

WALKING ON TWO LEGS



RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH CHINA

ELIZABETH AND GRAHAM JOHNSON

Abstract

This study of rural development is based on a visit to the Pearl River delta in China's southernmost province Kwangtung. The general character and organization of a number of rural people's communes are described and explanations are offered for the increases in production and other changes that have occurred in recent years. The information presented on social structure in rural China and the concepts of policy development and implementation will be of particular interest to policymakers and development workers in Third World countries who are concerned with the well-being of rural peoples.

Résumé

Cette étude sur le développement rural fait suite à une visite du delta de Pearl River dans la province de Kwangtung en Chine méridionale. On y décrit l'organisation et le caractère général d'un nombre de communes populaires et on y offre certaines explications de l'accroissement de la production et d'autres changements qui se sont opérés au cours des récentes années. Les informations sur la structure sociale de la Chine paysanne et les concepts qui ont présidé à l'élaboration et à la mise en oeuvre de politiques intéresseront surtout les dirigeants politiques et les spécialistes du développement, oeuvrant pour le bien-être des peuples ruraux dans les pays du tiers monde.

Walking on Two Legs

Rural Development in South China

Elizabeth and Graham Johnson

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Elizabeth and Graham Johnson, who have doctoral degrees in anthropology and sociology respectively, have research interests, among others, in rural development in China.

In 1973, Mr Johnson, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of British Columbia, was awarded a Travel and Research Grant in International Development from the International Development Research Centre to conduct research into the operation of rural people's communes in South China. Mrs Johnson, who accompanied her husband, was particularly concerned with the question of rural population and the role of women.

The results of their investigations are contained in this book.

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Preface

This book is about rural development in South China. It is based on a visit to the Pearl River delta region of China's southernmost province, Kwangtung, and is supplemented with information from a few academic sources. It describes the general character and organization of a number of rural people's communes, sets out the increase in production and other changes that have occurred in this part of rural South China, and examines some technical and nontechnical explanations for these changes.

Readers will find in this book — particularly in the chapter on Leadership and Organization and in the concluding chapter — a compilation of facts about, and an interpretation of, the Chinese model of rural development. The information we provide on social structure and the concept of policy development and implementation will hopefully be of special interest to policymakers and development workers in Third World countries who are preoccupied with the well-being of rural peoples.

A number of people made this small study possible. We would like to thank the staff of the Cultural Office of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Canada, who made arrangements for us to visit China. The China International Travel Service, Kwangchow Branch, made detailed arrangements. We particularly acknowledge the help of Wang Shao-mu, Chin Yun-chi, and Chen Wei-tung, who were our guides in Kwangtung. Our deep thanks also go to the various county and commune cadres who spent so much of their time talking to us and were extremely generous with their hospitality. Colleagues and friends made many comments on the manuscript in its various versions but in particular we thank Dr Anthony B. Dawson, of the University of British Columbia, who went through the entire manuscript with a critical eye. We also acknowledge the help of various relatives who looked after our children during our absence from Canada.

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Elizabeth and Graham Johnson

Chapter 1

Introduction

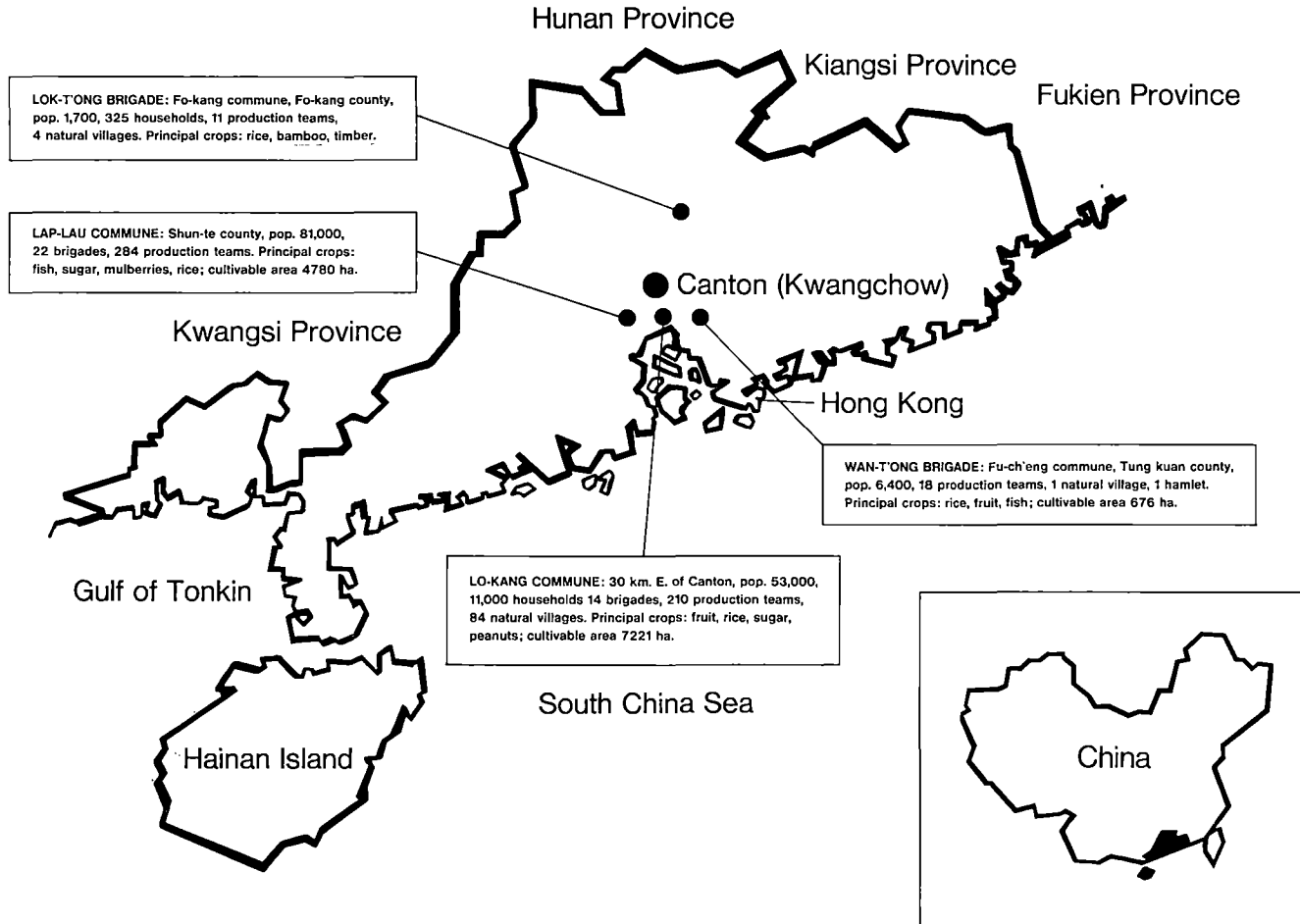
In the 25 years since the formation of the People's Republic of China a distinctive approach to economic development has emerged as part of the strategy for the overall transformation of Chinese society. Chinese development strategy had its origins in the theory and practice of guerrilla war, in which revolutionary activities were simultaneously pressed on many fronts and an entire population was mobilized for revolutionary ends. China's policy toward the transformation of the economy is not to emphasize development in a restricted sector, as the West or the Soviet Union emphasizes industry, but to foster coordinated development in all sectors. Such a policy is known in China as "walking on two legs." The policy has a number of specific implications. Its most crucial one is that industry and agriculture should develop simultaneously, and neither should be emphasized at the expense of the other.

This book is about development in rural South China. It is based on a visit to a part of China's southernmost province, Kwangtung. Kwangtung is a large province with a population of 42 million. Like much of China south of the Yangtze River, it is mountainous with relatively little flat land. The population tends to cluster in the river valleys and on the delta land. This study is primarily concerned with one such cluster — that of the Pearl River delta region. The delta is an area of 10 000 square kilometres with one of the densest concentrations of population in the whole of China. It lies within the tropics and is one of the great rice regions of China. For centuries the delta region has been a thriving commercial area and at its centre the provincial capital, Kwangchow (Canton), is the location of the twice-yearly trade fair that attracts businessmen from throughout the world.

Kwangtung in general has been culturally distinct from other parts of China and in many ways self-consciously so. It is linguistically quite diverse. Its dominant language (Cantonese) and its lesser ones (Hakka; Teochiu) are not merely mutually unintelligible but very distinct from the "common language" that is spoken throughout most of China. Kwangtung possesses distinct subcultural forms in terms of food, dress, and music. In the traditional past, large localized kin groups (lineages, although sometimes called clans) were a feature of most villages and market towns. Thus in many villages in Kwangtung there are to be found only one or two surnames among the male residents. This is very different from most parts of China. Kwangtung was settled late by Chinese standards. The dominant Cantonese often describe themselves as "people of T'ang" and not "people of Han," the general term for ethnic Chinese. There are thus many features of Kwangtung that give it a marked character.

The Pearl River delta has had a prominent role to play in recent Chinese history. It was the point of first contact with Europeans. The Opium War of 1840–42 was fought largely in the delta and the Treaty of Nanking, which stemmed from it, marked the beginning of the end of Imperial China and the onset of 100 years of Western domination of the Chinese economy that was to end in revolution. From the mid-nineteenth century on, the delta region was the source of much overseas migration to both Southeast Asia and the Americas. Coolie labour in the tin mines of Malaya, on the plantations of Cuba, in the goldfields of California, and on the railroads of Canada, was seen as an escape from the poverty of a densely populated and highly stratified rural existence. The delta was the birthplace of Dr Sun Yat-sen, its most

KWANGTUNG PROVINCE



notable migrant, the leader of the 1911 revolution that ended Imperial power in China.

Since 1949, changes have occurred in China as a whole that have had a profound impact upon Kwangtung and the delta. China experienced a revolution that involved the intense participation of a substantial portion of the population. In 1949, when the Liberation forces moved with ease into Kwangtung, one chapter of Chinese history ended and another began. In only a few short years, an economy with its base of individual peasant households, subject to the uncertainties and exploitation of a traditional system of agriculture, has been transformed. The key to that transformation has been a form of organization that is quite unique to China — the people's commune. In 1958, less than 10 years after the seizure of political power, the movement to establish people's communes exemplified the strategy of development in rural China. In that strategy the idea of *collective-ownership*, *collective-production*, and *collective-distribution* became the central element. The lone peasant household, labouring on scattered holdings and subject to the forces of nature and the class system, became a part of Chinese history.

This book attempts to look at some of the dramatic changes of the past two decades by examining aspects of four communes, or their subdivisions, brigades, in Kwangtung. Three of the communes are located in the delta. A fourth, by way of contrast, is in the mountainous north of the province. In addition, we include information on two counties, Shun-te and Tung-kuan, derived from several days' conversation with county-level administrators. Most of the information used in this study was collected in August 1973. The authors were invited, as Canadian anthropologists, to visit Kwangtung for the specific purposes of research. We had previously conducted research for 2 years (1968–70) in a Hong Kong village and we were thus somewhat aware of the nature of Cantonese (and Hakka) social life, albeit in a very different social context. One of us had visited North and Central China for 6 weeks in 1971 and we were therefore familiar with aspects of life in revolutionary China (see reference 1).

It is important to acknowledge that officials in China clearly understood our visit to be one for the specific purposes of research and provided the maximum opportunity to meet with those who could provide information. The procedures for conducting research, once the particular topic is seen as legitimate by the Chinese authorities, are smooth and efficient. "Conducting investigations" is a key part of the Chinese decision-making process, as we shall discuss below, and responsible officials seem to find little difficulty in adjusting to the presence of Western investigators. A frankness on the part of officials and their willingness to sit patiently for long periods and be subject to close questioning by visitors, make the research task both pleasurable and rewarding.

Itinerary

From the border town of Chamchun we proceeded by train to Kwangchow, passing through Pao-an and Tung-kuan *hsien* (county) into the municipal area of Kwangchow, which has extensive rural suburbs. From Kwangchow we went to the following places:

- (1) *Lo-kang commune*: a commune specializing in fruit growing, approximately 30 kilometres from Kwangchow and located within the municipal area.
- (2) *Shun-te county*: a county in the centre of the Pearl River delta. It is prominent for cash crops, especially sugar cane, freshwater fish, and silkworms. There we visited Lap-lau commune, the Kan-chu-tan hydroelectric power station, a silk filature mill in Jung-ch'i, and the Shun-te Electrical Engineering Factory in Ta-liang.
- (3) *Fo-shan*: an old established industrial city to the west of Kwangchow.
- (4) *Tung-kuan county*: a county to the east side of the delta, specializing in rice.

We visited Wan-t'ong brigade of Fu-ch'eng commune and the Tung-kuan Starch Factory in Tung-kuan city.

(5) *Fo-kang county*, Shao-kuan district: (Lok-t'ong Brigade of Fo-kang commune).

The areas listed above are, without doubt, prosperous and enjoy a generally favourable environment with good communications, good soil, and conditions that favour agricultural growth. For a possible contrast, in order to obtain a general overview of the situation in Kwangtung, we asked to visit a more remote and possibly poorer, mountain area. We went north to Fo-kang county. This was a useful experience, for we visited a brigade (Lok-t'ong Brigade of Fo-kang commune) composed entirely of Hakka speakers, a group that has traditionally lived in the poorer mountainous regions of the province, and that, in the past, was seriously discriminated against by the dominant Cantonese. This particular area had been extremely isolated, grain deficient, and its people dependent upon charcoal production to eke out a meagre living.

Procedures

We have noted that our visit was well understood by the responsible organizations in China as one for the specific purposes of research. As a consequence it was very carefully arranged that we should visit those places that seemed to illustrate some of the issues that we wanted to investigate and to meet those people who could best provide the kind of information that we wished to collect. The procedures were quite standard. At any organization that we visited (commune, factory, local administrative unit), we were met by responsible officials and given a briefing. The general account, which could last up to an hour, was invariably full of statistics and descriptions of local conditions, and was extremely useful. After the briefing was over it was possible to question the officials on particular points before leaving to visit the factory, commune, or whatever. After the visits, it was normal to return to the briefing room and continue questions for several hours.

Language

The common language (*p'u-t'ung-hua*) is the "official" language of China. It is based, more or less, on the speech that is standard in North China. In Kwangtung the local languages are diverse but Cantonese is dominant in the areas that we visited. We were dealing at a local level in which most (although not all) cadres were native speakers of Cantonese. As a rule, introductions were in the "common language." Our interpreter (we had the services of a guide, an interpreter, and a car and driver throughout our stay) indicated, immediately, that we understood Cantonese and in most cases our hosts switched languages. In only two significant cases were our conversations in the "common language." In Tung-kuan county our host was from Shantung and although a resident of the area since Land Reform (1953) and married to a Cantonese, was unable to speak Cantonese. He could understand it well, however, and although his presentations were in the "common language" his colleagues all spoke Cantonese. In the Hakka area of the north, our host used the "common language," although when he spoke to a group of young people who had moved to the area from Kwangchow, he used Cantonese, without an accent. As a Hakka, he might have felt that Cantonese was not the language he should use in a formal situation.

The issue of language is important. To use the native tongue of the informants was to create a degree of rapport that was critical. In many instances, a colloquialism gave a distinct flavour to the discussion. We used the services of our interpreter for the sake of efficiency and required his aid to deal with certain technical terms. We were, however, able to check his interpretation with little difficulty, to ask questions without recourse to the interpreter, and in some instances to dispense with the interpreter completely.

In the following pages we will attempt to summarize some of the issues that seem to us important. We will begin with a description of a commune in Shun-te county. From our general knowledge, and from our observation of ten or more communes in various parts of China, it seems typical in terms of its organization. It is larger than most and the economy is distinctive of Shun-te. To describe one commune lays the basis for a rather more general discussion of such topics as agricultural production, leadership, health and welfare, and the role of women in a rural situation. The crucial question concerns the kind of developmental path that China is following and the concrete steps that are being taken to realize certain abstract ideals. Our observations suggest that in the areas we visited some impressive achievements have been made. This is not to say that the millenium has been achieved in China. Our Chinese hosts were the first to admit that there are problems that are unresolved and difficulties which lie ahead. The Chinese road to development is not easy nor is it necessarily universally applicable. It is, however, significant and worthy of the closest study.



Approach to Ng-tei-chai village, Lap-lau commune.

Chapter 2

Lap-lau Commune

Lap-lau commune is one of 10 communes in Shun-te county, an hour's journey from the county town Ta-liang, where we stayed during our visit to Shun-te. Ta-liang is quiet and beautiful, with large trees and traditional-style buildings painted in delicate pastel shades. We drove out from Ta-liang early in the morning past shops and factories and along roads filled with typical Chinese traffic — bicycles laden with produce; buses; trucks; carts; and people on foot carrying food and vegetables home from the market. The road in the countryside is surfaced with yellow sand, well maintained, and lined with trees, as are most roads in China. These offer shade to travelers and some relief from the oppressive summer heat. In the countryside, roads become less common, for Shun-te is deep in the heart of the Pearl River delta, and the typical mode of transportation is by water. People can be seen traveling along the streams in small wooden boats, often piled high with goods. The vegetation and crops on all sides are lush and green, for the climate is moist and semitropical. There are large fields of sugarcane, rice, hemp, and mulberry bushes, which are used to feed silkworms, one of the most important products of the area. The fields are interspersed with large freshwater fishponds. The land is meticulously shaped into fields and fishponds. The dry land has been carefully leveled to provide the maximum possible crop growing area. Every centimetre seems to be planted with one crop or another. Even the narrow dikes separating the fishponds are lined with banana trees. Groups of people work in the fields, plowing, planting, or weeding. In some of the fishponds, teams of men draw their nets in large circles and move in to enclose and capture the freshwater fish. Children are busy tending large numbers of geese or ducks. A few are working in pairs collecting twigs and leaves for fuel. People everywhere seem busy with one task or another.

From the road, the large compact village settlements, so typical of much of the region, are not immediately obvious. Substantial brick houses built in the traditional style sometimes appear singly, or in small clusters, giving the impression of a settlement pattern that is somewhat dispersed. Large villages do exist but they are often located on waterways rather than on roads.

Economy and Organization

The administrative centre of Lap-lau commune, a large new building of white painted brick with meeting rooms and an auditorium, is to be found in a substantial older settlement with enormous traditional buildings that were formerly ancestral temples. We were met by two of the commune cadres, or administrative personnel, who were to be our guides during our visit to the commune. They provided us with basic information about the commune, answered our questions, and took us to see fish harvesting, a silkworm-raising station, a silk embroidery factory, the commune hospital, and other aspects of the commune. We were told that the cultivated area of the commune covers 72 square kilometres and that fishponds make up half that area. The other major crops of the commune are sugarcane (1607 hectares) and mulberries (673 hectares). The amount of rice grown is very small (100 hectares).

A large map on the wall showed that the commune is bordered on two sides by the West and North rivers, and that an extensive network of dikes and electrical pumping and drainage stations control the water level and prevent flooding. The population of the commune, which includes two towns as well as numerous rural villages, is 81 000, an increase from 51 000 in 1949. Of this population, about one-fifth are employed in industry and the balance in agriculture. The commune has a number of small industrial and service enterprises, all of which are owned collectively by the people of the commune and operated by them. (There are no privately owned industries or businesses in China.) These include a farm tool and machinery repair shop, a print shop, cotton weaving and plastics factories, a pharmaceutical plant, a silk embroidery workshop, oil-processing plants, an agricultural research station, and others. Each of these plants employs 200–300 workers. In 1972 the output value of the commune industries was 3.5 million yuan and that of its agriculture was 16.4 million yuan (1 yuan (100 fen) = ca. Can. \$0.53).

Lap-lau, like all communes, has three levels of organization, the production team, the brigade, and the commune itself. Its 284 production teams are the basic units of organization. These often coincide with natural villages, and include a nucleus of people as well as an area of land. Each team is responsible for farming the land under its control, and the income of the agricultural workers of the production team is determined by the value of the land's production. The income of each worker is calculated in work points, the number given each day being determined by the arduousness of the task performed, the skill required, and the quality of the work done, as well as the spirit in which it is done. These work points are added up at intervals and cash payment is given as well as a grain ration, which is allocated on the basis of need. People doing heavy manual work receive the highest ration. The value of the work point is determined by the value of the production team's output in any given year. Most of the people who are employed in industries, however, are paid regular monthly wages.

The production teams of Lap-lau commune are combined into 22 brigades. The brigades are responsible for coordinating the work of the production teams and for

Harvest and purchase of fish, Lap-lau commune.



organizing large-scale projects, such as irrigation works. They also run some small industries and workshops, health stations, and all of the commune primary schools. In addition, they are responsible for public security and for organizing the militia.

