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**PEASANTS AND THE STATE: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF
A VILLAGE IN MAOIST AND POST-MAO CHINA**

by

YoungKyun Yang

BA, Seoul National University

MA, Seoul National University

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2000

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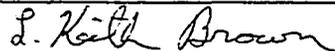
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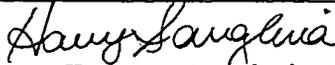
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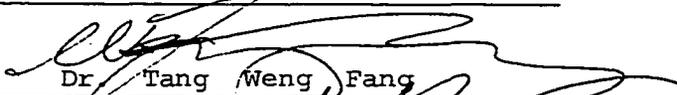
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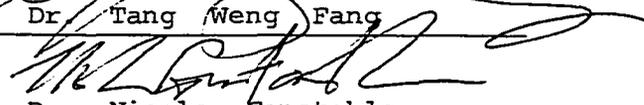
Dr. L. Keith Brown



Dr. Harry Sanabria



Dr. Tang Weng Fang



Dr. Nicole Constable

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PEASANTS AND THE STATE: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF
A VILLAGE IN THE MAOIST AND POST-MAO CHINA

Young-Kyun Yang, PhD

University of Pittsburgh, 2000

In this dissertation, I examine the relationship between the state and society, and explore the activities of peasants in Maoist and post-Mao China based on the fieldwork in Chenguang Village, Tianjin City.

To evaluate the strength of the state and examine the state-society relation in Maoist China, I explore the process of policy implementation at the local level, and the role of local cadres in that process. The state was strong enough to bring about radical changes to and exert firm control over rural society. Yet, when state policies were not in their best interests, peasants, sometimes with the help of local cadres, practiced the “everyday forms of resistance.” Local cadres who were at the key point of engagement between the state and society played the dual role of the representatives of peasants and the representatives of state authority. My data indicate that, in general, local cadres leaned more toward the role of state authorities.

Changes in state-society relations during the post-Mao era are reflected in the status and role of local cadres. Not only did their authority and prestige decline, but their power was limited and selective during the post-Mao period. The two remarkable categories of people that attract China specialists’ interests in the reform period are entrepreneurs and former and current cadres. By taking risks and making innovations, village entrepreneurs led to changes in the village economy and facilitated its fast growth. Former cadres in Chenguang seemed to receive little benefit from the village. Only a few leading cadres

enjoyed power and wealth which came from their personal ability to make the most out of their official positions.

This dissertation contributes to our understanding of Chinese society. It also contributes to scholarship on the state, by arguing that it is important to look at interactions between local cadres (as state agents) and peasants at the local level. This dissertation should also be of relevance to wider studies of socialist and post-socialist transformations. This study of community change in one village in China raises further questions in comparison with the burgeoning literature on socialist and post-socialist transformations in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and other parts of the world.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to many people. Without their support it would not be possible for me to get to this point. First, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Nicole Constable. Dr. Constable has done everything she could to help me get through my Ph.D. program. In particular, when I was writing my dissertation, not only did she provide critical comments and constructive suggestions, but she also corrected even trivial grammatical mistakes and typographical errors. I would also like to thank Dr. L. Keith Brown, Dr. Harry Sanabria, and Dr. Tang Wen Fang for their warm support, and excellent advice and comments that have made my dissertation better. I owe a special debt of gratitude to the late Dr. Arthur Tuden. As my first advisor, he always welcomed me, encouraged me, and cared about me. His support made my study and life here much easier. Dr. Rubie Watson also deserves my thanks for guiding me to one of the main topics of my dissertation.

Many heartfelt thanks are due the faculty members of the Department of Anthropology, Seoul National University: Dr. Lee Kwang-Kyu, Dr. Han Sang-Bok, Dr. Lee Mun-Woong, Dr. Kim Kwang-ok, Dr. Chon Kyung-Soo, and Dr. Wang Hahn-Sok. They led me to the wonderful world of anthropology, and provided me with the basis for the further academic career. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. Kim Kwang-ok, my advisor for my M.A. thesis, for introducing me to the field of political anthropology and to China.

There are a wealth of people who deserve my thanks for making my dissertation research possible and providing support in the field. The Tianjin Institute of Social Sciences made all the arrangements for my field research. In particular, Professor Tang Zhongxin helped me greatly from his own experience as a peasant as well as a rural

sociologist. The leaders of Ninghe County, Hongxing Township, and Chenguang Village kindly allowed me to stay and do research in Chenguang Village. From among the villagers, all of whom I owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude for unfailing hospitality, I would particularly like to thank Wang Ruifeng, Wang Lianxing, Wang Hongzuo, Wang Honglian, and Yu Changqi. I was able to finish a sometimes depressing field research with a healthy body, valuable data, and warm memories due to their friendship and care.

Many people in Pittsburgh also deserve my heartfelt thanks for making my life as a graduate student far away from home both emotionally and academically rewarding. Dr. Seong-Jin An was always beside me and ready to help me in whatever he could do. Jane Thomas has provided encouragement and support for which I am deeply grateful. I thank Lee Jee Young and her family for their warm friendship. I would like to express my appreciation to all the members of the Pittsburgh Korean Catholic Community for caring my family so much. I particularly thank Carol for correcting my poor English in the first draft, and Kim Bumcheol and Hwang Jee Young for their excellent work on the maps in the dissertation. All the members of the Department of Anthropology and the Asian Studies Program here at the University of Pittsburgh kindly provided all the support I needed.

Many colleagues from the Department of Anthropology at Seoul National University deserve my warm thanks for their support and encouragement, especially Jang Soo Hyun, Kim Woo Young, and Kang Eun Joo.

My deepest appreciation and love go to my family. My father, Yang Han-Seok, and my mother, Lee Kyeong-Ae, have given me, my wife and daughter endless love and support, without which none of this would have been possible. I am also grateful to my brother, Yang Soon-Ik, his wife, Lee Hye-Sung; my sister, Yang Eun-Jung, and her husband, Kim Hong-Keun; for their love and support. My wife's parents, Kim Young-Bae and Lee Young; her sister, Kim Hee-Jung and brother, Kim Dae-Wook; always had faith in me and cared about my family.

I thank my wife, Kim Mi-Jung, from the bottom of my heart for her love, patience, and encouragement. I am also grateful to my daughter, Hain, for all the joys and love that she gives me. I cannot say enough to express my appreciation to them.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Research Topics and Theoretical Background

During my sophomore year in college in Korea, when I began studying anthropology in earnest, I became interested in structural-functionalism. I was attracted to the writings of Durkheim, Radcliffe-Brown, Evans-Pritchard, and so on, especially Evans-Pritchard's writings on the Nuer. Evans-Pritchard shows us how the socio-cultural system of the Nuer maintains equilibrium through the interaction of various parts of that system, even though, as critics have pointed out, it was too well-structured to be real. My interest moved to the role of concrete individuals in society and the socio-cultural changes that are said to be a major factor that the structural-functionalist model does not sufficiently explain.

I have also been influenced by Korean society that was dominated by the state while I was growing up. In the first half of the twentieth century, Korean society experienced massive societal dislocation by major social disturbances represented by Japanese occupation between 1910 and 1945 and the Korean War. A strong state has emerged out of such a weak society (Migdal 1988). During the period from the 1960s to the early 1980s, Korean society can be characterized by rapid economic growth and strict political control both led by the state. The relationship between the state and society, therefore, moved to the center of my academic interests.

As I started my Ph.D. research, I thought there might be no better place than China for research on the topics of strong state and weak society, great social changes led by the state, and the role of individuals in those changes. The dislocation and fragmentation of Chinese society resulted from a series of devastating social disturbances—foreign military

invasions and Western commercial and religious invasions, numerous rebellions including the Taiping rebellion and Muslim rebellions, the Republican Revolution, the resistance war against Japan, the civil war between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Nationalist Party (*Guomindang*: GMD), and so on. After the CCP came to power under the strong leadership of Mao Zedong, it aimed to transform almost all spheres of people's lives, causing tremendous changes to the society.

The country again experienced major change during the post-Mao period since the late 1970s, this time led by the new leadership of the CCP with Deng Xiaoping as its central figure. Economic development, including improvement in people's standard of living, was given highest priority by the new leadership. Various measures have been formulated and implemented in the direction of the reduction of state control and the stimulation of people's initiatives in order to realize rapid economic development.

I carried out field research in a Chinese village with two main topics in mind. One was the relationship between the state and society. How strong was the state during the Maoist era? What was the relationship between the state and society? How has the relationship between the two changed during the post-Mao era? The other was individuals. How did they adapt to changing situations resulting from the reform policies? What is their role in bringing about further changes?

(1) The state and society in the Maoist era

Throughout the 1950s and as late as the mid-1960s, Western social scientists viewed Chinese society through a lens of totalitarianism that emphasized absolute power of the CCP and its leader, Mao Zedong. There were three important factors in forming such a viewpoint—(1) the trend of research in social sciences, (2) the situation in China, and (3) the availability of data.

First, in the 1930s in order to analyze the new mobilizational single-party regimes, both fascist and communist, the totalitarian model began to appear (Linz 1975).¹ Totalitarianism is similar to dictatorships, and despotic and autocratic regimes in several features, such as their elitist rule, arbitrary use of political power, minimization of private individual rights, and in their ordered and hierarchical institutions (Curtis 1979). Totalitarianism, however, bears several distinctive characteristics of its own, even though different researchers emphasize slightly different characteristics. For example, totalitarian regimes have an official, exclusive, and elaborate ideology that is the source of legitimacy. There is a single ruling party typically led by one man, the “dictator,” and his collaborators. Citizens are mobilized and actively participate in political and collective social tasks. It is also highly probable that such regimes have a system of terroristic police control, a monopoly of mass communications and the armed forces, and a central control of the economy. In addition, totalitarian regimes attempt to control the thoughts and emotions as well as the actions of people (Curtis 1979; Friedrich 1969; Friedrich and Brezezinski 1956; Linz 1975; Neumann 1957). Based on these characteristics, China under Mao was considered a totalitarian society.

The static rigid character of these conceptualizations, however, have serious limitations. That is to say, those definitions fail to account for the dynamic aspects of the society, especially the resistance of individuals, and groups within society, and the process of realization of the ideal model in society (Linz 1975). The research that applied the totalitarian model to Maoist China (e.g., Barnett 1964; Rostow et al. 1954; Li 1959; Tang 1957; Walker 1955) also typifies this limitation. They typically analyze the state’s organizational structure, policy goals and results as publicized by the government and government-controlled mass media, and Mao Zedong and China’s top leadership.

Second, the totalitarian image of the Chinese state was reinforced by various situations in China. In the fifties, after establishing the People’s Republic of China (PRC),

¹ Scholars include Nazi Germany under Hitler, Fascist Italy under Mussolini, the Soviet Union under Stalin, and China under Mao in the examples of totalitarian regimes.

the Chinese state was by and large successful in bringing about intended changes to the rural society.² Under their strong leadership, Mao Zedong and his comrades formulated and implemented many policies that created new power relations among peasants, and realized a socialist economic system. Those policies were mostly supported, or at least not actively objected to, by the peasants. Such a country did not deviate from the totalitarianism that the scholars described.

The third factor, the availability of data, must also be taken into account. The two important sources of data at that time were émigré interview accounts and the Chinese press, which provided very limited information. While the former focused on “thought reform and the coercive dimension of the Chinese system” (Oksenberg 1987: 578), the monolithic quality of the Chinese press created the image of the country whose economic and political systems were smoothly and effectively functioning with the cohesive leadership (Oksenberg 1987).

These three factors also contributed to the changes in the studies of Chinese society, as the field tended to move away from the totalitarian model in the 1960s. First, the framework of studying politics shifted to “the various roles and behaviors of political ‘rational actors’” and “their conditioning constraints” (Shue 1988: 13). This new trend in the scholarly world helped the researchers of Chinese politics discard the totalitarian model.

Second, China specialists reconsidered the image of China as a totalitarian country due to the incidents in China during the mid- and late-1960s. After Mao had supposedly withdrawn voluntarily from day-to-day leadership in late 1958, the party and state were supervised by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. Their primary goal was to restore social cohesion and economic productivity which had been severely damaged due to the Anti-Rightist Campaign (1957) and the Great Leap Forward (1958-60). Mao was dissatisfied with not only the content of the decisions but also with the way in which party leaders

² “Even with all the problems the CCP encountered, the frustrations and the shortcomings in their rural work, the period from 1949 to 1956 was manifestly one of impressive political victories” (Shue 1980: 321).

made decisions on major issues without consulting him. In addition, he failed to alter the policies that promoted material motivation, central bureaucratic controls, and expert management. He concluded that “revisionism” was emerging in China. He launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966 in order to abolish the abuses of bureaucracy and capitalist elements, and to strengthen democratic practices instead of relying on the centralized control and class struggles. However, ardent but disorganized Red Guards swept over the country in such a chaotic and violent manner that Mao himself could not maintain control. This went on until August of 1968 when Mao finally had to mobilize the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) to restore order. It became evident that the Chinese state was not a unified entity that could impose its will upon the society without difficulty and distortion, in contrast to the assumptions of the totalitarian model.

Finally, the new materials that became available to Western scholars from the mid-sixties also played an important role in framework change. The Red Guard newspapers and other materials, especially the materials about the 1959 Lushan Conference³ and the January 1962 Central Work Conference,⁴ provided new information about high-level politics since the mid-fifties (Oksenberg 1987). Émigré interviews continued to be a major source of information. The ex-Red Guards who were sent down to the countryside and then fled to Hong Kong formed an important part of Hong Kong based interviews during the period between the mid-sixties and the mid-seventies (Oksenberg 1987).

Those who wanted to apply the new concepts and approaches to the Chinese case, however, soon encountered serious obstacles. Because of the prohibitions on foreigners conducting research in China, they could not carry out any kind of systematic data

³ This conference is well known for the encounter between Mao Zedong and Peng Dehuai. Its influence was profound: Mao’s effort for rectification and consolidation of the Great Leap Forward was cut short; free debates among top leaders began to be suppressed; and Lin Biao was promoted to the Peng’s position, the defense minister, who was closely related to the Cultural Revolution (Liberthal 1993).

⁴ This is also called the ‘Seven Thousand Cadres Work Conference,’ where it was revealed that there were basic disagreements among top leaders on the assessment of the Great Leap Forward, the recovery process, and the future goals (Liberthal 1993).

collection, such as surveys and participant observation. Consequently, they had to conduct their studies at a distance from outside, such as among refugees to Hong Kong.

These factors resulted in several approaches to Chinese politics that remained popular until the mid-eighties. One group of researchers focused on the party, especially party ideology, the party's work style, political participation, and so on (e.g., Hinton 1966; Schram 1969; Starr 1973). Another group of researchers observed and analyzed the state, especially the dynamics of top level politics which was perceivable to outsiders (e.g., Nathan 1973; Pye 1981; Teiwes 1971; Whitson 1972). There were also a few attempts to analyze the participation of social groups in the political process (e.g., Goodman 1984; Oksenberg 1968).

These studies, however, did not address the issue of the state-society relations, one of the two main topics of my research. One of the most important reasons for this was that scholars' accessibility to the Chinese society had been very limited. Once new policies of the post-Mao era increased the accessibility, from the mid-1980s, studies directly or indirectly dealing with this topic began to be published (e.g., Ash 1991; Chan et al. 1984; Huang 1998 [1989]; Kelliher 1992; Nee and Mozingo 1983; Oi 1985, 1989a; Perry 1985; Potter and Potter 1990; Pye 1991; Rocca 1992; Rosenbaum 1992; Shue 1988, 1990; Siu 1989a, 1990; Solinger 1993; Unger 1989; Walder 1995; White 1993; Zweig 1989a, 1989b).

Actually, many scholars studying the Chinese society during the Maoist era cannot help taking the state into account. No matter what their topics are, they are not able to explain anything without considering the influence of state. Most of them, especially those who deal more directly with the state, suggest that although the state was not as strong as the totalitarian model assumed, the state was so strong and penetrating that local communities and peasants were fully dependent upon it. However, others (e.g., Kelliher 1992; Shue 1988, 1990, 1994) argue that the state was not successful in penetrating and controlling the society and people. In order to examine how strong the Chinese state was

during the Maoist era and how Chinese people (peasants in my research) responded to the state, I will briefly review the trends of studies of state in social sciences, and decide how to approach these topics.

Some characteristics of political organizations, such as Greek *polis*, empires (especially Roman and Chinese), and medieval political organizations approximate to the state. Most commentators, however, are hesitant about calling them states (Vincent 1987). It is generally agreed that the modern state has developed from the sixteenth century European state system.

It is true that the state is one of the most problematic concepts in politics; it is very elusive and hard to identify. But there are several elements which are generally included in the definition of the state. First, the state is a set of institutions; the institution controlling the means of violence and coercion is the most important one (Hall and Ikenberry 1989). Second, a state exists in a geographically identifiable territory over which it holds jurisdiction. It usually claims hegemony or predominance within the territory over all other groups (Vincent 1987). A third element is that the state's acts have legal authority, and are distinct from the intentions of individual agents or groups (Vincent 1987).

This concept of the "state" has been used on and off by social scientists in analyzing political phenomena. The 1950s and 1960s saw the concept of state abandoned or replaced because of the trend of social sciences, especially political science and political sociology. First, the vagueness of the term "state" and the elusiveness of the state-society boundary made students of politics avoid the term (Mitchell 1991). Instead, the more clearly definable concept of "government" was used, or the notion of the "polity" or "political system" absorbed the notion of the "state." Second, it was somewhat natural that American social scientists were not much interested in "the state" because of the relative "statelessness" of the United States⁵ where the center of gravity of social science was

⁵ While the state, in its historical development, has been a centripetal force, the federalism of the United States encourages centrifugal force (Vincent 1987). Therefore, the United States lacks the overall superordination or sovereignty (Nettle 1968).

located during that period (Nettle 1968). Third, the systems approach which avoided speaking of states even when it was dealing with politics and public policy making was in vogue. Those who assumed the systems perspective mostly paid attention to the input side of the political process, such as political socialization, political culture, pressure groups, social movement, and so forth, rather than the output side of it, such as the determining and implementing of goals, the enforcement of law, the expropriation and allocation of resources, the integration of conflict, and so on (Abrams 1988, Skocpol 1985). Therefore, this approach was inevitably society-centered.

The concept of state once again has appeared on the stage since the mid-sixties under the influence of several trends. First, the advanced capitalist states have increasingly engaged in “public economy” and national macroeconomic management.⁶ A second trend is that the states in most countries had no choice but to intervene in the private economic sector to overcome the pressures from the more intense and uncertain international economic competitions by the mid-seventies (Skocpol 1985). Third, after the Second World War, the states of the newly independent nations played a central role in attempts to transform traditional societies and rapidly develop their economies. Social scientists also advocated “the role of the state as the principal tool in transforming the society” following the Western development model (Migdal 1988: 12). Finally, states act as the representatives of their societies, and are expected to lead the transformation of societies in the international politics, especially under the United Nations system.

The necessity of bringing the state into analytical focus came from the Marxist camp as well. From the mid-sixties onward, Marxist theorists have engaged in studying the state

⁶ Public economy refers to “that portion of a nation’s economic product which is consumed or distributed by all public authorities” (Cameron 1978: 1244). More specifically, the roles of public authorities in public economy include providers of social services and income supplements, producers of goods, managers of the economy, and investors of capital. To finance those activities, the authorities obtain revenues in various forms, such as, direct and indirect taxes, all social insurance contributions by employers and employees, and all other fees, rents, and withdrawals from enterprises which flow into governmental treasuries. According to Cameron, the scope of the public economy among eighteen relatively advanced capitalist nations increased from average 28.5 percent of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in 1960 to 38.5 percent of GDP in 1975.

in capitalist societies, encompassing undeveloped and underdeveloped countries as well as developed industrial ones, centering on the class content of state action. Marxist theorists can be divided into two perspectives in terms of the interpretation of the state in capitalist society: instrumental and structural. The instrumental perspectives maintain that state actions are shaped and constrained by the direct control of the capitalist classes or deliberate capitalist influence; thus, they directly serve dominant classes.⁷ According to structuralist interpretations, on the other hand, the state functions to safeguard the capitalist interests as a whole, rather than to immediately realize the interests of dominant classes (Foley and Yambert 1989). Except for the extreme instrumentalist perspectives, Marxist theorists of state assume the “relative autonomy” of the state.⁸ Once the linkage between the power of the state and the power of the dominant classes is weakened, the state appears to be autonomous. The state, however, cannot enjoy “much” autonomy from the dominant classes; it can enjoy autonomy as long as state autonomy is needed to perpetuate the capitalist social relations.

In the 1970s, several studies started to emerge in the field of social science, arguing that the state had to be placed at the center of politics. These “statist” or state-centered studies share several features. First, they tend to present the state as an autonomous entity whose actions of formulating and implementing goals are independent of the various forces of society. This goes beyond the idea of the “relative autonomy of the state.” Proponents of the state-centered approach argue that the Marxist approach is basically society-centered because the capitalist state can be autonomous in so far as the reproduction of capitalism is seriously in danger; since the dominant class is divided, it is not strong enough to control the state (Nordlinger 1987). This does not mean that the statist totally disregard the influence of social groups and classes upon the state. Yet they regard the state as an independent variable that by and large determines what happens in society.

⁷ This perspective is a long Marxist tradition, which stems from “a vulgar deformation of the thought of Marx and Engels” (Miliband 1973:85).

⁸ One of the most prominent advocates of this perspective would be Poulantzas (1969, 1976, and 1978).

Second, this feature of the statist approach which regards the state as an autonomous entity leads to the question of the elusiveness of the state-society boundary. The systems approach evokes this question because the autonomy of state assumes a clear boundary between the state and society. It seems, however, that advocates of the statist approach have not succeeded in, or even been interested in, producing an elaborate definition of the state, which is necessary in order to differentiate the state from society. Rather, their formal definitions have not advanced much from the Weberian definition. They tend to emphasize “the state’s institutional character (as an organization or set of organizations), its functions (especially regarding the making of rules), and its recourse to coercion (monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force)” (Migdal 1994: 11). They sometimes try to solve this problem by narrowing down the scope of the state, which results in failure to capture the actual contours of the state (Mitchell 1991).

Third, in dealing with the capacity of state, the statist approach employs a concept of state power as coercive and arbitrary. It also implies the oppositional relationship between the state and society (Nugent 1994; Weiss 1998). A state is considered as strong in so far as it is able to achieve the tasks and goals that it sets for itself using coercive power, over and against opposition from various social forces. This concept of state power needs to be expanded so that it includes the power to induce consent and cooperation from the society. In a way, the state that effectively mobilizes consent of social groups can achieve its goals more thoroughly, which means it is stronger than states that depend mainly on coercive means.

Finally, state-centered researchers tend to focus on the capacity of the state not only to formulate and implement distinctive goals or policies but also to influence the meanings and methods of politics for the society overall (Skocpol 1985). Those who study societies in Latin America, Africa, and Asia have examined the roles of states in bringing about widespread societal changes, especially in the economic sphere. They have tried to assess the strength of states according to the scope and depth of societal change which the state

intended to achieve. In doing so, some of the researchers emphasize that the intentions or preferences of the state usually translated into the national interests and the unified actions of state to society, which risks anthropomorphization or reification of the state.

The statist approach has both strengths and weaknesses in explaining the political process and social changes of modern nation-state. Its focus on the state that acts autonomously in understanding various social phenomena is useful to approach the study of Chinese society during the Maoist era. While the newly established state was getting stronger in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the society was already very weak with fragmented and disintegrated social groups which resulted from the turmoil during the previous one hundred years or so. A statist approach would assume that under the strong leadership of Mao Zedong and his comrades the state was able to make decisions autonomously without significant input from the society. This approach would also posit that the state was strong enough to successfully implement the decisions with its coercive, ideological and organizational means.

Questions about this view of Chinese state and society during the Maoist era very naturally come to mind. Was the state strong and cohesive enough to drive society in the direction it set? If the state had been that dominant and autonomous, was the society just malleable putty in the hands of the state? Have people, the peasants in my study, just followed the lead of the state? To answer these questions, the works of Joel Migdal and James Scott provide us with useful framework.

According to Migdal (1988), society is a melange of social organizations and the state is one of many organizations which compete for domination in one area or another.⁹ In the twentieth century the state has been a key actor in this competition, and “the state leaders have accepted that they should be predominant” (Migdal 1988: 30). However, there has always been a gap between their aspirations and achievement. To understand this gap, we need to examine the interactions between the state and other social forces (or

⁹ He uses “domination” to refer to “the ability to gain obedience through the power of command” (Migdal 1994: 30). Domination can be localized or can be exercised broadly over society.

organizations) in society's multiple arenas. According to Migdal, the state consists of various levels and functionaries which have interactions with various parts of society. We have to focus on the cumulation of these interactions—struggles and accommodations—in order to decide the patterns of domination, either integrated or dispersed.¹⁰ And these struggles and accommodations produce outcomes that range from total transformation, state incorporation of existing social forces, existing social forces incorporation of the state, to the total failure in state attempt at penetration (Migdal 1994).

