p. 25.

62. Almost a year later, Jen-min jih-pao revealed that the author was Hu Fu-ming, the deputy chairman of the department of philosophy at the University of Nanking and the deputy secretary of the general party branch. The article was submitted on Hu's initiative in October, 1977, and was not solicited by the newspaper. It was revised to incorporate the ideas of the "comrades" of the Central Party School. The original title of Hu's draft was "Practice is the Criterion for Testing Truth." The term "sole" was added to strengthen the article's implications for the current situation. Jen-min jih-pao, March 21, 1979, p. 3.

At that time, Hu Yao-pang, the Secretary-General of the Party after February, 1980, was one of the most important leaders at the Party School. Presumably, it was Hu who suggested the strengthening of the article.

63. Ming Pao (Hong Kong), January 15, 1980, p. 3.


65. For example, see ibid., January 6, 1979, p. 1; January 10, p. 1; January 20, p. 1; March 1, p. 4; March 15, p. 1; March 16, p. 2; May 5, p. 2; June 9, p. 1; August 19, p. 2.


68. Ibid., 1979, no. 4, pp. 36-38.

69. Ibid., pp. 40-42.

70. Ibid., 1979, no. 6, pp. 7-9.

71. Ibid., 1979, no. 7, p. 11.
72. For interested readers, the following articles may be profitably consulted: Kao Cheng-jung et al., in Ching-chi yen-chiu, 1979, no. 2, pp. 54-57, 36. Article by Yi Lung, ibid., 1979, no. 3, pp. 15-21. Article by Hsu Ti-hsin, ibid., 1979, no. 4, pp. 2-7. Article by Tso Mu, ibid., 1979, no. 4, pp. 14-17. Article by Lo Wei-hsiung, ibid., 1979, no. 8, pp. 28-33. Article by Tso P'ing et al., ibid., pp. 34-35.

73. Article by a special commentator, Kuang-ming jih-pao, June 12, 1979, p. 1.


75. Chieh-fang jih-pao (Shanghai), March 3, 1979, p. 3. Jen-min jih-pao, March 14, 1979, p. 2. Ming-Pao (Hong Kong), March 12, 1979, p. 3.


77. Interview in 1980 at Hsiyang.

78. Jen-min jih-pao, June 24, 1979, p. 2.

79. Ibid., October 6, 1979, pp. 1-2.

80. For example, see ibid., December 24, 1980, p. 2.

81. Ibid., October 3, 1979, p. 2.

82. This represented a change in its view as described above.


84. Ibid., December 29, 1979, p. 2.

85. Liu is a native of Shansi and has worked in Hsiyang since 1974. In September, 1967, he became a vice-chairman of the revolutionary committee of the county. In 1969 and 1969, he also took charge of the reception
center at Tachai. From 1970-72, he was the head of a May 7th cadre school. In 1973, he was engaged in water conservation work. From 1973 onwards, he was a deputy party secretary in charge of industry.

Liu began his revolutionary career in 1946 at the age of seventeen when he took part in land reform and rural work. He finished five years of middle school in 1945. At different periods of time thereafter, he also worked in the spheres of cultural affairs, education, and public health.

87. From now on in this paper, we shall use Ch'en's name in place of the indirect reference used in the official press. Up to early 1981, Ch'en has not been criticized by name. Hung-ch'i, 1981, no. 2, p. 2.
89. See the section on "Tachai and the 'gang of four'" in this paper. Contrast Tachai hung-ch'i, published in 1974 with Tachai ching-yen, published in 1977, particularly pp. 5, 6, 8-9, 13-14, and 22 of the latter.

Many of these slogans such as "blocking the capitalist road" were coined by a correspondent of Shansi jih-pao who had become Ch'en Yung-kuei's private secretary and the head of Hsiyang's propaganda department, and who had been promoted still later to a prominent position in the propaganda system in Shansi. By 1980, he had been relieved of all his positions. Interviews in Shansi.

91. Wen-hui pao, March 8, 1979, p. 3.
95. Jen-min jih-pao, August 13, 1980, p. 3.
96. Ibid., August 1, 1980, p. 2.
98. Ibid., September 28, 1980, p. 2. See also, ibid., September 20, 1980, p. 3. Interviews in Shansi, August, 1980. This case was also widely reported in newspapers and journals in Hong Kong after October, 1980.
100. The Yunch'eng district party committee continued to resist the Party Center's agricultural and rural policies until October, 1979. A new party secretary was appointed in late 1979 or early 1980.
101. Interview in 1977 at Hsiyang; Jen-min jih-pao, November 8, 1980, p. 3; ibid., September 27, 1979, p. 4; scattered pieces of information found in newspapers published in China and Hong Kong.
106. Ibid., July 7, 1980, p. 1. This figure was also used in deputy secretary Li Hsi-shen's self-criticism as reported ibid., March 15, 1979, p. 2.