The work of the 22 brigades is coordinated by the commune itself. The commune also runs the larger industries and plants and is responsible for the hospital and the middle school. It also provides a link with the next higher level of organization, the county, communicating information and production plans down from the county and up from the brigades and teams.

Other administrative levels lie beyond the county. The highest level of local administration in China is the province, which has the overall task of coordinating the work of subprovincial administrative units and communicating directly with the central government. The level of administration directly under the province is the "district," known as the "special district" before 1971. There are eight such districts in Kwangtung province, including the distinctive administrative unit of Hainan Island. Large urban centres are classed as "municipalities" and encompass substantial areas of countryside, where commune forms of organization are to be found. Lesser urban centres, such as county towns, and larger marketing centres within counties (*chen*) are administered separately.

Certain agencies from higher administrative levels are thus to be found on the commune, such as a silk-purchasing station run by the province, which receives and processes silk cocoons from the brigades. In addition a provincial-level purchasing boat visits the teams to collect and transport the fish produced there. The commune also owns boats that transport produce to Kwangchow and upstream to Chaoch'ing and Wu-chou.

History

The history of the commune, as described to us, is similar in outline to that of other Chinese communes. Before 1949, the ownership of land in the area was very inequitably distributed. Some families had large amounts of productive land whereas others had little or none and supported themselves, as best they could, by working for others. The conditions of life for most were hard and death from starvation was not uncommon. The famine year of 1937 is remembered vividly. In that year, a thousand families starved to death and a further 2400 were forced to flee the area. Private ownership of land led to a good deal of inefficiency in the system of agricultural production. Compared to the present, fields and fishponds were small and yields and output low. The area economy, then as now, was concentrated on the cash crops of sugar, silk, and fish. Silkworm raising was a domestic industry and a good deal of living space was given over to the silkworms. Raising silkworms is a delicate task. In the past, the worms were often lost to disease. After the worms have made their cocoons it is essential to maintain a minimum temperature of 30 °C. Many households were unable to afford the fuel and suffered repeated financial losses. In addition, the prices of silk cocoons, fish, and sugarcane were fixed by forces outside peasant communities, over which the peasants had little or no control. Before 1949, therefore, the living was good for a few but hard and uncertain for most.

In late 1949, revolution came to Kwangtung. The first task in the countryside was to deal, through land reform, with the question of pronounced inequality. Work teams came into the area to mobilize the peasants, and to explain the policy of land reform. Meetings were organized and the peasants were urged to confront the landlords and rich peasants, that is, those who had lived by exploiting the labour of others.¹ In 1949, in the area that is now Lap-lau commune, there were 920 individuals who were classified as landlords and rich peasants. These included some who

¹ The social categories in rural China at the time of land reform were based on Mao Tse-tung's categorization (see reference 2).

owned land in their own right or who were dominant in the affairs of the large localized kinship groups, the lineages, which were an important feature of the Kwangtung social landscape before Liberation. The struggles against landlords and rich peasants were acute. In 1952 their lands were seized and then redistributed equally among all households of the area, including the households of former landlords and rich peasants.²

It rapidly became clear that a mere equalization of landholding was not in itself sufficient to change fundamentally the nature of agriculture in Lap-lau. Individual landholding was inadequate and inefficient. Differences among families in terms of tools, draft animals, even labour power, could easily lead to continued economic and social inequalities. The seizure of political power was thus only the beginning of a fundamental social change. The peasants were encouraged by Party activists (cadres) to see that only cooperative ventures could lead to a transformation of agriculture and the entire rural economy. At first, cooperation was a simple sharing of tools, animals, and labour through "mutual aid teams." By 1955, more permanent forms of organization in the shape of cooperatives were formed. In the beginning, peasant households retained land ownership and took out shares in the cooperative corresponding to the amount of land, labour, and tools that they contributed. The cooperating peasants shared in the total product at harvest time. The effects of cooperation were encouraging and both yields and output began to improve. But even a cooperative unit as large as a village, although a tremendous advance, could not deal with the many problems of Chinese peasant agriculture. For example, irrigation, large-scale fish cultivation, education, and the need for scientific cultivation, demanded larger units of cooperation. After 1956, a larger scale "advanced cooperative" encompassing several villages became typical. The new unit concerned itself not merely with production but with marketing as well. In 1958, yet another shift occurred in the scale of cooperation. Between August and October of 1958, rural China was caught up in a movement to develop people's communes. Lap-lau commune became one of 10 communes in Shun-te county.³

The commune movement ushered in a new concept of social organization in rural China. The new organization was even larger than the "advanced cooperatives" of 1956. It was responsible not merely for the coordination of agricultural production but also for education and welfare services, and for development of small-scale industry. It was to play an important role in the organization of the local militia and to become a unit of civil administration. There were difficulties during the early years. The sheer speed of the transformation in rural China left many problems unresolved. Inexperience and uncertainty, coupled with disastrous weather over much of China in the years 1959-61, caused major difficulties and led to changes in the initial conception of the commune. In many parts of China, the commune was reduced in size and certain responsibilities were transferred to lower levels of commune organization. Above all, the production team, which, in the Pearl River delta region at least, was identified with the natural village, became responsible for major production decisions and for distributing the net income of the team. The organizational difficulties of the communes were largely resolved by 1962 and resulted in the structure that prevails today.

In Lap-lau the 1973 boundaries of the commune are identical with those of 1958. There were some boundary changes between 1959 and 1962, when, in China as a

² The best description of the process of land reform is to be found in Hinton (3). It deals with one village in Shensi province over a 6-month period when the work teams went through the difficult task of mobilizing peasants in a situation probably a good deal worse, in terms of sheer human suffering, than experienced by the peasants of Shun-te.

³ Vogel (4) details the process of organizational change in agriculture in Kwangtung province between land reform and the formation of the people's communes. Schurman (5) gives the general picture for China as a whole; see especially pp. 404-500.



Lap-lau commune hospital.

whole, the size of communes was reduced (6). During this period the communes of Shun-te became physically smaller but in 1963–64 it appears that they were reallocated and returned to 1958 dimensions.⁴ The map of the commune showed quite clearly that the brigades are often ecologically quite distinct and surrounded on all sides by water. Geographically, they are identical to the advanced form of cooperative that existed during the 1956–58 period. There is also some suggestion that they coincide with the pre-Liberation unit of political cooperation, the *hsiang*. The teams are, of course, also identified with a “natural” unit, the village, which in the 1953–56 period formed the basis for the elementary cooperative. Lap-lau itself is coincident with a traditional “natural unit” — the market system (7). Like the other communes in Shun-te it is virtually identical with the “district” (*ch’u*) of the early Republican period (8).

A Peasant Family

Following our introduction to the commune, we went walking to see the harvesting of fish. Our route carried us on paths between the fishponds lined with banana trees, mulberry bushes, and soybeans. We passed small plots of land planted in vegetables, bananas, and melons. These are the “private plots,” which constitute about 5% of the commune’s cultivable land, allocated by the production team to households for their own use. Apart from vegetables, fodder crops are grown, especially for pig raising, which is typically, although not exclusively, a private rather than collective

⁴ We are grateful to Dr W.L. Parish for this information.

activity. In Shun-te, some peasants grow cash crops on private plots. Ducks and chickens are also often raised privately. We also passed several hamlets of substantial houses, many of them new, but built in the style typical of the area, with traditional ornamentation on their eaves. Most of these houses had brightly coloured papers pasted on their doors with sayings on them of political significance, in the place traditionally occupied by pictures of guardian "door gods." People were busy with domestic tasks, washing clothes and looking after younger children, who greeted us by clapping as we passed.

Returning from the fish harvest, we visited a family living in a compact village of 37 households (272 people) called Ng-tei-chai ("Small Territory of the Ng"). Like almost all the families in the village, the one we visited was surnamed Ng. The families in the village all claim descent from a common ancestor, whose descendants have lived in the village for many generations. The largest structure in the village is a handsome brick hall, where formerly the villagers would gather to worship their ancestors. The old lineage has lost its former religious base and its political and economic power disappeared with land reform. The hall is now a warehouse and meeting place, for the village now constitutes a production team. The Ng still live together, but ties of common descent and ancestor worship are no longer the principal bases for their solidarity. Rather, working together on their collectively owned land or raising fish in their collectively run fishponds are the bases for cooperation. As if to underscore the importance of collective production in their lives, there is a large board at the entrance to the village that lists various agricultural tasks. On nails by each of the tasks are hung bamboo slips with the names of village residents designating their work for the day. Half were surnamed Ng. The remainder were of mixed surname. They were the wives of the village men who had married into the village.

The houses in Ng-tei-chai are close together so as to conserve agricultural land; they are separated only by narrow paved lanes. These lanes and the houses themselves were immaculate. Despite the prevalence of pigs and chickens and some dogs and cats, and the lack of a sewer system (human and animal waste is conserved as fertilizer), there were no unpleasant odours and only a few flies or other pests. This is in striking contrast to similar lanes in rural villages in Hong Kong, with their unsavoury appearance and odours. In Ng-tei-chai there are wells from which the families draw water, and all of the houses have electricity, as do most (90%) houses in the commune. Electricity is used only for lighting, as families do not own appliances.

We were warmly received by Mr Ng and his wife (ages 26 and 23) and family. The household consists of the young couple and their year-old daughter, his younger sister, and his elderly mother. They were all dressed simply and comfortably, and the older Mrs Ng wore a traditional-style dark suit. Mr Ng explained to us some aspects of their livelihood and answered our questions. His wife and mother contributed additional information and questioned us with great interest about life in Canada, particularly about child-care facilities.

Mr Ng works in agriculture and his wife does silk embroidery at home for the commune workshop. His mother earns seven work points a day working in the production team day-care centre, which his daughter attends for a fee of 1 yuan per month. His younger sister is employed in a silkworm-raising workshop. The total household income was about 1200 yuan (\$636.00) in 1972, with an additional income of about 200 yuan (\$106.00) from the sale of privately raised pigs and produce from their private plot. They are given some income every month, in the form of a ration of grain and other foodstuffs and for those earning work points rather than salaries, accounts are settled at the end of the year when the proceeds from the harvest are known. There is no income tax (about 5% of the total crop goes as tax to the state) and the family has few expenses. The household participates in the commune "cooperative medical scheme," which has been in operation since 1968. Each member pays 30 fen (\$0.16) per month for complete medical and dental coverage.

They can grow most of their own vegetables, raise pigs and chickens, and catch fish and shrimp in the streams in their spare time. Prices are stable, and are virtually

unchanged since the early 1950s. Mr Ng has been able to buy a watch, and the family has a sewing machine. Manufactured goods are rather expensive, and the Ngs have not yet bought a bicycle, which is less necessary here than in other areas where water transport is less convenient.

Like most rural Chinese families, the Ng own their own house, which they built in 1967 for about 1200 yuan (\$636.00). It is simple, but solid, with three or four small rooms. The walls are of unfinished brick, with wooden partitions. The windows are not glazed, but have wooden shutters that can be closed in bad weather. The room where they received us had several simple stools and chairs and a table, with a thermos bottle and a number of family photographs on a cabinet. There were brightly coloured posters on the walls, and embroidered curtains in the doorways. Outside the door is a shaded courtyard, with a large, brick, wood-burning cooking stove under a roof at one side. At the other side is a pigsty with two fat pigs, and a flock of chickens runs about the courtyard.

Although the Ng family lives in an area that is more prosperous than many in China, they are typical of Chinese rural families in that they have a regular income and an adequate standard of living. Were they unable to work, the family would be guaranteed support by the production team. If they were sick, they would have access to basic medical care in their brigade, and more specialized treatments at the commune, county, or even the provincial level. Adequate medical care is not merely available, it is also very cheap. In the event of natural disaster, such as flood or drought, the Ng family could turn to the commune or higher levels for help. China is still a poor country, with a large population, but families in China, of which Mr Ng's is not untypical, enjoy a kind of economic and social security that was unheard of in the old society.

Mr Ng talked a little of his family's life before Liberation. His father was a landless labourer. His usual job was to catch fish in a landlord's pond. His mother had been a maid-servant. The family had lived, not in a pleasant brick house, but in a straw hut. Before Liberation over 2000 families lived in straw huts. Mr Ng recalled that their typical food had been rice porridge; even fish was a rare treat. His father had died shortly before Liberation. He was convinced that if Liberation had not been achieved at the end of 1949, he and his two sisters would have been scattered and subject to an uncertain fate. Sitting in the family's cool and simply furnished living room, we understood how clearly their changed circumstances demonstrated the meaning of revolutionary change for China's peasantry.

Lap-lau is but one commune among the thousands that make up rural China. Its population is larger than most — enormous, in fact, by North China standards. Its emphasis on fish, silkworm, and sugar production makes it typical only of Shun-te. But in many other respects it is typical of rural China. Significant changes have occurred in rural China in a mere quarter century. The following chapters will take up some of the elements that are part of the changing definition of the life of commune members in Lap-lau.



Irrigation project, Lo-kang commune.

Chapter 3

Production

Agricultural Production

The lush and verdant Kwangtung countryside shares the characteristics of subtropical rice agriculture with other parts of Asia but has added features. Large fields, the almost universal presence of electricity and electric water pumps, a wide variety of crops other than rice, and extensive reforestation are all distinctive. The collective character of production can be gauged from the concentrated efforts of work teams on various agricultural tasks such as plowing, transplanting, or weeding; however, certain shortcomings in the progress of Chinese agriculture, even in a "high and stable yield area" like the delta, can also be noticed. There is a general absence of mechanized plowing. The typical method of plowing is by buffalo and only a few tractors are at work in the fields. Hand tractors are common, but used more for transportation than plowing. In Lap-lau commune, for example, only 30% of the fields are mechanically plowed. Transplanting is still wholly the preserve of human labour. Mechanical transplanting is only at an experimental stage. Even at harvest time, traditional methods of threshing by hand seem most common. These shortcomings are recognized by Chinese officials who emphasize the particular attention that the question of mechanization warrants. The overwhelming impression, however, is of an agrarian economy successfully grappling with its various problems. There are difficulties and unresolved problems but there are solid achievements over a wide area.

The achievements of Kwangtung agriculture are indicated to some degree in Appendix 1, which details the principal economic crops of the areas we visited, and indicates the generally high productivity of agriculture in the Pearl River delta area. The performance of Lok-t'ong brigade in the mountainous north is impressive, although its economic base is much narrower than that of the delta area. It produces enough grain for its needs and has a small surplus that it can sell to the state. The brigade's major income is derived from timber and timber products, especially charcoal. The production figures detailed in Appendix 1 are those for *collective* production. A small proportion of total land under cultivation is reserved for noncollective production. This is allocated to the "private plots," which are cultivated for the private use of peasant households (see p. 28).

Changes in productivity

Agricultural productivity in the areas we visited is high.⁵ It is clear that, over time, substantial increases in productivity have been made. In Lo-kang commune a pre-Liberation rice yield of 3.0 tons per hectare had increased to 5.73 tons per hectare by 1965 and in 1972 was 7.42 tons per hectare. Fruit production has grown from a pre-Liberation level of 3000 tons to its present figure of 10 500 tons. Appendices

⁵ The calculations by Stavis (9) of grain yields give a general comparison. It is, of course, difficult to compare small regions with aggregate data, but the comparison is, nonetheless, instructive. *Rice Yields in Various Countries (tons/ha)*: China (high stable areas 4.2, regular 3.0, average 3.2); Japan 5.3; Taiwan 3.4; India 1.7; USA 5.3; Egypt 5.3.

2, 3, and 4 present changes over time for Shun-te and Tung-kuan counties. Similar records can be stated for other smaller areas we visited.

Changes in the agricultural economy

Progress in agriculture in the Pearl River delta has been substantial since Liberation. This is not to suggest that increases in both productivity and output have been constant over the 25-year period. Information from our visit and from other sources (9) suggest that growth has been most rapid since the early 1960s when the major organizational difficulties of the communes were resolved.

It is possible to suggest a number of explanations for the success of agricultural development in the areas we visited. Two explanations are technical and derive from the programmatic nature of the "Eight Character Charter" for agriculture and the "Four Changes."⁶ These are: (1) an increase in the area under cultivation; and (2) an increased efficiency in land utilization due to irrigation and water control, greater fertilization, and what can be termed "scientific cultivation." Any traditional agriculture must adopt procedures similar to those used by the economies of Western Europe, North America, and Japan during various stages in their economic transformation. The unique aspect of the Chinese situation is the social context in which it is made. Thus a third and fundamentally important explanation of increased productivity is the fact that changes in ideology have produced significant innovations in organization and leadership skills.

Increases in area under cultivation

Several of the areas that we visited had *increased* the amount of land under cultivation.⁷ Such reclamation might be impossible for independent farmers and yet can be efficiently carried out under a system of collective agriculture (see Yang (10) for a discussion of the difficulties of large-scale reclamation in the pre-Liberation period). In Lo-kang commune, with a total area under cultivation of 7400 hectares, some 1267 hectares have been brought under cultivation since 1949. This represents a gain of 17%. In Tung-kuan county, increases in land under cultivation have contributed greatly to increases in output (Appendix 5).

Techniques for this purpose include leveling and terracing uneven or hilly land formerly difficult to farm, and planting hilly or mountainous areas with crops not traditionally cultivated in the region. Thus Wan-t'ong brigade has planted many previously barren hillsides with stands of bamboo and fruit trees. It has a large plantation of 220 000 cedar trees that were formerly grown only in the mountains. Draining and diking low-lying riverside areas is another important reclamation technique. Both Wan-t'ong brigade and Lo-kang commune have brought substantial areas under

⁶ In many aspects of Chinese life certain phrases appear as a short-hand way of conveying important concepts or methods of approach to problems. Slogans such as "Serve the People", or, most recently, "Criticize Lin (Piao), Criticize Confucius" are the culmination of a good deal of effort in the definition of particular issues. There are two phrases that are especially important for the development of agricultural production and that refer almost exclusively to the necessity for certain technical changes in Chinese agriculture. One phrase is the "Eight Character Charter," which details the items that must receive attention if agricultural production is to increase. These are: (1) land reclamation; (2) water control and irrigation; (3) fertilizers; (4) improved varieties of seeds; (5) control of pests; (6) improved field management; (7) improved farm tools; (8) suitable spacing of plants.

A second phrase is the "Four Changes," which refers to the need to develop electrification, irrigation, mechanization, and the use of chemicals. Taken together the two phrases detail the central technical questions that Chinese agriculture must set for itself in order to transform itself to meet the needs not merely of a growing population but also of a changing economy.

⁷ Total area under cultivation: 50 000 hectares irrigated land; 16 667 hectares dry land; 54 667 hectares afforested land (49 333 hectares reafforested since 1949).

cultivation by this method. In Lo-kang in 1956, for example, a project to join embankments transformed 40 hectares of sandy foreshore into irrigated paddy.

Increases in the efficiency of land utilization

The area under rice cultivation in Tung-kuan county may have fallen slightly since 1949, a fact that indicates greater diversification in the use of land. A slight reduction of land under rice (perhaps 5%) has been more than offset by yield increases. Diversification is one method to improve the conditions of farming. The other major ones are water conservation, pumping and drainage, and scientific cultivation.

Water conservation is in some ways the most dramatic of the many changes in Chinese farming. Pumping and drainage, although less dramatic, are equally crucial. Shun-te county is true delta land and 60% of the area is under water. A cadre told us:

"Before Liberation in 1949, most of the cultivable land was regularly flooded. Even at Liberation, Ta-liang (the county town) was inundated by flood. Since the commune movement (1958) we have paid attention to building dikes. The dikes are now 525 kilometres long and can solve the flood problems of 92% of the land."

Today, some 80% of the cultivable land has (electric) pumps. The 106 electric pumping-drainage stations have a total capacity of 12093 kilowatts. The great bulk of the pumps and electric generators is produced within the county. Tung-kuan county boasts an extensive system of pumping and generating stations. There are now 2500 such stations with a total capacity of 45000 kilowatts, benefiting an area of 35933 hectares.

Different organizational levels deal with the problems of water conservation in different ways. During the summer of 1959 in Wan-t'ong brigade, torrential rains caused severe flooding throughout the village and destroyed 500 houses. A flood-control project was launched that took 6 years, resulting in the building of a dike 9 kilometres long. A former dragon boat racing area became a land area of high fertility and some 146.7 hectares were added to the available land, a gain that has contributed much to the impressive grain yield in the brigade.⁸

In Lo-kang commune the questions of water conservation and irrigation have been key ones since the middle 1950s. After the commune was organized in 1958 it took as an important guide the slogan "Fruit Growers Don't Eat State Grain." A medium-size reservoir with a capacity of 8.2 million cubic metres was completed in 1958. The period 1959-65 saw the completion of 80 small ponds and reservoirs with a capacity in excess of 2 million cubic metres. A network of 26 pumping and drainage stations with 110 sluice gates was completed in low lying areas. By 1965, 2667 hectares had been brought into gravity irrigation and the possibility of realizing the slogan was possible. By 1965 Lo-kang was no longer grain deficient. In 1972 it had a grain surplus of 14000 tons. In the spring of 1973, a 670-metre tunnel was completed that brings irrigation water from the reservoir and provides water power for two small hydroelectric power stations. Some 250 workers from the eight brigades benefiting from the project were employed in its construction.