A series of important works by Scott (1976, 1985, 1989, and 1990) provides us with a useful framework to account for the reactions of peasants to state programs. Dealing with the struggles between the classes, in his case between the peasantry and the rich farmer in Malaysia, he presents the “everyday forms of peasant resistance” as the “weapons of the weak.” According to him, “class resistance includes any act(s) by member(s) of a subordinate class that is or are intended either to mitigate or deny claims (for example, rents, taxes, prestige) made on that class by superordinate classes (for example, landlords, large farmers, the state) or to advance its own claims (for example, work, land, charity, respect) vis-à-vis those superordinate classes” (Scott 1985: 290). Everyday forms of peasant resistance are the prosaic, informal, disguised but constant struggle of the peasantry against the higher class and the state, including foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so forth (Scott 1985: 29).

Through various policies, such as land reform, state procurement of agricultural products, and collectivization, the state of Maoist China established its control over all economic activities of peasants. The peasants had to deal with the state as employer, buyer, supplier, moneylender, foreman, paymaster, and tax collector whose power was much stronger and more inclusive than the combined power of the state and landlords had

¹⁰ In integrated domination, “the state as a whole (or possibly even other social forces) establishes broad power” and it acts in a coherent fashion. In dispersed domination, “neither the state (nor any other social force) manages to achieve countrywide domination” and parts of the state may act in very different directions (Migdal 1994: 9).

been in the pre-revolution China. Therefore, the peasants did not have an effective way to oppose the omnipresent and dominant state other than their everyday forms of resistance.

As a starting point of my research, I begin with three key studies that explore state-society relationship in the Maoist era. Shue (1988) argues that the state never thoroughly penetrated local communities and peasants' lives during the Maoist period. According to Shue, Maoist development strategy, such as collectivization of agriculture, self-reliance in agriculture and industrialization, and the household registration system resulted in the "cellularization" of the Chinese socio-economy and also facilitated localism.¹¹ Those cellularized local units were connected vertically to the outside through the state administrative structure without any significant horizontal connection to other units.

The cadres served as a key linkage between the state and local communities. She suggests a dual role of the local cadres, just like the lower local gentry in the old regime. She places stress more on the role of the local cadres as representatives of peasants who try to protect local interests than on their role as the representatives of state authority who are responsible for the implementation of state policies which often go against peasant or community interests. "[R]ural cadres and officials at various levels routinely contrived to restrain central penetrations into their localities" (Shue 1988: 112-113). Therefore, Maoist China witnessed "the evolution of a 'thin' state command structure" (Shue 1990: 64), failing to penetrate and transform the society as intended.

Siu (1989), like Shue, recognizes the role of cadres as protectors of local interests and does not think party cadres willingly conveyed all higher level decisions to their units without deviation. Quite opposite to Shue, however, Siu places much stronger emphasis on the role of rural cadres as state agents. The state was the only legitimate source of rural cadre power. Moreover, the state with strong organizational and ideological power allowed rural cadres much less room to maneuver than the old regime did to the local gentry. The

¹¹ Shue compares the organization of rural society to a honeycomb in order to emphasize the fragmentedness of each local unit.

state apparatus was powerful to local cadres, and the cadres that possessed the means to control peasants' economic fate were powerful to ordinary peasants.

However, the state was not strong enough to force peasants to follow every state policy, and it did not intend to do so. It has been reported that the policies implemented at the local level often deviated from those formulated at the higher levels. Oi (1989a) fully explores this point by examining the state's grain procurement system which is the main stage of struggles between the state on one side and the peasantry and local leaders on the other. She argues that the local cadres, who sometimes colluded with the peasants, frequently evaded the state's efforts to extract grain surpluses. She also admits that the state was so strong that local cadres could resist state policies only marginally and covertly through cheating or passivity. The other important issue Oi raises in her study is clientelism in Chinese village politics. She argues that local politics tended to be structured along clientelist lines, because formal channels for meaningful political participation by peasants were weak. Both local cadres and ordinary peasants pursued their interests through the patron-client ties between them.

Oi's perspective more or less coincides with others. That is to say, several studies (Chan et al. 1984; Jacobs 1982; Kelliher 1992; Liu 1996; Oi 1985; Shue 1988, 1994; Watson 1994; Zhou 1993; Zhou 1996; Zweig 1989a) reported that there were "everyday forms of resistance" and encroachment of the private sector into the state sector, which limited the power of the state. Considering the Maoist state's strong coercive power, physical and ideological, open resistances or revolts were not an option available to the peasantry or local cadres. Without taking up the issues above, it would be impossible to correctly understand the state-society relationship that has unfolded through the interaction between the state's efforts to penetrate society, extract resources, and transform society and the society's attempts to oppose or evade state's efforts when in disagreement.

(2) State, society, and individuals in the post-Mao era

Many studies have dealt with the Chinese state in the reform era as well from various angles: in terms of agricultural changes (Ash 1991; Blecher and Wang 1994; Ling 1991), from the perspective of market transition (Nee and Matthews 1996; Szeleneyi and Kostello 1996; Walder 1994), from the civil society debate (Gold 1990; Huang 1993; White et al. 1996), from the problem of corruption (Levy 1995; Liu 1983; Oi 1989b; Ostergaard 1986; Rocca 1992; Yan 1991), from the topic of policy implementation (Aird 1994; Croll et al. 1985; Greenhalgh 1993; Lampton 1987; O'Brien 1994; White 1987; Zweig 1987), from the perspective of resistance and collective action (O'Brien and Li 1995; Perry 1985; Wasserstrom and Perry 1992; Watson 1994; Zhou 1993; Zweig 1983, 1989a) and so on.

Most studies suggest the state capacity to control society weakened after the reform. To deal with stagnant economy and excessive influence of politics on other spheres of society, the state loosened its grip on the political sphere as well as the economic sphere. That is, the state voluntarily retreated from some areas, such as agricultural production, distribution of most resources, restriction on residence, and class struggles, which it used to tightly control. This, however, has resulted in the state's loss of control over other areas that it did not intend. Corruption and family planning are the examples of such cases, which illustrate the weakened state capacity to control society. Discussions of civil society also demonstrate the growing empowerment of society vis-à-vis the state.¹²

¹² Shue (1988, 1990, and 1994) is the only one to my knowledge who argues the state has become stronger since the beginnings of reforms. According to her, reform measures have resulted in a more differentiated and more complex society, which in turn has led the state in the same direction. These changes have broken down the cell walls of the honeycomb-like society and state apparatus. She talks about mutual empowerment of the state and society. Various associations bring about strengthening and empowering of the social groups they represent. At the same time, the state's capacities in information gathering, policy planning, and policy implementation can also be strengthened.

I do not agree with her on two major points. One, the Chinese state on the eve of the reforms was very weak because of the lingering effects of the Cultural Revolution and the Gang of Four and the confusing leadership situations surrounding the succession of Chairman Mao. If we compare the capacity of the state during that period with the post-reform state, we may be able to talk about the stronger state of the post-Mao era. It would not be a fair comparison, though, because the state in the late Maoist era was far from representing the state during the whole era. Moreover, it is the "weak" state that successfully

From a slightly different angle, several studies show a decline in rural cadres' political power and economic position (e.g., Latham 1985; Nee 1989a; Nee and Su 1990; Oi 1989a; White 1987, 1991; White 1990; Whyte 1986; Yan 1995; Zweig 1986). Rural cadres, at the same time, have become less bound to the higher authorities. Therefore, considering the rural cadres' role as state agents, we again observe the weakening of state power.

The individual is one of the main topics of my research. The relaxation of state control over the society in the post-Mao era has created more room for individuals to act. Individuals in turn expand the scope of their activities, in some cases, encroaching on the influence of the state. Two kinds of people that attract the interests of China scholars are entrepreneurs, and current and former cadres. I will also discuss their characteristics, activities, and influence upon village economy and politics.

China specialists give "entrepreneurs" credit for the recent economic development (Byrd et al. 1990; Chan et al. 1992; Conroy 1984; Goodman 1996; Nee 1989b; Nee and Su 1990; Nee and Young 1990; Odgaard 1992; White 1991; Wang 1990; Yan 1992). There are two problems with these studies on entrepreneur or entrepreneurship in reforming China. One concerns definitions of the terms, entrepreneur and entrepreneurship, which, if provided, are used inconsistently. Since scholars use the term, "entrepreneur" to refer to different kinds of people, the results of their studies stand for different phenomena. The other is that these studies mostly use statistical data to explore entrepreneurs' pivotal role in economic development (exceptions that adopt a qualitative approach include Malik 1997; Tyson and Tyson 1995; Wong et al 1995).

I now briefly explore how the concept of entrepreneur or entrepreneurship was first developed and used in the fields of economics and business history. Then, I discuss the

launched the massive reforms in the first place. If we assess the state capacity according to the achievement of grand goals of the state, we can say the post-Mao state has been more successful in achieving its goal of rapid economic development than the Maoist state that aimed at egalitarian and revolutionary society. However, the specific directions and speed of economic changes in the reform era, as it is well known, are quite different from those planned. In other words, the state in the reform period has not maintained its grip on the economy, even though the state leaders have given economic policies the highest priority.

relationship between anthropological theory, especially action or process theory, and the concept of entrepreneurship; and anthropologists' use of this concept. After discussing how the term entrepreneur is used in the studies on post-Mao China, I will define the concept based on the Schumpeterian tradition. This concept will help us more clearly understand the role of the individual in economic change during the reform period.

I begin by discussing the development of the concept of entrepreneur or entrepreneurship. Until the early twentieth century, neoclassical economic theory dominated the study of economics. Theorists formulated an elaborate model based on western European economy. They were interested in the production and sustenance of the states of equilibrium in the market where there was no operative role for entrepreneurs.¹³ To them, "the entrepreneur was an abstract figure assumed to be unaffected by influences external to the rational operation of the firm he directed" (Greenfield and Strickon 1986: 5). In the late nineteenth century, however, some economists began to pay attention to the distinctive character of the entrepreneurial function. That risk-bearing function created profits that could not be seen as a return on capital. Joseph A. Schumpeter, who was interested more in the dynamics of economic development and growth than equilibrium, made entrepreneurs the focal point and key of his theory. To him, development is "spontaneous and discontinuous change in the channels of the flow, disturbance of equilibrium, which forever alters and displaces the equilibrium state previously existing" (Schumpeter 1961: 64). Furthermore, development was brought about through innovation defined as "the setting up of a new production function" (Schumpeter 1939: 87), and innovation was the criterion of entrepreneurship. That is, entrepreneurs were initiators of economic development by getting new things done (Schumpeter 1951). In contrast to the Schumpeterian view that somebody is an entrepreneur as long as he carries out innovation,

¹³ The terms 'entrepreneur' and 'entrepreneurship' have long and frequently been used in the French language. By 1800, many French economists used the terms with special meanings. In the mid-eighteenth century, in particular, Bernard de Belidor and Richard Cantillon thought that the essence of the entrepreneurial function was to bear uncertainty, which remains one of the basic characteristics of entrepreneurship (Cochran 1968).

Arthur Cole, who was a colleague of Schumpeter at Harvard and a leading scholar in the study of entrepreneurship, basically equates entrepreneurship with the general activities of managers (Cochran 1968). From his work and that of fellow economic historians the business-history tradition appeared, focusing on the lives and careers of individual businessmen, and firms.

After World War II, some economists turned their attention to the developing nations, many of which were newly founded. Based on assumptions of social evolutionism they were interested in the development of undeveloped nations following the paths of the “advanced” West, and these nations’ creation of policies that would speed up the resultant movements. So entrepreneurship or entrepreneurs as prime factor in stimulating economic development became a considerably important topic in the studies of a developing economy (e.g., Belshaw 1955; Benedict 1968; Broehl 1978; Long and Roberts 1984; Sayigh 1962).

Now, I would like to turn my attention to anthropological interest in entrepreneurship. The field of anthropology, especially British anthropology, was dominated by the structural-functionalist approach between the 1920s and the 1940s. Anthropologists who adhered to that paradigm were interested in norms, values, ahistorical social structures, maintenance of equilibrium of those structures, and so on.¹⁴ Anthropologists during the 1950s and 1960s fought hard to overcome the dominant influence of the structural-functional framework.

Major struggles against structural-functionalism were occurring in the field of political anthropology. Conceptual designs for the new approaches were first set by Firth (1954) with the introduction of the concept “social organization.” There are various names to categorize the approaches of that time, but they can be divided into two major groups. One is “process theory,” and the other “action theory.” Even though the two approaches differ, they are sometimes indistinguishable when researchers analyze the

¹⁴ The exemplary works are Evans-Pritchard (1940), Fortes (1945), Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940), Radcliffe-Brown (1952), Radcliffe-Brown and Forde (1950).

political phenomena of actual societies. That is because the two approaches did not have an elaborate theoretical base and dominant influence in anthropology, not to mention social sciences, as did structural-functionalism. On the other hand, the two approaches share common characteristics that make them different from the structural-functionalism. Proponents of both approaches are interested in changes through time rather than equilibrium in an ideal present (e.g., Bailey 1969; Barth 1959; Swartz, Turner, and Tuden 1966; Turner 1957). They also deal with individual actors who compete for power, experience conflicts, make decision, and so on, rather than abstract individuals with status and role, who contribute to social integration, carry shared culture, and so on.

We can find considerable similarities between the two approaches in anthropology and approaches to entrepreneurship in economics, especially in the studies of developing economics of the Third World. Not only were they theoretically similar, but their research sites also overlapped. Anthropologists found it useful to incorporate the results of entrepreneurial research by economists and business historians into their own research.

Many studies have adopted the concepts and orientation of entrepreneurial studies in order to explain change in the various spheres of societies (e.g., Benedict 1968; Broehl 1978; Eidheim 1963; Epstein 1968; Friedrich 1968; Greenfield and Strickon 1986; Hart 1975; Long and Roberts 1984; Rodman and Counts 1982; Saunders and Mehenna 1986; Strathern 1972). These scholars were interested in the dynamics of societies, usually small-scale, and individuals' creative activities, which sometimes initiated sociocultural change.¹⁵ Furthermore, the concept of entrepreneur is deeply embedded in the works of Bailey (1969) and Barth (1963, 1966, and 1967), two prominent anthropologists of the post-structural-functional era.

One of the distinctive features of these anthropological works is that many of them deal with entrepreneurs whose activities are not confined to the economic sphere. Some of

¹⁵ Victor Turner's 'Schism and Continuity in an African Society' (1957) deserves to be mentioned here. Even if this book is not obviously about entrepreneurship without adopting the concepts developed in entrepreneurial studies, individual actors in this study, especially Sandombu, show typical characteristics of entrepreneurs (Stewart 1991).

them talk about entrepreneurship in the political sphere (e.g., Barnes 1986; Eidheim 1963; Moench 1971). In many cases, the activities of entrepreneurs stretch over both the economic and political spheres (e.g., Bauer 1979; Leons 1977; Rodman and Counts 1982; Salovesh 1978; Strathern 1972; Tiffany 1975).

However, approaches to entrepreneurship have suffered due to the lack of definitional consensus among scholars. One scholar declared, “It is clear that the word [entrepreneurship] is normally used by analysts to mean whatever they like” (Hart 1975: 6). The use of entrepreneurship or entrepreneur in the anthropological literature is also far from being consistent. The definitional consensus was, in a sense, more difficult to achieve in the field of anthropology due to its holistic approach.¹⁶ In most anthropological works the use of entrepreneurship heavily leans toward the Schumpeterian tradition for two reasons. One is because anthropologists see the possibility of extending the meaning of “innovation,” even to spheres other than economy, and they are interested in explaining social changes, as Schumpeter tried to understand economic development and growth. The other is because not only do their research objects barely include business units, they also share few characteristics with business units.

Many scholars have tried to figure out the major causes of rapid economic development of the post-Mao China. The development in two sectors—private economy and rural industry—is identified as a driving force of early economic success of the reforms. And many studies incorporate the concept of “entrepreneur” as a main actor in both sectors, thus the agent of recent economic changes.¹⁷

A group of studies deals with entrepreneurs as the owners of private enterprises (e.g., Kelliher 1991; Malik 1997; Nee 1989b; Nee and Young 1990; Odgaard 1992; Tan 1996; Tsang 1996). Entrepreneurs in this sense show more or less the characteristics of a typical “entrepreneur.” In order to achieve the clear goal of making money, they utilize the

¹⁶ That is why the activities of entrepreneurs in the anthropological literature often stretch over the spheres of politics and economy.

¹⁷ Actually, the two sectors are not mutually exclusive. The overlapping part is the sector of private rural industry.

new opportunities provided by the reform policies and bear uncertainty, especially in the early years of the reform period.¹⁸ Furthermore, they have been a major driving force in economic growth and the change of the economic landscape. This definition, however, obscures the distinction between entrepreneurs and investors or capitalists or between entrepreneurship and proprietorship which many students of entrepreneurship, including Schumpeter, wanted to make.

A lesser number of researchers equate the entrepreneur with managers of township and village enterprises (TVEs) (e.g., Fan 1996; Wong et al. 1995). This usage of the concept reflects Cole's definition. TVEs are to a certain degree new products of the reform era and also a major agent of rural economic development. Other research adopts the concept of entrepreneurship in various ways.¹⁹ Among China scholars, Byrd follows the Schumpeterian tradition. According to him, "Entrepreneurship consists of activities that lead to new combinations of production factors or otherwise transform the industrial landscape" (Byrd 1990: 191). The key of his working definition is "newness" in a local, microeconomic context, which is also the essence of innovation, but he includes only relatively large-scale enterprises in his research due to its goal and scope.

In my research, I follow the Schumpeterian tradition as have many anthropologists. By entrepreneurs I mean those who carry out innovations in the context of the village, my primary research site. First of all, entrepreneur refers not to a person, a status, or even a role but to an "*aspect of a role*" (original emphasis); as long as "persons take the initiative, and in the pursuit of profit in some discernable form manipulate other persons and resources" (Barth 1963: 6), they are entrepreneurs. The concept of innovation needs more

¹⁸ The new opportunities comprise the introduction of a market economy, retreat of the state from direct economic management, privatization trend, encouragement from the state for the peasants to be rich, and so on. Considering the fact that political winds from the center used to change direction suddenly between the right and left, and considering especially the suffering of peasants when the direction of policies shifted, they took great risks to engage in private enterprises.

¹⁹ Entrepreneurs are sometimes the private owners of factories which seems to combine the two definitions above in Tyson and Tyson (1995). Goodman (1996) uses the word "entrepreneurial new rich" to indicate the owner-managers and suburban executives who get wealthy in the reform era. Blecher (1991) even uses the term, "entrepreneurial state" to denote regional or local governments that are directly involved in actual productive activity and that own enterprises to get economic profit.

discussion here as well. A wide range of specific acts constitute innovation: the introduction of a new good or a new quality of a good; the introduction of a new method of production; the opening of a new market; the conquest of a new source of supply of raw materials or half-manufactured goods; and the carrying out of the new organization of any industry (Schumpeter 1961: 66). Moreover, innovation is usually not a major breakthrough, but “a set of complementary innovation” (Debresson 1989: 3).

Therefore, entrepreneurs in my research are somewhat different from those in the other research I mentioned above. All owners of private enterprises are not entrepreneurs because even though they share some of typical characteristics of entrepreneur, some of them just imitate or follow other owners’ successful business performance, without even application. Thus, I exclude them from my category of entrepreneur. In a similar sense, all the managers of enterprises, such as village factories, are not entrepreneurs either. Only when I can find innovative elements in their managerial activities, do I call them entrepreneurs. Consequently, the important issue is not who he is or what he does but how he does it. That is, entrepreneurs do something in an “innovative” way. I regard innovation as key to defining entrepreneur because it is essential to find a connection between the activities of village entrepreneurs and the particular socioeconomic changes of the village.²⁰

The other individuals that frequently become the objects of research on post-Mao China are cadres and former cadres. I raise two questions with regard to them in my research. First, what is the impact of the reform measures on the cadres’ status and privilege? Most scholars agree on the point that reform measures undermine not only rural

²⁰ The usage of a term is naturally intertwined with the goal and scope of a study. Most research projects on entrepreneurs in post-Mao China have a much broader scope than my research. They try to show the trends of characteristics, activities, development, and economic influences of the entrepreneur or entrepreneurship whatever they mean by the terms—owners of private enterprises, managers of TVEs, the new rich, and so on. Given the scope and goals of their research, it would be very difficult for them to define the term as I do. Rather, various individuals in the ethnographic research show entrepreneurial characters similar to the villagers of my research, even though sometimes they are not called entrepreneurs, for example, Chongyin (Chan et al. 1992), Secretary Ye (Huang 1998), and the founders of the Shennong Health-Care Product Factory (Yang 1995).

cadre's authority and prestige but also their economic advantages, which eventually can imperil their leadership positions. On the other hand, Oi (1986, 1989a) argues that even though cadres have lost much of their former basis of power and patronage, the new economic and political systems provide cadres with new opportunities for patronage and corruption. Their power and privilege, thus, are changing but not diminishing.

Second, how advantageous is the career of current or former cadres to their economic success in the partial market economy? Many scholars explore this topic in relation to the discussion of entrepreneurship. They maintain that cadres enjoy more economic success than ordinary peasants through their wider connections, more information, and better managerial skills. There are two survey results in which a big gap is revealed. Vice-premier Wan Li reported in 1984 that 43 percent of 20,989 specialized households in Shanxi's Ying County were current or former brigade and team cadres.²¹ On the other hand, Nee (1989a) after surveying 498 households from 30 villages of Fujian's two periurban counties in 1985 reports that 26.5 percent of entrepreneurs were former team or brigade cadres or current cadres.

I doubt if the results of the two surveys can be directly compared because while specialized households are the subjects of the first, it seems that the second deals with those who engage in private business. In addition, it seems that Ying County of the former survey has not been decollectivized although two counties of the latter have already completed the decollectivization. Nevertheless, the two surveys raise the issue of the economic performance of former and current cadres in the reform period.

(3) Organization and significance of this study

²¹ According to official definition, a specialized household (*zhuan ye hu*) refers to households in which family members spend at least 60 percent of their time in specialized commodity production and sell at least 80 percent of their products on the market (Nee 1989b). In the early years of reform, entrepreneurs were often nothing but specialized households.

In chapter 2, I examine various characteristics of Chenguang Village²²—history, geography, demography, and economy—that will mainly be the basis of further discussion. The one point I want to highlight here is that the demographic data of the village send us a mixed message about the state’s capacity to implement its policies. The great disparity between the official record of household registration and the actual situation, and the distribution of village population by age reflect loosened state control over society. However, Tianjin’s distribution of population by age and that of household by size show the successful implementation of family planning policy in Tianjin.

In the following chapter, I describe Chenguang village’s political and economic changes from the late forties to the early sixties. I focus on the processes of policy formulation in Beijing and policy implementation at the local level. At the same time, villagers’ reactions to state policies are also discussed.

Chapter 4 deals with the period of the reformed commune system that lasted from 1962 to 1977. The issues in this chapter include how the commune system worked; how the state controlled the peasants’ economic and political life, and the position and role of local cadres in the state-society relationship; and how the state utilized campaigns to achieve its goals that would have been hard to achieve with ordinary means of state control.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine the relationship between the state and society during the Maoist era. As many researchers suggest, the Chinese state was far from an ideal model of totalitarianism. Not only was Chairman Mao’s power not absolute, but conflicts and struggles were also common among the top leaders of the party-state, Chairman Mao and his colleagues. There were apparently regional variations in policy implementation, which reflected the lack of unification and coordination between levels of state organization. Furthermore, at the local level, unpopular policies had to face opposition and resistance from peasants and local cadres. However, the state during the Maoist era showed great strength in formulation and implementation of the policies. It introduced many radical

²² This is my field site and the name here is a pseudonym. All the names of the places below the county level and people are pseudonyms, as well.

changes to rural society through autonomous policy making and powerful policy implementation. It also made local cadres stick primarily to their roles as state agents, rather than as the protectors of local interests. Chapters three and four position the Chinese state's power in relationship to society.

The next two chapters examine the village and villagers in the post-Mao era. In chapter 5, the focus is on reform: how and why the post-Mao leadership decided to introduce reform policies to the society; how they were implemented at the lower levels; and what changes those new policies provoked in the economy and politics of the village.

The state completed one huge task, the decollectivization of agriculture, in a relatively short period of time. State efforts in the economic sphere, for example to diversify agriculture, revitalize private commerce, and encourage rural industry, have obtained excellent results at the local level with positive responses from the peasants. However, political reform has not enjoyed as much success. Even though the state has successfully decreased the party's role in various aspects of villagers' lives, it has failed to reduce the power of the party secretary. It has also been unable to produce a certain degree of autonomy in the management of the economy. A small number of village cadres, with the party secretary at the apex, dominated the village's public decision-making. In addition, the villagers' low level of participation in village politics has strengthened the dominant position of the cadres, far from the state goal of enhancing grass roots democratic practice. All these facts point to the weakened power of the post-Mao Chinese state.

Next, I shift my focus to individual villagers in chapter 6—how they have fared in changing circumstances during the post-Mao era. First, I explore the cases of entrepreneurs who brought innovations to the village. The issues are how they took advantage of new opportunities opened up by the reform policies, and how they influenced the economic development of the village. The second topic of this chapter is cadres. In sum, the former cadres took advantage of their former positions, but not as much as indicated by Wan Li's report or even Nee's survey. Party membership and the cadre

position in the reform period are not as attractive as those were in the pre-reform period, because the prestige and power granted to those positions by the state has decreased. This also supports the notion of the weakened influence of the post-Mao state. Finally, I investigate who has gained the most and who has lost the most during the period of reform and why. I also raise the issue of who the winners were, according to the standpoint of villagers. The “winners” did not necessarily coincide with those who had higher economic or political standing.