109. The falsified figure is higher than the highest actual yields in any previous years in Hsiyang, as Table I shows.


111. Figures shown on chart at the Exhibition Hall in Hsiyang. Tachai ching-yen gave the figure 25.6% but did not mention a specific date; p. 212.

112. In 1976, the average income which each peasant received from Tachai brigade was ¥175. The social welfare benefits per capita were said to be worth ¥11.5.


115. Ibid., June 15, 1980, pp. 1, 2. This decision to postpone the construction of the project was considered by Workers' Daily as the ninth of the ten most important economic news items in 1980. Hua-ch'iao jih-pao, January 6, 1981, p. 4.


117. Ibid., October 24, 1980, p. 2.

118. Interview in Taiyuan, August, 1980.

120. Interviews with officials of the Water Conservancy Bureau in Taiyuan, August, 1980. According to a report in Jen-min jih-pao, Chinchung district had given a total of ¥ 25,000,000 to Hsiyang to finance its program of basic farmland construction and water conservancy. The average cost of turning one mu of dry land into irrigated field in Hsiyang was more than ¥ 600.


122. Ibid., October 24, 1980, p. 2.


125. The system of distributing wheat partly according to work-points may have existed for many years prior to 1979.

126. Prior to the Cultural Revolution, 24.4% of the brigades in Shansi were basic accounting units. Of these, 12.9% were small villages with around 100 households. By 1978, 46.8% of the brigades had become basic accounting units. Of these, 22.2% were small villages. In March, 1980, 23.5% of the brigades remained basic accounting units. Of these, 16.5% were small villages. All these brigades are regarded as well run units and are allowed to retain their status as basic accounting units.


128. We expect that this document will be published in journals in Taiwan very soon. An article in Chung-kung yen-chiu, November, 1980, which was received after the completion of our draft, identified this document as "Directive on Further Strengthening and Perfecting the System of Responsibility for Production," issued in
September, 1980. Both the title and the content of this article suggest that the system involves the division of collectively-owned land among individual households as well as agricultural production by contracts with individual farm workers. But the author has not presented any evidence that collectively-owned land has been given back to individual households on a large scale. Chung-kung yen-chiu, November 15, 1980, pp. 42-49.

129. According to one account, there are more than ten forms of the "responsibility system." Jen-min jih-pao, editorial, November 1, 1980, p. 1.

130. Prior to the adoption of the system of "self-assessment and public discussion" (tzu-pao kung-yi) from 1961 to 1963, there had been 130 to 140 work-quotas in Tachai.

131. Although "piecework" is the common term applied to the fixed work-quotas, in some cases the system might better be called "task-rate" since the sizes of individual jobs and time required are relatively large. Compare this to familiar factory or home-industry piecework in which a worker turns out hundreds of small items in a day, usually the same thing (especially in piece goods work in the garment industry). Moving cartloads of manure may more appropriately be called piecework.


133. The four specifications usually include task, quality standard, time limit, and the work-points to be received in exchange.


135. In granting this permission, the documents used the term yeh-k'o-i after it gave clear permission (k'o-i) to the system of awarding work-points according to
work-quotas and the system of time work plus appraisal of work done. Thereafter a debate arose at the local level in some areas. One side argued that the best formula was k'o-i, k'o-i, keng k'o-i (is permitted, is permitted, and is all the more permitted). The other side, the opponents to change, argued that the policy should be k'o-i, k'o-i, pu k'o-i (is permitted, is permitted, and is not permitted). Ibid., December 24, 1980, p. 2. Obviously, the proponents of change had won. Moreover, the system of responsibility had by that time extended to the level of a single household and an individual, as we shall see.


137. An article in Hung-ch'i expresses reservations about this system. The author fears that it may destroy the system of unified accounting and unified distribution of rewards. He asserts that it should not be classified, without careful examination of its various forms and effects, as one type of "responsibility system." Article by Yu Kuo-yao, Hung-ch'i, 1980, no. 20, pp. 12-15, 35.


139. Ibid., November 5, 1980, p. 2.

140. The decision on accelerating agricultural development adopted in September, 1979, gave permission to use this system only to single households living in remote hilly areas and in the cases where the special needs of certain kinds of sideline production make it necessary to use this system.