A more massive project is the Kan-chu-tan Hydro Electric Power Station in Shun-te county. It is a county level project at the junction of the North and West rivers that has utilized a slight tidal difference of 1.5 metres and a slight narrowing of the river to generate electricity. Traditionally the river was important for navigation, with boats moving from Chiang-men to Wu-chou, and yet navigation was subject to the hazards of a rocky river bed and an irregular water supply. Therefore the initial emphasis of the project was to make the river safe for shipping. Beginning in 1971, the development of greater energy resources (perhaps as a consequence of an increase in the number of factories in the county) became an important issue. A two-stage project was thus instituted. The first stage was completed in May 1972 and consisted

⁸ Total land: 1972 — paddy 265.3 hectares; dry land 254.1 hectares; fruit 124.9 hectares; fish 33.3 hectares. 1958 — paddy 113.3 hectares; dry land 146.9 hectares.



Terraced fields with rice and other crops.

of a dredged artificial canal (360 metres long, 75 metres wide) for a hydroelectric power station with 10 sets of generators, and a generating capacity of 6 million kilowatts. A lock was also constructed during this phase to accommodate shipping of up to 100 tons. The second phase, under construction in 1973, and scheduled for completion in March 1974, added a second power station, in the middle of the river, to increase the generating capacity.

This project is seen as an important example of local self-reliance. In terms of investment, some 6 million yuan were generated within the county, and the higher levels of government provided only 100 000 yuan. The turbines and generators were made at factories within the county, apart from the ball bearings and gears. Most important of all, the labour was recruited from throughout the county. Each production team in the county sent two workers and paid the workers from the collective allocation at that level, although payments were supplemented by a rice ration from the county level. At its height, 7000 workers were engaged in the project. It was largely a local effort. Only two engineers and four technicians gave "expert" advice.

The project, overall, has three main aims: (1) to serve the energy needs of the county: after the first stage it was able to supply approximately 60% of the needs of the agricultural sector of the county; (2) to improve navigation; and (3) to ease the problems of water control lower down the river.

In the northern mountain area, attention has also been paid to the generation of power. Lok-t'ong brigade is dotted with seven small hydroelectric projects. All the plants have been designed by an "educated youth" who went to the area in 1958. The power generated is used for electric light, which is universal, and also for driving agricultural machinery, such as rice-milling machines.

Scientific cultivation

Water conservation and irrigation have, along with crop diversification, been extremely important items in productivity increases. A more rational and scientific approach to crop production has also had an important effect. Monocropping was probably a dominant characteristic of the south Chinese peasant economy. Crop rotation and intercropping are aspects of a new approach. After experimental testing, new crops can be introduced. We have commented upon the introduction of peanuts and cassava on a large scale in Tung-kuan county. Wan-t'ong brigade has an experimental orchard that is important for introducing new fruit strains, especially of oranges but also of papaya and mangoes; there have also been attempts to introduce apples. It was distinctly peculiar to see a young apple orchard surrounded by rice fields and an array of tropical fruits. Like other communes in the county, Lap-lau has a scientific research station that is responsible for developing experimental crops and new strains and for testing fertilizers and pest controls. The organizational structure of the commune facilitates the rapid dissemination of both information derived from its own research activities and the results of research conducted at the provincial, regional, and county levels. Meetings are held at the local (team) level to discuss the problems of production and, with a largely literate population, such information can be easily communicated and explained. A wide array of books on certain technical aspects of agriculture are available at local bookstores. We saw books on pig diseases, poultry raising, the use of organic pesticides, and the application of the experience of the national model, Tachai production brigade, to specific problems in local (Kwangtung) agriculture.

Two of Shun-te's most important cash crops are fish and silkworm cocoons. Prior to the collectivization of agriculture, both activities were, like rice production, domestic tasks. Domestic production operated in an uncertain environment and involved various risks. Fish disease could not be adequately controlled, pond sizes were not rationalized, and various species of fish were raised together. In domestic silk production, fluctuations in temperature and silkworm disease limited output. The effect of collectivization has been substantial for both cash crops.

One of the first tasks after the formation of the communes was to flatten the bunds and merge small fishponds into large ones. The attempt to create fishponds with a minimum area of 8-10 mou (0.53-0.67 hectare) remains a wintertime activity. With an increasing rationalization of the ponds themselves has come a greater concern for the breeding of fish. Fish fry are scientifically raised in commune hatcheries so that a supply of fish is available when needed. The fish are raised in a succession of three ponds, so that fish in any one pond are similar in size. Formerly, a variety of fish inhabited a pond. Now, there is a policy of using different ponds for different types of fish. New breeds of fish have been introduced — most recently Vietnamese carp. The costs of production, it was reported, are now 3 yuan per mou (1 mou = ca. 0.067 hectare) a decline from 9 yuan per mou in 1958. The question of fish disease has also been a topic of close investigation. The Research Centre for Aquatic Products at the provincial and regional levels has sent technicians into the local area on a continuing basis. It seems that only 20-30% of fish fry survived to maturity in 1958-59. The rate is now 90%, an increase that is in part a consequence of a vaccine injected into each fish as it is transferred from one pond to another.

The food supply for fish is still quite traditional — composted grass, silkworm waste, and night soil. Some 7.5 tons of night soil are daily trucked in from Kwang-chow. Shun-te is notable for the enormous numbers of public lavatories that are built over the fish ponds. (Needless to say, the bottoms of the ponds provide an excellent fertilizer. One important element in agricultural work in Shun-te is to spread the silt from the ponds onto the sugar fields, mulberry beds, and the stands of banana trees).

Silkworm raising has also become an important collectively organized task. It seems often to be organized on a brigade basis, although certain stages of the process, and certainly the cultivation of mulberries, occur within the team. In Lap-lau commune, production is highly organized. The early stages of production are carried

out under tightly controlled conditions in a large brick building. Silkworm larvae are fed coarser mulberry leaves as they approach maturity and at 12 days are transferred to an outdoor mat-shed where they are fed unchopped leaves. At 18 days, they are transferred to special racks until they form cocoons. Charcoal fires keep the temperature at 30 °C or higher. Careful attention has been given to both the actual raising of the worms and the kinds of leaves that they eat. Certain new strains of mulberries have been introduced and since 1958, the per hectare yield of mulberries has increased by almost 100% to between 45 and 60 tons.

Fertilizers and pesticides

Fertilization is an important aspect of agricultural production. Traditional sources of fertilizer (composted night soil, organic waste, and silt from the fishponds and river bottoms) still predominate in south Chinese agriculture. In Shun-te, where there is a shortage of organic fertilizer as a consequence of the requirements for fish production, rice is fertilized with equal amounts of composted rice stalks and nitrogen fixing plants used as green fertilizer. Some 15 tons per hectare of this organic fertilizer is applied to the rice crop, which, we were told, "is not enough." Sugarcane and mulberries require slightly more organic fertilizer than rice and receive between 15 and 22.5 tons per hectare. A substantial part of this traditional fertilizer is silt, which is applied three times yearly to sugarcane and six times to mulberries. In the fruit-growing commune of Lo-kang, careful management of the fruit trees and the application of substantial amounts of fertilizer are necessary. One of the most important organic fertilizers is the residue from soybeans. In addition, urea is sprayed around the leaves.

Chemical fertilizer accounts for only a small part of the total fertilizer used. In Shun-te county mulberries receive about 750 kilograms per hectare of chemical fertilizer, rice and sugarcane about 425 kilograms.

Tung-kuan county produces about 40% of the chemical fertilizer used in the county. Total production in 1972 was 30 000 tons of which nitrogenous fertilizer accounted for 2800 tons. Part of the nitrogenous fertilizer (30%) was sold outside the county; 23 000 tons of ammonium sulfate were purchased outside the county.

Certain areas — Shun-te and Lo-kang were noteworthy — have begun to experiment with bacterial fertilizers. In a related development, organic and bacterial pesticides have been the subject of close investigation and, in Lo-kang, have been used extensively. Lichees in Lo-kang are subject to damage from insects that attack the blossoms and seriously affect the fruit. It is necessary to spray the fruit trees with insecticide although the favoured method is to introduce a predator bee (or wasp), the larvae of which eat the eggs of the insect that causes the damage though it itself is harmless.⁹

Diversification of crops

Sideline production is one important indicator of the success of agricultural development in the delta region. In general, self-sufficiency in grain is a prerequisite for a diversification of the rural economy. Once this has been achieved, it is possible to turn to other agricultural products, such as cash crops or livestock, to the processing of local products, or to the establishment of small handicraft industries to increase the local economic possibilities. An adequate and constantly growing grain supply was established in the 10 years after Land Reform.¹⁰ It was therefore possible from the early 1960s for the agrarian economy of the delta to expand into cash crops

⁹ See reference 11 for a discussion of bacterial fertilizer research and a report of a visit to the entomological division of Chungshan University, Kwangchow, where there is a discussion of biological pesticides with special relevance for the Pearl River delta region.

¹⁰ The total output of grain, in millions of tons, in Tung-kuan over time is as follows: 1949, 21.50; 1952, 27.25; 1957, 30.00; 1962, 33.50; 1964, 43.70; 1971, 50.00.



Workers in Shun-te electric pump and generator factory.

and other sidelines. Efforts have continued to expand grain output but once a critical level of grain supply was achieved, it was both possible and desirable to seek a more diversified rural economy. Greater diversification has an important effect in increasing rural standards of living. These arguments are not relevant to Shun-te where half of the grain is supplied from outside the county. There, cash crops have historically been the basis of the local economy. Rice yields are high within the county but cane fields and mulberry patches effectively compete with rice for scarce land.

An informal goal of agricultural policy in China is to approach one pig per capita. Pigs are not merely excellent sources of protein but are often described as “fertilizer factories on the hoof.” There is still some way to go in approaching this goal in most parts of Kwangtung that we visited, but most households have more than two pigs (Appendix 6).

The raising of pigs is predominantly a private activity and one of the most important “sidelines.” Between 65 and 70% of pigs are raised privately. A mature pig can be sold either to the state purchasing agency or on the free market for up to 100 yuan, and can be an important addition to household income.¹¹ In Kwangtung there is an additional cultural element. Pork is a crucial ingredient in Cantonese cuisine. Perhaps because so much is exported to Hong Kong, pork is rationed in Kwangtung, though not in other parts of China. As well as pigs, ducks, chickens, and other poultry are household sidelines.

Some sidelines that are organized collectively have a substantial impact on the local economy. They include the processing of agricultural products (oil processing, sugar refining), the manufacture of bambooware, basketry, handicrafts of many kinds, carpentry, the manufacture of bricks and tiles, etc.

¹¹ This is not particularly Cantonese. In most parts of China pigs are still privately raised. See reference 12, which describes the cash raised from a pig as an important element in the decision for a peasant marriage.

Public and private production

Our discussion up to this point has been concerned primarily with collective production. We noted, in commenting on the history of Lap-lau commune, that a collective approach to production was seen as the appropriate way for Chinese agriculture to improve its performance. From mutual aid teams to communes, the age-old focus of the Chinese peasant economy on individual households working small private plots of land was systematically undercut by a variety of techniques. Cooperatives demonstrated the potency of numbers; continued efforts at ideological reeducation reinforced the approach. Collective principles are central to all aspects of rural Chinese social life. And yet, at this stage in the development of the rural economy of China, some productive activities are still "private."

A small proportion of land under cultivation is reserved for the "private plots." These are allocated on a household basis — their size depends on the number of household members — and are cultivated for the private use of peasant households. Normally private plots constitute no more than 5% of total cultivable land. In Lok-t'ong brigade in northern Kwangtung, where cultivable land is at a premium, private plots constitute barely 1% of the total area. Peasants are expected to work on their private plots only when collective responsibilities have been discharged. Private production can, nonetheless, have a substantial impact on the domestic economy of the Kwangtung peasant. Peasants often grow vegetables on their private plots, which are consumed either within the household, or, occasionally, sold on the free market. Private plots are also important for raising fodder for privately raised livestock, especially pigs. In Shun-te, private plots are sometimes used for growing cash crops, especially bananas. Cash crops often need less care than vegetables.

Nonagricultural Production

At the heart of development strategies in rural China is a concern with the production of food, particularly grain. A summary of agricultural policy can be expressed in the phrase "Take grain as the key link and ensure all-round development." There are a number of implications of this policy. We have commented on its significance for the development of agricultural "sideline" production. But, equally, it involves the development of a local economy that is not based on agricultural pursuits alone. The simultaneous presence in the countryside of agricultural and industrial enterprise is one of the most concrete expressions of "walking on two legs."

Rural industry in China varies according to the organizational level at which it is located (county, commune, brigade) and the nature of the locality in which it is established. Rural industry in an area close to a large economic centre, like Kwangchow, is likely to differ from that to be found in a relatively remote mountain area, such as Lok-t'ong. The broad objective of rural industry is, nonetheless, a common one, namely, to serve agriculture.

In Shun-te county total output value in the agricultural sector in 1972 was 119 million yuan; total output value of the industrial sector was 210 million yuan. There are 34 county-run factories, which include engineering, cement manufacture, silk filature, sugar refining, and nitrogenous fertilizer production. There are 228 factories at the commune level in Shun-te. Before 1949 there were only nine factories in the entire county.

The Shun-te Electrical Engineering Factory in Ta-liang is typical of the type of rural enterprise that is found in the delta area. It was established in 1960 as a small workshop for the repair of farm machinery and employed 38 workers. It now employs 520 workers of whom 139 are women. The major products are water pumps of various kinds, electric generators, and electric motors. The bulk of the equipment, some 80%, was made by the workers, including one 5-ton crane and two 1-ton cranes. The dominant aim of the enterprise is to support agriculture. In Shun-te there are 160 sta-

tionary pumps and 5700 mobile pumps, most of which have been locally manufactured. The factory had an important role to play in the Kan-chu-tan hydroelectric project and provided much of the generating equipment.

The factory's role does not cease with the production of an item. Since the Cultural Revolution, the factory has reconsidered the question of how it can best aid agriculture. Cadres and workers in the factory regularly go to the countryside and attempt to discover what local needs may be. One of the most important tasks is to work out what the appropriate irrigation and pumping devices might be for a county in which so much of the surface area is water. Once equipment has been installed it needs operators and technicians skilled in making repairs. The factory has set up a mobile team that travels through the countryside by barge. The mobile team travels from production team to production team bringing spare parts and tools. It can make repairs on the spot, but its most important task is to train local technical workers and establish or upgrade small repair shops at the brigade level. General repairs can thus be made at the local level, although the mobile team can perform major repairs. In addition, the factory regularly invites brigades throughout the county to send members to receive technical training in the factory. Every 3–6 months 45 peasants come to the factory to work as apprentices with skilled workers and to learn to operate and repair the electrical pumping and generating machinery. Since 1968 more than 500 peasants have received training, which, according to a factory cadre, helps to "establish an indigenous technical strength in the countryside."

In Tung-kuan in 1972, total output value in agriculture was 239 million yuan. Industrial output value totaled 118 million yuan,¹² much of which derived from 261 county-run factories that employ a total of 38 000 workers. A further 8000 workers are employed in cooperative handicraft enterprises. Much of the enterprise relates to agriculture, either in its support or in processing agricultural products. In Tung-kuan there are factories that deal with machinery and electric motors, fertilizers, cement, sugar refining, starch manufacture, oil processing, fireworks, matches, paper, batteries, and electric light bulbs. Most have been founded since Liberation (the majority since 1958) to serve the needs of the locality. The cement factories, for example, began as a consequence of the push toward water conservation and the processing of oil as a consequence of the increased production of peanuts.

The Tung-kuan Starch Factory in the county town was founded in 1950 to process cassava. It had a modest beginning with only a handful of workers producing cooking starch. After 20 years, the labour force has grown to 400, and an automated process daily produces 30 tons of industrial starch and from the residue, 4–6 tons of wine. The wine is mostly for cooking, but to some is added an array of dried fruit, or medicinal herbs, or both, to produce a variety of potable wines. The lichee wine is particularly delicious. The factory also produces about 150 tons of glucose per year. Some of the starch is exported, although a great deal is used in county-run textile concerns as sizing. Both the wine and glucose are largely consumed within the county. Annual output value in 1972 was 8.16 million yuan.

There is a wide range of enterprises at the commune and brigade levels. Fruit processing, machinery repair, and handicrafts are typical. At the brigade level there are often facilities for grain and oil pressing, sugar refining, repair and service stations for farm tools, and brick and tile kilns.

Lo-kang commune operates a fruit-processing factory with an annual output value of 2 million yuan. The most important processed fruit is the plum, but other fruits, such as olives, apricots, oranges, and lichees, are also processed. The factory also produces a small quantity of a traditional medicinal tonic that is derived from honey. The enterprise employs 235 workers of whom 60–70% are women.

Lap-lau commune has a substantial silk embroidery workshop employing 240 workers. In Lap-lau work is also "put-out" for women to complete in their homes. The total value of embroidery work in the township of Lap-lau is 150 000 yuan.

¹² Output values (millions of yuan): 1949, 21; 1965, 100; 1971, 116; 1972, 118.

Wan-t'ong brigade has a wide spread of local enterprise. There is a small brick and tile kiln, which provides the materials for the large number of new houses in the village, and a well-developed farm-tool repair station staffed by workers skilled in the repair of tractors, diesel engines, and other farm machinery. There is a small food-grain processing mill, a facility for curing tobacco, a peanut oil-pressing workshop, and facilities for the seasonal processing of various agricultural products. The largest is a small sugar refinery with six machines processing 90 tons of cane per day. Cassava is processed into starch and a variety of processed fruits are produced. These industrial developments have occurred within the past 12 years and the brigade has bought 380 machines during that period for processing and for power generation. The brigade also has a variety of small workshops in which handicraft production is carried on. The most important product is bambooware. The raw materials come from the brigade's newly planted hillsides. A small engineering shop also manufactures bicycle parts and a sawmill provides lumber for a cart-manufacturing workshop. The carpenters' shop provides workers skilled in housing construction.

Lok-t'ong brigade in northern Kwangtung does not have an array of workshops like that of Wan-t'ong in the delta. It does have small machinery workshops and several processing plants, especially for rice and peanuts. The most important nonagricultural activity is related to timber and charcoal production, on which the area was formerly dependent for survival. In Lok-t'ong brigade, the total value of agricultural production in 1972 was 120 000 yuan; that of nonagricultural production was in excess of 150 000 yuan.

Chapter 4

Leadership and Organization

Correct leadership can only be developed on the principle of 'from the masses, to the masses.'

Mao Tse-tung (13)

Certain technical changes in the conditions of production have greatly affected the local economy of rural South China. Those changes, be they land reclamation, water control, greater and more efficient use of pesticides, scientific cultivation, or the development of local industry, have occurred within a particular organizational and ideological context. Substantial ideological change, above all the heightened consciousness of a collective orientation, coupled with an effective system of organization, are the key elements in the success of Chinese rural development strategy. Ideological change and effective organization have resulted in the successful adoption of certain technical changes. The abstract notions of "organization" and "ideology" became concrete in the persons of local cadres or leaders whom we met and who were our guides during our visit to Kwangtung.

In a short visit to China it was inevitable that our most important and regular contacts were with cadres rather than ordinary peasants or workers. The task of cadres is to administer and direct. They are individuals with a wide range of knowledge, who are skilled in transmitting information from one administrative level to another and in encouraging and utilizing particular social groupings. County-level cadres provided much of our general information on the places that we visited.

Commune, brigade, and production team level cadres are directly responsible for production decisions. We found these men, and occasionally women, to be extremely knowledgeable. It was surprising to learn how much information they communicate with only occasional reference to notes. Our host at Lo-kang commune¹³ spoke for hours without notes. For example, he had an intimate knowledge of production figures, both past and present, income figures, and details concerning urban youth who had come to the commune over the previous 5 years. The knowledge of county level cadres was also comprehensive although it was normal for individual cadres with special responsibilities to give details on their areas of administrative competence. When a particular item of information was not immediately at hand, a glance at a well-used notebook, or a question to a colleague, could easily produce it.