My argument throughout this dissertation can be summed up as follows. The state in Maoist China was strong enough to bring about radical changes to and exert firm control over rural society. On the other hand, when state policies contradicted with their interests, the peasants, sometimes with the help of local cadres, practiced the “everyday forms of resistance.” Local cadres who were at the key points of engagement between the state and society played the dual role of the representatives of peasants and the representatives of state authority. My data indicate that, in general, they leaned more toward the role of state agents. Changes in state-society relations during the post-Mao era are reflected in the status and role of local cadres. Not only did their authority and prestige decline, but their power was limited to certain villagers in certain aspects. The two remarkable categories of people that attract China specialists’ interests in the reform period are entrepreneurs and former and current cadres. By taking risks and making innovations, village entrepreneurs led changes in the village economy to the specific direction and facilitated its fast growth. Former cadres in Chenguang seemed to receive little benefit from the village. Only a few leading cadres enjoyed power and wealth which came from their personal ability to make the most out of their official positions.

I will briefly discuss the meaning of my study in terms of the topics, the approaches, and the research site. The study of Chinese politics was guided at first by the totalitarian model and then by the pluralist perspective. By the mid-eighties, the notion of China as a totalitarian society was rejected by China specialists, as the systematic data

collection became possible. Furthermore, by that time the relationship between the state and society became one of the important topics of China study. The three studies by Shue, Siu, and Oi, the basis for developing my research, are among the earliest attempt to systematically deal with the state-society relationship in rural China. Through a series of studies, they try to answer questions such as how effective the state was in penetrating and controlling the peasant society, how the local cadres played their role between the state and society, and how the peasants responded to the state's attempts. As mentioned earlier, the three scholars reach different conclusions about the strength of the state during the Maoist era.

I also examine in two ways how strong the state was. One way is to analyze the state's capacity to achieve its goals, mainly in the form of policy implementation, following the statist approach. In doing so, however, I focus not only on the state's capacity to implement policies over the resistance from villagers, but also on its capacity to mobilize their consent. The other way is to examine the patterns of interaction between the state and society. The village (or brigade and production team) constituted a main arena where the state interacted with the society. Local cadres stood in the middle of these interactions as a key link. Therefore, I estimate the strength of the state under Mao by examining the cadres' relationship with the higher officials as well as with fellow villagers, and by analyzing the cadres' dual role as state agents and representatives of villagers. I also approach the topic of the changing state-society relationship during the post-Mao China in terms of the factors mentioned above.

This study should also be of relevance to wider studies of socialist and post-socialist transformations which have been taking place in the countries in the former Soviet Union, East European countries, Vietnam, and China. In particular, the economic and political changes of Chenguang village in the post-Mao period are closely related to the market transformation debate in the field of Chinese and East European studies. Chenguang village has its own characteristics, yet, by investigating the relationship

between specific characteristics of the village and the changing trends, we can better understand the wider variation in the post-socialist or late socialist changes.

While I mainly deal with the political sphere of village life during the Maoist era, my study focuses on the economic sphere during the post-Mao era. Even though many scholars study entrepreneurship in the reform period, little attention has been paid to the relationship between entrepreneurs and village economy. By defining the term, “entrepreneur” according to the Schumpeterian tradition, I can clarify the influence of entrepreneurs on the particular pattern of change in the village economy.

Chenguang village also bears a combination of characteristics that makes it unique. First, it is located in the area close to the county seat and Tianjin City, which is not far from Beijing. This feature contributed to the fact that the village was under the GMD control until as late as the fall of 1948. It, however, was far enough from the county seat and other towns not to be involved in the fierce struggle between the GMD and the CCP, so it avoided being tore apart between the two powers. Moreover, its easy access to neighboring economic centers provided the villagers with relatively abundant economic opportunities, not just in the reform period but also in the Maoist period.

Second, there was relatively little intravillage stratification before the socialist revolution. This characteristic, along with the lack of influence from the struggle between the GMD and the CCP, led to peaceful land reform. In addition, the village did not suffer from severe disruptions and conflicts in the following movements and campaigns that emphasized class struggle.

A third characteristic was that rice farming dominated in the village on the eve of the Revolution, thanks to the well-built irrigation system. Rice farming needed more unified coordination than farming in dry fields, which made the collectivization, the biggest tasks of the state in the early years of the PRC, somewhat smooth.

Finally, the village leadership was strong and stable throughout the Maoist and post-Mao periods. There was only one change of secretaries of the village party branch,

which occurred roughly at the time of decollectivization. Both of them got a firm grip on other village (or brigade and team) cadres and had support of the majority of the villagers. Under their strong leadership, state policies were implemented in the village without much deviation. They were, in turn, acknowledged as good leaders by higher authorities.

One more thing worth mentioning here is the time of my research. From three to four years before I did my field research villagers began to engage in earnest in private economy and rural industry, two important sectors that led economy to early success in the reform period. Therefore, I was able to observe the process of economic changes of the village, and the flourish of entrepreneurial activities and their influence upon the changing village economy.

2. Methodology

I conducted ethnographic field research in Chenguang Village of Ninghe County, Tianjin City between October 1995 and November 1996. My host institution, the Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences (TASS hereafter) made necessary arrangements for my research, which was not an easy task.

I first visited China in the summer of 1993. The main purpose of that trip was language study and I also planned to visit several villages in order to see what was going on in rural China and to search for my future research site. At that time, I became interested in Hongqi Village of Wei County, Hebei Province, which was the home village of Professor Tang of the TASS with whom I became good friend. The reforms that had started in southeastern China were widening their influence in the north along the coastal area and then in the inner area. Hongqi Village, located in southwest part of Hebei, fell behind in terms of economic development, but the villagers had started to engage in non-farm work and small-scale private business.

Tang assured me that it would be quite possible for me to do fieldwork in Hongqi Village, so I prepared my research, planning to focus on the various circumstances of that village. Before I actually began the field research, Tang finished all the arrangements with the county government.²³ Tang and I stayed in the village for five days celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival with his family and village cadres and elders. Then, we went to the seat of the Wei County office to get permission for the research from the upper level authorities. However, the Xingtai City government office at the immediate superior level of Wei County office did not grant permission. In our frustration, Tang and I went to Shijiazhang, the capital of Hebei Province, to try again. On reflection, however, we could not have done anything to change the decision. That experience made me realize how formidable the Chinese state still was. Several issues are worth mentioning.

First was Tang's behavior in the guest house of the county government. He always made sure that no one could hear our conversations, closing the door and lowering his voice when we spoke. When we were talking about the topics he thought might be politically sensitive, he wrote his thoughts down on paper rather than say them aloud, and then got rid of the paper.

Second was the fact that the Xingtai City government did not allow me to live and conduct research in Hongqi Village. The only reason Tang and I could think of was that the officials did not want a foreigner to know the actual circumstances of a poor Chinese rural area under their jurisdiction. Tang's friend, an official of the party branch of Hebei Province, who we met in Shijiazhang, came up with another possible reason. He speculated that officials might fear that my data could be used for an enemy attack on China, especially by the U.S., because I was a student at an American university. Moreover, the tension between the U.S. and China was rising at that time due to the human rights problem in China.

²³ Tang had extensive connections with county officials, not to mention the village officials, because he had been the village party secretary before he entered Nankai University, and he had been constantly in contact with county officials for his own research as a rural sociologist.

The final issue was Tang and the county officials' attitude toward the city's decision. Whereas I could not accept the decision easily, they simply complied with their superior's decision at once and would not do anything to overturn it. The only reason we went to Shijiazhang was because I persuaded Tang to give another try. I was able to guess the reason after I heard from Tang. He said that the officials of Xingtai City censured both Tang and the county officials for letting me to stay in the village for five days without proper permission. That is, Tang and the county officials made an error that might hurt them in the future. Therefore, they just did not want to be involved in the matter any more in any way.

After that experience, I had to depend upon TASS to search for and arrange a research site. I presented two requests to TASS. One was that the research site would not be in Jinghai County because one of my Korean friends who introduced me to the TASS had recently done his work there, and a U. S. sociologist was conducting her research in a village in Jinghai County. The other was that I preferred a village where the influence of reform was not so strong so that I could continue to work with the assumptions and hypothesis I developed for Hongqi Village.

TASS had no significant connections with rural counties in Tianjin City except in Jinghai County. This raised two problems: I had to wait one month from September 18 to October 17 before they could find me a research site. At first glance, moreover, it seemed that they did not accede to my second request. Chenguang Village was one of the better-off villages in Ninghe County, whose economic conditions were above the national average of rural areas. I also discovered that the village was under strong and stable leadership. In a word, Chenguang Village was the kind of place that the county officials were proud to show off to a foreign researcher. It turned out later that the village's good economic condition was mainly due to the development of rural industry in the village itself and the region. However, private business was also sprouting in the village, and this

corresponded to part of the reason why I had initially wanted to do fieldwork in Hongqi Village.

I had little leverage over the selection of my field site, nor did I have any say about my living arrangements in the village. The officials of the county and the village arranged for me to live in the office building of the bag factory (*xiangbao chang*) located on the north side of the village's main road (see Map 3). The closest houses to the building were across the road, and there were no houses by the building. They also arranged that I should eat at the restaurant of the bag factory that served the guests of all the units of the village as well as the outside workers of the factory. Such arrangements were an obstacle, making it difficult for me to freely mingle with the village, but there was nothing I could do about it. On the other hand, I understood the position of the cadres who made these arrangements which limited my chances for spontaneous contact with the villagers, especially in the evening when they usually stayed at home. It turned out, however, that I could take advantage of those arrangements in some respects. First of all, I had many opportunities to meet village cadres. I could observe the relationships and activities of the leading village cadres because their meetings were often held in an office on the same floor as my room. They also frequently dropped by my room on their way to or from the office to chat.

I also got to be very close to four old men—two worked as guards at the entrance of the bag factory compound which included a manufacturing building, a warehouse, an office building, a the restaurant; the other two worked as the chef and the manager of the restaurant. One guard had been a cadre in the 1950s before his class was changed from upper middle peasant to rich peasant. His original class background was later restored. The other guard had experienced hardships due mainly to his brother being classified as a counterrevolutionary. Two restaurant employees were a former production team head and a former deputy secretary of the village party branch. Therefore, I was able to obtain valuable information and opinions from them on the Maoist era.

For data collection, I mainly depended on conventional anthropological research methods that include participant observation, informal, unstructured, and semi-structured interviews, and village-wide surveys.²⁴

My work is primarily based on participant observation. The fact that I was Korean had very positive impact upon my research in a Chinese village. To begin with, it seems that they rather easily became familiar with me due to my appearance, which was different but not that much different from theirs. The differences in clothing were no greater than the differences they would have had with the urban youth. Many villagers who had never met a Korean in person were surprised by the fact that I looked similar to them, and they readily felt familiar toward me. In addition, similarities between Korean culture and their own culture also surprised them, and we often engaged in pleasant conversations even if we barely knew each other. Lastly, many villagers who knew that South Korea was one of the Four Small Dragons in Asia often asked me first about the economic situation of South Korea, such as income level, consumption patterns, and the speed of economic development, especially in Korean rural areas. Therefore, it did not take long until the villagers were not much bothered by my being there, and they relaxed some of the psychological obstacles they usually had against outsiders.

I used informal interviews throughout the research period, especially at the early stage. During the first month of fieldwork, I mainly talked with current and former cadres who could facilitate basic understandings of various situations of the village. Professor Tang, who stayed with me during that period and later sporadically came to the village and stayed for several days, helped me to adapt to the villagers' dialect and to clarify the details of the conversations sometimes ambiguously stated by the interviewees. He also introduced me to new points of view as well as new ways to approach some topics.

²⁴ Informal interviewing is characterized by a general lack of structure or control. Unstructured interviews are held in "formal" situations in which both interviewer and interviewee are clearly aware that they are interviewing. It is based on a clear plan of topics and a series of questions in which the interviewer lets the informants express themselves "in their own terms, and at their own pace." Semi-structured interviews differ from unstructured interviews in that the interviewer has more control and more detailed interview guide of topics and questions that need to be covered in a particular order (Bernard 1994).

I used unstructured interviews most during my fieldwork because I could interview people on several occasions throughout the long-term fieldwork, which lasted about one year. After I figured out who to ask about what topics, I set up an interview with him/her in a relaxed atmosphere. I encouraged interviewees to fully express their knowledge and opinions on the topics by asking comprehensive questions rather than the questions that required simple answers. This consumed a lot of time and required much patience, but it also made it possible for me to find topics that I had not thought of and that I needed to delve into more deeply.

I used semi-structured interviews mainly during the later part of the fieldwork. At that time, after I accumulated significant amounts of information, I figured out what specific questions I had to ask to whom for particular topics. These interviewees were very important for my research, but had previously been hard to meet, for example, the secretary of the village party branch, the manager of the bag factory, the village head, the director of the women's work, and so on.

There were two problems that I faced throughout the course of my fieldwork. One was how to record what I heard and saw. I used note-taking and tape-recording only selectively because they tended to make people too cautious and self-conscious. When I asked questions about general facts that I needed to record accurately, such as the distribution of land before and after the reforms, village political institutions, the list of former and current leading cadres, the regulations of family planning, the kinship organizations, inheritance customs, and so on, I wrote down the main points on the spot. Then, I later wrote down the details in my field notes, adding what I remembered. I used a tape recorder with those who were very close to me and had a good grasp of my work. The interviewees were keenly conscious of the fact that their words were being recorded, but after ten or twenty minutes, they usually talked comfortably without being bothered by tape recording. I recorded most of the semi-structured interviews and some of the unstructured interviews. When I wanted to record what I heard, but I felt that my note-

taking might cause people to raise their guard and change the course of their activities, I refrained from taking notes. Instead, I wrote them down later on.

The other problem that I faced was the interviewee's self-censorship. Interviewees usually applied rigid standards of self-censorship to politically sensitive topics, such as misgovernment by the state, corruption of cadres, competition for power, cadres' preferential treatment, and so on. There were also some topics people did not want to talk about due to their "face." The typical cases of this kind were people's evasion of state policies in the Maoist era and illegal businesses in the post-Mao era. Each interviewee had his own standard of self-censorship that often varied depending upon the circumstances. The relationship between the interviewees and me made a difference in the content of the conversations. I could obtain more diverse and deep information from those who developed a close relationship with me and trusted me. The circumstances of the interview also influenced the information. Thus, when I conducted interviews on sensitive topics, I tried to make the interviewee as comfortable as possible without the presence of a third person and without note-taking or tape-recording. Such conversations were approached like a casual and pleasant chitchat. Sometimes, however, whatever I did, I could not overcome my limitations as an "outsider."

There was also my own self-censorship. While I prepared for my fieldwork, I thought I had established a fairly strict sense of the matters that might make trouble for my research subjects as well as for myself. However, I had to strengthen my guard later, as I experienced the power and deep penetration of the party-state through the process of selecting the field site. Nevertheless, I could not give up all politically sensitive topics that interested me. I constantly had to decide where to stop my inquiries.

I implemented the village-wide survey for about a month starting six months after entering the village. The questionnaire consisted of simple questions asking for background information about household members, the economic situation of the household, and the interviewee's preference of occupation. I did a random sampling of

150 households out of a total of 491 households in the village using household registration data. With the help of Zhang Hongfeng, former secretary of the village party branch for twenty-five years, I went door to door, and I filled out the questionnaire according to interviewees' answers. Through this survey not only could I obtain valuable data on the villagers' economic conditions, such as their current and former occupations, incomes, and living standards, but I could also talk to many villagers who I otherwise would not have contacted in person.

Chapter 2

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CHENGUANG VILLAGE

After finishing a welcome-banquet held for me by the county government, I got on the van provided by TASS and dozed off under the influence of the drinks from the banquet. Somebody woke me up and let me know we had almost arrived at the village. The fields on both sides of the paved road were filled with golden rice, some still stood, some was cut and laid down, and some was tied up in sheaves and piled up on the fields. The van finally stopped in front of a two-story building covered with tiles that belonged to a village factory. My first impression was that the village was not very old, a little crowded, and relatively well-off because of the open field under harvest, the buildings and the new-looking houses that stood in long lines. It turns out my first impression more or less accurate. In this chapter, I will explore the characteristics of the village in terms of its history, geography, demography, and economy. The main goal of this chapter is to provide a basis for further discussion of the study's main topics. However, the demographic data of the village require our attention in terms of the state-society relationship. The data are closely related to the household registration (*hukou*) system²⁵ and the family planning policy, two policies on which the state has tried to get a firm grip. I will discuss the state's capacity to control the society through analysis the village's demographic data.

1. History and Geography

²⁵ This system was implemented in the early 1950s. According to this system, all the people in China had to register in their residential units, and took the records with them when they changed their residential units. This system was used to monitor and control residential changes, especially migration from rural to urban areas. For detailed discussion, see pp. 45-46.

Chenguang villagers said that it had been more than 300 years since their ancestors first settled in the place where the village now stands. I could not get more precise information about the village history than “more than 300 years” because the records of village history, even the genealogical records (*zupu*) were all destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. According to the Gazetteer of Ninghe County (NDBW 1991) Chenguang village first appears in the records in 1756. It belonged to the First *Bao* of *Xingyi Li* in *Ninghe Xian* (County).

In regards to the administrative divisions, during the Qing Dynasty, there were three levels of *li*, *bao*, and *cun* (village) under the *xian* (county) level. The GMD government (1912-1948), at first, used the same administration system as the Qing Dynasty. In 1914, six towns (*zhen*) were added to 8 *lis*, 29 *baos* and 262 villages (*cun*) in Ninghe County. In 1928, *qu* (district) was introduced as a sub-county unit, and the scale of *li* was reduced; there were 5 districts, 12 *lis*, and 263 villages. Two years later, the level of *li* was abolished, and the administrative village (*xiang*) unit was added; there were 5 districts (*qu*), 5 towns (*zhen*), 149 administrative villages (*xiang*), and 263 natural villages (*cun*) in Ninghe County. While the number of districts, towns, and villages, both administrative and natural, increased, the constitution of administrative system remained intact until 1942, when *xiang* was reformed into township. Between 1942 and 1948, Ninghe County included 6 districts, 7 towns, 32 townships, and 314 villages.

The PRC government abolished the township unit; therefore, there were 10 districts (*qu*) and 285 villages (*cun*) in Ninghe County in 1949. Then, in 1953, the township (*xiang*) level was reintroduced on a smaller scale than the township of the last period of the ROC; there were 71 townships in Ninghe County. The size of the township significantly increased in 1956, and only 19 townships were set up in the county. The administrative divisions underwent a major change with the start of the Great Leap Forward Campaign. In 1958 at the height of the collectivization movement, the People’s Commune system was adopted, which underwent one change in 1961, and then basically remained unchanged

until the reform policy dismantled the People's Commune system and restored the “*xiang, zhen* (township, town)” system in 1984 (NDBW 1991: 81-86).

It was 1731 when Ninghe County first became separated from Baodi County. Since then, it has undergone a lot of administrative changes. Under the rule of the GMD government for about thirty years, Ninghe County had been changed more than ten times.²⁶ The Japanese army virtually occupied the county from 1939 to 1945. After the Japanese army retreated from the region, the CCP and the GMD struggled to hold power over the area for the next three years. The CCP established the county committee and the county government in January of 1946 but did not come into power until December of 1948.²⁷ Even after the establishment of the PRC, its administrative status has been changed quite a few times. Table 2.1 shows which administrative unit Ninghe County has belonged to from 1949 to now (NDBW 1991: 73-75).

Table 2.1 The Upper Level Units of Ninghe County during the PRC Period

| Year | Upper Level | Note |
|------|---------------------|---|
| 1949 | Tianjin Prefecture* | |
| 1958 | Tangshan Prefecture | |
| 1959 | Tianjin City | Merged into <i>Hangu Qu</i> , formed <i>Hangu Qu</i> |
| 1960 | Tangshan Prefecture | <i>Hangu Qu</i> became <i>Hangu Shi</i> |
| 1961 | Tangshan Prefecture | Separated from <i>Hangu Shi</i> , formed <i>Ninghe Xian</i> |
| 1962 | Tianjin Prefecture | |
| 1973 | Tianjin City | |

Source: NDBW 1991

* Prefecture is a translation of *zhuanqu* that lied between a province and a county.

²⁶ Those changes mainly were the changes of the upper level units to which the county belonged and combined with other counties into a new county and separated from it.

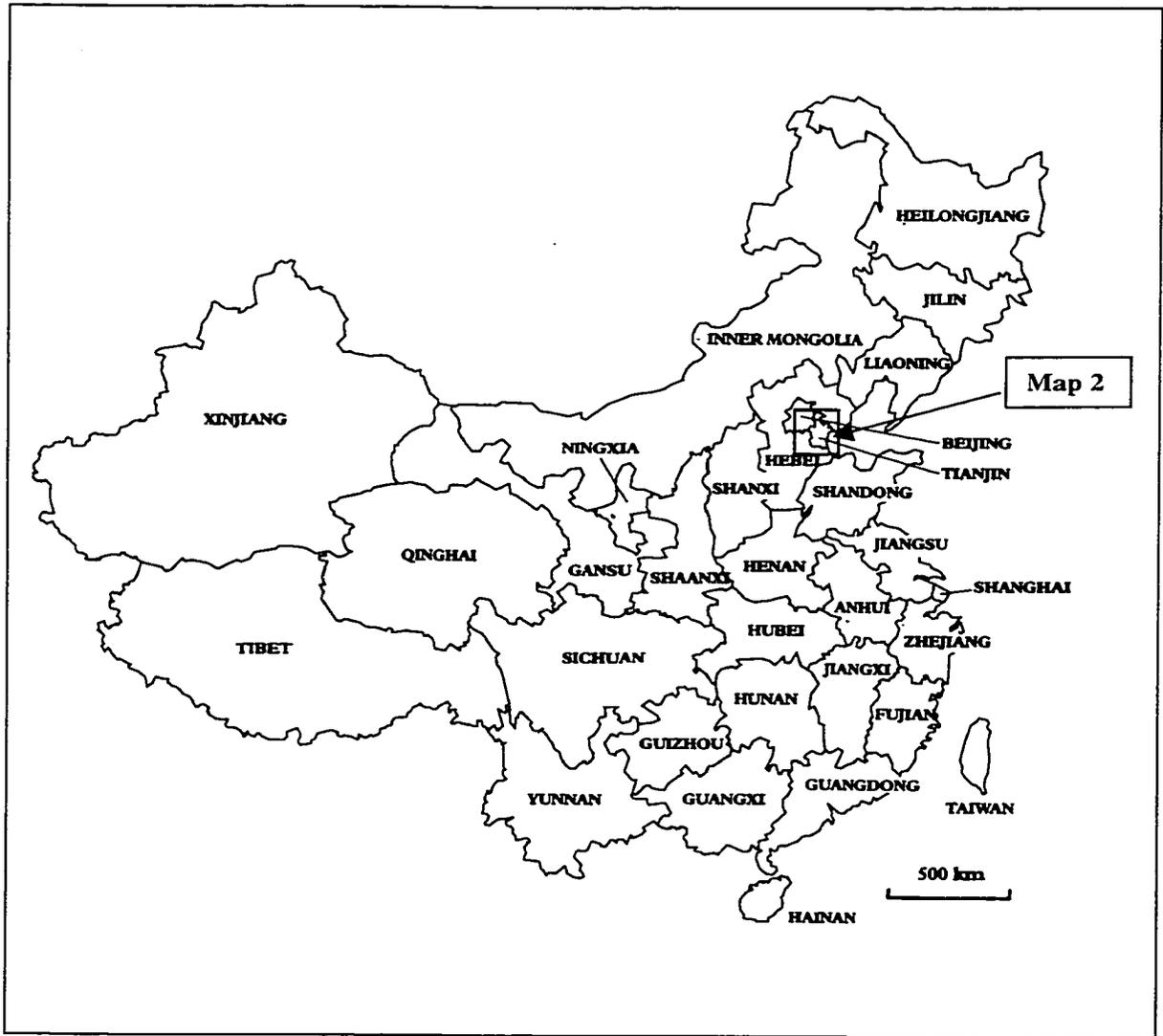
²⁷ I describe how the struggles between the two parties affected Chenguang village and villagers in the next chapter.

The county has been a part of Tianjin City since it was incorporated into the city in 1973. The boundary has remained unchanged since 1980 and the administrative divisions within the county have basically been the same since 1984. Now, Ninghe County belongs to Tianjin City, which includes 4 *zhen* (towns), 18 *xiang* (townships), 287 *xingzhengcun* (administrative villages). The county covers an area of 1031.3 square kilometers which is 49 kilometers long (north-south) and 52 kilometers wide (east-west).