141. Jen-min jih-pao, January 22, 1981, p. 2; ibid., January 23, 1981, p. 2. The correspondent also contrasted the rapid adoption of this system to the difficulties encountered by the authorities in introducing the Tachai system of distributing rewards.
144. Ibid., September 28, 1980, p. 2. See also ibid., p. 1; ibid., October 13, 1980, p. 1. The ratio between labor and land in this team is low in comparison with many parts of China. Note that a yield per worker of 6,500 jin per year is equivalent to 542 jin per month. If the worker is able to double the rather low output of 168 jin per mu that the quota calls for, the resultant surplus retained is equivalent to a substantial monthly grain ration (k'ou-liang). If the worker could attain yields surpassing 500 jin per mu, he would receive a high monthly grain ration plus around ¥ 60 in cash. (Figuring 542 additional jin per month at about ¥ 0.11 per jin). But these yields may not be possible.

146. Ibid., March 2, 1981, p. 1. In Kiangsi, this system is called the "assignment of responsibility for field management to a farm worker and linkage of rewards and bonuses to yields." Ibid., March 13, 1981, p. 2.

148. Ibid., March 2, 1981, p. 1. The work-groups, households, and individual farm workers who undertake specialized tasks are known respectively as chuan-yeh tsu, chuan-yeh hu, and chuan-yeh jen.

149. Interviewees in China suggested that many teams or brigades which had adopted the system of "self-criticism and public discussion" in awarding work-points would still revert to the ting-o pao-kung system for both the summer and fall harvest in order to finish their work in time.
150. In Shansi, there were in 1980 120,000 production teams. 39.8% of these had adopted the system of awarding work-points according to fixed work-quotas for a series of related tasks to be performed over a period of time. In the rest, the teams were divided into work-groups and the system of fixing an output quota for each work-group was used, locally called lien-ch'an tao-tsu.

151. See Tsou, Blecher, Meisner, op. cit., pp. 185, 190.

152. Tachai had a population of 470 in 1977.


154. Three new dwellings at ¥ 210 each comes to ¥ 630, less the ¥ 190 realized from the sale of the old house, giving a total net cost of ¥ 440.


156. Ibid., May 1, 1980, p. 4.

157. The officials in Szechuan who gave Tsou these figures noted that this sample was not representative in that the per-capita income from collective sources was ¥ 95.4, far above the ¥ 80.1 for the province as a whole. But they insisted that the per-capita income from family sideline occupations was a little more representative.

158. Jen-min jih-pao, January 3, 1981, p. 1. This sample survey puts the net per-capita income of peasants from the collective units at ¥ 102, which is much higher than the figure of ¥ 83.4 given in the communique of the State Statistical Bureau.
159. To be sure, there are statistical problems in manipulating the data. Distortions may result from the use of midpoints of income range categories. The large category of ¥ 100 to ¥ 140 given in the 1976 data may in fact overstate the level of inequality in that distribution. The assumption that the highest open-ended categories in Table V had means of ¥ 160 is arbitrary. Nevertheless, we believe that these problems are relatively minor; it is hard for us to imagine a situation under which they could be concealing conceptually significant differences between the levels of inequality in the 1976 and 1979 situations.

160. Interview in August, 1980.


162. Tsou, Blecher, and Meisner, op. cit., p. 196.


166. Article by Ch'en Yung-kuei, Hung-ch'i, 1977, no. 10, pp. 24-25.

167. Interview, November 4, 1977. This belief in one form or another was shared by other party leaders who did not specialize in economic affairs.


A few days before we sent this paper to the printer, a dispatch and an article by a commentator of Jen-min jih-pao appeared in its April 15, 1981, issue. This dispatch from Taiyuan, Shansi, suggested that the progress made in the implementation of the "system of responsibility" had been very rapid. By this time, 86.8% of the production teams in Hsiyang had adopted one or another form of that system. Of these, 35% had adopted the system of dividing a team into work-groups and linking the incomes of the groups to their yields, although the brigade remains the basic unit of account. Thirty-eight percent had adopted the system of linking the incomes of the teams to their yields. One hundred ninety-two households living in remote hilly areas had adopted the system of "contract work with the household" (pao-ch'an tao-hu). Initial steps had been taken to implement the system of "contract work for specialized tasks." More important politically is the fact that the commentator gave high praise to Hsiyang county under the leadership of its new party committee in breaking the leftist ideological and political fetters of the past and
in achieving another "liberation." The new party committee was given credit for drawing a line between the errors committed by "individual leaders" and the actions of the other cadres and the masses, thus protecting the activism of the latter and encouraging them to continue to work in the spirit of hard struggle. This transformation was held up as an example to other localities where the cadres were still "poisoned" by leftist ideas (Jen-min jih-pao, April 15, 1981, p. 1).