But the extent of individual cadres' knowledge, although important and very significant for our work, was merely one of their characteristics that we found impressive. Another was the way they conducted themselves in their dealings with other cadres — at all levels — and with the people with whom we saw them interact. Whether walking through a village, a county town, a factory, or a kindergarten, they did not hold themselves aloof or behave in a manner that marked them off as a group of people who were privileged or unused to seeking the opinions of others. Relations with workers in a factory, peasants in a field, or passersby on a street were relaxed and casual. There are rarely any signs of distinction in terms of dress between cadres

¹³ See Chapter 1 for authors' itinerary.

and noncadres at the local level. The head of the Tung-kuan county administrative office wore a simple shirt and pants and plastic sandals, as did any other resident of the county town. The cadres of Wan-t'ong brigade went barefoot, as did others in the village. The local Party secretary wore shorts. Here as elsewhere cadres were indistinguishable from other peasants.

There is also a degree of earnestness about local leaders with whom we interacted, a desire on their part to learn about a process or a problem, that was both moving and impressive. In walking through a factory or a production team, county-level cadres would constantly seek information and encourage those working in production. The brigade Party secretary at Wan-t'ong did not hesitate to demonstrate the use of a machine or a process. He knew how it should be done and it appeared that he had performed a similar task.

Cadres are leaders in Chinese society. They operate within an organizational structure and an ideological context that demand an intimate contact with ordinary people. It is a structure and a context that are referred to as "the mass line."

The "Mass Line": General Guide for Leadership

A theory of organization has emerged in China that states that there should be no sharp distinction between those who lead and those who are led. It is a theory of organization that did not suddenly emerge in the period after 1949 as a response to certain problems implicit in the notion of "development." Rather, its roots lie in the theory and practice of revolutionary guerrilla warfare.

The development of revolution in China from at least 1937, if not before, was a response to the problems of a society undergoing basic structural dislocation. The revolution in China had its origin in a broad set of social crises (see reference 14 for a general theoretical treatment of peasant rebellion and revolution). (The Japanese invasion of China worsened an already critical situation.) It was only through the organizational abilities of the Chinese Communist Party that peasant discontent was turned, first, to resisting an invader and, then, to eliminating some of the fundamental causes of their discontent. Those struggles went beyond reform and led to a basic restructuring of local peasant and national society. The strength of the movement depended upon peasant support. But that support was given precisely because of peasant *participation* in the guerrilla struggle. The guerrilla struggle was successful because the peasantry as a whole was mobilized for national defence and for the restructuring of local communities.

To achieve the large-scale mobilization of the entire population it was necessary not merely to organize but also to educate. The two-pronged character of the revolutionary process demanded a particular organizational framework that was clear without being rigid and unambiguous without being dogmatic. One of the most important features of such an organizational framework was that it became highly decentralized. There emerged a good deal of hostility toward formal bureaucratic structures and toward leaders who acted in a distant or formalistic manner. This was a remarkable deviation from the established practice of traditional Chinese society, in which bureaucrats were accorded the highest prestige. These changes created a new kind of relationship between the leaders and the led. In addition, recruitment of peasant leaders who traditionally were denied any leadership positions was crucial for revolutionary success, both against the Japanese and against the Nationalists after 1946.

This organizational framework was still seen as appropriate after the seizure of state power in 1949. Methods of organization and leadership that were central to the success of guerrilla war were applied to the problems of social and economic development in the years after 1949. For a short period in the 1950s, Soviet methods of highly centralized organization and leadership, which ran counter to the guerrilla style, were adopted. But these proved to be inappropriate to the conditions of Chi-



Agricultural work group.

nese development and were almost completely abandoned in 1958. There has been a dispute in China as to whether or not “guerrilla strategies toward development” are appropriate. It is a dispute that is central to an understanding of the Cultural Revolution in the period after 1966, and is by no means resolved. Nevertheless, the dominant model of organization and leadership in China today is one that derives from the period of guerrilla resistance against the Japanese (see Selden (15), the best single source for the period, and Schurman (16), who details the questions of organization in the 1950s).

There are two important elements in the Chinese theory of organization. The first is Marxist-Leninism as a general theoretical guide; the second is the adaptation of Marxist-Leninism to the particular circumstances of China. Mao Tse-tung is the theoretician of the Chinese Revolution. It is Mao who has extracted from the corpus of Marxist-Leninism those aspects that are seen to be most relevant to the Chinese situation. From classical Marxist-Leninism there derive two key theoretical components for the Chinese theory of organization — “the theory of contradictions” and “the theory of democratic centralism.”

The theory of contradictions

The idea that contradictions are universal stems directly from the tradition of Marxist-Leninism, although Mao Tse-tung gives a particular emphasis to certain aspects of the theory. One important idea is that there exists both “antagonistic” and “nonantagonistic” contradictions. Antagonistic contradictions are those of classical Marxist theory: conflicts between classes and conflicts between opposing systems, capitalist and noncapitalist, colonial and noncolonial. The theory suggests that antagonistic contradictions can be resolved only by violent means. Thus one of the major contradictions was overcome on the assumption of power in 1949. Other major antagonistic contradictions were overcome with the elimination of the power of the

bourgeoisie, the rich landlords, and other elements. The choice at this period was, as Mao put it, "between killing the tiger and being eaten by it."

Nonantagonistic contradictions are different in nature from antagonistic ones. Their most important characteristic is that their resolution is not by violent means. Rather they are resolved through discussion, mutual criticism, and reeducation. Mao has argued that:

"These include contradictions among the interests of the State, the interests of the collective and the interests of the individual; between democracy and centralism; between the leadership and the led; and the contradiction arising from the bureaucratic style of work of certain government workers in their relationship with the masses" (17).

The general argument is that in the socialist society of new China there is a general agreement on basic principles. But disputes can nonetheless still arise. These disputes, however, are "among the people" and in normal circumstances can be resolved by education and discussion. The key to a great deal of change in China today is education.

The theory of contradictions provides the theoretical basis for cadre behaviour. Cadres have a central role to play in determining the general direction of change in Chinese society. The Chinese use of the term "cadre" (*kan-pu*, literally to be in charge of a section) is somewhat distinctive. The older Russian notion of cadre referred to a group of individuals working for the general goals of a revolutionary party. In China the term refers to particular *individuals* involved in the revolutionary process. In the Chinese view of social development there is the initial presumption that, although men (and women) are the decisive forces in history, they are particular kinds of men acting in particular ways. Above all, it is important that individuals who take on leading roles are able to perceive the nature of social reality and act on the basis of those perceptions. An accurate perception can only arise from extensive participation so that the contradiction between general notions of how to do something ("theory") and actually doing it ("practice") can be successfully resolved.

The theory of democratic centralism

Democratic centralism is the basic theory behind the mechanics of organization. Its object, as in the formative days of guerrilla struggle, is to combine strict discipline with maximum flexibility. It is a theory that rests on a fine balance between participation and obedience. It suggests that those within an organization should have a maximum opportunity to participate and present their views on a particular issue. There should be no restrictions on an individual's right to participate and debate. But once a decision has been taken, incorporating as far as is possible the diversity of views, an individual is expected to accept the decision as final and binding.

The theory of mass line

The theory of mass line is an amalgam of the theory of contradictions and the theory of democratic centralism. On the local level, at the point of contact with the broad masses of the population, the cadre is a key figure in eliciting support for the general policies of the Communist Party. The cadres become key figures in the structure of power and authority that will induce change in Chinese society. The theory of contradictions gives a guide to the character, bearing, and activity of individual cadres. The theory of democratic centralism indicates what the relationship of the individual to the organization must be. The theory of mass line clarifies the connection between leadership and organization and thereby gives clear direction as to how the two can be meshed to provide a solution to the general problem of effecting change in society. Mass line methods of work are concerned with the task of mobilizing a peasantry to perform revolutionary tasks. Mass line methods attempt to induce social mobilization but only insofar as they can gain *genuine* support for that mobilization. A peasant revolution cannot be imposed. It can only grow and be nurtured from within. The operation of mass line is summarized by Mao Tse-tung:



Collective plowing of rice paddies.

"correct leadership can only be developed on the principle of 'from the masses, to the masses.' This means summing up (i.e. coordinating and systematizing after careful study) the views of the masses (i.e. views scattered and unsystematic) then taking the results back to the masses, explaining and popularizing them until the masses embrace the ideas as their own, stand up for them and translate them into action by way of testing their correctness. Then it is necessary once more to sum up the views of the masses so that the masses give wholehearted support . . . And so on, over and over again, so that each time these ideas emerge with greater correctness and become more vital and meaningful" (13).

The process has a number of implications. It is an endless cycle that entails cadres leading the people and the people leading the cadres. Since its aims are determined by a policy directed toward certain specific goals, it demands procedures both for collecting views from the locality, in order to reach conclusions of practical significance, and for transmitting those conclusions and new ideas back to the locality. How the cadres will act in their role as propagandists of policies that may be disruptive to the locality is a crucial aspect of cadre training. Successful operation on the part of cadres must involve more than merely achieving the most technically efficient solutions. It must reassure the public and make clear that the nature of cadre leadership involves a relationship of trust with the people, not dominance. Theoretically there should be no need to coerce the people; indeed, it is morally indefensible to do so.

The clearest demonstration of the efficacy of the Party's ability to lead is in overt cadre behaviour. The responsibility for mobilization rests clearly with cadres. The individual cadre's "style of work" is the major factor in changing basic social relations in accordance with the Party program. "Correct style" demonstrates the ability to carry out the mass line, to lead yet remain in close contact with the people. The basic task for the cadres thus becomes an integrative one. Style of work is not concerned, overtly at least, with efforts to determine policy. It is basically a question of implementing policy and is thus concerned with winning support for, and preventing discontent with, policy. The theory suggests that in collecting the views of the broad mass of the people the cadre will be helping to formulate policy, but his major task is as an interpreter of policy and as a strategist who will ensure that the correct conditions exist for a policy decision to become effective.

In the Chinese theory of organization, the idea of flexibility is paramount. Much of the flexibility derives from the recognition that — particularly in an economy like

that of China — a specific policy can be only a general guide for action. For policy-making to be effective, the reality of the locality to which it is to be applied has to be considered. Mao has stated that:

The art of leadership is for a leader to take into account the situation as a whole in accordance with the historical conditions and immediate circumstances of each specific locality, correctly determine the central task and programme of work in a given period, then steadfastly carry out this decision and see to it that results are to be achieved” (13).

This neatly summarizes the theoretical basis for leadership in the specific localities that we visited in Kwangtung in 1973.

Levels of Organization and Leadership

The question remains as to how theory and practice are combined in the specific localities that we visited. The various administrative levels — county, commune, brigade, and team — have different tasks to perform and their administrative structures are therefore distinct. We shall thus begin by describing the characteristics of administration at the various levels.

Administrative structure

Most cadres consider the Cultural Revolution, which began in earnest in early 1966, an extremely significant event. The Cultural Revolution, to put the matter simply, was a national debate about the future of Chinese society. It began with a narrow emphasis upon the nature of socialist art and culture but quickly expanded to encompass virtually the whole range of social phenomena. Certain long-term concerns of the Chinese leadership were aired, not the least of which was an antagonism to the emergence of highly bureaucratic structures. The Cultural Revolution led to a simplification and decentralization of administrative authority in both governmental and Party organizations, a development that had great significance for all administrative units at the local level.

In the pre-Cultural Revolution period, there were normally dual Party and administrative bureaucracies, at least down to the county level. The distinction between administrative organization (the “State organs”) and Party organizations is today maintained only at the national level. At all levels below, there is the concept of “unified leadership” in which the governmental and Party organizations have been merged. The administrative bodies at levels down to the commune are called “Revolutionary Committees.” Under the principle of “unified leadership,” political and administrative tasks are combined under one body of which the Party members form the core. The idea of the Revolutionary Committee has been incorporated into the new constitution of the People’s Republic of China.

(1) County-level administration: Tung-kuan

The Revolutionary Committee of Tung-kuan county consists of 67 members, 19 of whom are members of the standing committee, 14 of whom are full-time. A fifth of the members are women and it is a “three-in-one-combination”¹⁴ composed of representatives who are young, middle-aged, and old. Most of the Revolutionary Committee members are elected through a People’s Representative Conference, although a small number of leading members are appointed. As a consequence most members are local; only six are from outside the county. Of the outside cadres, two are from the People’s Liberation Army. The remaining four are Northerners who

¹⁴ “Three-in-one-combination” grew up during the Cultural Revolution as a device to ensure that various elements of the population were included in an organization. Age is one principle. Others may be the combination of cadres, workers, and technicians, or cadres, workers, and members of the People’s Liberation Army, to give two examples.

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China

Article 22

The local revolutionary committees at various levels are the permanent organs of the local people's congresses and at the same time the local people's governments at various levels.

Local revolutionary committees are composed of a chairman, vice-chairman and other members, who are elected and subject to recall by the people's congress at the corresponding level. Their election or recall shall be submitted for examination and approval to the organ of state at the next higher level.

Local revolutionary committees are responsible and accountable to the people's congress at the corresponding level and to the organ of state at the next higher level.

Article 23

The local people's congresses at various levels and the local revolutionary committees elected by them ensure the execution of laws and decrees in their respective areas; lead the socialist revolution and socialist construction in their respective areas; examine and approve local economic plans, budgets and final accounts; maintain revolutionary order; and safeguard the rights of citizens.

came South during the period of Land Reform (1951-52) and have remained in Kwangtung since then. Our host during our stay, who was head of the general office in the county administration, had been living in Kwangtung since the period of Land Reform.

The principle of unified leadership is clear in Tung-kuan. The revolutionary committee and the Party committee have the same personnel, although there are two signboards outside the committee office. Within the county administration there are five offices (1) general office; (2) agriculture, forestry, and water conservation; (3) industry and communications; (4) finance and trade; and (5) science and education. There are two departments: (a) organization and (b) propaganda; and two committees: (i) planning and (ii) politics and law.

The offices and departments are on an equal administrative footing in that the directors of the various offices and the department heads have equal rank. The committees are composed of heads and members of the offices and departments. Under the departments there are bureaus. The bureaus may set up "companies," which are, of course, publicly operated and not private concerns. Under the Bureau of Trade and Commerce, for example, there are companies. Such companies are responsible for retail trade throughout the county.

The number of cadres staffing the various units is surprisingly small. A substantial number of them were away from the administrative centre at the time of our visit "conducting investigations" (*tun-tien* — literally "squatting on the spot"), that is, investigating a particular aspect of their work in a specific locality. One reason for the absence of such a large proportion was due to a shortfall in production during the first rice crop as a consequence of inclement weather. Cadres from the specialized offices were attempting to resolve the various difficulties in the hope that a good second harvest would make up for the shortfall in the first.

As a general principle, cadres in the county administration spend 3 months per year doing manual labour. Once every 3 months there is an investigation to check up on how the cadres have approached their labour responsibilities. The staff of the general office, our hosts, were not involved in "squatting." The General Office was likened to a "general staff" that, as one cadre suggested, has to "grasp the situation of the county as a whole, reflect and work out methods of approach and thus do some

research work." Cadres who are conducting investigations do not necessarily go to their own native places. Typically the cadres go to a particular location and investigate a situation thoroughly. It is possible to see in a particular context how a specific plan is being carried out. The cadres' experience can be discussed with peasants in the localities and with other cadres who are conducting similar investigations. By comparing experiences it is possible to gain an overall view on how particular plans are developing. It is then possible for the cadre to return to the same locality or move to another to urge a plan of action.

The frequent contacts that cadres have with ordinary peasants and their role in conducting investigations and comparing the results with others does much to account for the ease with which the average cadre seems to interact with ordinary people. Their activities are also important in that they enable Party leaders to be intimately aware of local variations and, conversely, their activities allow localities, at the commune level and below, to become aware of policies as they are refined in their passage down through the various levels of rural China. Cadres are not reluctant to talk about certain difficulties in their areas. There was little hesitation to discuss shortcomings in the birth control program in Tung-kuan, for example, or to comment on the difficulties in their work. Perhaps even more unusual is their willingness to make self-critical statements about the quality of their work. To quote the same cadre:

"Compared to Chen Yung-kuei (brigade leader of the national model for agriculture, Ta-chai) our work is not so good. He participated in labour for 300 days per year, and he was responsible not only for his brigade but for the county administration as well!"

Thus, the knowledge of the cadres, their willingness to operate for long periods outside their offices in the fields, and the sophistication of their knowledge about actual conditions make them effective leaders. The burden of development policy falls on their shoulders. They are responsible for operating an effective system of organization and for encouraging peasants to transform their thinking.

(2) Commune level: Lo-kang and Lap-lau

The basic tasks of the commune level are: (1) to determine the production plan for the commune as a whole; (2) to determine the plan for distribution; and (3) to conduct political education.

The commune level is also responsible for commune industry, middle-school education (in Shun-te, for example), the operation of commune hospitals, and the work of the militia.

Like the county, each commune has a number of specialized departments. They fall into three distinct kinds: (a) those that deal with *production decisions* concerning, for example, animal husbandry, fruit growing, water conservation, sidelines, commune industry, and health care; (b) those that deal with *political education*, including the work of the Young Communist League, propaganda, women's work, culture, education, and (in Lo-kang) sports and recreation; and (c) the one that organizes the militia.

The number of cadres in the two communes is about the same, and the principle of "unified leadership" prevails. Most cadres are elected although a small number, five or six in both cases, are state cadres who are appointed to the particular commune. Cadres are elected from a representative congress consisting of delegates elected from the production teams. Elections are held every second year for commune-level cadres and on an annual basis at lower levels.

Commune-level cadres have similar tasks to county-level cadres. The commune level receives production plans from the county level, or from the Municipal District of Kwangchow, in the case of Lo-kang. These plans are discussed in a preliminary fashion at the commune level. Plans are then taken down to the team level for an open discussion. Cadres must explain the rationale behind plans and assess the feasibility of plans with respect to a particular locality.

Two County-Run Factories

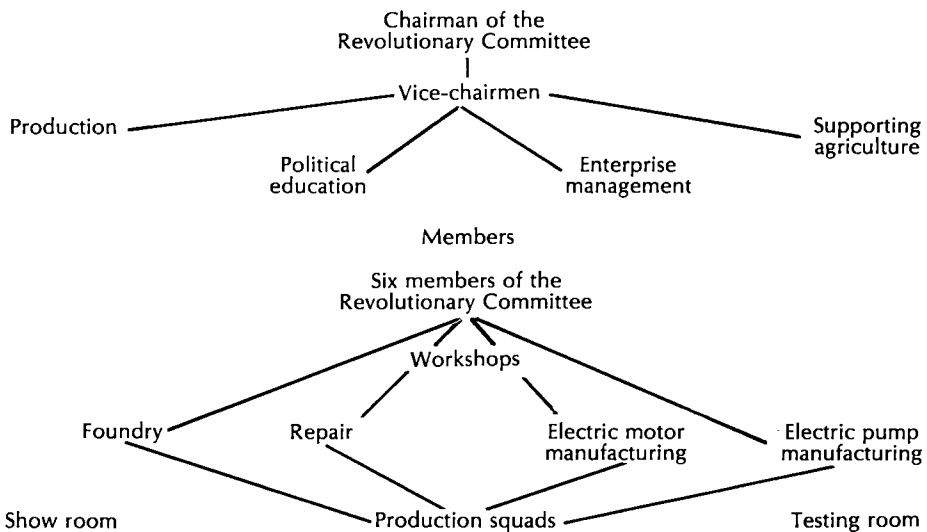
The organization of a factory, given the nature of the technical process, is somewhat tighter than a team or commune. Similar principles, however, govern the organization. In Shun-te a Revolutionary Committee of 11, including three women, works with a Party Committee of nine, including two women, to administer the factory. In Tung-kuan the Revolutionary Committee is composed of 17 members including four women. In both factories the committees consist of three elements — revolutionary-leading cadres, workers, and militia representatives. Within the Shun-te factory as a whole there are 33 cadres and in Tung-kuan, 21.

The Revolutionary Committee of the Shun-te factory is divided into several departments — production, supply, maintenance, design, enterprise management, "supporting agriculture," women's work, and a political department. Four vice-chairmen are responsible for particular tasks. There are four workshops in the factory — a foundry, a repair shop, and electric pump manufacturing and electric motor manufacturing shops — as well as a testing room and a show room. Within each workshop there are a number of production squads. The Tung-kuan factory is similarly organized.