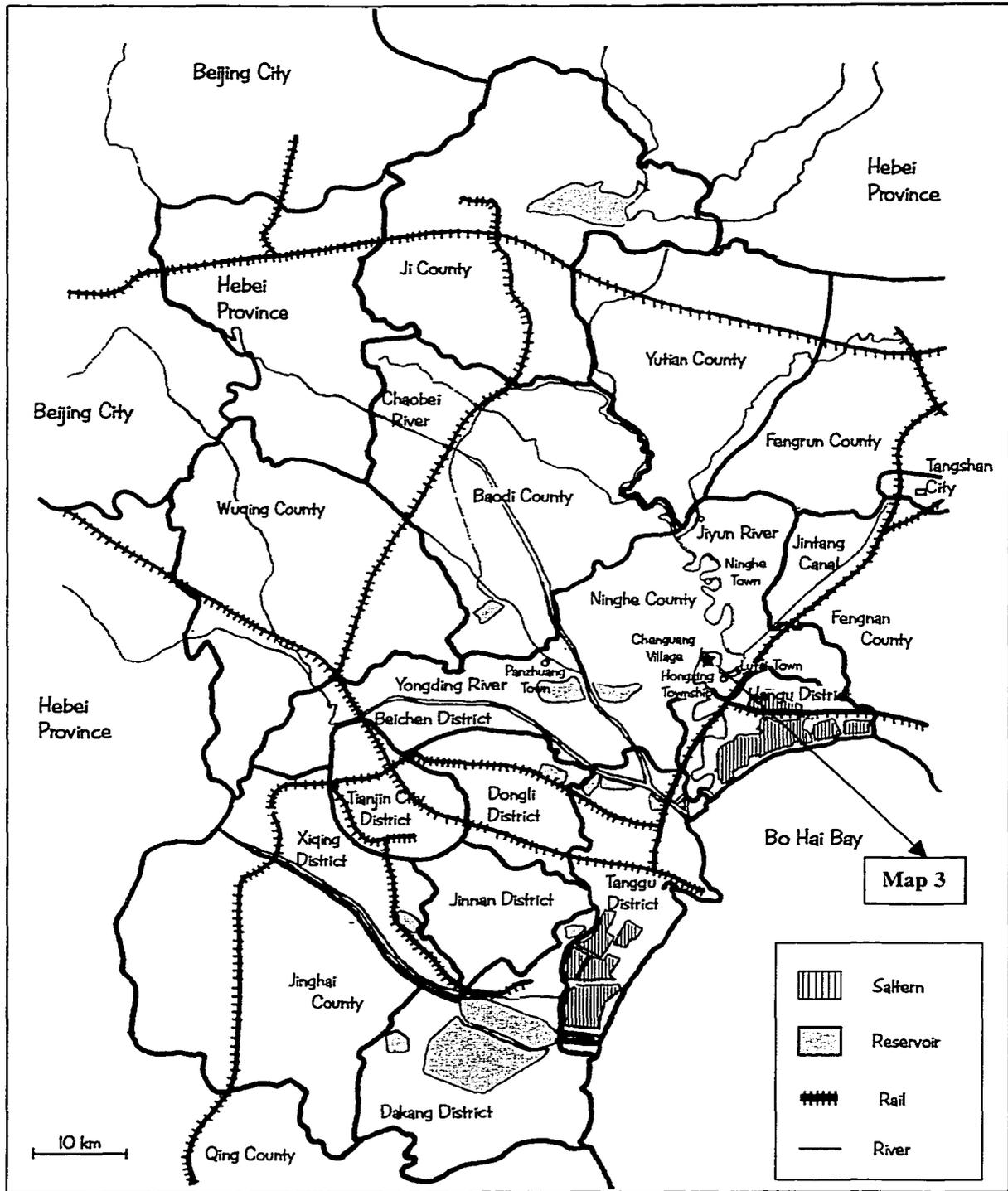
In addition to the administrative changes I have mentioned so far and the major economic and political changes in recent history that I will discuss later, the Big Earthquake of Tangshan (*Tangshan Dadizhen*) had tremendous effects on the village. The earthquake took place at about 4 a.m. on July 28 of 1976. The shock was of 7.8 magnitude. Since the seismic center was Fengrun County that shares boundaries with the northern parts of Ninghe County, the earthquake badly damaged Ninghe County. Chenguang village was one of the villages that suffered most from the earthquake. About 300 out of 1800 villagers died, and most of the houses were destroyed.²⁸ In 1978 the villagers started to build new houses, so all the houses of the village are less than twenty years old. That is why the village appeared new and relatively well-off.

Chenguang village is located in the eastern part of Tianjin City, northeast of the metropolitan area (see Map 2). To the north and east lie Yutian County, Fengrun County and Fengnan County, all of which are under Hebei Province's jurisdiction. It is bordered by Baodi and Wuqing County, two of five counties that belong to Tianjin City and Beichen District, which is one of four suburban districts to the west and northwest. To the south and southwest it shares boundaries with Dongli District, a suburban district and Tanggu District, one of three coastal districts. To the southeast lies Hangu District, which is also a coastal district.

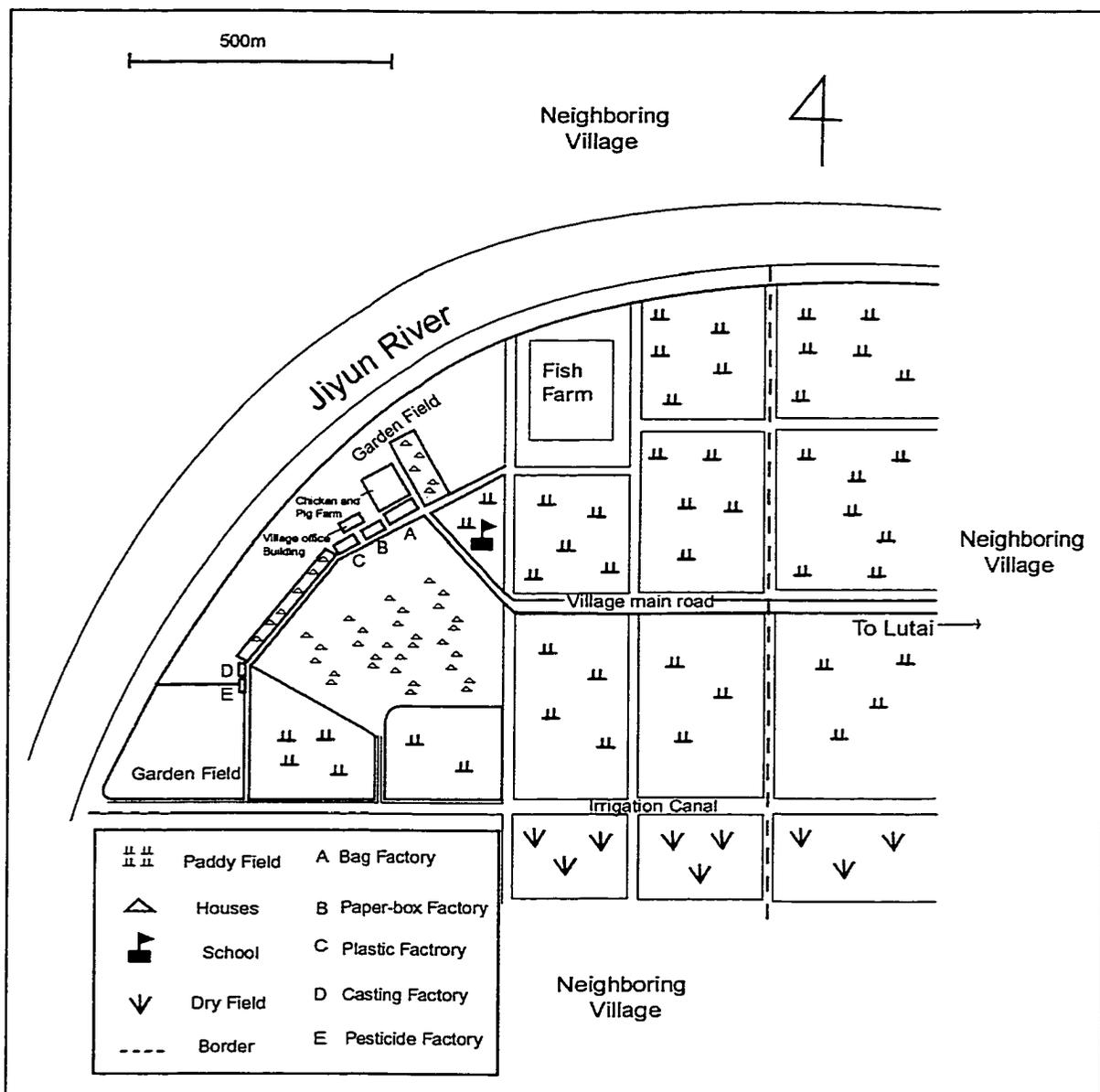
²⁸ When I talked with villagers about the earthquake, I could certainly feel the trauma they felt. They vividly described what happened to them, their families, and their neighbors with great emotion. In addition, I witnessed the following incident. One morning, from my room, I saw many villagers rush out of their houses. I did not know why. It turned out that there had been an earthquake, which was so mild that I could not feel anything unusual. It, however, was enough to frighten the villagers. The fear of an earthquake was also the reason why the villagers did not build two-story houses.



Map 1 China



Map 2 Tianjin City and Vicinity



Map 3 Chenguang Village

From Lutai Zhen, the county seat, to the metropolitan area of Tianjin, is eighty kilometers. It is forty-eight kilometers from Tangshan City, Hebei Province and 180 kilometers from Beijing. Nine kilometers away lies Bo Sea (*Bohai*). The Beijing-Tangshan Railway (*jingshan tielu*) and the Tianjin-Shanhaiguan Road (*jinyu gonglu*) run through Lutai, which make access to neighboring major cities convenient. Besides, Hangu District and Tanggu District are not far from Lutai.

It takes about one hour and twenty minutes to get to the Tianjin metropolitan area by train, and it takes about two hours by bus. The trains run between Lutai and Tianjin four to five times a day and the buses five to six times a day.

Chenguang village is about five kilometers west of Lutai Zhen, the center of the county. It takes about thirty to forty minutes to get to Lutai by bicycle, the most common means of transportation, and about fifteen minutes by motorized tricycle (*sanlun*), the second most common means. The road is paved with asphalt all the way from the village to the county seat. So, it is roughly a two-hour trip from the village to the Tianjin metropolitan area by train and three-hour trip by bus. Furthermore, you can get to the Hangu District in slightly over one hour by bicycle, thus it lies within a commutable range. You can also commute to Tanggu District by automobile.

The convenience of access to the outside world has formed an outwardly-oriented economy of Chenguang village. Hangu District and Tanggu District as well as Lutai Zhen, the political and economic center of the county, provide the villagers with many economic opportunities. The development of village industry, the increasing number of villagers who are engaged in commerce and transportation and who get jobs in those areas are all taking advantage of the strategic location of the village.

The temperate-monsoon-continent-type climate of the region is good for rice growing, but the precipitation is not sufficient, especially in the seeding season (see Table 2.2). It is supplemented by the irrigation system using water from the rivers and the underground water. Fifteen rivers which basically belong either to the Jiyun River (*Jiyun*

He) or the Chaobai River (*Chaobai He*) system run across the county. The Jiyun River, with the largest volume, runs from the northeast to southwest of Chenguang village, so the village has rarely been short of water for agriculture. On the contrary, floods had been the biggest source of natural disasters for a long time because even though the overall precipitation is low, the rainfall is concentrated in July (201.5 mm) and August (187.3 mm). To make matters worse, the Jiyun River runs so slowly due partly to its serpentine course and partly to the gentle slope of the riverbed that it could easily overflow. Several rivers and canals have been built in order to lessen the volume of water running in the Jiyun River. In the case of Chenguang village, the Tianjin-Tangshan Canal (*jintang yunhe*) that began to be built in 1960 but was never finished has eased the danger of flooding.

Table 2.2 Seasonal Characteristics, Temperature, and Precipitation*

| Seasons | Characteristics | Average Temperature | Average Precipitation | Proportion in the Yearly Total |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Spring (3-5) | Windy, Dry | 11.6°C | 62.3 mm | 10.1% |
| Summer (6-8) | Hot, Humid | 24.6°C | 470.4 mm | 75.9 % |
| Autumn (9-11) | Cool, Dry | 12.4°C | 72.3 mm | 11.7 % |
| Winter (12-2) | Cold, Dry | - 4.2°C | 14.6 mm | 2.4 % |
| Total | | 11.1°C | 619.6 mm | 100.1 % |

Source: NDBW 1991

* The temperature and precipitation are the averages of the years from 1964 to 1985.

Ironically enough, the Tianjin-Tangshan Canal has created a water shortage for agriculture in Chenguang, especially in the seeding season. The Dabo pumping station set up in 1943 supplied water from the Jiyun River to the village for seeding and transplanted of rice, but the Hongxing Commune had to build another pumping station in a neighboring village in 1974 to cope with a water shortage around the Chenguang area. Moreover Chenguang village had to dig more wells and install lift pumps to supplement the

water supply from the Jiyun River. As a result, paddy fields of Chenguang are completely under irrigation and do not suffer from a water shortage.

2. Demography

Before going into the demographic characteristics of Chenguang village, I should first discuss the household registration (*hukou*) system of China and the process of obtaining my data because my demographic data are based on the household registration record (*hukoubu*). I spent about two weeks, twelve hours a day, hand copying the household registration record before I noticed some interesting facts. That is, there were many households that had female household heads (*huzhu*), and some households had more members than I expected. It attracted my interest in the *hukou* system itself and its practices.

The origins of the *hukou* system can be traced back to *bao-jia* system (local security system).²⁹ It was also influenced by various social control techniques adopted in the areas under the GMD and Japanese rule and in the base areas under the Communist control. Then there was the influence of the Soviet passbook system (Chang and Selden 1994).

In 1951 a new system was established to monitor residential changes. One year later the state began to recognize the migration of rural residents to the cities as a big problem. Having issued a series of regulations and directives to curb the influx of rural people into the cities, the state established a permanent system of household registration in 1955. Not only did this new regulation make any change of residence difficult, legal migration from rural to urban areas was especially difficult. It also made the survival of illegal migrants in the cities almost impossible by linking the *hukou* system with food

²⁹ The *bao-jia* system was introduced in the middle years of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). It was a system that organized people below the county level. Later, under the *bao-jia* system, emphasis was laid more upon security than upon ordinary administrative functions. In 1935, this system was reinstated in Ninghe County by the GMD government as a part of GMD's anti-Communist campaigns. Therefore, mutual surveillance became the most important function of the *bao-jia* system.

rationing, housing, health care, education, and retirement benefits. This system produced two caste-like divisions among the Chinese population—those who had *feinongye* (non-agricultural) *hukou* and those who had *nongye* (agricultural) *hukou*, the former was privileged over the latter (Potter and Potter 1990: 296-305).³⁰

Although the *hukou* system and its practices have been loosened during the reform period, they have basically remained the same as before. First, the benefits granted to the urban *hukou* holder have been reduced. This, along with the development of free market, has brought about the rapid increase in the number of unofficial migrants to the cities. Second, the volume of agricultural products, the objects of compulsory sales, has been reduced, too. Thirdly, some rural residents who had agricultural *hukou* were allowed to convert their *hukou* to urban, as exemplified by the “young intellectuals who had been sent down to countryside” (*xiafang de zhishi qingnian*). Finally, it is not strictly forced to report changes in households caused by birth, death, marriage, household division, and so on. It was very difficult for me to get accurate demographic data by examining the household registration book because of the *hukou* system itself and its lax practices. That is, some are unlisted and some are overlisted in the book.

First, there are several categories of villagers who have urban *hukou*, thus they are living in the village but not shown in the *hukoubu* (household registration record). The first category includes thirty-two state employees.³¹ The second is the “young intellectuals,” and ten villagers belong to this category.³² The school teachers who are not state employees but have worked for a certain period of time can transform their own and

³⁰ *Feinongye hukou* is also called *chengshi* (urban) *hukou*, and I will use the latter term because it seems to be used more often. However, villagers do not use the term, *nongcun* (rural) *hukou*, instead of *nongye* (agricultural) *hukou*.

³¹ All of them are male. They started to work as temporary workers, thus having *nongye hukou*. After having worked for a certain period of time, they became permanent workers whose *hukou* were transformed to urban. The salterns in Hangu Qu hire fourteen of them, and various offices of the county government hire nine of them.

³² They are called *zhi(shi) qing(nian)* in the village and all of them are female. They were originally sent down to other villages located in more remote areas. After spending several years there, they realized that there was no hope of returning to the cities they had come from. So they married into Chenguang village because it was much closer to their native places than the original villages, and the economic situation was much better. In the 1980s the state allowed them and their children under eighteen years of age to transform their *hukou* to urban.

their family' *hukou* to urban, there is only one villager in this category. Those who enter college fall into the final category. I do not know how many college students are among the villagers, but they will absolutely not return to the village after graduation, so they are not included in my demographic data.

What is remarkable is that children's *hukou* are always classified following the mother's line. China has been a patrilineal society, even the children's class status followed father's in the class classification in the early years of the PRC. However, matrilineality is applied to the *hukou* system. That is why only male state employees themselves have urban *hukou*, and the female "young intellectuals" could change their children's *hukou* into urban. There are practical reasons why the state uses this classification method in the *hukou* system. Since state employees are overwhelmingly male, it reduces the burden of supporting employees' family members, by depriving them of the benefits granted to urban *hukou* holders. It also reduces the urban population size by forcing family members as well as many employees to remain in the countryside.

Second, there are cases of women who do not transfer their *hukou* to their husbands' households after marrying out of the village. On the one hand, some women do not take *hukou* with them when they marry out of the village. In a few cases, the women who marry someone living in the urban area are not allowed to transfer their *hukou* to the husbands' place because of the policy that prohibits agricultural *hukou* holders from migrating to the urban areas. In most cases women do not bother to transfer their *hukou* because there is no disadvantage, and they are also not forced to do so.

On the other hand, some women do not bring their *hukou* with them when they marry village men. Just like the cases above, most of them do not care about the *hukou*. In cases in which women who have urban *hukou* marry someone in the village, they do not transfer their *hukou* to the village because they do not want their *hukou* to be transformed to agricultural. The reason for this is that it is still advantageous to be an urban *hukou*

holder. For example, the state assigns jobs only to urban *hukou* holders, and the work unit (*danwei*) allots houses only to the employees with urban *hukou*.

As a result, there are significant numbers of people who reside in the village but are not listed in the *hukoubu*. There are also people who are listed but do not live and work there. Unlisted people outnumber those who are overlisted because all the children of unlisted mothers are also missing from the *hukoubu*. It is strange that the children of the women who should have transferred their *hukou* out of the village do not appear on the village *hukoubu*. I suspect that in either case the children may not be listed anywhere, neither in their fathers' villages nor in their mothers'.³³

Third, though both parents are listed on the village *hukoubu*, some children are not registered. The parents of those children do not make an effort to register the children, or they want to evade the family planning policy by making their children officially non-existent. There are apparently only a few cases like this; I could find only three such children through my survey that included about one third of the village households and through my extensive interviews with villagers.

Fourth, many households that already went through family division (*fenjia*) remain undivided on the *hukoubu*, so the number of households in the *hukoubu* is a lot less than the actual number. However, it is not easy to count the actual number of households in the village because family division is not a simple matter. If a family has divided up family property and live apart, they definitely form separate households. Even though a parent or parents and the families of married son(s) live under the same roof, I count them as separate households if they have separate budgets (*fenzao*).³⁴ That is, the ultimate standard for determining whether or not a household is independent and can thereby be counted as a household is whether or not it has its own means of living. Therefore, many households

³³ The children of the mothers who are urban *hukou* holders must be listed on the *hukoubu* of their natal places so they can take a full advantage of urban *hukou*.

³⁴ Literally it means the division of cooking stove, but it contains a meaning of the division of budget.

comprised of an old widow/widower or an old couple on the *hukoubu* are not counted separated households in my household data.

After considering all those factors, the actual demography of the village looks different from the demography on the *hukoubu*.³⁵ The number of households increased from 429 to 488 because many large households are split into two to four households as a result of family divisions. The number of male villagers increased from 975 to 1034, but female villagers are counted as only 980 instead of 985 in the *hukoubu* (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 Distribution of Population by Age and Sex, 1995

| Age | Male | | Female | | Total | | Percentage | | Sex Ratio* | |
|---------|------|-----|--------|-----|-------|------|------------|-------|------------|--------|
| | RHRR | HRR | RHRR | HRR | RHRR | HRR | RHRR | HRR | RHRR | HRR |
| 0 - 9 | 205 | 189 | 153 | 141 | 358 | 330 | 17.78 | 16.84 | 133.99 | 134.04 |
| 10 - 19 | 173 | 170 | 189 | 188 | 362 | 358 | 19.97 | 18.27 | 89.53 | 90.43 |
| 20 - 29 | 161 | 154 | 148 | 166 | 309 | 320 | 15.34 | 16.33 | 111.64 | 92.77 |
| 30 - 39 | 163 | 156 | 186 | 189 | 349 | 345 | 17.33 | 17.60 | 87.63 | 82.54 |
| 40 - 49 | 174 | 155 | 160 | 153 | 334 | 308 | 16.58 | 15.71 | 108.75 | 101.31 |
| 50 - 59 | 68 | 61 | 67 | 70 | 135 | 131 | 6.71 | 6.68 | 101.49 | 87.14 |
| 60 - 69 | 55 | 54 | 44 | 44 | 99 | 98 | 4.92 | 5.0 | 125.00 | 122.73 |
| 70 - 79 | 26 | 27 | 23 | 24 | 49 | 51 | 2.43 | 2.60 | 113.04 | 112.50 |
| 80 - 89 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 19 | 19 | 0.94 | 0.97 | 90 | 90 |
| Total | 1034 | 975 | 980 | 985 | 2014 | 1960 | 100 | 100 | 105.51 | 98.98 |

Source: Revised Household Registration Record (RHRR) and Household Registration Record (HRR)

* Sex ratio is the number of males to every 100 females.

The large gap between the two sets of data in the age bracket of 0-9 can be attributed to the mothers who had not transferred their *hukou* into the village and the

³⁵ After I copied the *hukoubu*, I interviewed two villagers who had extensive knowledge about the entire village, not to mention villagers' life cycles and *hukou* status. One is Zhang Hongfeng, a man in his seventies. The other had been the accountant of the brigade for about fifteen years and is still working as an accountant in charge of village enterprises. He is also in charge of *hukoubu*. The three of us went through all the households one by one, correcting discrepancies between household situations on the *hukoubu* and actual situations. When there was anything that they were not sure of I asked other villagers, especially the village head (*cunzhang*) about it. I think my data are pretty accurate, confirmed by the fact that I found two cases among 150 households that show differences between the revised data and the survey data.

couples who had not reported births of their children. Very high sex ratio in this age bracket, 133.99, shows the influence of family planning policy and the tradition of male preference. Females in their twenties also reflect a big difference from the *hukoubu* because of women who did not take the *hukou* when they married out. Many male state employees make differences in the population data and so do the female “young intellectuals” in the 40–49 age bracket.

Table 2.4 Distribution of Population in Chenguang Village, Tianjin, and Nation, 1995

| Age | Percentage of Population | | | Sex Ratio | | |
|---------|--------------------------|---------|--------|---------------|---------|--------|
| | Chenguang | Tianjin | Nation | Chenguang | Tianjin | Nation |
| 0 - 9 | 17.78 | 13.55 | 17.96 | 133.99 | 108.67 | 113.44 |
| 10 - 19 | 17.97 | 14.33 | 16.15 | 89.53 | 104.52 | 107.08 |
| 20 - 29 | 15.34 | 15.23 | 18.91 | 111.64 | 98.49 | 98.69 |
| 30 - 39 | 17.33 | 19.76 | 15.77 | 87.63 | 99.77 | 102.23 |
| 40 - 49 | 16.58 | 15.86 | 12.96 | 108.75 | 98.87 | 103.59 |
| 50 - 59 | 6.70 | 8.91 | 8.09 | 101.49 | 94.86 | 106.65 |
| 60 - 69 | 4.92 | 7.68 | 6.20 | 125.00 | 98.51 | 102.06 |
| 70 - 79 | 2.43 | 3.62 | 3.11 | 113.04 | 93.89 | 85.03 |
| 80 - | 0.94 | 1.06 | 0.85 | 90.00 | 74.79 | 57.48 |
| Total | 99.99 | 100 | 100 | 105.51 | 100.18 | 103.67 |

Source for Chenguang village data: The revised household registration record.

Source for Tianjin data: Statistical Yearbook of Tianjin (SYT), 1996.

Source for national data: China Statistical Yearbook (CSY), 1996.

In order to make clear the demographic characteristics of Chenguang village I compare the distribution of population of the village with Tianjin and the nation overall (see Table 2.4). The proportion in each age bracket in Tianjin looks quite different from the other two sets of data because of the large proportion of urban population.³⁶ That is, the strict implementation of the one-child-per-couple policy since the late 1970s in the urban

³⁶ In 1995 about 70 percent of Tianjin City population resided in urban areas.

areas results in less population in younger generations, population under the age of nineteen. Comparing Chenguang village with the nation overall, a striking difference is found in the 20-29 age bracket. The proportion of population that comes under that range is the fifth largest in Chenguang village compared with the third largest in Tianjin and the largest in the nation. It suggests that the young people leave the village for various reasons, such as for education, better jobs, and marriage. One reason for this phenomenon, I think, is because the number of women who married out of the village is greater than the number of those who married in at that age range. The sex ratio of 111.64 also shows remarkable differences from 98.49 in Tianjin and 98.69 nationally. The other reason is because young men twenty and twenty-one years old remain unmarried because the legal limit for a man's marriageable age is twenty-two and above while woman can get married from the age of twenty.