Since the factories are managed by the county level, questions of production are determined by the industrial department at the county level. The county cadres enter into consultation with the leadership of the factories. In Shun-te three full-time cadres meet weekly with the county industrial department to discuss production plans. In the case of the Tung-kuan Starch Factory the county enters into discussions with the communes with respect to the production of cassava. General production plans are discussed in the Revolutionary Committee. During the discussion, representatives of the workers sit with the committee to discuss the issues involved. After a preliminary discussion, monthly production plans are sent down to the squads for discussion. Each squad meets at the beginning of the month to discuss the coming monthly plan. The Revolutionary Committee meets regularly on Fridays to formulate the plans for the following week. As in agricultural units there is an attempt to decentralize decision-making. Similarly, cadres spend 1 day per week in manual labour on the shop floor.

In the Tung-kuan factory the Trade Union had been reorganized a few months before our visit after the formation, during the Cultural Revolution, of a Workers' Representative Conference. It is a largely political organization with the aim of organizing workers in political study, conducting welfare work, and training cadres. Its principal task is to "help and urge leaders to carry out instructions and to help the leadership of the factory to carry out the correct line."

Organization of the Shun-te Electrical Engineering Factory



As a matter of course, cadres will go out and conduct investigations. Apart from attending meetings six or seven times per month, they remain in the localities. They are expected to spend at least 60 days per year participating in manual labour for, as one cadre suggested, "cadres must try and set a good example." Spending time out of the commune office and in the fields is done in a conscious attempt to break down the barriers between administrators and ordinary commune members and to assess the full impact of particular policies so that effective decisions can be made.

(3) Brigade level

The tasks of the brigade-level organization are intermediate between the general tasks of coordination at the commune level and the particular responsibility of the team level to organize production. There are a number of issues that cannot be resolved within the confines of a production team but do not need to be organized on a commune scale. Typical brigade tasks are: (1) to organize capital construction and coordinate water conservation; (2) to organize cultural, educational, and welfare tasks. Primary education is a brigade responsibility. A brigade also makes provisions for clinics and health stations and operates the cooperative medical service (see Chapter 6); (3) to organize certain enterprises such as repair shops and handicraft production. Scientific research work such as seed selection and livestock breeding is also a brigade concern; (4) to implement production plans; and (5) to serve in some instances as a unit of township administration.

The brigade-level administration is in close communication with its constituent teams. In some instances, as in Wan-t'ong, for example, it is largely coincident with the natural village. Of the 18 teams in the brigade, 14 are within the village. In Shun-te county the brigade is coincident with the pre-Liberation unit of political cooperation, the *hsiang*, which gives an important dimension of solidarity.¹⁵ The major task of the brigade is to integrate the work of the teams that compose it. Questions of water conservation are clearly very central to its work. The administrative burdens of the commune level are also eased by the brigades' organization of such tasks as primary education and basic health care. By reducing the responsibilities for these tasks to a level that is less remote from the lives of ordinary peasants, it allows them to participate in making decisions about facilities that are of great concern.

(4) Team level

The team is a particularly crucial level in rural China for it is where production decisions are put into practice. A production plan is passed to the county from the provincial level and then to the commune. The plan receives its most critical comment from the production team whose members are most responsible for its completion.

In Wan-t'ong brigade each team has three to seven cadres depending on its size, which can range from about 20 to about 120 households. Teams are formed in terms of village neighbourhoods. Most team cadres have different responsibilities. Typical positions are: team leader, production leader, sidelines leader, women's work leader, accountant (work point recorder), cashier, warehouse keeper.

The cadres meet every evening and a general meeting of the team is held twice per month. Work is assigned by the cadre responsible for production decisions. The cadre in charge of women's work (invariably a woman) is responsible for organizing meetings of the women's group, which, in conjunction with the Women's Association at the brigade level, is involved in such activities as the organization of women in production, political study, literacy classes, and family planning. The cadres deal with day-to-day administration. However, they are all part-time administrators and

¹⁵ This is a feature only of the densely populated delta land. In Fo-kang county in the less densely populated mountains, the commune is equivalent to the *hsiang*. The 1958 dimensions of the commune of which Lok-t'ong is part encompassed four *hsiang*. The commune was reduced in size in 1960 and the area was divided into four communes.

spend most of their time in field work. Cadres work 320 days per year and in Wan-t'ong brigade receive 100-150 additional work points as recompense for their responsibilities.

Wan-t'ong cadres explained that general meetings of a team discuss four main issues: (1) the production plan; (2) the expenditure of team funds; (3) work points; and (4) political education. An issue will be discussed among cadres and a general position put forward for discussion. According to one team leader, a general meeting of his team typically breaks down into five groups, each under a cadre, to discuss the items in a "small group" context. A general meeting can simultaneously disseminate specific items of information and provide a forum for political study. At the general mobilization meeting certain technical issues can be resolved with respect to planting, buying farm equipment, or deciding to become involved in some higher-level project. The impact of organization at this level on ideological development is substantial, especially in the context of the small groups. The political significance of recent newspaper articles, national campaigns, or even drafts of the national constitution may be discussed.

The meaning of important slogans such as "In agriculture, learn from Ta-chai," may be discussed with respect to the local situation. The Wan-t'ong Party secretary has been to Ta-chai and has been an important influence. The peasants of Wan-t'ong have followed the example of Ta-chai in building a 9-kilometre long dike, which has had a substantial effect on the standard of living. But emulating Ta-chai may reveal that ideological progress may lag behind technical progress. One cadre commented:

"Ta-chai, through the spirit of self-reliance and hard struggle and by putting politics in command has transformed its environment. We have learned from Ta-chai but we must also learn from them ideologically. We must never forget class struggle. Life is getting better and better. We now have enough to eat. We have houses, food, fish and sugar. But there are some of our members who don't want to work harder. They can now go to the county town by bus with rubber tires. They think its not necessary to carry on class struggle. This is a big problem and we have to continue to discuss it and get the problems straightened out among ourselves."

The problem of development in rural South China is therefore not primarily technological. It is also organizational and ideological.

Conclusions: Mass Line in Action

One of the most significant aspects of Chinese development strategy, which clearly has its roots in the experience of guerrilla war, has been the role assigned to leaders. The Chinese are concerned that a leadership group might emerge as a privileged elite, which would then inhibit development. Part of the Chinese analysis of the Soviet case draws attention to the role of a privileged "managerial elite," which, like similar groups in capitalist systems, is not fully able to comprehend the actual situation of the great mass of producers. Their position as an elite, it is argued, acts as a barrier to effective development because, among other things, the distinction between mental work and manual work is excessively rigid. In China the elimination of the distinction between mental and manual labour is an important precondition for development. The primary means toward this end is for those occupying leadership positions to participate, on a regular basis or for fixed lengths of time, in manual labour as ordinary workers or peasants.

The separation of cadres from manual labour is seen as the beginning of a chain of events that will make them obstacles to the development effort. Chinese policy-makers insist that a cadre be both "red and expert." To insist upon this is not to downgrade expertise but to demand that it be used for the collective good rather than personal profit. To be red and expert is to "hold the ideology of collectivism" and "to serve the people." To be "expert" and not "red" is to be a "bourgeois indiv-

individualist." One argument against the bourgeois individualist is that the individual puts "self" before the collectivity and may be unwilling to make decisions that would be detrimental to himself, though possibly beneficial to the group. Labour participation is regarded as valuable because it induces people to expect a minimum reward for their services. A second argument is that bourgeois individualism causes talent to be applied in ways that are not immediately useful for development. China needs leaders, and expertise, but demands that those possessing expertise use it in a progressive manner, selflessly, and with social responsibility. Expertise cannot be an isolated development. It must be combined with other qualities before it can properly contribute to the process of development. Talent by itself is regarded as a potential liability since an individual may use his skills to seek material rewards that the society literally cannot afford.

One of the great problems in many Third World economies is an excessive growth of bureaucracy. Chinese policy by its emphasis on simple administration leads to a pruning of top-heavy bureaucracy. It thus has a productive function. It not only cuts administrative expenses but also releases well-trained human resources for more meaningful development efforts. Through labour participation the leaders can demonstrate that they are not removed from those who must carry out policy decisions through production. The cadres, through their involvement in production, can develop solid relationships with the peasants that are fundamental if innovations such as growing new rice strains or changing traditional agricultural practices are to be adopted. There is no sense in which the various organizational levels that we have been discussing are discrete ones. Cadres at one level meet regularly with their counterparts at other levels and are involved in the process of transmitting information both up and down the system of decision-making. The process of economic development in rural South China requires the coordinated effort of all levels from county down to team.

The team in certain respects looks inward. It is responsible for production decisions and for the distribution of the net product to its members. There was no evidence during our visit that the experience of Ta-chai in allocating work points at the brigade level was seriously considered. There are also pressures, however, for the team to expand its horizons. By its involvement in such significant tasks as education, collective sidelines, reclamation projects, and health care, the brigade seems particularly important in counteracting a potential "localism" on the part of production teams. The economic tasks of the brigade are very significant and in many ways perhaps more significant than those of the commune level. From our observations, the commune level is important in its administrative coordination of the whole area and in its involvement in political education. Of particular significance, especially in the period since the Cultural Revolution, has been the role of the county administration. The much publicized "local self-reliance" and its related aspect "local self-sufficiency" seems to be very much a county-level concern. This was observed during an earlier visit to North China, especially with respect to the development of non-agricultural capacity (1). In Kwangtung, county administrations are deeply involved in expanding factory production, massive water conservation projects, rural electrification, road building, and the like. They have a substantial impact on the direction of rural development strategies by their involvement in economic activity of a broad nature. Equally, their concern with the political aspects of development is profound.

Increased yields, improvements in agricultural technique, and a more diversified rural economy have been made possible partly by technological advances. But underlying these, there is a quality of leadership, a degree of organization, and an attention to changing attitudes among the peasantry that are of great significance. One of the difficulties in discussing the character of development in Third World economies is to assess "the human dimension." Chinese development strategies emphasize the centrality of human development in the transformation of rural society. Indeed, as Mao Tse-tung has said, "Of all things, people are the most precious."

Chapter 5

Rural Population

As visitors accustomed to the open spaces of North America, we were struck by the obvious pressure of population on arable land in China. Compact villages, constructed so as to use a minimum amount of land, and the painstaking reshaping of the land into terraces, level fields, and fishponds, indicated the need to support a very dense population. The Pearl River delta is a region of particularly high density. Historically, an intolerable pressure of population resulted in large-scale migrations abroad. The southern provinces of Kwangtung and Fukien are the homeland of most of the overseas Chinese, including those of Canada. The fact that this region can now support an even larger population with an adequate standard of living is evidence that it was the earlier inequitable distribution of land and resources, as well as the inadequacy of traditional agricultural techniques, that were responsible for this migration.

Population Growth

The question of population growth was important to many of the cadres we met, but their perceptions of this question appear to be rather different from analyses made in the West. The pressure of population on resources was mentioned only once, by a cadre on Lo-kang commune, who emphasized that they did not attempt to limit population growth because of a present or potential scarcity of food. He pointed out that food production on that commune had increased 32% since 1966, whereas population had increased only 15%. He expressed full confidence that food production will continue to keep ahead of population growth. His reasons for a policy of controlling the growth of population were "to guarantee the health of the next generation" and "to bring out the full initiative of women in socialist construction." A third reason, given by a woman cadre in the Shun-te county administration, is that the planning of births "involves the planned development of socialism and the national economy." In a socialist society, the people, led by the Party, should take responsibility for planning their lives. Neither the growth nor the spatial distribution of population should be left to chance.

In all the counties, communes, and cities we visited, policies were being implemented to lower the rate of population growth. In Shun-te county, the target growth rates are 1% per year in the cities and 1.5% in the countryside (with two children per family, 3–5 years apart). The fact that the rural people remain more traditional and less amenable to persuasion concerning the limitation of births is reflected in the differences between the two targets. Urban growth rates must also be diminished by the mass movement of urban young people into rural areas (see pp. 48–50). In 1971, the actual percentage of population growth in the county as a whole was 1.8 and 0.9 in Ta-liang, the county town. Population growth in other areas we visited was little different from that of Shun-te (Appendix 7).

The mortality component of these growth figures is very low. In the absence of figures on the age structure of the population,¹⁶ it is impossible to analyze the extent

¹⁶ The only composition figures we obtained (for Tung-kuan county) indicate that slightly less than one-half the population is in the labour force (ages 18–55 or 60), over 20% are students (ages 7 to about 18, perhaps less), less than 30% are under school age (7), and 7–8% are elderly (over 55–60).

to which a very young population may be partly responsible for these low rates, but clearly improved nutrition and the extensive and nearly free health-care system, with its emphasis on preventive medicine and environmental sanitation, has had important effects. In Lo-kang commune, the mortality rate was 5 per 1000 in 1971, whereas in Lok-t'ong brigade 10 people died out of 1700. In Tung-kuan county the mortality rate was 5.4 per 1000 (as opposed to 5.8 per 1000 in 1963), whereas in Shun-te county it was 6.4 per 1000.

From commune- and county-level cadres we obtained the following crude birth-rates for 1972: Lo-kang commune, 25 per 1000; Shun-te county, 24.4 per 1000 (1965: 34 per 1000); Tung-kuan county, 25 per 1000 (1963: 35 per 1000).

According to those informants, these figures represent the results of nearly 10 years' educational efforts in family planning (since 1963), which have been intensified since the Cultural Revolution (1966-69). Family planning education has been a part of national policy during these years, and according to the Shun-te woman cadre, it is the concern of every level of government and party organization, as well as of the various mass organizations such as the women's associations and trade unions. At all levels of these organizations there are "leading groups" whose responsibility it is to popularize the idea of family planning. At the lowest level of rural organization, the production team, family planning work is a part of the responsibilities of one of the women cadres. In Tung-kuan county the county administration has a committee responsible for family planning, with its own staff and office. Each commune in the county has a "leading group" responsible for family planning, and certain workers in the commune hospitals are assigned to give technical advice. The Tung-kuan county cadres also emphasized that leadership at all levels should give consideration to the implementation of family planning policies.

Individual communes appear to organize their family planning campaigns according to their local situations. Some run special study courses. One commune in Tung-kuan county created a special 50-person propaganda team, consisting of medical staff, commune cadres, women cadres, and educated youth from the cities, to popularize the idea and techniques of family planning. In addition to small group meetings to explain the benefits and methods of birth control, one method of persuasion used is the setting of target rates of population growth. Examples of those communes that have succeeded in meeting or surpassing these targets are held up for emulation. In Tung-kuan county, we were told of one model commune that had achieved a birthrate of 18 per 1000 in 1972 and of one brigade that had had a birthrate of only 16 per 1000. As the county cadres said: "This is an example to be popularized in the county." They also cited another model commune in which 62.7% of the couples of childbearing age were planning their families.

In a society as thoroughly organized as China, it is possible not only to systematically inform the entire population about family planning, but also to ensure that contraceptive methods are universally available. China's extensive rural medical care network facilitates the distribution of contraceptive supplies even into remote areas, and its system of socialized medical care guarantees that there are no economic barriers to contraceptive use. Incidentally, the thorough organization of Chinese society and of its health care system also facilitates the keeping of detailed population statistics, including records of contraceptive usage. Thus, cadres at various levels were able to provide us with such statistics for the people within their constituencies. The detail of the records kept suggests a real concern with the limitation of births, although figures are often given only for methods involving medical procedures. Statistics are not always available on the use of pills and condoms.

Pills are generally available at brigade-level clinics, and cadres in charge of women's work may also dispense them. Medical procedures such as sterilization and insertion of intrauterine devices (IUD) are free. In addition, the Shun-te woman cadre said that it is national policy that a woman receive 20 days off work to recover from sterilization and 3 days for an IUD insertion, whereas men receive 7 days' leave to recover from vasectomies (male sterilization). In addition, in Shun-te at least,

both men and women who are sterilized receive a chicken and two catties (1 kilogram) of sugar, as these foods are believed to help them to recover their health.

In Shun-te county, 60% of the couples of childbearing age are planning their families. Of these, 70% have used the IUD and 15% are sterilized. Pills, condoms, and abortions account for the remainder. The woman cadre said that rural men are not willing to use condoms. In that county, abortion is not advocated except in cases where it is absolutely necessary. Likewise, in Fo-shan city we were told that abortion is not common and is given only twice for any one woman, because it is considered to be bad for a woman's health. Abortion will be given on demand, however, after consultation with the husband.

Birth control measures adopted in Tung-kuan county for the months of January to June 1973 were 6067 IUDs, 84 vasectomies, 499 tubal ligations, and 2971 abortions. The large number of abortions is striking, and the cadres told us that women are urged to have abortions with their fourth pregnancies, although they are in no way compelled. For both abortion and sterilization, consent of both husband and wife is required. This contrast with Shun-te county exemplifies an important characteristic of Chinese politics: although the general outlines of a policy are consistent throughout most of the county, the details of its implementation are often determined at least in part by local leaders in accordance with particular conditions.

National policy to limit population growth has two aspects: encouragement of late marriage and popularization of the use of birth control. Delayed marriage may be fully as important as contraception in lowering the rate of population growth. In addition, it lengthens the period of time in which young people can devote their full attention to working for the country, without family responsibilities. In the rural areas we visited, the target age for marriage is 25 for men and 23 for women (the legal minimum ages are 20 and 18 respectively). The somewhat more traditional nature of the rural areas is acknowledged in the fact that the urban target ages are 28 for men and 25 for women.

In the communes and brigades we visited, we were told that the target ages had been generally met during the last few years, although in Wan-t'ong brigade the average age at marriage is slightly below the target. A county cadre in Shun-te county told us that in the county as a whole, about one-third of the couples marrying are of the target age, in one-third of the cases one of the two is younger, and in the remaining one-third neither has reached the target age. Even the young Ng couple, who were probably in most respects a model peasant family, had been below the target age when they married. In Tung-kuan county the cadres said that most young people respond to appeals not to marry too young, with the exception of those who are strongly influenced by their old parents. Several cadres mentioned that the traditional ideas of the older people, who "want to drink a cup of tea poured by a daughter-in-law," are deterrents to the full implementation of the policy. As with other such policies in China, people are not forced to conform, but are subjected to persuasion. All rural marriages are registered with the commune, and at the time of registration the couple will be interviewed not only to ensure that they are entering the union voluntarily but also to attempt to persuade them to postpone the marriage if they are too young.

Also, the persistence of traditional (in Chinese terms, "feudal") ideas with respect to family planning still poses some problems. According to the Shun-te woman cadre, the idea of the two-child family is still not fully accepted in the rural areas. Families prefer to have three children, and are then satisfied if they have both boys and girls; but if they have three girls they will want to persevere until they have a boy. According to a Lo-kang commune cadre, the old sayings are still quoted: "More children, more happiness" and "Boys are important, girls are unimportant." Families still prefer boys, although many want children of both sexes. These "feudal ideas" are gradually disappearing but as they have to some degree a rational economic basis (see p. 59) they cannot be expected to disappear entirely.

Although the idea of delayed marriage has become generally acceptable, non-

marriage so as to serve the revolutionary cause more fully is apparently unheard of. When we asked the Shun-te woman cadre about this, she replied that a few older women who previously rejected the traditional system (18) might never marry, but that nonmarriage among younger people is very rare. The old norm of universal marriage to continue the family persists, but with the qualification that marriage be delayed and the number of children limited.

Households

The household is the basic unit of social organization in rural China, and in almost all instances we were given the number of households as well as the population of the communes and brigades we visited. The members of a household not only share common residence, but also form a unit for purposes of consumption, sharing a common budget. It is a productive unit only insofar as each household produces vegetables on its small private plot, and raises pigs and chickens for its own use, but its members are employed in collective production. Judging from cadres' comments, families are most likely to consist either of a couple and their children or a couple, their children, and one or both of the husband's parents. The average household has about five people (Appendix 8).

It is still the normal pattern that a woman upon marriage moves to the household of her husband and his parents. Thus it is often the case that a new household is not formed upon marriage, but rather, that a woman is added to an existing household. The household continues to exist as a unit until the members make a decision to divide the commonly held property (in modern China this would be only the house, furniture, tools, and savings) and to separate into the constituent smaller families. Thus, the married sons with their wives and children might decide to live separately from each other and their parents. This process often entailed bitter conflict in the past, but this is now less true because the livelihood of the constituent families does not depend on their share of the property.

It appears that traditional blind marriages (i.e., marriages in which the partners were chosen solely by the parents) no longer take place in rural China. The Marriage Law of 1950 states that marriage must be the result of free choice on the part of the couple, and the commune cadres who register marriages are supposed to ascertain that this is the case. Couples now have opportunities to meet in their work situations, especially when employed in large-scale construction projects with people from other brigades or communes. Perhaps half the couples presently marrying meet through introductions by relatives or friends, however. This is partly because they normally work and associate with people from their own production team or brigade. The teams, and sometimes even the brigades, are often equivalent to natural villages, and in Kwangtung, with its tradition of large, locally based lineages a village may be composed entirely of people of one surname. Same-surname marriage has traditionally been discouraged in China, and so it may be necessary for young people to be introduced to eligible partners from other villages.

According to the party secretary of Wan-t'ong brigade: "After the introduction the young man will go to visit her and sit for a while with her in her house and look at her. After a while they come to develop a common understanding and then they get married." The marriage certificate is obtained from the brigade and the marriage registered in the commune. Friends and relatives are invited to a banquet to celebrate the wedding. Such feasts are less lavish and extravagant than they were in the past, but may still be quite festive. The policy with regard to such feasts is to educate the people in the spirit of frugality but not to interfere. A small bride price of about 100 yuan may be given to the woman's family, but without the previous connotation of "buying a woman." It is used to buy furniture and clothing for the bride to take to her new home. Some families refuse to accept even this, and simply let the husband's family buy the necessary articles themselves.

Before 1949, it was almost impossible for a woman to obtain a divorce, and if she

ran away from an intolerable marriage, it was often the case that she would have to leave her children behind, as they were her husband's family's descendents. Now, however, the right to divorce is guaranteed by the Marriage Law. Every attempt is made to reconcile the couple, however, especially if there are children involved. People at their work place and cadres will talk with them to try to resolve their problems. A couple seeking a divorce first goes to the brigade, and when permission is granted there, goes to the commune level. The divorce is finally granted by the county court. The rate of divorce is extremely low — less than 100 in 1972 in Shun-te county, which has a population of 715 000. Immediately after the passing of the Marriage Law there were over 1000 divorces in that county, however, because of the large number of unhappy traditional marriages. The most common reasons for divorce in that county, according to a woman cadre, are conflict between husband and wife or mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, infidelity, and infertility. As a rural wife would be normally living in her husband's family's home, upon divorce she would either return to her own parents or have a new house built in her husband's village. According to the Marriage Law, both parties have equal rights to custody. Likewise, in the case where a widow remarries (another right guaranteed by law, although we were told that an older woman would not do it), her husband's family have no claim on her children.

Contrary to persistent rumours about the "destruction of the family" in China, it appears quite clear that conditions in the countryside now are more favourable to the realization of the ideal of having a unified family of several generations under one roof than they ever were before. While walking through one Tung-kuan village we were introduced with evident pride to one family that had 13 members, spanning four generations, all living together. The ancient great-grandmother was busy feeding a very small member of the fourth generation when we arrived. Now everyone can afford to marry, the great majority of infants who are born live to grow up, and periodic famines no longer drive families from their homes and disperse their members. Contrary to the pre-1949 situation, however, the family is no longer the sole locus of social security for individuals. Security is offered by the collective, and indiv-

Children, Won-t'ong brigade.



iduals are expected to extend their loyalty and commitment beyond the family to the wider society.

Migration

It is somewhat surprising to learn that despite the many dramatic changes in Chinese social organization, the great majority of rural village people are still living in their ancestral villages. There appears to have been very little movement of population. This represents a considerable change for Kwangtung people, who traditionally migrated both within China and to other countries to seek a living, although they attempted to maintain ties with their native villages. According to our informants, there is at present very little migration, and that which exists conforms to certain patterns. Some commune members, especially younger people, may take employment on state farms or other enterprises, particularly in the developing frontier areas. During the past 2 years, more than 400 people left Lo-kang commune to take up residence elsewhere.

At Lok-t'ong brigade, we were told that a few dozen young people had left to work elsewhere. Some moved permanently with their families, whereas others left their families behind and return to visit them every year at the Spring Festival. Women, of course, "migrate" upon marriage to their husbands' villages. There is little migration of rural families either to cities or to other rural areas. In order for a person or family to migrate, it is necessary to make proper arrangements, including transferral of ration cards and of registration (all communes keep population registers) from the commune of origin to that of destination. Presumably, migration would also not be possible until family members had made arrangements for new employment and housing, as both must be negotiated through the proper government channels. Such control is essential to ensure socialist planning. When the movement of population is regulated, economic and social planning can be carried out and the problems so characteristic of most developing countries can be avoided. By controlling rural-urban migration, China has managed to avoid urban congestion and overpopulation, with its housing shortages, slums and squatter areas, inadequate educational and medical facilities, and unemployment. On the streets of Chinese cities one does not see unemployed and underemployed people in marginal occupations such as petty hawking.

The policy of "walking on two legs" implies not only preserving and improving the quality of life in the cities, however, but also working to develop the countryside so that the rural areas will have medical, educational, and cultural facilities comparable to those in cities. Since the Cultural Revolution, it has been a particularly important aspect of policy to prevent the development of an urban intellectual and administrative elite. It is now common for cultural performers, medical doctors, and other specialists to go out into the countryside to work for part of the time. In addition, urban intellectuals and administrators are expected to spend a few months or even years in the countryside on a regular basis (called *hsia-fang*, or "downward transfer"). They live and work on rural communes or in special "cadre schools" to gain a better understanding of the peasants' lives and struggles, to participate in manual labour, to study, and to improve their political viewpoint. This migration is temporary, as the cadres sooner or later return to their previous posts. We were not given any indication of the numbers of such cadres present on the communes we visited. We did, however, meet a number of cadres who had been transferred permanently from one rural area to another where their skills were needed, some coming from other regions of China.

A further form of migration to the countryside is that of young urban middle-school graduates. It is the normal pattern that all such young people go to the countryside or to factories after middle-school graduation, and 2 or 3 years spent in this way are a prerequisite to further employment or university education. This practice, emphasized since the Cultural Revolution, is an important component of the overall

policy of combating elitism and the preference of young people to live and work in an urban rather than a rural environment. The young people go to the countryside to work with the peasants, to learn agricultural skills, to receive ideological education from them, and to gain first-hand experience of their living and working conditions. They, in turn, can contribute whatever specialized knowledge and technical training they might have.

Lo-kang commune has received a total of 602 of these "educated youth" (probably since the Cultural Revolution). About half of them have now left: some to work in factories, some to become teachers, some to enter university, and others to join the army. Others left, with approval, because of health problems, and returned to Kwangchow, and some left because they married people in other communes. The remainder are still at Lo-kang commune, where they are now production team cadres, barefoot doctors (paramedical workers), and primary school teachers.

In Shun-te county we were able to talk with a cadre responsible for educated youth in the county as a whole. Since 1968, 11 058 young junior and senior middle-school graduates from Kwangchow and the larger towns have gone into the Shun-te countryside. Of these, 1000 have since returned, and others have left their original posts when they were assigned to other rural work within the county.

When a young person goes to live in a production team or other organization, the county gives the team 240 yuan to pay for initial living expenses and 450 yuan to meet the costs of providing housing. The young people are always housed in separate dormitories, and do not live with peasant families. Any additional expenses are met by the team's welfare fund, since the young people become full commune members with the same rights as any others. The county also gives each a subsidy of 6-8 yuan per month for the first year, but after that time they are expected to have learned to support themselves and to earn work points as do other commune members. They may initially have problems in settling down because they are reluctant to engage in hard physical work, but, according to this cadre, most of them adjust after they have received support and political education from the local people. In general, they spend 70% of their time doing ordinary agricultural work, and 30% in those areas in which they have special skills. After 2-3 years, they tend to move into more full-time work in scientific and technical areas. Of the 10 000 educated youth in Shun-te, one is on the county Party Committee, five are on the County Revolutionary Committee, and six are members of commune Party Committees. About one-fifth have become barefoot doctors, evening teachers, and teachers of Mao Tse-tung thought, and others are production team accountants, warehouse keepers, and committee members. They often work on political education teams. They also hold weekly political study sessions with brigade and team cadres and peasant representatives.

Wan-t'ong brigade in Tung-kuan county has had 49 educated youth since the Cultural Revolution. Of these, four have gone to factories. A few others, according to the brigade cadre, were unable to adjust to rural living because they came from families with business backgrounds and did not have the necessary degree of political consciousness. They ran away, either to Hong Kong or elsewhere. Forty now remain, and most are expected to stay permanently. They are senior middle-school graduates and most arrived without special skills. In fact, at the beginning they didn't know how to work and some couldn't even cook for themselves. They were taught these skills by the peasants and cadres. They came wearing shoes but after being taught to take them off while working they are now used to going barefoot. The brigade cadres illustrated the progress they have made by citing the example of one girl who when she arrived could carry only about 30 catties (15 kilograms) on a carrying pole, but who can now carry 200! They said that most have adjusted well and are doing good work. Some have become medical staff and others are teachers. Some have married natives of the commune.

The result of this policy is that large numbers of young people are moved into the countryside, most of them permanently. There they will not only be able to relieve urban population pressure but will also be able to put whatever skills and

talents they might have to practical use. On balance, it might seem that the young people initially, at least, gain more in education and experience than the peasants receive in return, as the peasants have to devote time and energy to housing them and teaching them agricultural techniques. One might also question how well the young people relate to the people of the area. If their educational background is superior (and if it is, one should ask questions about the nature of rural education) do they often move into leadership positions sought by the local young people? This is one of many questions that we did not have sufficient time to answer.

This policy seems to have served very well to disperse young people with some degree of specialized training into the countryside, preventing their concentration in the cities where they might form an elite class. It not only gives the young people first-hand experience of rural life and work but also, according to the Lok-t'ong young people, helps to more closely integrate the city and countryside by improving communication and understanding between rural and urban workers.

The Educated Youth of Lok-t'ong Brigade

While walking around Lok-t'ong brigade, we stopped in at a small whitewashed building that turned out to be a dormitory for the educated youth of the brigade. It was a simple structure, with a hard-packed earth floor and crude wooden furniture, occupied by 21 tanned, healthy-looking young people (19 girls) and their dog. They interrupted their meal preparations to greet us cheerfully, and we later spent an hour or so with them.

All were graduates of four middle schools in Kwangchow. Most had been there for 1 year, but a few had come in 1968. The average age of the recent arrivals was 18. They spoke Cantonese, but said they were slowly learning Hakka, the dialect of the local people (anyone educated since 1949, and all cadres, should know Putonghua, the national language). After their graduation they had applied to go to the countryside, and had been assigned by the state to this brigade. Their dormitory had been built by the brigade, but financed by the state. When the students first arrived, they had been supported by state subsidies, but they now earn their own work points.

Since their arrival, they have learned from the local peasants how to grow fruit trees and other crops, to raise animals, and to engage in fishing and forestry. They had not had experience in these areas before they came. Some now work in special areas for which they had had theoretical training in school, such as weather forecasting and animal husbandry. The young people have also learned to grow vegetables for their own consumption. Their educational background has prepared them for their other work, which includes conducting literacy classes for illiterate older women and carrying out cultural education. They also give performances for the local people.

They have their own study groups, in which they were at that time studying the Communist Manifesto, Orientation of the Youth Movement, current news, and editorials. They also get together regularly with the 300 young urban people on the commune to study, to discuss their living conditions, and to chat and joke informally.

The young people asserted that they are also closely integrated with the local people, who treat them like their own relatives, preparing food and heating water for them when they return from work, helping them to learn agricultural techniques, and caring for them when they are sick. One girl said her parents were very worried about her when she first went to the countryside, but they relaxed after learning that when she had been sick the local people had looked after her and called a doctor. They often write to their parents about their experiences and describe their progress, and during the agricultural slack season they have 40 days off to return to the city for a visit. Sometimes the cadres and local peasants go to visit the students' parents in the city to reassure them, and their parents have also visited their children in the countryside. Thus, according to the young people, the relationship between urban workers and rural peasants is strengthened.

Chapter 6

Standard of Living

... and thus the people's livelihood has steadily improved.

Extensive travel throughout the Pearl River delta and to the mountainous regions of northern Kwangtung enabled us to observe the people carefully. We saw no one who looked hungry or undernourished and none who appeared to have untreated illnesses or sores. Clean bandages and poultices covering boils (common in the hot Kwangtung summer) and injuries suggested the availability of prompt medical treatment. Everyone looked healthy and energetic. Housing appeared adequate and in good repair. People's dress varied from place to place. In some areas people were well dressed; in other, more remote areas we saw individuals wearing older patched clothing. Our overall impression was of a rural population that has attained at least an adequate standard of living and that, in some areas, is approaching prosperity. The standard of living of these rural people derives directly from their productive activities, whether agricultural or nonagricultural. Production provides the population with personal income and various services: health and educational facilities and social security benefits. With increasing production these services have become more extensive and have improved in quality.

Income

Both the commune and the brigade derive income from the various industrial and agricultural activities carried out under their auspices, such as small manufacturing, livestock raising, fruit and bamboo orchards, and handicraft production. The income from the sale of these products is used for investment, for the costs of production, and for wages. Commune industrial workers are paid cash wages (see below, p. 53) as are brigade and commune workers engaged in agricultural sidelines, such as silkworm raising.

The income of rural agricultural workers derives from the agricultural activities of the production team. The team obtains its income from the sale of grain and other produce to the state. Appendix 9 shows how the constituent production teams of the various counties, communes, and brigades we visited apportion their income.

The agricultural tax on grain was established after a land survey in 1954. Land was classified according to its quality and a set amount of tax (not a percentage of the crop) was determined for each unit of land. In the area that later became Lo-kang commune, the tax was levied at 87.5 chin per mou (656 kilograms per hectare) when the grain yield was 485 chin per mou (3638 kilograms per hectare) i.e. at 18%. After collectivization, agricultural taxes were consolidated and the accounting unit (now the production team) was made responsible for the tax. As productivity has increased, the agricultural tax has remained constant and thus represents a declining proportion of income. In Lo-kang commune, the tax on grain is now 8.8%. This tax may be reduced in the event of natural disaster. The tax on cash crops such as fruit is determined each year (in Lo-kang commune this tax is approximately 8%) but animal husbandry and other sidelines are not taxed.

Something over half the income of the production team is allocated for distribution. It is from this that the individual's cash income is derived. However, each indiv-

idual also receives a part of his income in kind, predominantly in grain, but also sometimes in other produce, such as fish or vegetables. The grain ration is allocated on the basis of need, which is determined according to age and type of work done. Thus, a young man doing heavy agricultural work might receive as much as 40 kilograms of rice per month, whereas a child or old person is allocated only 15 kilograms. On Lo-kang commune, the average received was 22 kilograms. The value of the household's ration of grain and produce is subtracted from the cash income of the working members.

The principle of payment at the present stage is "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work." Each task carries with it a certain value expressed in work points. The allocation of work points to a particular task is determined by the heaviness of physical labour and the technical ability required to carry out the task. However, the number of work points an individual receives for carrying out a task may also vary according to the quality of the work done and, in some places at least, the political and social attitude with which the person performs the task.

Allocation of tasks to individuals is determined by production team cadres, and attendance is recorded on a daily basis. Work points are aggregated every 10 days in the busy season and once a month in the slack season. The allocation of work points is ratified by public discussion in which allocations to particular individuals can be challenged on either technical or ideological grounds.

As the entry of women into paid agricultural work on a large scale is a new phenomenon (less so in Kwangtung than in other parts of China), there has been a persistent problem of ensuring that women are paid the same as men for their work. The principle of equal pay for equal work prevails, but some struggle has been necessary to enforce this. Furthermore, since payment depends on the nature of work performed, and women generally do somewhat lighter work than men, under the present system they would tend to earn somewhat less. Also, women work only 24 days per month whereas men work 26. At Lok-t'ong brigade, we were told that a man might earn 4000 work points per year, whereas a woman would earn 3800-3900. In Shun-te county, a woman alone can support herself and three children by working in agriculture.

The agricultural worker may receive some cash every 6 months or every quarter, but accounts are settled at the end of the year, when each individual's work points are added up and he is allocated cash accordingly. This, according to Mr Ng of Lap-lau commune, is the time for making large purchases and taking trips to Kwang-chow. The total number of work points earned by all members of the production team is divided into the amount of money available for distribution, and thus the cash value of the work point is determined. Each individual's work points are added up and multiplied by the cash value of the work point, giving his income for the year.

Because some production teams have a higher level of productivity than others, the value of the work point varies from place to place. As a result, there are fairly marked differences in per capita income (Appendix 10).

Differences among organizational units can be considerable. Of great importance are differences in natural endowments. Tung-kuan has both rich delta land and a good deal of mountainous land. Although the county as a whole is a "high and stable yield" area, some parts do not warrant this description. It may not be merely a question of natural advantage. Questions of leadership and organization may account for relative backwardness, if that be judged by income figures. One cadre remarked: "the development of communes is like the fingers of a hand — they are not even." The problem of income disparities is one that is receiving considerable attention. In Lo-kang commune, for example, development of marginal areas is stressed with the goal of equalizing incomes across the commune. Eventually, income may be pooled over a larger unit, such as the brigade or the commune, in order to reduce inequalities. However, one cadre explained that the people are not yet ready for such sharing: to force them to do so before they are ready would be, he said, "sham com-

munism."¹⁷

Private sources of income are important in the household economy, and probably provide the "petty cash" needed for day-to-day purchases. Individual households may sell some of the produce from their private plots, which constitute no more than 5% of commune land and are allocated to households on a per capita basis. In Lo-kang commune, the average holding is 0.57 mou per person. In Tung-kuan county we were told that individuals can, in addition, reclaim an equal amount of waste land for private production. Chickens and pigs are also privately raised and may be sold; and peasants may engage in small-scale handicrafts production, such as broom making. Regular rural markets are held for the buying and selling of collective and private produce. In Tung-kuan county, 15–30% of household income derives from private sources.

Wage Work

One feature of the commune economy is its attempt to encompass a diverse spread of economic activities besides the production of agricultural crops. Many collective sidelines are produced in factories and payment is in wages rather than in work points. In Lo-kang commune, for example, one of the most important sideline activities is fruit processing. Its centre is a commune level factory, organized in 1958, that currently employs 235 permanent workers. Its major product is preserved fruit (plums, olives, oranges, and lemons), which is a popular snack item. The factory's output value in 1972 was 2 million yuan. Permanent workers receive an average monthly wage of 45 yuan. The silk embroidery factory at Lap-lau commune, also a commune-run industry, employs 240 workers, all of whom are women, who receive an average monthly wage of 42 yuan. Similarly, at brigade-level enterprises, such as sugar refining, machinery repair, or oil pressing, workers are frequently paid wages rather than work points. The wages are only slightly lower than those in local state-run factories at the county level. All county-level factories we visited had similar wage structures. In the Hung-wai Silk Filature Mill, the average wage is 48 yuan, with a range of 30.6–80 yuan. The highest cadre wage is 80 yuan and the lowest 35.5; the range in technician's wages is 49.6–63.5 yuan. At the Shun-te Electrical Engineering Factory, we were told that an individual's wage level is determined by group discussion (subject to leadership approval) of his skill, length of service, and political attitudes. The range in wages there is from 34.5 to 41 yuan, with an average of 46.7.

Expenditures

Because of China's socialist economy and its relative independence of world markets, it has not suffered the inflation that plagues most of the world. Most prices are unchanged since the 1950s, and a few, such as those of pharmaceuticals and tea, have gone down. Manufactured goods are relatively expensive; food and rent are quite cheap (see Appendix 11).

The shops in Ta-liang and the other towns we visited offer a wide range of consumer goods, and apparently in adequate quantity, as we saw few queues. Ta-liang had shops selling furniture, stationery, tea and medicine, bicycles, condiments, and books. In addition, there were banks, teahouses, a large department store, and repair

¹⁷ One unusual method of payment concerns the workers on the Kan Chu Tan hydroelectric project. Labour was supplied from every team in Shun-te county and the workers on the project were paid work points, although the county level provided a grain supplement. Given the variation in per capita income from team to team, there is the unusual situation of unequal pay for equal work. Payment was determined not by the productivity of each worker on the project, but by the productivity of the team that provided the labour. A similar method of payment was used in the construction of an irrigation project on Lo-kang commune. In this instance the supplementary grain allocation was made by the commune level and only those teams directly affected by the project contributed labour.



Workers, Lo-kang commune factory.

shops. Even Wan-t'ong brigade had several well-stocked shops. A few goods were rationed: rice, pork, cooking oil, and cotton cloth (limited to 6 metres per person per year).

Rural households have few expenditures, paying only for clothing and other household goods, electricity, cooperative medical care service, and schooling. Scrap wood and twigs are often used as fuel. Rural housing is privately owned, and the cost of construction varies from one area to the next, depending on traditional local styles and local materials. In Lap-lau commune a house with a living room and two bedrooms costs 1200 yuan, but in Lok-t'ong brigade, where houses are built of adobe brick with frames of local timber, the cost of a five-room house is only 100 yuan, which can be realized from the sale of one pig, if the family provides the labour. In Wan-t'ong brigade, in contrast, where houses tend to be two stories high, built with reinforced concrete and with glazed windows, the cost is at least 2000–2500 yuan, and may go as high as 4000 yuan. In that brigade, about 5% of the people borrow some funds from the loan society located in the county town to build houses. House land is free, allocated after consultation with the production team and the people in the area.