The average number of members per household in Chenguang village is 4.10. It is more than 3.74 nationally and 3.35 in Tianjin (see Table 2.5). The very low proportion of one-person and two-person households and the high proportion of four- and five-person households are, I think, mostly due to the way I count the households. As I have stated above, I did not regard the households that consisted of an old couple or a widow/widower as separate unless they were economically independent. Therefore, many one-person or two-person households in *hukoubu* are incorporated into other households. The small number of persons per household in Tianjin is due to its large urban population. The large proportion of the metropolitan population also contributes to the most striking characteristics of the city, that is, a high percentage of the households consist of three members. Especially in the metropolitan area (Tianjin City District) where about forty percent of the Tianjin's total population resides, the percentage of three-person households is astonishingly 50.98 percent. This is also due to rigid implementation of family planning policy in the metropolitan area.

Table 2.5 Distribution of Households by Size, 1995 (in percent)

| | One Person | Two Persons | Three Persons | Four Persons | Five Persons | Six & Over | Total | Average |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|-------|---------|
| Nation | 5.89 | 13.73 | 28.42 | 26.58 | 14.45 | 10.92 | 100 | 3.74 |
| Tianjin | 5.82 | 15.09 | 43.13 | 21.42 | 9.15 | 5.38 | 100 | 3.35 |
| Chenguang | 0.81 | 4.68 | 26.68 | 42.16 | 16.29 | 9.37 | 100 | 4.10 |

Source for national data: CSY, 1996

Source for Tianjin data: SYT, 1996

Source for Chenguang village: The revised household registration record

There are sixteen surnames among 491 households in the village (see Table 2.6).³⁷ Zhang holds a majority, 52.34 percent, and it is followed by Li, Cui, Wang, Yang, Liang and Yu all of which have at least ten households. However, surnames cannot necessarily be identified with a single lineage (*jiazú*). In the case of Zhang, Cui, and Wang, each consists of more than one lineage. Thus, no single lineage group has been dominant economically or politically in the periods of Maoist and post-Mao as well as pre-Revolutionary China.

There were several lineage organizations among Zhang, Li, Cui, Wang surname groups before the socialist revolution. They also had their own graveyards, but the biggest lineage of Zhang that included the majority of that surname group was the only one that held lineage rituals. All the lineage graveyards were removed when the graves in the field were dug up by order of the authorities in 1958 and never reconstructed afterwards. It was 1954 when the lineage ritual was held for the last time.

³⁷ What I mean by household's surname is male's surname that is passed down and perpetuated within the household because China is a patrilineal society. According to the *hukoubu*, fifty-four households are headed by females who share fifteen additional surnames among themselves besides sixteen households' surnames. Among fifty-four female household heads, only twenty-one of them are actual heads, as either the senior member of the household in twelve cases, or the only member of the household in nine cases. The remaining thirty-three females are only household heads on paper because their husbands, the actual household heads, have urban *hukou*, thus do not appear on the village *hukoubu*.

Table 2.6 Distribution of Households by Surnames, 1995

| Surnames | # of Households | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| Zhang | 257 | 52.34 |
| Li | 46 | 9.37 |
| Cui | 43 | 8.76 |
| Wang | 39 | 7.94 |
| Yang | 30 | 6.11 |
| Liang | 16 | 3.26 |
| Yu | 15 | 3.05 |
| Yan | 9 | 1.83 |
| Kan | 7 | 1.43 |
| Liu | 6 | 1.22 |
| Ping | 5 | 1.02 |
| Jin | 4 | 0.81 |
| Shao | 4 | 0.81 |
| Chen | 4 | 0.81 |
| Zheng | 3 | 0.61 |
| Feng | 1 | 0.20 |
| Unidentified | 2 | 0.41 |
| Total | 491 | 99.98 |

Source: The revised household registration record

3. Economy

How high was the income level and the standard of living of Chenguang village? One way to find out was to compare the per capita income of Chenguang village with other areas³⁸ (see Table 2.7).

³⁸ It is impossible to compare it with other areas directly because the sources of data available are not identical. For example, per capita net income of a rural household in 1995 is 2531 *yuan* in the SYT, 1996, which is a little higher than 2406.38 *yuan* in the CSY, 1996.

Table 2.7 Rural Household Per Capita Net Income (in *yuan*)

| | 1978 | 1980 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 |
|------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Nation | 133.6 | 191.3 | 686.3 | 784.0 | 921.6 | 1221.0 | 1577.7 |
| Tianjin | 178.4 | 277.9 | 1069.0 | 1309.0 | 1473.1 | 1835.7 | 2406.4 |
| Chenguang | 75.7 | 117.4 | 1047 | 1100 | 1350 | 2100* | 2639.8** |

Source for national and Tianjin data: CSY, 1996

Source for Chenguang Village data: The village annual report on revenue and expenditure compiled by the village

* This figure comes from the table of village revenue and expenditure posted in the village party branch office.

** This figure comes from my survey.

According to the data, per capita net income of Chenguang village has been higher than the national average of rural households since 1991. It has also been higher than average Tianjin rural households since 1994. The figures for Chenguang must be higher than they appear in the table, however, especially during the reform period because when they made the reports, they did not include the salary income earned outside of the village. Therefore, it is safe to state that the income level of Chenguang village has been higher than the national average and has been as high as Tianjin.

One other way to examine the income level is to look at the distribution of rural households according to per capita income (see Table 2.8). There are a greater number of households that have low per capita net income at the national level than in Tianjin and Chenguang. Those two areas whose per capita income levels are not very different show a very similar distribution pattern.

Table 2.8 Percentage of Rural Households by Per Capita Annual Net Income, 1995

| Yuan | Nation | Tianjin | Chenguang |
|---------------|--------|---------|-----------|
| Below 500 | 5.36 | 0.6 | 0 |
| 500 - 999 | 24.87 | 2.8 | 2.68 |
| 1000 - 1499 | 26.6 | 10.8 | 14.09 |
| 1500 - 1999 | 17.25 | 17.4 | 17.45 |
| 2000 - 2499 | 25.92* | 21.6 | 21.48 |
| 2500 - 2999 | | 17.1 | 16.78 |
| 3000 - 3499 | | 12.9 | 8.05 |
| 3500 - 3999 | | 6.4 | 8.05 |
| 4000 and Over | | 10.4 | 11.42 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source for national data: CSY, 1996

Source for Tianjin data: SYT, 1996

Source for Chenguang village: My survey

* This figure is for 2000 and over.

If the income level of Chenguang village was so high, what was the standard of living? The best way to know is to examine consumption patterns. There are several ways to do so, but the only data I have collected in Chenguang village are household possession of consumer goods (see Table 2.10). The distribution pattern of each area roughly corresponds to the income level of each. That is, Chenguang village households possess many more consumer goods than do the average Chinese rural households. The possession pattern of Tianjin and Chenguang households are very similar, the former possessing slightly more than the latter, even though income levels are reversed. It seems that the income level does not completely correspond to consumption patterns. The Tianjin rural area includes four suburban districts and three coastal districts whose income level is higher than the five counties, one of which Chenguang village belongs to. Per capita net income of Chenguang is slightly less than or almost the same as those districts, but their locational characteristics as suburban and coastal areas have more to do with the

consumption pattern than with the income level. The households in those areas are likely to have more urban-like consumption patterns, for instance they possess more expensive appliances, such as washing machines, refrigerators, color TV sets, and so on, in comparison with their income level. Therefore, they are likely to raise the average of Tianjin rural households' possession of consumer goods. Within Chenguang village too it is not the case that the households with more income possess more consumer goods than do those with lower income. In addition to the income, the possession pattern is related to household members' education level, contact with the outside world, and value system.

Table 2.9 Rural Household Year-end Possession of Durable Consumer Goods Per 100 Households, 1995

| Types of Durable Goods | Nation | Tianjin | Chenguang |
|------------------------|--------|---------|-----------|
| Bicycle | 147.02 | 233.67 | 235.33 |
| Sewing Machines | 65.74 | 91.83 | 89.33 |
| Watches | 169.09 | 225.17 | 235.00 |
| Electric Fans | 88.96 | 118.67 | 96.83 |
| Washing Machines | 16.90 | 62.00 | 55.33 |
| Refrigerators | 5.15 | 28.50 | 20.00 |
| Motorcycles | 4.91 | 9.50 | 4.17 |
| Televisions (B/W) | 63.81 | 67.83 | 72.00 |
| Televisions (Color) | 16.92 | 51.17 | 40.33 |
| Recorders | 28.25 | 48.00 | 49.83 |
| Cameras | 1.42 | 5.17 | 3.50 |

Source for national and Tianjin data: CSY, 1996

Source for Chenguang village: My survey

I will now briefly outline the activities of Chenguang villagers in various sectors of economy. The cultivated land of the village is quite small compared to the population (see Table 2.10). Farming cannot provide the villagers with the income level of today, not even with the sufficient income for survival. I will return to this point later in this section.

Rice farming forms the largest part of agriculture. Among the cultivated land of 1600 *mu* (106.72 ha), a paddy field occupies 1300 *mu* (81.25 percent), a dry field holds 300 *mu* (18.75 percent), which is divided into three parts. The villagers plant grains such as corn and millet in 200 *mu* (12.5 percent). A fruit garden of 60 *mu* (3.75 percent) and a vegetable garden of 40 *mu* (2.5 percent) split the other 100 *mu*.

Table 2.10 Per Capita Cultivated Land (in *mu*/hectare)

| | <i>mu</i> | ha |
|-----------|-----------|------|
| Nation | 2.17 | 0.14 |
| Tianjin | 1.87 | 0.12 |
| Ninghe | 2.08 | 0.14 |
| Chenguang | 0.79 | 0.05 |

Source for nation and Tianjin data: CSY, 1996

Source for Ninghe County data: SYT, 1996

Source for Chenguang village data: My survey

The villagers are also engaged in animal husbandry and fishery. After several households lost a lot of money from animal husbandry because of the fluctuating prices of young pigs and chickens, feed, pork and eggs, the number of households that raise pigs and chickens has decreased. There are several fish farms whose area totals about 250 *mu*. All the fish farms are located in irrigation canals and riversides except the largest one that occupies 148 *mu* of the land, where rice was previously grown. The profitability of fishery also dropped recently due mainly to the increased price of feed.

In comparison with the grain farming which occupies most of the cultivated land (about 93 percent) and in which virtually all the households are involved, growing fruits and vegetables, animals and fish demand a lot less land and labor. However, the household income from the latter is more than from the former. That is, while grain farming contributes only 43 percent of household income from the agricultural sector,

agricultural activities other than grain farming form remaining 57 percent. Amazingly only 19 out of 149 my survey sample households³⁹ are engaged in agricultural activities other than grain farming, and only 10 households earn the majority of their income from those activities.

There are five factories in the village, all of which are collectively owned by the village but one that the village established in partnership with a villager. The total number of employees of all factories is about 450.⁴⁰ Among the factories, the bag factory (*xiangbao chang*) that employs more than 300 people and the pesticide factory (*nongyao chang*) that has about 50 employees are managed by the village. Three other factories, including the paper-box factory (*zhixiang chang*) that has about 70 employees, the plastic factory (*suliao chang*) whose employees are only 2-3 people, and the casting factory (*zhuxin chang*) that hires about 20 people are all contracted out to villagers. These factories produce more than 80 percent of the total gross output value of the village.

The villagers have been engaged in construction for a long time. They have built houses, dug wells, and excavated rivers and canals, but there were very few who were specialized construction workers. Building a house in the village was done in the form of labor exchange, and the state mobilized people to launch public works. Construction work has become an occupation since the reforms. There are three construction teams, each of which consists of about twenty people. While people from other villages work as members of those teams, Chenguang villagers participate in the construction teams of other villages. As a result the villagers engaged in construction amount to a considerable number.

We can divide the villagers who are engaged in transportation into two broad categories. One is those who employ themselves in transportation business by using their

³⁹ One household among total 150 my survey sample gives very confusing information, so I have taken it out from my consideration.

⁴⁰ The status of employees of the village factories is very unstable. The factories adjust the number of employees according to the amount of orders received. Unlike the state factories the village factories are virtually free to lay off employees because they do not pay a discharge allowance. On the other hand, it is also relatively easy for the employees to quit work according to their situations. Therefore, the number of employees is constantly changing.

own trucks or tricycles. The other is those who work as stevedores in the railway stations of Lutai and Hangu and the port in Tanggu.

The final large sector of village economy is commerce. There are several ways to categorize people engaged in this sector. One apparent way is to distinguish those who have shops from those who do not. Eight grocery stores in the village belong to the former category. There are quite a few people who do business without their own shops. They buy feed for animals, vegetables, fish, clothes, and so forth, in an area where they can buy them at a low price and sell them at a higher price elsewhere. They constantly search for the places where they can buy low and sell high. They use their own means of transportation, which usually are trucks or tricycles, or they rent them to carry merchandise from the buying places to the selling places.

How much does each sector contribute to the village economy and how many villagers are engaged in each sector (see Table 2.11)? We can roughly say that more Chenguang villagers engage in all the sectors except for agricultural sector than do the rural residents of Tianjin and the nation overall. The extremely small percentage of the Chenguang village labor force engaged in agriculture catches our eye. It mainly stems from the way I interpret my data. It is very difficult to decide who engages in agriculture because actually almost all members of households are more or less involved in agricultural work, but the agricultural work is neither a full time job nor a major income source in the majority of village households. Therefore, I include those who do farming, animal husbandry, and fishery as their full time job and who earn the majority of their income from these activities in this category. That is why the proportion of agriculture is so small. Anyway, it is not entirely appropriate to directly compare the numbers from Chenguang village to those from the nation and Tianjin because the estimation methods are surely different in each data set. Nevertheless, I cannot help wondering on what basis they estimate the distribution of the labor force.

Table 2.11 Distribution of Rural Labor Force by Sector, 1995 (in percent)

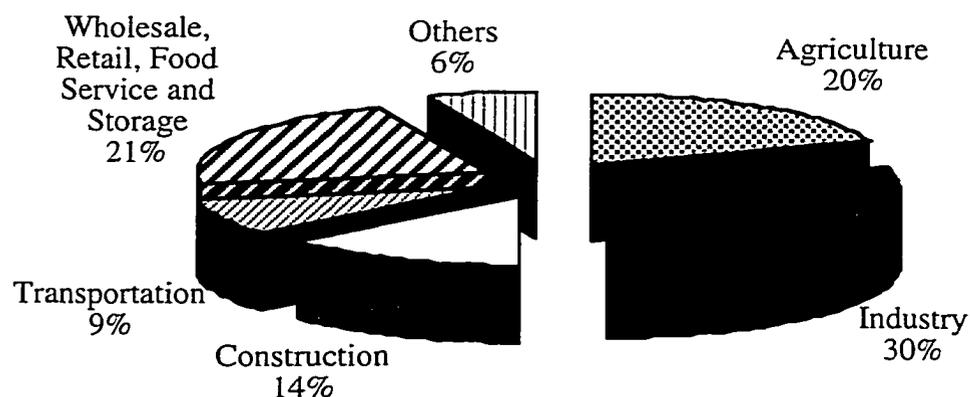
| | Nation | Tianjin | Chenguang |
|---|--------|---------|-----------|
| Agriculture | 71.79 | 47.64 | 13.93 |
| Industry | 8.82 | 30.92 | 42.50 |
| Construction | 4.89 | 5.54 | 17.50 |
| Transportation | 2.18 | 5.48 | 7.50 |
| Wholesale, Retail Sale, Food Service and Storage | 2.60 | 4.30 | 10.00 |
| Others** | 9.72 | 6.12 | 8.57 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source for nation and Tianjin data: CSY, 1996

Source for Chenguang village data: My survey

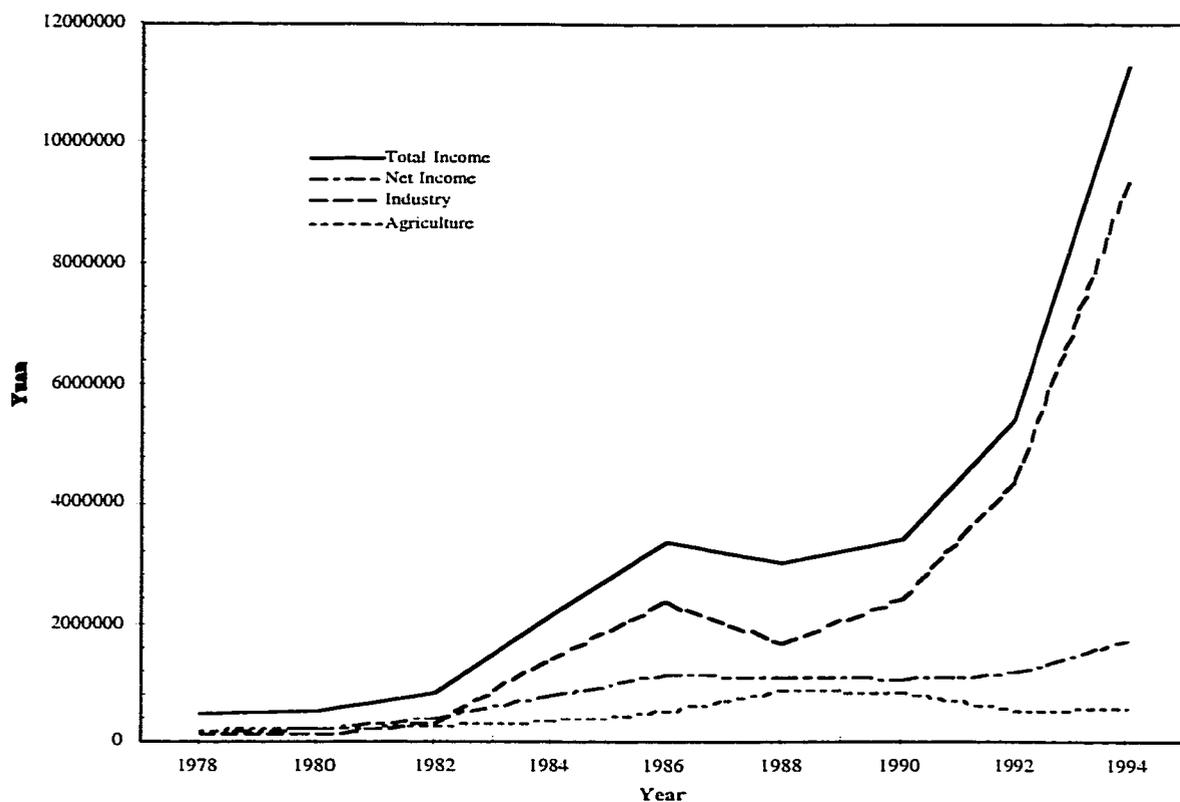
* This category includes teachers, barefoot doctors, village and township employees, a barber, pension receivers, a hotel worker, and part-time workers.

** The figures in parentheses are percentage of each sector in total household income. This kind of data is unavailable for the nation and Tianjin level.



Source: My survey

Figure 2.1 Distribution of Rural Household Income by Sector, 1995



Source: The village annual report on revenue and expenditure

Figure 2.2 Total Income, Net Income, Total Income from Agriculture and Industry in Chenguang village⁴¹

⁴¹ I do not have the data for 1984. The values of 1984 are means of the values of 1983 and 1985. Although they are not accurate, we can at least see the trends. In addition, I applied the price index to the amount of money because the trend in agriculture and industry, and their influences on the total income can be more accurately shown by applying it. I use the overall retail price index because it is the most inclusive, and it is available from 1978.

Comparing the distribution of the labor force with household income, we notice differences. In the case of agriculture, even if it does not serve as a major income source to many households, virtually all the households in the village do farming, so it occupies relatively a larger portion in income than in the labor force. The sectors of industry and construction show a reverse trend. That is because many unskilled workers earn a relatively small amount of money in those sectors. The large difference is also found in wholesale, retail, food service and storage sector because those who are doing business make much more money than others.

Returning to the topic of household net income per capita, the relatively diversified sources of household income in Chenguang village are one good reason for its high income level. The second reason related to the first one, I think, is that the total income from industry in the village has been increasing while that from agriculture almost unchanged (see Figure 2.2). The influence of industry on the total income is evident, and the increase and decrease of total income is not precisely reflected in the changes of net income. However, the development of industry does have a strong influence upon the high level of household income not only through profit by the village factories but also through the jobs they have created for the villagers.

The advantageous location of the village serves the villagers with the basis for the third reason for the village's high income level. The village is close to Lutai, Hangu, and Tanggu. As I mentioned in the previous section, those areas provide villagers with a many opportunities for jobs. This condition as well as the development of industry in the village have resulted in the situation that the majority of household income comes from wages rather than from household business (see Table 2.12). As we can see in the table, the higher income the residents of the area earn, the larger proportion of income is earned in the form of wages. Chenguang village's relation between income level and income source does not deviate much from this trend, but the large proportion of unskilled workers who earn relatively low wages has this trend reversed between Beijing and Chenguang.

Table 2.12 Household Net Income Per Capita by Source and Region, 1995 (in *yuan*)

| | Wage | | Household Business | | Others | | Total | |
|-----------|--------|---------|--------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| | Yuan | Percent | Yuan | Percent | Yuan | Percent | Yuan | Percent |
| Nation | 353.7 | 22.4 | 1125.8 | 71.4 | 98.2 | 6.2 | 1577.7 | 100 |
| Shanghai | 2734 | 64.4 | 1183.4 | 27.9 | 328.2 | 7.7 | 4245.6 | 100 |
| Beijing | 1715 | 53.2 | 1220.9 | 37.9 | 287.8 | 8.9 | 3223.7 | 100 |
| Tianjin | 1012.2 | 42.1 | 1297.7 | 53.9 | 96.5 | 4.0 | 2406.4 | 100 |
| Chenguang | 1527.7 | 57.9 | 1112.2 | 42.1 | None | | 2639.9 | 100 |

Source for Chenguang village data: My survey

Source for other area data: CSY, 1996

* This category includes transfer and property income. I do not think that no household earns such income in Chenguang village. However, it appears as none on the table because no respondent mentioned such income in my survey.

** Figures in parentheses are percentages of each income source.

To summarize, the changes in administration system are closely related to the stability of the regimes. That is to say, the frequent changes during the ROC and the early PRC periods illustrate the fact that the regimes at those periods had not consolidated their rule over the society. The existence of lineage ritual and lineage graveyards in the 1950s also shows the state's weak grasp of its society. The geographical characteristics of the village—the climate and water supply—explain the reason why rice farming holds a dominant position in agricultural activity. The advantageous location of the village has exerted a huge influence upon its economic conditions—high-income level, diversified income sources, a large proportion of income in the form of wages, and so on.

The demography of the village is directly related to the state's capacity to control the society. The *hukou* system that aimed at the control of migration from rural to urban areas was successfully implemented during the Maoist era. This system, along with several other measures, contributed to the creation of two caste-like divisions among the Chinese population (Potter and Potter 1990),⁴² and the cellularization of local units (Shue 1988). It

⁴² This idea includes two important points. One is that the urban residents with official household registration enjoyed much more advantages and higher living standards than the rural counterparts. The other is that the residential status of a person was inherited from his/her mother. Thus a system of birth-

illustrates the state's strong control over society during the Maoist era. On the other hand, a great disparity between the demographic data based on the official *hukou* record and the actual situation indicates the loosened application of the *hukou* system.

Family planning is also closely related to demographic characteristics. The high percentage of the population in the age brackets of the ten to nineteen, and under ten shows that the state's effort to control birth was not so successful in the village (see Table 2.3). However, the low percentage of young population and the high percentage of three-person households in Tianjin reflect the strict implementation of the one-child-per-couple policy in the urban areas (see Table 2.4 and 2.5). These phenomena suggest that the state in the post-Mao era is strong enough to achieve its goals if it chooses to do it at any cost. Yet, we have to consider the fact that, whereas the state can use effective means in its power, such as housing, health care, and education over urban dwellers, it has virtually no such effective means to influence the peasants. In other words, it is easier for the state to implement family planning policy in urban areas than rural areas. It is impossible to compare directly the Maoist state and the post-Mao state about family planning because this policy is the product of the reform leadership. It seems that the state in the post-Mao period still exercised quite strong control over society, but not as strong as it did during the Maoist era.

ascribed stratification was formed and maintained. However, there existed several ways to change one's household registration from rural to urban, even though it was very hard

Chapter 3

CONSOLIDATION OF THE STATE CONTROL OVER THE PEASANT SOCIETY

Chinese people, especially poor peasants and workers, suffered a great deal in the first half of the twentieth century. Warlordism, the invasion of the Japanese army, and the civil war between the GMD and CCP worsened their already bad living conditions. Chenguang villagers also could not escape from those streams of history. Chenguang villagers had to deal with the rulers who kept changing, and thus, with different collectors of taxes and surcharges, sometimes several at once. After the CCP came into power, it helped create greater order, and established itself as the only legitimate power. That is, the new party-state became the only one that the villagers had to deal with. However, as we shall see shortly, it was only the beginning of a series of huge changes that the state introduced to rural society.