Certain consumer goods — bicycles, sewing machines, watches, and radios — are highly valued in the countryside, and are among the major expenditures made by rural families. For example, Wan-t'ong brigade, with its population of 6400 people in 1250 households had 1100 bicycles and 360 sewing machines, as well as 1100 new houses. In Tung-kuan county as a whole, there were 250 000 bicycles, which were said to be still not enough to meet the demand.

Health Care

Health care should now be only a very small item in the budget of most rural families, and it appears to be almost universally available. During the late 1960s, a cooperative health care scheme was initiated in which the costs of individual care were subsidized in part by the brigade and in part by small monthly fees paid by individuals. Under this scheme, any medical care needed would then be free, except for payment of a token registration fee upon each visit. This scheme is now in operation in about 70% of the brigades in China (19). In Tung-kuan county, 429 of the 436 brigades have cooperative medical care. Each person pays 10–30 fen per month to participate in the scheme, the amount depending on the extent to which the brigade can subsidize care. All treatment, whether at the brigade, commune, or county level medical centres, is then free; and some brigades are able to subsidize even provincial-level treatment. In the areas we visited, the scheme had been initiated in 1968.

Industrial workers in state factories receive all medical treatment free. Their dependents pay only one-half the cost of treatment, the other half being paid by the factory. The costs of medical care for those who must pay are very low. Chest surgery is the most expensive, costing 20 yuan. Abdominal surgery costs 5 yuan, and dental extractions 80 fen.

The development of an extensive network of health care facilities was begun long before the cooperative medical care system, but has been particularly emphasized since the Cultural Revolution. All brigades have at least one medical station where diagnosis and simple treatments can be done, inoculations given, and birth control supplies distributed. Lok-t'ong brigade's health station was built in 1959. It now has one female and three male paramedical workers ("barefoot doctors"), one of whom is a Chinese traditional medicine specialist. The woman is in charge of gynecology and childbirth (which in that brigade still takes place at home). The medical workers were trained at the county centre for 6 months to a year, and they go back periodically for more study. The clinic has reception and examining rooms, a pharmacy, and a sealed glass room for preparing and bottling Chinese herbal medicines. The health workers treat more than 10 patients per day. They told us that each production team has one person who can give simple treatments, and whose responsibility it is to maintain good sanitation and thus prevent disease. Any illness that cannot be treated at the brigade level clinic is referred to the commune- or county-level hospitals. The commune hospital is 11 kilometres away, and an ambulance can be sent for the patient if necessary.

Each commune has at least one hospital. Lap-lau commune has 1 hospital, 6 clinics, and 24 brigade-level medical stations, with a total of 174 medical staff (including 37 Western doctors and 13 traditional doctors), and, in addition, 211 paramedical workers. The commune hospital has one section for traditional Chinese treatment (housed in a large and elaborate former ancestral temple), and another for Western medical care with a 68-bed hospital, as well as a maternity clinic. The hospital rooms are very simple, with eight beds to a room, and were crowded with relatives visiting the patients. There is a small but immaculate operating room where three or four operations per month are done. They are able to do stomach and gallbladder operations, appendectomies, Caesarian sections, and sterilizations. In addition, there is a room for minor surgical procedures and an X-ray room.

We had time to visit only one of Lo-kang commune's two hospitals. This one has 70 beds (including maternity) with 72 staff (including 13 Western doctors, 3 or 4 traditional doctors, and 17 nurses). The outpatient clinic is also divided into traditional Chinese and Western medicine sections. The Western medicine department has a pharmacy with familiar drugs like antibiotics and aspirin, while the traditional medicine pharmacy has boxes and drawers of herbs. This hospital also has an X-ray machine and a simple but modern laboratory. One aspect of its work is holding monthly training sessions for brigade-level midwives who come in to study and to change their instruments and medicines. Each brigade has an obstetrical clinic, and

very few births take place at home. Each team has a midwife who can do home deliveries if necessary.

Tung-kuan county has four county-level hospitals and a total of 13 X-ray machines in the county. In 1972 there was a total of 1867 hospital beds in the county (including commune hospitals) with 2532 medical staff. For mentally ill patients outpatient treatment is available and there are 57 hospital beds, which the county cadres said are "not enough." In the case of mental illness, the patient's family pays for drugs and other treatments when possible, but subsidies are available for those who cannot, and in fact the state pays most of these costs.

In Tung-kuan county, the cadres emphasized that the elimination of many diseases has been the result of the general improvement in standards of public health. Although the extensive network of facilities offering inexpensive medical treatment is important, inoculation programs, educational work in environmental sanitation and hygiene, and campaigns to eliminate pests such as flies have been critical. Thus, in Tung-kuan, smallpox, cholera, and plague have been eliminated and previously endemic diseases such as malaria have been greatly reduced, as have childhood diseases like measles and whooping cough. In Lo-kang commune, the goals of the medical care system were defined as: (1) the prevention of disease; (2) the early treatment of minor illness; and (3) the provision of dependable treatment to the victims of serious disease.

The emphasis on sanitation and hygiene was striking wherever we went in rural Kwangtung. The streets and lanes are immaculate, and there are no open sewers and filthy ditches. We saw no pests, such as cockroaches, and virtually no flies.

All of these changes are possible only because of China's thorough and all-pervasive organizational system, which facilitates the transmission of ideas and services into the rural areas. By using the already-existing hierarchical system of organization, the brigades can offer basic treatment and can also easily send patients up to that level of the health care system where they can receive the more specialized treatment they may require. Conversely, ideas and services, such as a training program for brigade paramedics or a new campaign to improve local sanitation, can quickly be disseminated down to the production team level. All of this has made possible a dramatic improvement in public health at low economic cost. It is hard to imagine that in these same areas 25 years ago the people were virtually without medical care. Unless they were wealthy enough to seek treatment, they simply had to rely on their own folk knowledge of herbal medicine. The evident health and vigour of the people testifies that this is no longer the case.

Traditional doctor, Lo-kang commune hospital.



Education

Before 1949 in the area now comprising Lo-kang commune there was no complete primary school. Seventy percent of the men and 90% of the women were illiterate. These figures were probably typical of rural China. The implications of this were impressed on us when several older brigade and team level cadres in Won-t'ong brigade mentioned in passing that they could not read. Even the Brigade Party Secretary was illiterate.

Now virtually everyone under the age of 25 is literate, women as well as men. Well over 90% of primary school-age children attend school in the areas we visited, although enrollment is not quite 100%. Lo-kang commune now has 14 seven-year primary schools, with 11040 pupils; and two secondary schools, with over 630 students. Nine Lo-kang commune members have attended university. The rural primary schools are run and supported by the brigades, whereas the secondary schools are both commune-run and state-supported (in this case, by the county level). Certain specialized secondary schools are run by the counties. The school fees are somewhat variable: in Lap-lau commune, the fees for senior and junior middle school are 5 yuan for each 6-month term, and for the primary school 3 yuan. Fees for kindergarten (optional for ages 5-7) are 1 yuan per month.

In rural China, many educational activities take place outside school settings. Political and technical study occurs at regular intervals during work breaks or in the evenings. Thus, a Won-t'ong cadre said his production team sometimes meets as a group to hear presentations on topics in political education and then breaks into discussion groups. During the previous autumn they had held sessions to educate themselves about Ta-chai, a model brigade, trying to determine what they could learn from Ta-chai's experience, and how this could be applied under their local conditions. Sometimes small groups of women may also get together to hold political discussions, to read to illiterate members, and to help them learn to read and write. Educated urban youth living in the countryside are important in conducting literacy classes for older women.

Conditions of Work

From all appearances, there is full employment in the areas of Kwangtung we visited (and, according to all reports, throughout most of China). The planned economy, and labour-intensive methods of work, ensure that everyone has a job. In agriculture, people begin working in their own production teams upon reaching employable age. Jobs in industry are located through county employment bureaus. Apprenticeships of 1 or 2 years are often served. Workers apparently remain permanently employed in one factory, with little job mobility. Cadres often related the average age of their workers to the age of the factory, implying that the group of workers who had been hired when the factory opened had remained there. Almost half the population is in the labour force, and slightly more than half the agricultural labour force is female.

It is standard in both industry and agriculture to work an 8-hour day and a 6-day week (except for women in agriculture, who work only 24 days per month). The 8 hours may not be consecutive: in the Hung Wai Silk Filature Mill, the shifts are split, with 4 hours off in the middle. In Tung-kuan agriculture, during the busy (and hot) season, work may be in two or even three short sessions, the first starting as early as 3 a.m., with long rest periods in between. There are no paid personal holidays but various national holidays are given, the Spring Festival (Lunar New Year) and National Day (1 October) being the most important. Personal leave can also be taken.

Social Security

Many factories provide a range of services for workers. Clinics are common, with paramedical workers giving consultations on the shop floor. Many factories also

Rural Reader for Children (Nongcun Ertong Kantu Shizi)



kuài jì
会计



bǎo guǎn yuán
保管员



sì yǎng yuán
饲养员



jì fēn yuán
记分员

Not only has the written language been simplified to make it easier to learn, but the school curriculum has been made directly relevant to rural life, with a very practical emphasis, as is shown in this page from a rural reader. Study is combined with work experience, in contrast to traditional Chinese education, which emphasized the acquisition of highly specialized literary skills and downgraded manual labour.

provide housing at very low rent. The Hung Wai Silk Spinning Mill has 59 housing units, with apartments for families and shared rooms for single workers, accommodating more than 400 people. A family apartment with two rooms rents for 1.75 yuan per month, and a bunk for a single worker costs 0.35 yuan. This factory, like other large factories, also has dining halls for the workers. A meal at the Tung-kuan Starch Factory costs 16 fen.

All state factories have unlimited sick leave, the length of leave to be determined by a doctor. Policy varies from place to place: in the Fo-shan Silk Weaving Mill, full pay is given for the first 6 months, and then 70% (or more if needed), whereas in the Shun-te Electrical Factory the amount depends on length of service, the smallest amount being 60% of salary. No paid sick leave is available in the agricultural areas we visited, but subsidies are available for those in need.

In industry and in agriculture, the retirement age is normally 50–55 for women and 60 for men. Pensions in industry amount to 70% for those who have worked for more than 10 years and 60% for those who have worked less. The communes we visited do not offer pensions to agricultural workers at present. It is expected (and written into the Marriage Law) that children will care for and support their parents. For those elderly people without children, and others without means of support, there is the system of rural social security called the “Five Guarantees,” assuring them of the basic necessities of life. They are guaranteed food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and a decent burial.

This gives support not only to the elderly without children, but also to others who are unable to work, and it guarantees them a standard of living equivalent to the average in the area. The funds come from brigade and team welfare funds. The towns have a similar system. Ta-liang offers 8–12 yuan per month for food, plus subsidies for other necessities, the funds coming from the income of neighbourhood factories and from the state. Wan-t’ong brigade has 100 such “Five Guarantee” families out of 6400 people. That brigade is unusual among those we visited in that it has an old people’s home for childless people in need of care. In Lok-t’ong brigade, which has no old people’s home, the elderly are looked after in their own homes, and neighbours help them with their chores, such as fetching water and firewood.

It is not clear whether elderly people with daughters but no sons are eligible for “Five Guarantees” support. As it is still the pattern for a girl to move to her husband’s household upon marriage, she and her husband are expected to be responsible for supporting his parents, not hers. Only in the rare case in which her husband joins her in her parents’ household would the young people be expected to give their loyalty and support to her parents. The fact that retired agricultural workers must depend on their children, specifically their sons, for support may well have a pronatalist influence; for families will be influenced by economic rationality as well as tradition to be sure to have at least one son. The position of old people without surviving children is far more secure than it was in the past, however, with the assurance of “Five Guarantees” support.

Women’s Social Security

Women’s special needs because of their childbearing role are recognized in certain social security provisions. In agriculture, women are to be given special consideration at four times of particular need: (1) during menstruation, they are not to be given wet work; (2) during pregnancy, they should be given lighter work; (3) at the time of delivery, they are to be given 40 days leave (unpaid, but with subsidies available for those in need); (4) while breastfeeding, they should be given work close to home.

The larger factories we visited, especially those employing large numbers of women, have nurseries to care for workers’ children from age 56 days to 7 years. A small percentage of the children live in the factory’s nursery 6 days per week (at the Tung-kuan Starch Factory this costs 9 yuan per month), but the majority go home at night. The cost of daycare is 1.5–3 yuan per month in the factories we visited. This varies somewhat from place to place and according to the age of the child.

The facilities in the factory nurseries we visited were extremely simple by Canadian standards, with very few toys or other special equipment, but the children without exception looked clean, cheerful, and well cared for. The ratio of staff to children was generally 1:10, with a higher ratio for the younger children and a lower ratio for

those in kindergarten. The children seem to spend most of their time in group activities, such as singing and dancing, and are very poised in giving performances. The nursery of the Hung Wai Silk Spinning Mill, like those of other factories we visited, divides the children into groups by age. The smallest were in a separate room in cribs, while infants over a few months in age were, when we visited, napping in canvas hammocks hung in rows, which were being rocked by several nursery workers. Some toddlers were in a large enclosed area with several nurses sitting and playing with them, while others sat and played with nurses on a raised platform. Rooms with cribs were available for their naps. Older children were in a large playroom, while kindergarten children were in a conventional classroom, where they play, do exercises, and learn singing, dancing, counting, and simple reading.

The availability of daycare facilities for agricultural workers varies greatly from region to region in Kwangtung. In Shun-te county, every production team has nurseries, serving 45 000 children in all. In Ng-tei-chai village in Lap-lau commune, for example, there is a nursery that cares for 22 children from the age of 40 days to 7 years. Four elderly women are employed looking after the children, earning seven work points per day. The cost of care is 1 yuan per month for a child. The production teams on Lo-kang commune have a similar arrangement, except that parents pay for the care in work points — 1 work point per day for an infant, and less than 1 work point for a child who can walk. A cadre estimated, however, that about 30% of the children are cared for by grandparents at home.

In Tung-kuan county, it is essential that the children be cared for by grandparents or older siblings, or that women share childcare, as there are no rural nurseries there, except those organized by some brigades during the busy agricultural season. In that county we saw many more small children out and about, with their mothers at work in the fields, or in the company of grandparents or older children.

In Wan-t'ong brigade, only one team has a nursery, and the children in other teams are cared for by old people or by one woman for others. Women who care for the children of others receive work points, one from the team and one from the parent, for each child (somewhat more for an infant). This work is generally done by elderly women.

As the development of childcare facilities has been uneven (probably in response to local resources and demand), so also has been the development of other collective facilities to lighten the burden of housework on employed women. Grain is now ground in collective mills, relieving women of the drudgery of doing it at home. Communal dining facilities were developed in 1958, but soon rejected by the local people who found the food unsatisfactory and probably resented the disruption of family life. Canteens are now common in factories and cities, however. The care of old people is still most commonly done at home, and the old people can perform important services for the family by doing housework and caring for children while the younger people are out working. During the last few years, the importance of men's helping with housework and childcare has been heavily emphasized, with the result that this idea was well known wherever we went, although we had no way of judging the extent to which it is put into practice. People stated that "no man would sit by and watch a woman work," but they also said that educational work is still needed in this matter. It has been necessary to fundamentally change men's thinking with regard to housework. In Lok-t'ong brigade, the men cadres have sometimes acted as examples to the other men. For example, at the time when rice was still milled at home, men cadres began to do it, thus breaking the traditional idea that this can only be women's work.

Status of Women

One of the cadres with whom we talked at Wan-t'ong brigade was a young woman of about 20. She looked like a traditional peasant woman, with her hair done in the local manner, her eyebrows carefully shaped, and her dress in the traditional

style of the area. From her appearance, we would have expected her to be illiterate, shy, and certainly afraid to speak in this intimidating situation — a room full of men cadres, and two strange foreigners armed with a tape recorder. To our surprise she was quite articulate, and gave a lucid and well-organized description of her work in the brigade. Her poise and confidence made us realize that the position of women in China has indeed changed in the past 25 years.

Before the development of the revolutionary movement, Chinese women had no right to hold political positions at any level. Positions of authority in the local and national government systems, as well as in the kinship structure, were held only by men. Public opinion upheld the authority of men over women, although women as they grew older often attained some considerable authority within the household. Still, a younger woman could be abused by her husband and his family almost with impunity, unless her natal family was able to come to her defense.

Traditionally, Cantonese women had more economic rights than women in other parts of China. Their feet were not bound, and they often worked in the fields as did men. They were much less confined to their homes than were northern women. Hakka¹⁸ women were often left with the sole responsibility for agricultural work that supported their families, while the men migrated elsewhere in search of employment. These women even took wage labour jobs in construction and transport. Few Kwangtung women were able to own any form of productive property, however. Land was owned and inherited by men, and descent was traced through the male line.

With the success of the revolution in 1949, the first law to be passed was the Marriage Law, which prohibited the abuses inherent in the traditional system (such as polygamy, arranged marriage, and the taking of child brides) and defined the rights of men and women as equal with regard to property, the custody of children, and authority in the family. The passage of this law was followed by intensive campaigns to publicize its provisions. This must have been a slow process, counteracting deep-seated attitudes and traditional practices. Since that time there has been a great deal of educational work done to counteract the old ideas about women's inferiority and to publicize the new ideas: "men and women are equal now" and "women can do what men can do." Women have increased their status by gaining economic power. At the time of land reform, they as individuals were allocated land; and now, with the collectivization of landholding, an important basis for men's power over women is gone. In Kwangtung, full-time employment in agriculture is available to women, as is industrial employment. Forty percent of the industrial workers are women. Only jobs that offer dignity to women are available; exploitative occupations like prostitution no longer exist.

In addition, women have access to education, and girls study almost as long as boys. Political positions are now open to them, and there is an unwritten rule that a minimum of about 20% of the administrative positions in any governmental body, factory, or commune should be held by women. This was generally the case in the places we visited, although it seems to be true that the highest positions are still held by men. Every production team has one woman cadre who is responsible for organizing the productive work of women and ensuring that their welfare needs are met.

Special women's associations are concerned with women's welfare and the protection of their rights. Before the Cultural Revolution, these associations had existed at every level, but they had then been disbanded. At the time of our visit they had been reconstituted up to the county level. The team level associations had apparently remained in continuous existence. In Shun-te county (and probably elsewhere) the women's association at the team level consists of deputies elected by the women, one for every 10 families. The brigades and communes also have women's associa-

¹⁸ The Hakka are an ethnic minority in Kwangtung province, speaking a different dialect from the dominant Cantonese. They commonly inhabit the mountainous areas. The people of Lok-t'ong brigade are Hakka.

tions. Their general functions include organizing women's study, criticizing feudal ideas about women, facilitating women's participation in production, training women cadres, and communicating awareness of women's problems while attempting to solve them. The role of the commune level association consists of making policy and conducting general educational work concerning the status of women. This association meets once a year. The brigade level associations serve to communicate information from the commune to the teams, and to coordinate the work of the team level associations. They hold meetings of representatives twice a year. The team level associations are most involved in direct day-to-day contact with rural women and their problems. Their role is to carry out recommendations from the higher levels, to organize women's political study, to run nurseries and kindergartens, to do family planning education, and to deal with women's problems as they arise. They work to resolve difficulties that might prevent women from working and they help women who suffer abuse in their homes. The team level associations meet one or more times per month to discuss the problems with which they have been dealing and to communicate them to the higher levels of the association.

Although the women's associations and the team cadre in charge of work with women have these special functions, the advancement of women's status is seen as a general task of the society. Women are considered to be one of the classes of people who suffered particular oppression before 1949, and so special efforts are made to improve their status now. They have been guaranteed basic legal protection and given ideological support and economic and political opportunities to improve their status. Then, following the fundamental principle of self-reliance, women have worked to demonstrate their potential and to earn their higher status.

Conclusions

Increased productivity in rural Kwangtung has resulted in a general improvement in the standard of living as agricultural production has improved due to collective efforts in water control, land reclamation, and scientific cultivation. The threat of periodic natural calamities with disastrous consequences for the people's livelihood has all but disappeared. State aid and tax relief alleviate privation in areas suffering poor harvests. Thus each region is assured of a secure income.

As China has moved toward more advanced forms of socialism the distribution of rural income has gradually become more equal, although wide discrepancies still exist. The "Five Guarantees" system of social security assures basic support for those who cannot work. In time, the distribution of income will be made even more equal but this transformation can be achieved only through the slow process of educating people to adopt a more socialist outlook.

As a consequence of increases in production and the development of a socialist consciousness, rural services and amenities have increased and have become more equal in their distribution. Thus basic health care and education are now generally available throughout the countryside and are no longer the privilege of the wealthy.

All these changes are part of a movement toward more equalitarian human relationships in the countryside. Gross distinctions of wealth have been broken down and political power is more equitably shared. In society and in the home the power of men over women has been weakened as a result of extensive educational work. In these ways the residents of rural China are encouraged to participate in building a new society.

The crucial question is the kind of developmental path that China is following and the concrete steps that are being taken to realize certain abstract ideals. Our observations suggest that in the areas we visited some impressive achievements have been made. This is not to say that the millenium has been achieved in China. Our Chinese hosts were the first to admit that there are problems that are unresolved and difficulties that lie ahead. But the progress that has been achieved is substantial. The Chinese road to development is not easy nor is it necessarily universally applicable. It is, however, significant and worthy of the closest study.

Chapter 7

Conclusion: Walking on Two Legs

This book has outlined aspects of the development process in a small area of rural South China. It is based upon a relatively brief visit to the Pearl River delta region of Kwangtung province, supplemented with a few academic sources. Our intention has not been to present a research report for the specialist. There are doubtless many gaps and many unanswered questions, but the evidence we have presented illustrates some general issues in Chinese rural development strategies.

China's Economic "Problem": The Rural Sector

China is the world's largest peasant society. As Schurman (20) has noted it is possible to appreciate the magnitude of the fact that China is a peasant society only by the realization that China's urban, and therefore non-peasant, population is 125 million, a population larger than that of industrialized Japan. But the remaining 650 million Chinese are peasants.

The enormity of the peasant sector of Chinese society gives a clue to the nature of China's central economic problem and also the steps that have been taken to deal with it. In 1949 Mao Tse-tung described China as "poor and blank." There is little doubt that in 1949 China was poor and weak after a century of disintegration and domination by foreign powers. In common with much of the non-Western world China has attempted to become less "poor and blank" in the period since Liberation in 1949. In the early years of the People's Republic, in which the influence of the Soviet Union was strong, the development of an efficient industrial capacity was seen as the central element for China's economic advancement. In a society in which the agricultural sector was large and technologically impoverished a concentration on industrial development led to certain imbalances in the economy. The economic position of the social group largely responsible for the political success that was achieved in 1949, the peasantry, improved only slowly.

In 1958 Chinese policymakers recognized that the development of industrial power was only one element in the complex process of economic development. They saw an important relationship between the ability to improve the productivity of agriculture and the success of a program of industrial development. The late 1950s saw a wholesale abandonment of a Soviet-inspired program for development and attempts to determine a strategy for the peculiarities of Chinese conditions. The problems were enormous. The "farmers of forty centuries" have always battled against an unfavourable man/land ratio and the extent of the agricultural surplus was small. To meet the demands of a growing industrial population it was essential to overcome the difficulties and increase the productivity of the land. Chinese policymakers have thus recognized that unless China can solve the problems of the agricultural economy, she will remain poor and blank at best — and perhaps much worse.

Technology or Ideology? The Road to Development

One possible solution to China's central economic problem, and one favoured by most Western theorists of development, would be to transform Chinese agriculture through the application of technology. In Asia, Japan stands out as a significant ex-



Hydroelectric station, Lok-t'ong brigade.

ample of a traditional rural economy transformed by technological inputs, such as fertilizers and electrification. But technology was not the only element in the transformation of Japanese agriculture, nor is that experience necessarily relevant for an agrarian economy the size of China's. In the contemporary period the "technological" solution does not seem to have a guarantee of success, as the dubious results of the "Green Revolution" in South Asia might suggest. To opt for technology is not only expensive but may also put a developing economy into a position of subordination to the more developed economies that can supply the technology. It also bypasses the key issue. The central problems of peasant economies cannot be dealt with only by convenient inputs of agricultural technique for they are a good deal more intractable. In the Chinese view, their major problems relate to social structure and the fundamental solutions are social rather than technical.

The Chinese view of development, since the conscious rejection of a Soviet-inspired model, argues for a balance between certain developmental possibilities and in addition suggests an approach that can bypass the need for an expensive technological solution to the varying problems of development. China's policymakers do not downgrade technology but argue that for it to be effective it must be utilized within a particular ideological and organizational framework. In the Chinese approach to development the *ideological* transformation of individuals who operate within a well-defined system of organization is seen as more significant than technological inputs alone. Such an approach did not arise fortuitously, or overnight, or in the aftermath of a revolutionary victory. Rather its roots are deep in the theory and practice of guerrilla warfare. The communist movement owes its success to methods of organization and the emphasis it placed on both peasant participation and the transformation of peasant thinking.

During the China-Japan war, Mao Tse-tung wrote:
"Weapons are an important factor in war but not the decisive factor, it is people not things, that are decisive." (21)

A similar argument can be made for the role of technology in the Chinese view of development. China has opted for a "guerrilla strategy" toward development. In the transformation of Chinese society, the talents of the broad mass of the people have to be mobilized as they were to fight the Japanese and destroy the class system. The techniques developed in rural China to revolutionize a peasantry renowned for its conservatism have been applied in the post-Liberation situation to the transformation of Chinese society as a whole. During the war of Liberation the Chinese peasants ceased to "bend with the wind." They became involved in a movement that gave them a decisive role in decision making. Organizational structures emerged that the peasants helped to define and control. From our observations in South China, the continuities with the present seem clear.

China's Development Strategy: Walking on Two Legs

The general principle of China's view of development is that technological elements do not take precedence over the essentially human components of ideology and organization. There are strong arguments, nonetheless, to balance certain developmental possibilities. One of the most important slogans for development policy is: "Take agriculture as the foundation, and industry as the leading factor." "Agriculture" and "industry" are but one pair of elements in a series of policies that are known as "walking on two legs." Others draw attention to the relationship, for example, between heavy industry and light industry, large enterprise and medium-to-small enterprise, modern and traditional methods of production, and national enterprises and local enterprises. The policy of "walking on two legs" suggests that the elements in each pair should develop simultaneously and that one should not be emphasized at the expense of the other:

"The relations between these pairs are like that between the two legs of a person. When both legs coordinate well, the person is able to walk steadier and faster."
(22)

The relationship between industry and agriculture is the central element in the policy of walking on two legs. The contribution of agriculture to the development of industry was clear, as we have argued, since the rejection of the Soviet-inspired development model. But, equally, the development of agriculture is closely dependent upon the support it can obtain from the industrial sector. Only a modern industry can supply such items as agricultural machinery, electrical pumps, generating equipment, and chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The arguments for a simultaneous and coordinated development of agriculture and industry are, in the Chinese view, strong ones.

Other aspects of the policy are derived from the attempts to achieve a simultaneous and coordinated development of agriculture and industry. If industry is the source for certain modern inputs there is no implication that they will be supplied from a few highly industrialized centres, much less from foreign suppliers. Items that are needed to support local agriculture are manufactured within the local area using, if possible, local materials and certainly local talent. Of all the slogans in rural China none is more potent than "self-reliance!" This is not to suggest that all rural areas are self-sufficient. It is not possible to produce all the items needed for the development of a local economy. As a consequence the great national centres of industry in Shanghai, Wuhan, and the North-East, for example, as well as the county-run factories of rural China contribute to the process of supplying modern techniques to the agricultural sector. The concept of "self-reliance" is one that is valid for the whole economy, but that takes in different meanings at various administrative levels. China follows a policy of national self-reliance in which she attempts to overcome the various problems of development by relying as far as possible on her own resources. One of the most significant consequences of this policy has been to reject "foreign aid" as an element in the process of development. It does not preclude buying items of foreign technology, such as chemical fertilizer plants or passenger aircraft. Such



Preserved fruit factory, Lo-kang commune.

purchases should not lead to a dependence on foreign technology nor should it place China in a subordinate position to foreign suppliers.

Similarly, the goal of manpower policies is to disperse expertise from the sophisticated urban centres to the countryside. This is clear in the policy of encouraging urban-educated young people to relocate in the countryside and in the attempts to create a core of scientific expertise at the commune level. In a similar fashion, agricultural products are not shipped away from the local area but are processed in the county town, or, increasingly, at the brigade level.

The policy of walking on two legs is a choice between developmental and technological alternatives. At its base, however, are certain principles that derive from the guerrilla origins of China's developmental strategy. In utilizing all aspects of the Chinese economy — industry and agriculture, large- and small-scale industry, modern and indigenous production methods — there is an attempt to encourage the participation of all in seeking a solution to China's most pressing developmental problems.

The Pearl River delta is distinct in terms of language and subculture but it is part of the general transformation that has occurred in China since Liberation in 1949. China is still poor and has by no means solved all its problems, but the progress that has been made, not merely in terms of economic advancement but also in the more abstract quality of social life, is impressive. It was in the rural areas where the greatest contribution to the Chinese revolution was made. It is in the rural areas that the key to continuing progress lies.

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22. Op. cit. ref. no. 19, p. 54.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Introduction

O. Schell and J. Esherik *Modern China* (New York, Random House, 1972) is a good general account of modern Chinese history from 1839 to the present. This can be supplemented by H.F. Schurman and O. Schell *The China reader: Volume I Imperial China; Volume II Republican China; Volume III Communist China* (New York, Random House, 1967) and D. Milton, N. Milton, and H.F. Schurman *The China reader: Volume IV Peoples China* (New York, Random House, 1974). These volumes contain a good selection of documents dealing with Chinese society from the Imperial period up to the present.

The most detailed account of Kwangtung province in the period since 1949 is E. Vogel *Canton under communism* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1969).

Lap-lau Commune

There are a number of accounts of villages and communes. J. Myrdal *Report from a Chinese village* (London, Heinemann, 1965) and J. Myrdal and G. Kessle *China: The Revolution continued* (New York, Random House, 1970) deal with a brigade in Shensi in 1962 and again in 1969. I & D Crook *Revolution in a Chinese village: Ten mile inn* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959) and *The first years of Yangyi commune* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966) discuss the changes in a village in Northwest China from the cooperative movement until its incorporation into a commune. A recent detailed account of a Honan commune can be found in Jack Chen *A year in upper felicity* (New York, Macmillan, 1969). The experiences of another Honan Commune is reported in Chu Li and T'ien Chien-yun *Inside a Peoples commune* (Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1974).

Brief Reports of Kwangtung communes can be found in CCAS *China: inside the Peoples Republic* (New York, Bantam, 1972) and K. Buchanan *The transformation of the Chinese earth* (London, Bell, 1971).

C.K. Yang *A Chinese village in early communist transition* (Cambridge, Mass, M.I.T. Press) deals with a delta village in the early 1950's. M. Topley *Marriage resistance in Kwangtung* in M. Wolf and R. Witke (eds.) *Women in Chinese society* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1975, pp. 67-88) is one of the few articles that deals with Shun-te county.

Production

B. Stavis *Making green revolution: the politics of agricultural development in China* (Ithaca, N.Y., Centre for International Studies, Cornell University, 1974) is the most comprehensive recent compilation of material, which deals with the agrarian economy as a whole. K. Buchanan op. cit. gives data for the 1950s and 1960s. D. Perkins *Agricultural development in China, 1368-1968* (Chicago, Aldine, 1969) is a scholarly account of the whole sweep of Chinese agricultural development from the Ming dynasty. Carl Riskin *Small industry and the Chinese model of development*, *China Quarterly*, 46 (April-June, 1971) pp. 245-273 and Jon Sigurdson *Rural industry and the internal transfer of technology* in S. Schram (ed.) *Authority, participation and cultural change in China* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1973) pp. 199-232 deal with the question of rural industry.

Leadership and Organization

The extent of materials in this area is extensive. One of the most seminal contributions is W. Hinton *Fanshen: a documentary of revolution in a Chinese village (vintage 1970)* (New York, Random House, 1967), which details the nature of political change in a village in Northwest China in 1948. A good general account can be found in H.F. Schurman *Ideology and organization in Communist China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1968). James Townsend *Politics in China* (Boston, Little Brown, 1974) is a most up-to-date summary. Mar-

rienne Bastid *Levels of decision making* in S. Schram (ed.) *op. cit.* pp. 159–198 is a splendid account of decision making in rural China. S. Schram *Introduction: the Cultural Revolution in historical perspective* in *ibid.* pp. 1–108 is an insightful analysis of recent political developments in China in the light of hitherto unpublished articles by Mao Tse-tung.

Rural Population

General accounts of the Chinese population can be found in L. Orleans *Every fifth child: the population of China* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1972), H.Y. T'ien *China's population struggle: demographic decisions of the People's Republic 1949–1969* (Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 1972) and John S. Aird *Population policy and demographic prospects in the People's Republic of China* in U.S. Congress, Joint Economic Committee *The Peoples Republic of China: an economic assessment* (Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office, 1972) pp. 220–331.

Particular studies of fertility behavior are C. Djerassi *Some observations on current fertility control in China*, *China Quarterly* 57 (January–March, 1974) pp. 40–62 and Janet Salaff *Institutionalized motivation for fertility limitation in China*, *Population Studies*, 26 (1972) pp. 232–262. Note also Janet Salaff *Mortality decline in the Peoples Republic of China and the United States*, *Population Studies* 27 (1973) pp. 551–576.

W.L. Parish *The Chinese family under socialism*, *Journal of Asian Studies* May 1975, pp. 613–630 is an excellent treatment of the position of the family in China with a good deal of evidence from Kwangtung. See also the articles on the family and related issues, all emanating from China itself, published in K.H. Fan and K.T. Fan *From the other side of the river* (Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1975).

On the question of urban youth in the countryside see R.W. Lee III *The Hsia-fang system: Marxism and modernization*, *China Quarterly* 28 (October–December, 1966) pp. 43–66. John Gardner *Educated youth and urban-rural inequalities* in J.W. Lewis (ed.) *The city in Communist China* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1971), pp. 235–286, Pi-Chao Chen *Over-urbanization, rustication of urban educated youth and the politics of rural transformation*, *Comparative Politics* 4, 3 (April 1972), pp. 361–386 and G. White *The politics of Hsia-shang youth*, *China Quarterly* 59 (July–Sept., 1974), pp. 491–517.

Standard of Living

J. Myrdal *op. cit.*, J. Myrdal and G. Kessle *op. cit.*, Jack Chen *op. cit.*, CCAS *op. cit.* all report on rural standards of living in some detail.

The most succinct account of health care is J. Horn *Away with all pests* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1969). See also V.W. Sidell *The barefoot doctors of the Peoples Republic of China*, *The New England Journal of Medicine* (286) 24 (June 15, 1972), pp. 1292–1300 and his *Serve the people — observations on medicine in the People's Republic of China* (New York, 1973).

On the status of women in China see Delia Davin *Women in the countryside of China* in M. Wolf and R. Witke *op. cit.* pp. 243–273. M.B. Young (ed.) *Women in China: studies in social change and feminism* (Ann Arbor, Mich. Center for Chinese Studies, 1973) and the articles in K.H. Fan and K.T. Fan *op. cit.*

Conclusion: Walking on Two Legs

A most provocative article is J. Gurely *Capitalist and Maoist economic development* in E. Friedman and M. Selden (ed.) *America's Asia* (New York, Random House, 1971), pp. 324–356. E.L. Wheelwright and B. Macfarlane *The Chinese road to socialism* is a useful general account of China's developmental strategy. See also Jack Gray *The two roads: alternative strategies of social change and economic growth in China* in S. Schram (ed.) *op. cit.* pp. 109–157.

Appendix 1
Agricultural production in selected Kwangtung localities, 1972
(tons/hectare)

	Grain	Sugar	Fish	Other
Lo-kang commune, Kwangchow Municipal Area	7.46	–	–	Fruit 10500 tons
Shun-te county	10.65 ^a	69.8	2.78	Silkworms 2.19 Mulberries 45.0
Lap-lau commune, Shun-te county	n.a.	90.0	3.0	Bananas 6000 tons
Tung-kuan county	7.94 ^b	49.41	3.10	Vegetables 10000 tons Cassava 10.59 Peanuts 1.22
Wan-t'ong brigade, Tung-kuan county	13.30	–	–	Peanuts 1.5 Hemp 1.22
Lok-t'ong brigade, Fo-kang county	9.9	–	–	Peanuts 0.75

^a First rice crop 4.5; second rice crop 5.4; winter wheat 0.75. The grain production figures for other areas include two crops.

^b 1971 = 8.23.

Appendix 2
Shun-te county: yields of selected items 1957 and 1972 (tons/hectare)

	1957	1972	% Change
Rice	4.81	9.9	+106
Sugar	57.7	69.8	+ 21
Silk	0.83	1.60	+ 94
Fish	1.86	2.78	+ 49

Appendix 3
Tung-kuan county: yields of selected items 1949 and 1972 (tons/hectare)

	1949	1972	% Change
Rice	3.3	7.94	+140
Peanuts	0.56	1.22	+116
Sugar	24.4	49.41	+103
Cassava	6.33	10.59	+ 67

Appendix 4
Tung-kuan county: output of selected items ('000s of tons)

	1949	1972	% Change
Rice	211.5	475.0 ^a	+ 125
Peanuts	0.145	1.15	+ 693
Sugar	7.0	42.05	+ 501
Cassava	0.34	3.72	+1010
Fish ^b	0.32	2.10	+ 565

^a 1971 output 501.5.

^b Includes both salt and fresh water.

Appendix 5

Tung-kuan county: increases in land under cultivation for selected crops (hectares)

	1949	1972
Peanuts	2600	9333
Sugar	2133	8467
Cassava	520	3467

Appendix 6

Pig production in selected Kwangtung areas, 1972

	Population	Households	Pigs
Lo-kang commune	53000	11000	34000
Tung-kuan county	1026882	231847	814000
Lap-lau commune	81000	17400	59000
Wan-t'ong brigade	6400	1250	10053
Lok-t'ong brigade	1700	325	1500

Appendix 7

Percentage increase in population, 1972

Lo-kang commune	2.0 (as compared with 2.2 over the past 7 years)
Lap-lau commune	1.9
Tung-kuan county	1.96 (as compared with 2.92 in 1963)
Lok-t'ong brigade	2.0
Fo-shan city	1.35
Fo-shan rural areas	1.5

Appendix 8

Household size in selected localities

	No. households	No. people	Average
Ng-tei-chai village	37	272	7.35
Lap-lau commune	17400	81000	4.65
Lo-kang commune	11000	53000	4.82
Tung-kuan county	231847	1026882	4.44
agricultural	193037	852730	4.44
fishing	2209	9273	4.44
Wan-t'ong brigade	1250	6400	5.12
Lok-t'ong brigade	325	1700	5.26

Appendix 9
Collective income accounts by area (%)

	Average of production teams in the unit			
	Tung-kuan county	Lo-kang commune	Wan-t'ong brigade	Lok-t'ong brigade
Costs of production	34.0	20.0	28.0	20.0
Agricultural tax	4.5	8.0	4.8	5.0
Reserve	} 9.5	10.0	} 2.0	3.5
Welfare		3.0		1.0
Administration fee		1.0		0.5
Distribution	52.0	58.0	65.0	70.0

Appendix 10
Selected figures for agricultural income from the collective (1972)
(yuan per capita, before deduction of value of grain ration)

	Average per capita income	Range
Lo-kang commune	115 (before cultural revolution: 88)	80-160 (among constituent teams)
Shun-te county	140	100-230 (among constituent brigades)
Lap-lau commune	160	120-180 (teams)
Tung-kuan county	130 (1957:57)	80-160 (communes) 50-330 (teams)
Wan-t'ong brigade	173	158-210 (teams)
Lok-t'ong brigade	127	108-135 (teams)

Appendix 11
Some sample prices in yuan (1 yuan = \$0.53 Can)

Rough wood table	6.00	Pork	1.00/0.5 kg
Wood bucket	5.19	Spareribs	0.53/0.5 kg
Chinese watches	100-390	Eggs	0.90/0.5 kg
Imported watches	176-290	Beef	1.40/0.5 kg
Enamel washbasin	2.61	Eggplant	0.65/0.5 kg
Large thermos flask	3.21	Onions	0.14/0.5 kg
Children's cloth shoes	2.50	Potatoes	0.15/0.5 kg
Children's plastic sandals	1.45	Taro	0.15/0.5 kg
Heavy wool blanket	54.00	Domestic electricity	0.20/kwh
Very large towel	8-15	Ride in 3-wheeled motorcycle taxi	0.25/km
Bicycle	140.00	Housing rental in Ta-liang town	0.03-0.04/m ² /month
Child's T-shirt	1.40		
Violin	18.00		
Wok	2.01		
Cleaver	2.30		
Rice bowl & lid	0.70		
Children's small games	0.15		