In this chapter, I explore the politico-economic changes in Chenguang village from the eve of the socialist revolution (late 1940s) to the end of the Great Leap Forward Campaign (early 1960s). After I discuss the economy and politics of Chenguang before the revolution, I discuss how the state leaders aimed to change peasant society through new policies introduced after the revolution, and how the villagers reacted to those policies. In doing so, I will examine the processes of policy formulation at the central level, as well as policy implementation at the local level, focusing on a series of agricultural policies.

For an understanding of why and how the state aimed to bring about various changes, especially in the early years of the Maoist era, it is useful to approach them with a framework of “legibility” (Scott 1998). That is, many new policies, for example, the land reform, the United Purchase and Sale of Grain, the *hukou* system, and the collectivization movement, can be seen as being designed to make rural society more legible—and hence

manipulable—from above and from the center. Furthermore, Scott's account of the logic behind the great human tragedies of the twentieth century can be applied to the Great Leap Forward. I will discuss more on his perspective and the Chinese case later.

There are two main arguments I make in this chapter. One is that in spite of the great power and influence of Chairman Mao and strong solidarity of the top leaders of the party-state, decision-making processes often included conflicts and struggles among top leaders. Sudden changes in direction or implementation pace of policies were often the outcome of such conflicts. The other point is that the state, using mainly its administrative and ideological power, was strong enough to successfully implement the policies in the rural areas, though sometimes facing opposition from the majority of villagers. However, in some cases, the local cadres as well as ordinary villagers did not closely follow the directions and orders of higher authorities.

1. Politics and Economy on the Eve of the Socialist Revolution

It has long been recognized that rural society in north China was very different from that of south China. The rice-growing, more diversified economy of the southern regions could support a highly stratified society where the elites assumed a dominant position over fellow villagers. On the other hand, low-yield, disaster-prone dry farming of the northern areas could not produce enough surplus for the elites to exercise strong domination (Duara 1990). So, rural elites in the north were much less sharply differentiated from the peasants.

The elaborate and powerful Chinese lineage groups contributed much in shaping different social landscapes in the northern and southern regions. In the south, the collective ownership of ancestral estates attached to ancestral halls was the foundation of lineage, and lineage functioned as economic corporations. Lineage also assumed the functions of judicial bodies, village guards, educational institutions, religious bodies, social welfare,

and so on. The corporate property of the lineage made it possible for the elites to have decisive means to control the peasants' livelihood and to maintain their dominant position for generations (Freedman 1958; Potter and Potter 1990; Watson 1990).

In contrast, we could rarely find those strong, multi-functional lineage organizations in the northern villages. The elites were in a much less favorable position than their southern counterparts who could utilize the lineage resources for their own interests. Moreover, it was very difficult for the elite families to maintain their wealth, the most important basis of their power, for more than one or two generations because of the system of partible inheritance. Thus, the lack of significant amounts of corporate estates resulted in constant changes in the composition of the elite groups, generation after generation (Duara 1990; Myers 1970).

What was the situation of Chenguang village in the 1930s and 1940s? It seems that Chenguang village did not deviate much from the general characteristics of the northern Chinese villages described above. The villagers grew Chinese sorghum, soybean, and a little bit of corn, millet, and rice. This grain production was the main source of income. They were also engaged in handicrafts, mainly weaving reed mats, which did not contribute much to household income.

Lineage organizations existed but were far from elaborate and powerful as they were in the southern regions. None of them owned corporate estates and just three of them had their own burial sites, which symbolized the wealth and unity of the lineage in northern China (Cohen 1990). Only one, the biggest lineage of Wang, kept customs of *tianfen* and *baichi* (free feast) on Qingming Festival. One male out of each member family went to the lineage graveyard together and swept each mound, added new earth, and burnt paper money (*tianfen*).⁴³ Every male member over sixty years of age and his wife were invited to a feast with eight dishes (*baichi*). A lack of strong lineage organization was one of the

⁴³ A family, the unit of membership of the lineage, included descendents and their nuclear families of a living male members of the lineage. Therefore, even though division of family (*fenjia*) had already taken place, as long as the father was alive, all the sons and their families formed a family.

reasons why the village was not highly stratified. The land ownership, however, was the single most important reason for the lack of stratification, and it deserves more detailed analysis.

All the cultivated land in Chenguang village was owned by an absentee landlord named Zhang Baoshan on the eve of the socialist revolution. He resided in Lutai, and he also ran a shop there. All the Chenguang villagers were tenants on his land. They were somewhat different from the ordinary tenants in that they had the “permanent tenant rights” (*yongdianquan*).⁴⁴ The landlord did not interfere with anything the tenants did, except that he took one-third of the harvest as rent. The villagers, namely the tenants, made all the decisions concerning production, such as selection of the crop planted, application of manure, labor input, and time management. They could even freely buy and sell the tenant rights without interference of the landlord.

To my question about the villagers’ relationship with the landlord, an old villager answered:

There was not much room for conflict with him [Zhang Baoshan] because he did not much care about what we did. He just took the rent which was considered to not be terribly high. I should say we got along with him. When we went to Lutai to shop, we often dropped in at his store and took a rest. If it rained we would eat and drink there while we were waiting for the rain to stop.”

According to him, however, there were constant struggles between the two sides over the harvest. The villagers (tenants) tried to take an excessive share by hiding production (*manchan*) or by stealing grain (*touqing*). They stole grain from the field before harvest. They sometimes hid a few baskets of grain on the field while harvesting and brought them

⁴⁴ This is similar to the “double ownership of the land by the landlord and the tenant.” According to Buck, some land is divided into soil (*tiandi*) and surface (*tianmian*). The possessor of the surface is called a tenant (*dianhu*), and he has the exclusive right to leasing the surface for cultivation. The possessor of the soil (*dizhu*) cannot cultivate the land, but he is required to lease it to the one who possesses the surface. Neither can he expel the lessee at his own will, except in cases where the tenant owes him for rent to an amount equal to the value of the surface (Buck 1980: 22).

home after dark, and they also haphazardly harvested the fields so a lot of grain fell on the ground on purpose, and later, they carefully gleaned the fields.⁴⁵

The landlord appointed a *zhuangtou* (head of tenants) to cope with such tenants' tactics. Li Ruisui, a member of the family that rented and farmed the largest piece of land, assumed that position on the eve of the Liberation. He roughly estimated the expected harvest and closely watched the harvest process to prevent villagers from hiding and stealing grain. According to old villagers, the process of dividing harvest was as follows. The villagers brought all the harvested grain onto the drying fields and then threshed it. Ten to twenty hands sent by the landlord measured the grain and divided it up between the two parties. They used thirty-*jin*-measures and took one measure full of grain and gave the tenants two measures. The *zhuangtou* took the grain that fell after leveling off the top of the measures that were the landlord's share (*chi doujian*). The duties of *zhuangtou* made him closer to a manager for the landlord than to a representative of tenants. Therefore, the harder he carried out his duties, the harder it was for the tenants to evade rent and the more he could take as his own share. However, he did not work too hard to prevent his fellow villagers from rent evasion because he would thereby have become the enemy of most villagers for just a minor gain. Moreover, the landlord did not push him hard.

The "*bao-jia*" system, mentioned in chapter 2, was adopted in 1935 in order to deal with the administrative matters, and it lasted until the establishment of the PRC in 1949 (NDBW 1991). Basically 10 households constituted a *jia*, and 10 *jias*, in turn, constituted a *bao*. In many cases, a village formed a *bao*, even if the households of the village were a bit more or less than one hundred. Therefore, the *baozhang* (head of *bao*) played the role of village chief who collected taxes, organized labor conscripts, and mediated disputes. In the late 1940s, the burden of *baozhang* was getting heavier because the GMD levied more and more taxes on villagers who were not able to pay all the taxes and because it was getting hard to deal with intravillage conflicts as the traditional cultural norms that had

⁴⁵ These are typical "everyday forms of resistance" practiced by subordinate peasants (Scott 1985).

governed the relationships between villagers nearly collapsed. Therefore, no one wanted to assume the *baozhang* position. From 1947 eighteen relatively better-off people were elected, and they took turns performing *baozhang*'s duties monthly.

The Japanese army occupied the region between 1942 and 1945. It mobilized the people to dig canals and to set up pumping stations in order to increase rice production right after they seized the region. That increased the area of paddy fields in Chenguang village from about 400 *mu* in 1942 to over 1000 *mu* in 1943, but it did not improve the villagers' diet. Actually it worsened the diet which was already poor because the Japanese did not allow the villagers to eat even a grain of the rice they produced, and forced them to sell it all. In return, the Japanese sold the villagers sorghum and corn as provisions. They also sold chemical fertilizers and pesticide to the villagers according to the farming size of the paddy fields to increase the production of rice. All those transactions were done by the book, subtracting the value of all they sold from the total value of the rice they bought. The villagers were given the difference in cash, and then they paid rent to Zhang Baoshan in cash.⁴⁶

The Japanese tightly controlled the harvest of rice with the collaboration of Li Ruishan, one of Li Ruisui's brothers. One month or so before the harvest a Japanese merchant came to the village accompanied by a translator. The three of them walked around the paddy fields estimating the expected harvest section by section. This estimation served as the standard for the purchase of rice after the harvest. That is, the peasants were forced to sell the same amount of rice as their land was estimated to produce. In principle, however, they had to sell all the rice they produced. This was one of the two main sources of conflict between the two parties because the peasants wanted to sell the Japanese merchant as little rice as possible. The other source of conflict was the use of chemical fertilizer and pesticide that the Japanese sold to the villagers. The villagers wanted to apply them to their own dry fields, and the Japanese tried to prevent this.

⁴⁶ It means that during the Japanese occupation period, the rent system changed from 'crop rent' (*shiwu dizhu*) to 'cash-crop rent' (*huobi dizhu*).

Li Ruishan, an agent of the Japanese army, was well acquainted with what was happening in the village. Since the quality of land was not equal within a section as well as across sections in the village, some peasants harvested more than expected and some did less. The former tried to hide the surplus and the latter did not want to get beaten up. Li Ruishan exactly knew how much rice every household in the village harvested, hence he made sure that the villagers sold all the rice they produced. He often made the villagers who harvested more than estimated turn in the surplus; he also on occasion persuaded the Japanese merchant not to punish those who did not fulfill their expected harvest as long as they sold all the rice. In addition, Li Ruishan strictly controlled the villagers' use of chemical fertilizer and pesticide. According to the villagers, in all these conflicts and potentially conflictual situations, he leaned toward the Japanese side, carrying out his duties too enthusiastically as an agent of the Japanese army. That is why he was treated badly later on, during the land reform and several campaigns.⁴⁷

After the Japanese army retreated from the region in the summer of 1945 (Japan surrendered to the Allies on August 15th, 1945), the struggles between the GMD and the CCP intensified. The battles between the two parties largely centered on the towns of Ninghe County. Right after the Japanese army evacuated the county, the Eighth Route Army (*balujun*) captured Panzhuang Town (*zhen*), Ninghe Town and Fengtai Town. Meanwhile, the Nationalist army was stationed in Lutai Town at the end of October, and then, intruded into Fengtai Town in December. In January 1946, the Ninghe County Committee of the CCP and the county government were established in Ninghe Town; the GMD set up the Ninghe County Executive Committee in Lutai Town. Both parties could not have commanded the region until the CCP completely controlled the region in late 1948.

⁴⁷ His brother, Li Ruisui who had been the head of tenants, received better treatment during campaigns, even though they were both the rich peasant elements, because Ruisui had not work very hard as an agent of the landlord.

The first thing the CCP did when it captured that rural area was to implement land reform. The results of the land reform, however, were nullified as soon as the GMD occupied the area. In the process of the continuing struggles between the two parties, some towns and villages had experienced a change in occupation several times. Therefore, land reform in those places could not be executed thoroughly.

The situation of the area surrounding Chenguang village did not deviate much from this trend. The villages on the south side of the Jiyun River including Chenguang village were within the GMD's power, and the CCP controlled the north side of the Jiyun River. The Nationalist army was basically stationed in Lutai, and they sometimes came to the village requesting grain, carts, and so on. The Eighth Route Army crossed the river and infiltrated into the village, usually after dark. They collected information about the movement of the Nationalist army and the situation of the village and also requested food.

In December 1947, the Eighth Route Army expanded its power to the south side of the Jiyun River. One night the CCP army took the families of landlords and rich peasants in all the villages on the both banks of the river to Tongcheng, which was located about 10 km north of Chenguang village. At a meeting attended by all those landlords and rich peasants, the leader of the CCP stationed in the region said, "You return to your villages and give your land and grain to poor peasants. If you don't listen to me, I guarantee that something bad will happen to you and your families."⁴⁸

The head of each family was sent to his own village while other family members remained in Tongcheng. They faced other meetings held by the Peasants Association (*nonghui*) of villages. In Chenguang village, the head of the Peasant Association (*nonghui zhuren*) ordered the rich peasants to bring grain and distributed it to poor peasants. The head of the Peasant Association also specifically ordered who gave how much land to whom (of course, to the poor peasants). This distribution of grain and land took a little

⁴⁸ At that time, the class labels of landlord, rich peasant, poor peasant, and so forth, were temporarily given to the villagers mainly based on how much land a family cultivated. That is why some villagers, such as the Li family and the Cui family, classified as landlords, later received rich peasant label in the Land Reform Campaign. No villagers remembered the exact standard of the temporary class classification.

longer than expected because it required estimations of the situations of both givers and receivers. The family members of landlords and rich peasants were released and returned to their own villages when the distribution process ended in eight days. During this incident no injury was inflicted on anybody—the villagers called it a “peaceful land reform” (*heping tugaī*). The CCP wanted it to be peaceful because they had not yet gained full control over the region at that time, so they did not want to meet fierce opposition from any peasant. In contrast to this, on the north side of the Jiyun River where the Eighth Route Army stationed and exercised firm control, many landlords and rich peasants were beaten, and some of them were choked to death during the land reform.

But there remained another turn in the situation. In the summer of 1948, just before harvesting millet, the GMD army recaptured the south side of the river, including Chenguang village. The rich peasants, backed by the GMD army, claimed the leading position in the village, which had been assumed by the cadres of the Peasant Association (*nonghui ganbu*). They also reclaimed their land, telling the poor peasants, “This land is ours. We handed it over to you not because we were willing to do so, but because *Gongchandang* (CCP) forced us. But they all fled to other regions. So you’ve got to return it to us.” What could those poor peasants do? The situation lasted only about three months until the CCP completely “liberated” the village in the autumn of 1948.

Chenguang villagers remember the three years from the autumn of 1948 to the autumn of 1951 as a relatively peaceful and satisfying period. All the turmoil of warlordism, the Japanese occupation, and the civil war had ended. All the villagers came to own at least a bit of land as a result of the land reform in 1947, which led to the improvement of the average household’s economic condition, and they could do almost anything without much interference from the state. The storms of the Land Reform Campaign, class classification, and the collectivization of agriculture were yet to come. This period was called “a time of calm before the storm” (Potter and Potter 1990) or a “honeymoon” period (Friedman et al. 1991). I would say that it was a period of transition,

in which the peasants waited and prepared for the emergence of a new economic and political order.

2. The Land Reform Campaign

There were two main theories that explained the backwardness of Chinese agriculture and the poverty of Chinese rural areas in the pre-Communist period. One emphasized the unequal distribution of land ownership, and the other placed more stress on the lack of capital, technical skills, infrastructure, and so on.⁴⁹ The Communists' rationale for land reform leaned toward the former: high rent and interest were primarily responsible for peasant poverty. The exploiters, such as landlords, merchants, and small industrialists, took most of the surplus away from the peasants; thus, it was very hard for the peasants to accumulate capital for agricultural development and provision against natural disasters or banditry. As a consequence, the rich became richer, and the percentage of peasants with little or no land got higher (Myers 1970).

What was the actual situation of land tenancy prior to the socialist revolution? The actual data do not seem to support the Communists' arguments that stressed the unequal distribution of land ownership, at least in north China. Buck (1968) reports that 28.7 percent of farm area in China was rented between 1929 and 1933. In the winter wheat-*kaoliang* (Chinese sorghum) area that consisted mainly of Hebei, Shandong, Henan, and part of Jiangsu and Anhui Provinces, this number dropped to 11.8 percent during the same period. Among the peasants, 80 percent were owners, 15 percent were part owner-part tenants, and the tenants (landless) constituted only 5 percent in that area. Based on "Investigation of Chinese Village Customs" data, Myers (1970) argues that a little over four-fifths of the peasantry were owners or part owner-part tenants, so only less than one fifth of the peasantry fell into the category of pure tenants and agricultural workers in Hebei

⁴⁹ Myers (1970) calls the former "the distribution theory" and the latter "the eclectic theory."

and Shandong Provinces in the 1930s. Therefore, ratios of landlessness and tenancy were too low, according to him, to be regarded as the main factor responsible for the poverty of peasants in north China.⁵⁰

It seems that more land was concentrated in the hands of fewer landlords and rich peasants in Ninghe County in the 1930s compared with other north China regions. According to the Gazetteer of Ninghe County (1991), 10 percent of households owned 76 percent of the cultivated land in 1936. Myers (1970) assumes a hypothetical village in north China based on various data available, where 13 percent of households owned 52 percent of the land. In 1945, 8 percent of households possessed 64 percent of the land in Ninghe County. The concentration rates of land were somewhat dropping but, to my astonishment, just ten landlords owned all of the land in more than 110 villages, which constituted 50 percent of land in the county. This highly unequal land ownership distribution was, I think, due to the location of Ninghe County. Since the county was near Tianjin, it appears that the rich who resided in Tianjin possessed a large amount of land in the county.

The land ownership pattern of Chenguang village matched that of Ninghe County, deviating from north China area's usual pattern. As mentioned, an absentee landlord who lived in Lutai owned all the cultivated land in the village. The villagers said, "The lands of most neighboring villages were also owned by the large capitalists (*dazibenjia*). They resided in Tianjin, Lutai, and so on and none of them lived in the villages where their lands were located."

We can safely conclude that absentee landlords were very common, and they possessed a major portion of land in this region, which indicates the deepened polarization of land ownership. It was, however, an entirely different story at the village level. In the

⁵⁰ The percentage of tenants was extremely high in the southeastern part of China, especially in the Pearl River delta. In Ha Tsuen, located in Pearl River delta, 97 percent of peasants were tenants and 55 percent were landless in the 1930s (Watson 1990). Chen Han-seng reports 70 to 90 percent tenant rates in the same region in the same period (ibid.). Others also show very high tenancy rates for this region (Potter 1967; Yang 1959).

case of Chenguang village, all villagers were tenants who did not own even one *mu* of cultivated land. So, they were differentiated by how much land they rented (or how much surface of land they possessed). Since economically significant sideline activities did not exist, it was the area of rented land that determined the classes of villagers.

How did the Land Reform Campaign (*tudi gaige yundong*) proceed in Chenguang village? In the autumn of 1951, the district government sent down a work team that consisted of four or five state cadres (*guojia ganbu*) to the village.⁵¹ Between 1948 and 1951, during the period of transition, the Poor Peasant Association headed by Zhang Huaizhang took care of the administrative work of the village, following directives from the upper units. The work team first organized groups for land reform. They recruited young and reliable peasants with good class background (even though the formal class classification had not been carried out, the class status of each family was generally known), depending upon the information from the leaders of the Poor Peasant Association and the villagers.

The propaganda group (*xuanchuan gu*) held meetings to inform the villagers of the object and process of the campaign. The group also explained how good it would be to the peasantry, and all the good things the state had done for the peasantry. The investigation group (*shencha gu*) looked into the details necessary for land reform, such as each household's possession of the so-called "five major properties" (*wuda caichan*) — land, draft animals, farm implements, houses, and furniture—and the number of household members. This group later assigned each family not only land and other property but a class label based on the investigation data. The register group (*tianxie gu*) issued the certificate of land and house (*dizhao* and *fangzhao*) to each household to verify ownership.

The Land Reform had equalized peasant landholdings more than ever. It had also brought about upside-down-like changes in the political hierarchy of the peasant society. The rich, the educated, and the old had always been in leadership positions until the

⁵¹ District (*qu*) was an administrative unit between county and township. In this case, it was between Ninghe County and Hongxing Township.

socialist revolution took place. The redistribution of land and other properties took all the power and privileges away from the rich. Furthermore, these qualities, such as wealth, education, and age, became huge burdens rather than advantages to the possessors. The class classification formalized those changes of peasants' status.

Each family was assigned to one of the rural classes following the "Agrarian Reform Law of the People's Republic of China" issued in 1950. The work team and village cadres followed the national guidelines in general, but local particularities were also considered. The two most important standards in assigning one's class status were the possession of property, especially land, and agricultural work, that is, how much property one possessed and how much agricultural work he did himself, as opposed to using hired laborers.

The classes ranged from landlords to agricultural laborers.⁵²

Landlords (*dizhu*). Landlords were defined as the largest landowners who rented out a significant portion of their land and who hired long-term farm laborers to work in the fields with their families doing less than six-months' farm work. No family belonged to this category in Chenguang village.

Rich peasants (*funong*). Generally speaking, rich peasants owned less land than landlords, but they owned so much land that they could not get all the farm work done by themselves. They had to hire long-term farm laborers. The major difference between the two classes was not the area of land they possessed but the amount of work they did. Rich peasants almost always took part in agricultural labor with their hired hands. Six Chenguang families were labeled as rich peasants.

Upper middle peasants (*shang zhongnong*) or prosperous middle peasants (*fuyu zhongnong*). Upper middle peasants took care of all the farm work of their fields by themselves except during the busy season when they hired short-term laborers.

⁵² I acquired the information about the criteria of class classification and the distribution of class labels among village families from my interviews with old villagers, especially those who had participated in the campaign as young activists.

Some of them had as much land as rich peasants, but the difference was that they hired fewer laborers less often and in shorter durations of time than rich peasants. Eight Chenguang families fell into this category, two of whom were reclassified as rich peasants during the Four Cleanups Campaign, but that judgment was overturned again in the 1970s.

Middle peasants (*zhongnong*). They owned enough land to make a living and did not hire labor maybe except a few days of busiest season. They generally had draft animals and farm tools. Eight or nine Chenguang families were assigned to this category.

Lower middle peasants (*xia zhongnong*). They did not possess enough land to make a living, thus had to supplement their income by working as short-term laborers. They owned simple farm tools, like hoeing implements, harrow, and so on, and some of them owned draft animals, too. There were also eight or nine families classified in this category.

Poor peasants (*pinnong*). Most of the families in this category owned a small amount of land and were far from able to eke out a living from cultivating their land. Therefore, a great portion of their income was derived from selling their labor power to rich peasants. Most of the villagers, about 85 percent of the whole population of Chenguang, were assigned to the poor peasant category.

Agricultural laborers (*gunong*). Three families in this category in the village had no land or property of any kind. They made a living by hiring themselves out as long-term agricultural laborers. They were literally rural proletariats.

The campaign went on in a relatively peaceful and orderly manner. “During land reform, people showed good attitudes to the rich peasants in this village. We didn’t beat them up,” said an old man. However, “struggle meetings” (*douzhenghui*) against rich peasants were held. In preliminary meetings, the cadres of the work team educated the

peasants about the exploitative nature of class relationships, which were said to be responsible for the misery the peasants had experienced for a long time. The peasants criticized and denounced the rich peasants in the struggle meetings. One of the aims of the Land Reform, maybe the most important one, was to raise the class consciousness of the peasants by making them realize the exploitative nature of the traditional, pre-revolution social order. The CCP utilized the struggle meetings against class enemies, like landlords and rich peasants, to instill the ideology of class exploitation into the peasants' minds and to make them show their class consciousness in public. That is why struggle meetings were an indispensable part of the Land Reform. No violence was committed in those struggle meetings in Chenguang village.

Why did the Land Reform Campaign proceed without violence in Chenguang village? First, there was not great intravillage stratification (cf. Huang 1990: 166-169). All the villagers were either landless or possessors of the surface, that is the tenants of an absentee landlord. Of course, there were big differences in the area of rented land among the villagers. The Li family, the largest tenant of the village, cultivated over 200 *mu*, so they were much wealthier than the poor peasants and agricultural laborers that constituted about 90 percent of village population. Actually, there were debates on whether the Li family should be classified as rich peasants or landlords. Some villagers argued that they should have been classified as landlords, mostly based on the fact that Li Ruishan, a member of this family, had worked for the Japanese army, and he had done so enthusiastically. According to the party's guidelines, they were rich peasants because they worked very hard in the fields all year around. Moreover, the family had many members—seven brothers, their wives and children. Other villagers complained that they were too strict with the hired laborers: they made the laborers work hard and well. Not only did they themselves work hard but they also provided the laborers with relatively good

meals.⁵³ Consequently, there was not much contradiction between the so-called exploiters and the exploited, and not such great conflicts, either.

Second, in the places where the conflicts between the CCP and the GMD or between the CCP and the Japanese army were intense, the land reform tended to be violent. In order to establish control over those places, each party tried to get support from villagers as much as possible. In many cases like that, supporters of the GMD or the Japanese army were those who were wealthy and powerful, precisely the class enemies. They had to face fierce criticism and denouncement, and often violent treatment from the peasants in the Land Reform.⁵⁴

Third, as the work teams from the upper levels led the Land Reform Campaign of the individual villages, their leadership styles were an important factor in deciding the intensity of the Campaign. Even though the political and economic situations were not very different from those of Chenguang village, the campaign process was violent in some neighboring villages on the north side of Jiyun River. The landlord and rich peasant elements, even their family members who did not wear the hat of the four bad elements (*silei fenzi*), were beaten and killed.⁵⁵ The work teams had often encouraged peasants to treat the class enemies harshly because they wanted the villagers to enthusiastically participate in the campaign, especially the class struggle. There existed a tendency to think that the more intensely the class struggle proceeded, the more successful the campaign was. The work team sent to Chenguang, however, did not encourage the villagers to act violently.

⁵³ There was a saying (*shunkouliu*) among the farm laborers.

“The Wang family house is a home for old folks. (*laowangjia shi yanglaoyuan*)

The Li family house is a pen for big pigs.” (*laolijia shi feizhujian*)

The meaning is the Wang family that also rented more than 200 *mu* was not so strict with the hired laborers as the Li family but did not give them as good meals as the Li family did.

⁵⁴ We can find an example like this in Long Bow Village (Hinton 1966).

⁵⁵ The four bad elements referred to landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, and criminals. The class label was given to the family and it was inherited patrilineally. But for example, among the members of a family labeled as rich peasants, only the family heads or the actual managers of the family’s property or hired laborers were labeled as “rich peasant elements.” In other words, he wore the hat of the rich peasant element (*funong fenzi*). The other members were not rich peasant elements but just “rich peasants.” Therefore, though there were eight rich peasant families, only nine people were rich peasant elements, the main targets of criticism and denouncement.

If the land reform in 1948 was a prelude, the Land Reform Campaign was an actual beginning of the new relationship between the state and society. Throughout Chinese history, there had not been much direct contact between the state and the grass roots level peasants. As long as taxes were collected and order was maintained, the state did not have the intention and ability to interfere in peasants' lives. Compared to this, the socialist state was far more ambitious than its predecessors, and the land reform was the first step to realize its ambitions. The state was to bring about revolutionary change via the grass roots of rural society through a redefined state-peasant relationship. It tried to control virtually all aspects of the peasants' lives, especially in the spheres of economy and politics. In order to achieve that purpose, it was necessary to eradicate the old order of rural society largely based on class relationships, in which landlords and rich peasants dominated the society. By equalizing land ownership, land reform destroyed the material basis of dominance of the landlords and rich peasants. The struggle meetings helped poor peasants and agricultural laborers who had been not only subordinate but also passive spectators of village politics. These meetings helped them break the psychological dependence and fear of the dominant class peasants so that they could establish themselves as active players in village politics.

The Land Reform Campaign ended in October of 1951, lasting about three months. The last task of the work team was to establish a village leadership structure through the election of the new village cadres. The work team held a meeting attended by the entire village. Those who attended were asked to recommend people as their representatives. If someone was recommended and several people (*yi xie ren*) agreed to that recommendation, he was elected as a representative. Repeating this procedure, twenty-one representatives, all males, were chosen.

These representatives attended a meeting presided over by the head of the district (*quzhang*), whose goal was to elect seven village leaders. The representatives were instructed to choose young and capable villagers with good class background, including

mainly poor peasants and agricultural laborers. After seven men were elected, the incumbent cadres (*lao ganbu*), most whom were the Poor Peasants Association leaders, stepped down and a specific post was assigned to each newly elected cadres:

| | | |
|----------------|--|-----------------|
| Zhang Zhenshu | The head of the village (<i>cunzhang</i>) | 18 years of age |
| Zhang Hongtong | The deputy head of the village (<i>fucunzhang</i>) | 21 years of age |
| Zhang Hongfeng | Production (<i>shengchan</i>) | 25 years of age |
| Liang Songde | Finance and Food (<i>cai liang</i>) | 33 years of age |
| Zhang Zhengui | Civil administration (<i>minzheng</i>) | 25 years of age |
| Zhang Huaixuan | Education (<i>jiaoyu</i>) | 24 years of age |
| Hu Tiankui | Public security (<i>gongan</i>) | 22 years of age |

Chenguang village was one of the places where the work team put much stress on the capability of the candidates as leaders rather than their class background, even though they definitely did not want rich peasant elements to infiltrate the new leadership. For example, Zhang Hongfeng, who later would become the first secretary of the village party branch, had a middle peasant class background but he was literate, an excellent worker and capable of public speaking. Most of these seven young leaders assumed various village leadership posts in the years ahead. That is, they were the first generation of the village leadership. The new power relationships had replaced the old order. While the old leaders had mostly depended upon their personal qualifications, such as wealth, education, and lineage, to assume the leadership positions, the new order began to be dominated by the agents of a new socialist state whose position, honor, and power were basically granted by the state.

All the villagers had owned and cultivated some land since the autumn of 1948, but those who received land previously owned by rich peasants were still fearful of being deprived of their land, as had happened in the summer of that year. The civil war was

going on in the other regions of China, and landlords and rich peasants still cherished the hope of recovering their land and property. The Land Reform Campaign in 1951 put an end to this uncertain situation and brought relief to most villagers; yet the situation was far from being secure and stable.

3. The Collectivization Movement and the State Procurement of Grain

Even after the Land Reform Campaign, there still existed substantial inequality in the ownership of land and other property among peasants. The property formerly belonging to landlords, rich peasants, ancestral halls, temples, and so on, was confiscated and redistributed to poor peasants and landless laborers, but the property of middle peasants was left untouched. This put middle peasants at the top of the economic hierarchy of rural society. In the case of Chenguang village, about 800 *mu* of rich peasants' land was distributed to about 360 households, 2.2 *mu* per household. Poor peasant households' average landholdings of 4 *mu* were considerably less than middle peasant households' average landholdings of 15 *mu*. One of the upper middle peasants owned 50 *mu* and even rich peasants, after giving up much of their land, ended up owning land that was roughly equivalent to lower middle peasants' holdings. While farming implements and houses of rich peasants were confiscated and redistributed to poor peasants and landless laborers, the middle peasants retained their own property. We can conclude, therefore, that equality had yet to be achieved as far as economic conditions were concerned.

There existed several other problems in Chenguang as in other parts of rural China. Per capita landholdings were so small that many former poor peasant households could not produce enough to keep them from worrying about surviving. A household's land was often dispersed over several locations, thus, hindering efficient cultivation of land. During the Land Reform Campaign, farm tools and draft animals were divided and reallocated

along with the land, so poor peasant households came to own more than before. However, the reallocated farm implements were not sufficient and were often unavailable when needed because several households shared some draft animals and large tools. The financial support system had not yet been established, which made it hard for the peasants to get money to invest in agricultural production or sideline activities. Collective farming could cope with these difficulties, according to Communist thought, and it was also considered an ideal form of socialist farming.

Mutual Aid Teams (*huzhuzu*) were the first move toward the collectivization of agriculture. In fact, the cooperative movement dated back to the early 1930's, during the Jiangxi Soviet period. In 1933, the Chinese Soviet government issued an "Outline on the Organization of Labor and Mutual Aid Cooperatives" (Schurmann 1966: 415).⁵⁶ The CCP started a large-scale drive to set up village cooperatives in 1934, but the success of the drive is questionable. Facing their defeat by the GMD, the CCP had to retreat to Yan'an, starting a new period. The Yan'an leaders launched a Campaign for the Rural Cooperativization (*nongcun hezuohua yundong*) in 1943. This time they did not want to hastily impose the new organization on peasants, but to slowly build cooperatives around the existing village social organization. This cooperativization movement during the Yan'an period set the tone for rural reorganization in the years ahead. The Mutual Aid Teams (MATs) were organized following the land reform in liberated areas, thus some areas already had the experience of cooperatives when the MATs started to be organized nationwide in 1952.⁵⁷

The MATs were based on a traditional form of labor exchange bound up with social relationships of kinship, friendship, and neighborhood. Each member household owned land, farm tools, and draft animals. The MATs were organized to make up for differences

⁵⁶ Under the strong influence of Moscow, the CCP established the Chinese Soviet Republic in the parts of Jiangxi and Fujian provinces in 1931. In order to survive under the heavy attacks from the GMD, the CCP moved to these remote areas and sought peasant support by land redistribution and increase of agricultural production by the organization of Mutual Aid Cooperatives (Fairbank and Goldman 1998; Schurmann 1966).

⁵⁷ Wugong village (Friedman et al. 1991) was an early and successful example of model villages that established MATs.

in land, labor, and implements among peasant households by exchanging labor and sharing farm tools and draft animals. The average number of households per MAT was seven in 1954 (Stavis 1982), but the situation in Chenguang village was quite different from this trend.

In 1952, one township cadre stayed in each village of the township to guide the newly-elected cadres in handling public affairs and carrying out the tasks allotted by higher authorities. The most important task for the cadres at that time was to organize the MAT. The peasants were expected to join the MATs voluntarily and, according to the regulations, cadres could not force them to join. The better-off households that owned large amounts of land, major tools and draft animals did not want to join because they thought that they had little to gain by doing so. So village cadres, following the township cadre's guidance, held meetings everyday (*tiantian kaihui*) to persuade them. Finally, about 80 percent of village households joined one of seven MATs in the village, which made the size of MATs in Chenguang village much larger than the national average. Compared with the nation's 60 percent of independent peasant households and 40.4 percent in Ninghe County in 1952 (Table 3.1), the situation of Chenguang village was striking.

In 1953, a policy that was to exert tremendous influence over the rural society, in addition to collectivization, was issued. It was the United Purchase and Sale of Grain (*liangshi tonggou tongxiao*). It was designed "to ensure a supply of grain required for the people's livelihood and for national construction, to stabilize grain prices, to eliminate grain profiteering and to further strengthen the worker-peasant alliance" (Chao 1957: 193).⁵⁸ At that time, there was some shortage (*you yidian jinzhang*) in grain supply because consumption of grain increased due to the expansion of non-agricultural population and the improvement in living standards, on the one hand, and the hoarding of grain by merchants and peasant profiteers, on the other (Shue 1980). Therefore, the center devised a

⁵⁸ This is cited from "Commands on the Implementation of Planned Purchase and Planned Supply of Grain" which was issued by the Government Administrative Council (later, the State Council) on November 19, 1953.

mechanism through which the state would absorb the surplus from the agricultural sector to ensure a stable supply of grain to urban residents and to support the industrial sector.⁵⁹

The government set the amounts, kinds, and prices of grain the peasants had to sell. In 1953, the first year this policy was implemented, Chenguang villagers had to sell all the grain, leaving 400 *jīn* per person for self-consumption. The peasants resisted this policy because they did not want to lose control over the disposition of “their own” grain. Village cadres, with the help of township cadres, held meetings and visited each house, persuading peasants to follow the government directives. Some villagers did not listen and carried the grain to sell in Lutai. They found, however, that all the shops dealing with grain were closed. At last, they had only one choice: to sell it to the state agencies. This policy was said to be so successfully implemented that the government had purchased eighty percent more grain in 1953-54 than it had in 1952-53 (Shue 1980). According to Walker (1984), the state procured 17.1 percent of the gross output of grain in 1953-57. The state absorbed 27.6 percent of total grain output, taking the 10.5 percent tax into account during this period.

The state took one further step to control grain output by issuing a series of regulations that started with passage of the “Provisional Regulations on United Purchase and United Sale of Grain in Rural Areas” in 1955, “calling for quotas on each household’s grain production” (Huang 1990: 173). Now, the state came to decide the kinds and quantity of grains the peasants had to produce as well as the prices and quantity of grains they had to sell.

The Lower-level Agricultural Producers Cooperatives (*chuji nongye shengchan hezuoshe*)⁶⁰ were organized in Chenguang village in 1954. They resembled the MAT, in

⁵⁹ When I discussed this matter with villagers, it was apparent that they had been disgruntled at the preferential treatment of the urban population given by the state. They insisted that *tonggou tongxiao* benefited the urban population at the expense of the peasants and the state. They explained that peasants lost the chance to improve their fortune through marketing grain. Moreover, the purchasing prices of grain had been kept very low throughout the Maoist era. The selling prices of grain were a little bit higher than the purchasing prices, but they did not match all the costs for transportation, storage, shop keeping, etc. So, the state had to make up the loss.

⁶⁰ The villagers usually refer to this organization as *xiaoshe* whose meaning is a small cooperative.

that the major means of production, such as land, large farm tools, and draft animals, were still privately owned by peasant households. The difference was that the major means of production were put at the disposal of the cooperatives. When a peasant household joined the cooperatives, the four evaluations (*si ping*) were done. Each cooperative evaluated and recorded the quantity and quality of land, the price or rent for draft animals, the price or rent for the major farm tools, and the labor force of each household. The households either sold draft animals and farm tools to the cooperative, accepting payment in installments over several years or rented them to it. All the members had to rent their land to the cooperative, and a rent payment for its use constituted 30 percent of members' income from the cooperative. The remainder of members' income came from labor compensation. In addition to this difference in management, the size of cooperatives was usually somewhat larger than the MATs. The average number of cooperative member households was 27, four times as large as the MATs (Stavis 1982).

In 1954, six Lower-level Agricultural Producers Cooperatives (APCs) that encompassed all the households were organized in Chenguang village. Even in 1952 and 1953 when the MATs served as the main framework for agricultural management, paddy fields were already cultivated in the form of the Lower-level APC because the work in paddy fields needed more unified and planned management than in dry fields, mainly due to water control. The size of the MATs, which had been almost as large as the Lower-level APCs, made these arrangements easy for Chenguang village. Therefore, the transition from the MATs to the Lower-level APCs took place quite smoothly there.

Nationally, at the end of 1954, 58.3 percent of rural households joined MATs, and 39.7 percent of them remained independent. Only two percent were in any type of APCs (see Table 3.1). The central leadership worried about restratification of the peasantry and the reappearance of traditional leaders in villages. The best way for the CCP to penetrate the village organization and to stop those trends was to utilize the party cadres. Thus, early in 1955, the CCP launched a program of building up party organization at the grass roots

level, which led to enormous growth of the party apparatus in the rural areas during 1955 and 1956 (Schurmann 1966).

Table 3.1 Collectivization in Agriculture, 1952-1956 (in percent)

| | Nation | | | Ninghe County | | |
|------|--------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | Independent Peasant Households | Mutual Aid Teams | Agricultural Producers' Cooperatives | Independent Peasant Households | Mutual Aid Teams | Agricultural Producers' Cooperatives |
| | 1952 | 60.0 | 39.9 | 0.1 | 40.4 | 54.8 |
| 1953 | 60.5 | 39.3 | 0.2 | 67.5 | 29.0 | 3.5 |
| 1954 | 39.7 | 58.3 | 2.0 | 55.1 | 36.9 | 8.0 |
| 1955 | 35.1 | 50.7 | 14.2 | 51.7 | 16.3 | 32.0 |
| 1956 | 3.7 | — | 96.3 | 4.1 | — | 95.9 |

Source for national data: Kraus 1982, p. 102

Source for Ninghe County data: NDBW 1991

The village party branch was established in Chenguang village as a part of that program in 1955. The center came to have firm control over rural society through the party branches all the way down to the village level. The village branch played a prime role in the collectivization movement with guidance and assistance of upper level cadres and the work teams. Establishment of the village branch also brought about changes in intravillage power relations. Zhang Hongfeng, who had been elected in 1951 as one of the village leaders in charge of production, became a secretary. He was theoretically in charge of the political work, but he soon rose to be the most powerful figure and actually had a say in all the important matters of the village.

Now, we need to turn our attention to the central leadership in order to understand the process of conversion from the Lower-level APCs to the Higher-level Agricultural Producers Cooperatives (*gaoji nongye shengchan hezuoshe*). From the start of the MAT movement, there was an understanding among central leaders that they would not force the

peasantry into the hastened collectivization in order to protect peasants' voluntarism and agricultural production; they promised that socialization of agriculture would be a slow and gradual process. There was also clear consensus in early 1955 that collectivization was a goal for economic as well as political and social transformation of rural society, and that cooperativization was simply a transitional stage.

However, the central leadership was divided over the pace of setting up APCs. By early 1955, the Central Committee's Rural Work Department, headed by Deng Zihui, set forth a cautious view in concert with the leading economic specialist of the Politburo, Chen Yun. This view emphasized a careful consolidation of existent APCs and a moderate speed for future growth. They aimed to form one million APCs by the fall of 1956, if this would not damage agricultural production. Along this line, Deng ordered the dissolution of 20,000 poorly performing APCs. The other position of the central leadership was to advocate rapid expansion of cooperatives based on the positive observation that APCs had not only enabled the peasantry to increase production through more efficient use of labor and the means of production, but they had also enabled the state to extract the agricultural surplus more easily and to curb the polarization tendencies in the rural society. Almost all the top leaders held this view (Teiwes 1993).⁶¹

Mao initially consented to Deng's program, but in the mid-May of 1955 he changed his position, and called for a rapid increase of APCs. Nevertheless, Mao's program was a far cry from a radical one. Even though he argued for a target of 1.3 million APCs by October 1956, instead of one million as Deng Zihui had originally planned, the rate of

⁶¹ This interpretation is somewhat different from the others that emphasize the differences between Mao Zedong on the one hand and the most central leaders on the other. For example, Chang (1978) identifies two distinct approaches of economic development. One can be labeled "radical"; it stressed organizational changes of economy, political mobilization, and subjective human factors. Mao Zedong and Lin Biao among others were representatives of the radicals, and they supported the rapid cooperativization. Against this approach is "conservative," which laid more emphasis on giving material incentives to the peasants and improving the means of production, such as fertilizers and agricultural machinery. Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, and Chen Yun held this view, so they backed Deng Zihui. Similar interpretations can be found in Walker (1965). I find Teiwes' interpretation is reasonable because evidence suggests that the Chinese central leadership came to be split, as Chang and Walker argue, in the adjustment period after the failure of the Great Leap Forward, that is, around 1961, and afterwards.

increase cannot be considered terribly high. Moreover, he emphasized careful preparations for new APCs and their proper operation. His shift in position put an end to the Central Committee's hesitation and led to policy changes. In his famous speech "On the Question of Cooperativization⁶² in Agriculture" delivered on July 31, 1955, Mao criticized the leaders who lagged behind the mass movement for tottering along like women with bound feet (Selden 1979).

This speech brought about the "High Tide of Cooperativization" (*hezuohua gaochao*). Mao's success in speeding up the cooperative movement was due to several factors. First of all, he was the leader who nobody had dared to challenge. Second, his program was moderate enough to get support from most central leaders. Third, the highest level leaders shared concerns about two important phenomena. One was that the growth rate of agricultural production since the completion of the land reform had not met the expectations, thus hampering industrial growth. The other was that continuing inequalities among peasants, even widening gaps, could hurt the agricultural production as well as the progress toward a socialist society. In effect, the cooperative movement proceeded much faster than Mao's goal. By the end of 1956, virtually all the peasant households joined APCs, and most of them were the Higher-level APCs.

The Higher-level APC resembled the Lower-level APC in terms of managerial aspects, such as land utilization, arrangements for use of agricultural implements, work assignments to peasants, and the work point system. It was larger than the Lower-level APC, encompassing an average of 165 households in a cooperative (Stavis 1982).⁶³ The most important difference, however, was that land, large farm tools, draft animals, and other important means of production privately owned by the members of the Lower-level APC fell into the collective ownership of the Higher-level APC. This meant nothing would be paid to any member as rent for agricultural implements or land. The income of members was derived from the labor they performed and their grain rations.

⁶² Cooperativization is a common translation of the Chinese term, *hezuohua*.

⁶³ Quite naturally, the villagers usually called this organization as *dashe* (large cooperative).

In Chenguang village, all the Lower-level APCs were converted to the Higher-level APC, *Chenguang she*, with six production teams (*shengchandui*) under the strong influence of the High Tide of Cooperativization in 1955. In 1956, the cooperative further expanded into a larger one (*Yuguang she*), now embracing three previous villages—Chenguang village with six production teams, Boqian village with three teams, and Bohou village with four teams. The dominant role of the village party branch and its secretaries in the village politics was already apparent at this point of time. The secretaries of three villages took top posts of the cooperative. The secretary of Boqian village became the secretary of the newly-formed *Yuguang she* party branch, and the secretaries of Chenguang and Bohou village became the deputy secretaries. The other main offices were also filled by the leaders of three villages' party branches.

Since the ownership of the major means of production would be abolished, even though compensation was promised, the conversion of the Lower-level APCs into the Higher-level APC was much more difficult to achieve than the previous conversion of the MATs into the Lower-level APCs. Work teams from the township and the district came to Chenguang village, and one township cadre stayed for several months. The majority of villagers, former poor peasants and agricultural laborers easily agreed to join because they did not have much to lose. Since the Lower-level APCs, like the MATs, were formed based on existing social relationships, there were great disparities in land and implements among cooperatives. For instance, the Second Cooperative members owned the most property, and the Third Cooperative members owned the least; the income of the members corresponded to the cooperatives' property. Production teams of the Higher-level APC were to be organized based on location, that is, a team consisted of the peasants living in proximity to one another. Each team was to have roughly equal amount of members, and to control the same amount of land, draft animals and major tools.

The former middle and upper middle peasants who owned more property than others in the village adamantly refused to join. Village cadres, following the guide of

township or district cadres tried to persuade them, holding meetings day and night (*tian-tian heibai*) and repeatedly visiting those who did resist joining. According to the cadres at that time, they sometimes threatened them, saying, for example, “We won’t sell the chemical fertilizers which the state provides our village to you. We’ll sell all of them to the *dashe* (cooperative). Then, the rice of the *dashe* will grow well and yours won’t.” Here is one example related to Zhang Zhenshu, the head of the village at that time. His father stubbornly refused to join the *dashe* because he wanted to cultivate five *mu* of a vegetable garden that was considered the best in the village by himself. He was the last one to turn over his land to the cooperative. His son, Zhang Zhenshu, was dismissed from the post of the village head.

4. The Great Leap Forward

As we have seen above, the Chinese central leadership was divided over the pace of collectivization. It resulted in zigzag changes in agricultural policies. In a directive issued by the Central Committee in September 1957, it declared that the results of the cooperative movement for the last few years had shown that large cooperatives and production teams did not match various conditions of villages. The appropriate size of an APC and a production team would be 100-300 households and 20-30 or 30-40 households respectively. Once the size of the APC and team had been fixed, there should be no further changes for the next ten years (Schurmann 1966). This directive represented the point of view that advocated cautious development, slowing the pace and taking a step backward every once in a while, as necessary.

The atmosphere of the center began to change once more in late 1957. The most important factor that contributed to this change involved the problems produced by the first Five-Year Plan (1953-57). Following the economic development strategy of the Soviet Union, the Chinese state valued industry, especially heavy industry, and provided no

substantial support for the agricultural sector. According to the Soviet strategy, resources had to be channeled from the agricultural sector into the industrial sector. However, the state could not extract surplus from the agricultural sector to support industrial development because agriculture did not produce enough surplus (Lieberthal 1993). The urgent task of the central leadership was to define an appropriate strategy to enhance agricultural output so that investment in the industrial sector could be increased. Then, it would stimulate rapid growth of industry, especially heavy industry. The hot topic at the Third Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee held in the fall of 1957 was how to increase agricultural output without much investment from the state.

The debate went on in a way that paralleled the debate on the pace of cooperative movement. Just like the previous debate, Mao Zedong won this one too. The mass mobilization for the water conservancy campaign in the winter of 1957-58 was the first action taken along Mao's line.⁶⁴ The Great Leap Forward (GLF), which would pursue simultaneous rapid development of agriculture and industry by using mobilizational and ideological methods, was officially adopted in May 1958. The communization of agriculture was one of the most prominent features of the GLF in rural areas. Even though the People's Commune (*renmin gongshe*) system underwent several changes in its organization and management, such as the size of commune and production brigade, the accounting unit, and labor reward system, the system remained as a major framework for the peasant life for the next twenty years or so.

The People's Commune bore several remarkable characteristics that distinguished it from other collectives previously launched in the Chinese countryside. The first characteristic as such is the enormous size of the commune. This point is obvious

⁶⁴ This movement was a precursor to the mobilizational model of economic development that Mao advocated. This program of capital construction by means of mobilization of the peasants lasted until the end of the Maoist era. Chenguang village began to participate in this program around the Mid-Autumn Festival of 1958 by sending more than 80 able-bodied men to Miyun County, Beijing, to work on the construction of the Miyun Reservoir. Chenguang villagers had been mobilized mostly for the work in the region, such as excavating rivers and canals, repairing irrigation systems, and the like, every winter for 20 years.

considering the fact that the first step in organizing a commune was to amalgamate many Higher-level APCs, even before it was unclear what kind of organization a commune would become. Even so, its size was amazingly large. Each commune included 4,600 households, about 28 times as many as a Higher-level APC. In Ninghe County, five communes were established in September 1958. Each commune was comprised of 8,638 households and 41,532 members, which means that it was even larger than the national average.

Table 3.2 The Size of Collectives (in number of households)

| Forms of Collectives | Average Number of Households |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Mutual Aid Team (1954) | 7 |
| Lower-level APC (1955) | 27 |
| Higher-level APC (1957) | 165 |
| People's Commune (1958) | 4,600 |
| People's Commune (1962) | 1,000 |
| People's Commune (1974) | 3,000-4,000 |

Source: Stavis 1982. He got the MAT data from Horsey (1970), Lower-level APC data from Chen (1967), and he got data on the People's Commune (1974) from Crook (1975).

While the cooperatives were primarily agricultural units, the communes were multifunctional ones. The commune system consisted of four levels: commune (*gongshe*), management district (*guanliqu*), production brigade (*shengchan dadui*), and production team (*shengchandui*). It replaced the *xiang/zhen* system that consisted of administrative units of township (*xiang*) and village (*cun*) below the county level. That is, the commune took over all the functions performed by those units as well as the functions of the cooperative. Economically, not only did the commune continue to control the agricultural sector, but it also expanded its control to the industrial and commercial sectors; it ran factories, banks, and supply and marketing cooperatives. In addition, it organized its own

militia and educational institutions. “[T]he large-scale People’s Commune in the rural areas of our country which combines industry, agriculture, trade, education, and military affairs and in which government administration and commune management are integrated” (Selden 1979: 405).⁶⁵

The final characteristics that differentiated the commune from the APCs were the strength of collective ownership and stronger communist elements in distribution and consumption. Private plots that had been distributed to the peasants with the establishment of the Higher-level APCs, and domestic animals that had still remained in the hands of the peasants were all redefined as collective property. Consequently, all economic activities including grain and vegetable farming, fruit-growing, animal husbandry, handicrafts, and petty trading were collectivized. The work-point system was eliminated in favor of a part-supply, part-wage system. In Wuyi People’s Commune, to which Chenguang village belonged, members were classified into five different labor grades mainly according to physical strength and production skills which were estimated by the village cadres. Men were usually classified into first to third grade and women, fourth and fifth grade. Most men and women belonged to second grade and fourth grade respectively. Members received wages according to their labor grades, and wage differences among those who belonged to the same grade were virtually nonexistent. Meals were supplied at two collective dining halls in Chenguang. Medical care and education also came under the free supply system.

Having started with ambitious goals aimed at an economic “leap forward” and the realization of a utopian communist society, this movement ended with tragic disasters, and resulted in one of the worst famines in Chinese history. Several factors contributed to this failure. First of all, there was virtually no preparation at all for the establishment of the

⁶⁵ Even though this sentence was cited from the Central Committee Resolution on Some Questions Concerning the People’s Communes (so called the Wuhan Resolution), December 10, 1958, this multifunctional feature of communes was evident at the establishment stage (see Central Committee Resolution on the Establishment of People’s Communes in the Rural Area (so called the Beidaihe Resolution), August 29, 1958).

commune system. As I have pointed out above, the commune system was different from previous collectives in several fundamental ways. Nevertheless, the central leadership launched the system all over rural China in just three or four months after the decision was made. Realistically, it was impossible to prepare for the transformation. Within six months, the Wuyi People's Commune ran out of collective funds that provided commune members with wages. Provisions supplied to the members through the collective dining halls gave out within about one year.

Second, the problem of provisions worsened due to low agricultural productivity. Several factors were working simultaneously in this matter. The commune was too large of an accounting unit. Chinese villages showed differences in their economic situations, such as the amount and quality of land, agricultural implements, sideline activities, and so on, which resulted in unequal distribution of income between villages. Even though intravillage economic inequality was greatly mitigated by a series of agricultural policies after the socialist revolution, the state had done little to fix the problem of intervillage economic inequality. Communes tried to minimize the economic inequality among its constituent units by channeling resources from richer to poorer ones, but this was detrimental to the peasants' incentives. One villager expressed the villagers' dissatisfaction with those arrangements as such:

Our village was one of the better-off ones in Ninghe County. We had good land and more paddy fields. We also had solid leadership whose importance in production had increased since the introduction of collective farming, and we worked hard under that leadership. Then, those advantages disappeared with the beginning of the People's Commune period. All the crops were taken away by the commune except a certain amount of them. For example, the village was allowed to keep the rice as much as 360 *jin* per member in 1959. It means we had to give in almost a half of the rice we harvested that year. We received free food and a few *yuan* per month to cover all the living expenses. So what? Other villagers also got that. We felt that it was unfair. The harder we worked and the more we produced, the more other villagers benefited by our labor. So, we didn't want to work hard.

At the individual level, abolition of the work-point system took material incentives away from the peasants. Performance of the peasant's work had nothing to do with his or her income under the commune system. At the beginning of the GLF, peasants' commitment was so high that they worked as hard as they could. That is exactly what the central leadership led by Chairman Mao attempted to bring about. They wanted to replace the material incentives with the ideological ones. That is, they wanted to raise the peasants' consciousness through uninterrupted education and mobilization, so as to encourage peasants to work harder than ever with few material incentives. Unfortunately, it did not last very long. Zhang Hongfeng, the secretary of the village party branch at that time, talked to me about the ups and downs of consciousness and productivity.

Chinese peasants had suffered a lot in the past, especially under the control of the *Guomindang* [GMD] and the Japanese army. Many peasants came to have their own land for the first time in their lives by the *Gongchandang*'s [CCP's] land reform. Every household received enough land to scratch out a living in our village. How grateful we were to the *Gongchandang*! Of course, a few rich peasants hated them. In the course of the collectivization of agriculture, some villagers objected to the state's policies because they didn't want to give up their precious property, more and better land and other agricultural implements than others, they thought. However, it is true that the standard of living of the village had increased significantly since the socialist revolution, thus, we were basically satisfied with the *Gongchandang*'s rule.

With the implementation of the People's Commune, propaganda work was intensified in the countryside, saying what good things the party had done for the peasants, and that if we closely followed the party's guidance, our country could catch up with the developed countries, like Great Britain or France in a short period of time, in fifteen years or so. Actually we believed it. And we ate as much as we could in the collective dining halls. It was the first time that I didn't worry about the next meal, tomorrow's meals, or next month's meals and the like. At the beginning, we worked really with the confidence that we could achieve whatever we wanted and the appreciation for what the party had done for us.⁶⁶

But that state didn't last long, maybe less than one year. We received the same wage, and we ate as much as possible no matter how hard and well we worked. As time went on, the consciousness and the feeling of gratitude subsided. Peasants pretended to work hard and the cadres would not and could not force them to do something they didn't want to do, in this case to work hard.

⁶⁶ It was clear that the peasants sincerely believed the party's propaganda, at least in the early years of the GLF. However, they told me that nowadays they knew that the goals and methods of the GLF had not been realistic.

Third, in addition to the lack of preparation and low agricultural productivity, unrealistic production goals set by the central government and its direct intervention in agricultural production also played a crucial role in the severe famine. At least in the beginning of the GLF, the wild enthusiasm swept the whole country. Thanks to the exceptionally good weather, the harvest in 1958 was good enough to make central leaders think that the GLF, including the communization movement, was successful. The grain output of 1957 was 185 million metric tons. In December 1957, the State Planning Commission set target for grain production for 1962, the last year of the second Five-Year Plan (1958-1962), at 240 million tons, which implied an annual growth rate of 5.4 percent. As late as early 1958, the grain output target for 1958 was set at 197 million tons, or 5.9 percent increase from the previous year. However, the GLF and good harvest of summer crops in 1958 drastically changed the situation. By December 1958 grain output for that year was reported as 375 million tons, which was confirmed in April 1959 by the State Statistical Bureau (Lardy 1987). Based on this figure, the grain output target was set at 525 million tons, about 280 percent increase over 1957, and 40 percent increase over 1958 (Cheng 1963). We can get an idea about how exaggerated the figures were by the false reports from the local level cadres who were under tremendous pressure to produce astonishing results, considering that according to Chinese Agricultural Yearbook, 1980, the grain output for 1958 was only 200 million tons (Ashton et al. 1984).

To make things worse, upper level cadres who did not know much about agriculture directly intervened in agricultural production based on assumptions rather than experience. The prominent example was close planting. Instances of crop failure due to close planting were widely known, and Chenguang was not an exception. In the spring in 1959, directives required peasants to plant rice seedlings twice as close as the time-tested usual way. As a result, rice production fell to almost a half of normal production, considering the weather conditions of that year.

Again, the tragic part was that the local cadres could not report the facts correctly to the upper levels. Based on the falsified reports, the central government determined the total amount of procurement that was distributed to each level all the way from the provinces to production teams. Procurement on the basis of inflated production reports resulted in the severe food shortage in Chenguang. The villagers I spoke with did not remember exactly how much they harvested and how much they were required to sell to the state. They did remember, though, that the original procurement target exceeded the actual amount of crop harvested, thus, the state had to lower the procurement target so that villagers would have something to eat. However, to make things even worse, the villagers continued to eat their fill at the collective dining halls.

All the errors purposely or purposelessly committed by the authorities from the central leadership led by Chairman Mao down to the local cadres and by the peasants set the stage for a disaster. Even though the man-made errors did great damage to agricultural production, it alone would not have caused the severe famine China experienced. The bad weather of 1960 made a could-be disaster come into being, completing the tragic play. In Chenguang a long drought struck the region in the first half of 1960. Villagers told me that they did not see even a drop of rain during that period. Then, the rain poured down in August, which resulted in flooding all over the region. They harvested a total of 500,000 *jin* of rice that year. It was about one third of the usual harvest and about one fourth of the harvest of 1958, which had been the best in the villagers' memory.⁶⁷ The normal grain ration had been 360 *jin* per person a year, that is, roughly one *jin* per day, but the grain ration reduced to at first 8 *liang* per day, and then, 6 *liang*, and in the winter 4 *liang* for the span of one month.⁶⁸ Villagers described how their bodies swelled due to malnutrition, and they lost all the strength for physical labor; thus the irrigation work and preparation for the next seeding could not be done properly. The rice harvest was again poor, amounting

⁶⁷ This does not mean that the agricultural productivity per area was the best in 1958. The cultivated land had been shrinking from about 2,000 mu in 1958 to 1,600 mu in 1995 due to the expansion of the residential area, the construction of fish ponds and industrial factories.

⁶⁸ *Liang* is a traditional measuring unit of weight. One *liang* is one tenth of one *jin*.

only to about 800,000 *jin* in 1961. It did not reach to the usual amount of grain ration again. Nevertheless, they had to sell 30,000 or 40,000 *jin* of rice to the state. Later, each villager bought corn, millet, and so on from the state. It was called “resold grain” (*fanxiao liang*) which means grain resold by the state to the place of production. Actually, the grain was imported, not produced in the place where it was sold.

When did the top-level leaders come to know the actual state of affairs in the countryside? What did they do to rectify the problems? The top-level leaders appeared to sense as early as in the fall of 1958 that problems were brewing. In February 1959, even though Mao still believed that the basic Great Leap Forward strategy was correct, he worried that “leftist” errors among cadres would ruin the GLF itself. Mao also called for decreasing the level of communization and granting ownership rights to production brigades and production teams. Evidence suggests, however, that some cadres at the provincial through communal level refused to admit their errors and to participate in a process of rectification. Throughout the spring of 1959 Mao focused on adjusting and rectifying efforts to make the basic GLF strategy work (Lieberthal 1993; Shue 1980).⁶⁹

In July 1959, the Lushan Conference was held, in which the top leadership discussed the present problems of the nation and tried to find solutions for them. They paid attention mainly to the disappointing progress of the GLF, and they agreed that consolidation, not expansion, was the most urgent task. Mao seems to have felt that his rectifying efforts were producing positive results, but during the course of the conference, the incident of Peng Dehuai’s letter sprang up. Peng, the defense minister at that time and long time colleague of Mao, wrote a letter to Mao that expressed his feelings about the problems of the GLF. Even though the letter was an informal and a personal one meant for Mao’s eyes only, and even though the content was similar to what Mao himself had said

⁶⁹According to the Gazetteer of Ninghe County (1991), in June 1959, private plots, which had first been distributed to peasants with the establishment of the Higher-level APC and returned to the commune, began to be distributed again to the commune members and free supply of meals was stopped in most areas of the county. So, it appears that the central leadership led by Mao had set the rectification efforts in motion, but it was not until 1961 that both changes were fully implemented at the village level.

during the previous several months, Mao circulated the letter to all participants at Lushan and launched a furious counterattack against Peng. That incident is believed to have played a decisive role in launching the Anti-Right Opportunist Campaign that put the consolidation and rectification efforts to an end and produced a kind of “second leap.” As a result, the top leaders let the chance to avoid the tragic disaster slip out of their hands (Lieberthal 1993).

During the period between 1960 and 1962, the top leaders tried to assess the situation and figure out ways to recover from the disastrous GLF. Most of the investigations and resulting documents were supervised by Liu Shaoqi, the head of state and a prospect successor of Chairman Mao, and Deng Xiaoping, the general secretary of Central Committee of the CCP. Chen Yun was a leading figure in the overall evaluation of the current economic conditions and the future policies. Liu, Deng, and Chen concluded that the overall situation was far from being recovered, and the center would have to wait for quite some time before reassuming the initiative in leading China to an advanced socialist country. They promoted material motivation, central bureaucratic controls, and experts, as opposed to the previous focus on ideological mobilization, local autonomy, and ideologues (Liberthal 1993).

Economic policies in the first half of the 1960s, the period of economic adjustment and consolidation, were formulated and implemented under the supervision of Liu, Deng, and Chen. Regarding rural economic policy, changes began with the “Urgent Directive Concerning Present Policy Problems in the Rural People’s Communes,” issued by the Central Committee in November 1960, and they were finalized by the “Regulations on the Work of the People’s Communes,” the so-called “Sixty Articles on the Communes,” (Revised Draft) approved at the Tenth Plenum, Eighth Central Committee, September 1962. Rural economy and social organization had been reshaped as those new policies were applied to the countryside. In 1961, the size of the commune was dramatically reduced. In Ninghe County, five communes were divided into twenty-two communes

(Table 3.2).⁷⁰ Chenguang came to be under the jurisdiction of Hongxing People's Commune whose size was roughly equivalent to the size of the former management district. At the end of 1961, Chenguang itself formed a production brigade, being divided up from Yuguang production brigade that had consisted of the three villages of Chenguang, Boqian, and Bohou.⁷¹ This move somewhat alleviated the management problems caused by the enormous size of the commune, but many problems remained unresolved until the implementation of the three-tier ownership in 1962. Under this system the production team became the basic accounting unit and the unit of production and distribution. A peasant's income was thus closely linked with the performance of the production team of which he or she was a member.⁷² The production brigade became the unit of administration, party organization, social welfare, and economy. In particular, most of rural industries were owned and managed by this unit. The commune was the highest level of this system, functioning as administrative, political, and economic units. Most of the economic functions, however, had to be turned over to the lower level units.

In addition to the reduction of commune size, more changes were adopted to directly tackle the problem of motivating production. One was the replacement of the wage system with the work-point system. Many items, including food, were excluded from the free supply list. The communal dining halls were disbanded in Chenguang in 1961. Private plots were redistributed to peasant households, in which they grew vegetables and raised animals. Under the remaining influence of the GLF private plots were reduced to eight *li* per person from one *fen* two *li* per person before the GLF.⁷³ Rural markets were reopened, allowing the peasants to earn cash by selling grains left after the government

⁷⁰ Villagers refer to the former as the big commune (*da gongshe*) and to the latter as the small commune (*xiao gongshe*).

⁷¹ Yuguang brigade had at first consisted of seven villages including Zhanghou, Zhangnan, Zhangdong, and Zhangyi until those four villages were separated at the end of 1960.

⁷² Even though the size of a commune had increased a lot to be somewhat similar to the *da gongshe* (big commune) encompassing 3346 households, due to reorganization in the late 1960s, there were not such managerial problems as the *da gongshe* caused because the basic accounting unit, a production team, included only 33 households (Oi 1989a).

⁷³ *Li* is a traditional measuring unit for area. One *li* is one tenth of one *fen* and one hundredth of one *mu*, equivalent to 0.666 square meter.

procurement and self-consumption, cash crops, and sideline products, or by engaging in commercial activities. Those measures clearly revealed the basic idea of those who designed and implemented them that material incentive would motivate the peasants to work harder and produce more. Basically they worked. The rural economy showed remarkable improvements from 1962, and it stayed in good shape until the Cultural Revolution swept the countryside.

James Scott (1998) presents a fatal combination of four elements which leads state-initiated social engineering to the tragedies. The GLF, one the most tragic human disasters in the twentieth century, also resulted from that combination. The four elements are (1) the transformative state simplifications,⁷⁴ (2) a high-modernist ideology,⁷⁵ (3) an authoritarian state, and (4) a prostrate civil society.

The implementation of the *hukou* system significantly increased not only the legibility of whole population, but also the state control over the population movement. Economic activities of the peasants also became more legible and controllable by a series of policies, such as the land reform, the United Purchase and Sale of Grain, and collectivization of agriculture. High modernism is conceived as “a strong (one might even say muscle-bound) version of the beliefs in scientific and technical progress” (Scott 1998: 89), which is closely related with industrialization in Western Europe and North America. The Chinese leaders with this ideology wanted to bring about huge, utopian changes in rural society, and the state was strong enough to bring these high-modernist designs into being. As was pointed out earlier, the society was so weakened that it could not effectively resist these plans.

⁷⁴ This is one of the most distinguishable characteristics of the modern state. That is, in order to exert more control over its terrain and its people, the state simplified the nature, for example, the designs of scientific forestry and agriculture and the layouts of plantations, and strategic hamlets, as well as the society, for example, the creation of permanent last names, the standardization of weights and measures, the standardization of language and legal discourse, and the design of cities.

⁷⁵ Scott borrowed this concept from David Harvey, the condition of post-Modernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Social Change (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989). Harvey's concern is particularly with capitalism and the organization of production in the post-World War II period. He describes this concept as a strong belief in linear progress, absolute truths, and rational planning of ideal social orders, which resulted in positivistic, technocratic, and rationalistic.

The way to the disaster in China, the GLF, was very unique. That is, even though the disaster was initiated by the state, the peasants did not strongly oppose to the state's plan. This characteristic largely came from the relationship between the state and the peasants. The peasantry was a driving force as well as a chief supporter of the socialist revolution. By and large, in China, the new state and the peasants maintained a good relationship with each other. The major policies, such as the land reform, the state procurement of grain, and collectivization movement, were implemented without encountering violent opposition by the peasants. However, it does not mean that there were no conflicts between the state and peasants. While some policies, such as land reform and collectivization, faced opposition from a relatively small portion of peasants, others met with extensive resistance, and the United Purchase and Sale of Grain is a good example. The GLF did not provoke strong and extensive opposition from the peasants. In fact, the establishment of the People's Commune, one of the distinguishing characteristics of the GLF in rural areas, was done smoothly and quickly, being an extension of the "High Tide of Cooperativization." Most of all, it seems that the peasants and grass roots cadres basically had faith in the state leaders and Mao Zedong.⁷⁶

The Land Reform Campaign, the first major agricultural policy of the new Chinese state, proceeded peacefully in Chenguang. According to the villagers, there was no physical violence against the "class enemies."⁷⁷ It was mainly due to relatively few tense relations between the villagers. We cannot find deep polarization in land ownership (actually the permanent tenant rights) within the village on the eve of the socialist

⁷⁶ The collectivization process in the Soviet Union very differed from the Chinese case. The power holders of the Soviet, the Bolsheviks, did not take root in the countryside. Not only did the Bolsheviks not know about the peasant society, but they also regarded it as a target for abolition. The peasantry was also hostile to the Bolsheviks. In such a situation, the conjunction of a faith in industrial agriculture (or a high-modernist faith) and a crisis of state grain procurement helped to spark the collectivization drive in Soviet Russia. Unable to rely on any significant rural support, Stalin dispatched twenty-five thousand urban Communists and proletarians to destroy the peasant communes and replace them with a collective economy. Between early 1930 and 1934, the Soviet state waged a virtual war against the peasantry (Scott 1998).

⁷⁷ This characteristic is noticeable if we compare the situation of Chenguang village with Houhua village (Seybolt 1996), Qiaolou village (Ruf 1998), and Wugong village (Friedman et al. 1991). According to the researchers, all of these villages experienced relatively peaceful land reform, while my data suggest that Chenguang village had an extremely peaceful land reform.

revolution. Nor can we find acute division and hostility among the villagers in the period of the civil war when the villagers were forced to show loyalty by both the GMD and the CCP.

The processes of the collectivization movement, which started with the organization of the Mutual Aid Team and concluded with the setting up of the People's Commune, and the United Purchase and Sale of Grain which enabled the state to control the production and distribution of grain, reveal two important points. One is there was confusion in policy formulation and implementation because of the different standpoints among top leaders. The other is the state was able to realize the collective economy in the rural China, overcoming the peasants' oppositions. While it has been reported that violence was employed to suppress the peasants' resistance in some villages (Seybolt 1996), in case of Chenguang, the method preferred by the CCP, "patient and persistent verbal pressure, and ultimately criticism and threats" (Seybolt 1996: 42), was enough to achieve results.

On the other hand, through the comparison of the processes of policy implementation in several villages, we can find considerable variation in implementation timings, the degree of villagers' resistances, and the outcomes of policies, according to the geographical, historical, and socio-economic characteristics of the villages, and the capabilities of village leadership. For example, the villages of Houhua (Seybolt 1996), Qiaolou (Ruf 1998), Wugong (Friedman et al. 1991), and Zengbu (Potter and Potter 1990) show these variations among themselves. Furthermore, during the GLF, the hypocrisy and dishonesty of officials at various level of the administration, which were out of state's control, played a big part in the tragic famine. Therefore, far from the totalitarian model's idealistic assumption, the Chinese state in this period did not have complete control over the rural society.

Chapter 4

THE DOMINATION OF THE STATE IN THE MAOIST ERA

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the measures and directives formulated at the central level had been implemented at the local level passing through several intermediate levels. This does not mean, however, that all of them were implemented in a mechanical way. We can find regional variations in several points. For example, what differed from region to region, even from village to village in the same region was the time of the establishment of the collectives, the size, the time of a policy implementation, the process of implementation, the involvement of work teams, the duration of their stay, and so on.⁷⁸ Furthermore, policies were not always accepted by the peasants without objections and resistance, explicit or implicit. However, the basic intention of the central leaders and the overall schemes of those policies were realized at the local level without great deviation from their original intent. The commune system was certainly one of those in operation without much deviation from the state's plan nor with great regional variations.

In this chapter, I will explore how the commune system that was reformed in 1962 worked, how the ruling body of that system at the levels of brigade and production team was organized and operated, how and to what extent the state controlled the peasants' economic activities, and the position and role of the cadres in the relationship between the state and peasants. Then, I will discuss how the response of the peasants varied according to different state policies and how the state, in turn, coped with those responses. The final topic of this chapter will be the campaigns that the state launched to exert strong influence on the society in a short period of time.

⁷⁸ We can find plenty of these cases when we compare various regions and villages through the ethnographic research projects, such as, Chan et al. 1992, Friedman et al. 1991, Hinton 1966, 1983, Huang 1998, Jang 1998, Kipnis 1997, Potter and Potter 1990, Ruf 1998, Seybolt 1996, and Siu 1989, and my data.

1. The Working of the People's Commune System

From the end of 1961 until the end of 1982 when the commune system was dismantled, the Chenguang Production Brigade had become one of twenty-two brigades that belonged to the Hongxing People's Commune. The Chenguang Brigade in turn embraced six production teams that served as a basic unit of economic activities.

The arable land of Chenguang consisted of three sections. Each section was divided into six parcels. Each team cultivated three parcels, one parcel per section. Each team had the exclusive rights to cultivate the land allotted to it, except the right to decide which crop to grow on how much land, as we shall see shortly. The team decided the schedule of cultivation and assigned tasks to the team members. The team owned its own property including the major production implements, such as tractors, electric motors, hoes, harrows, carts, water pumps, horses, and donkeys, and the buildings, such as storage facilities and a team headquarter.

Teams managed work and distributed income on the basis of the work-point system. They had used two systems of the time-rate system and the piece-rate system simultaneously. All the individual members received labor grades according to their physical strength, work skill, age, and sex. The highest grade out of ten was given to able-bodied male laborers between the age of 18 and 54 (*nan zheng laodongli*) and a grade of seven was given to most of able-bodied female laborers between 18 and 49 (*niü zheng laodongli*). In the case of the highest rated laborer, one received two points for the work from dawn to breakfast, four points from the breakfast break to lunch, and the other four points from the lunch break to sunset. The quality of the work done could make differences in the points one gained, but this did not make much influence. As I pointed out earlier, this system was used mostly during the GLF, and later it played only a supplementary role to the piece-rate system.

Most work was managed by the piece-rate system called “guaranteed work and guaranteed production” (*bao gong bao chan*). To understand how this system worked in Chenguang, we have to return to the land distribution process. All the production teams were allotted to the same amount of land on a per capita basis, but the quality of the land was neither equal nor evenly distributed throughout the village. So the village leaders divided the land into four grades and set the projected harvest for each grade. Because all the teams had different combinations of grades and areas of land, per capita projected harvests were different among all teams. Equality was preserved through the state’s grain procurement system. The more a team cultivated better land thus had more projected harvest, the more it was obliged to sell grain to the state. The amount of procurement was determined by the projected harvest of each team, not upon the actual harvest. The location, area, grade, and projected harvest of a team’s land had never changed. State procurement had absorbed the population changes, too. That is, the state adjusted the amount of procurement at least every three years according to population changes due to birth, marriage, death, and migration so that the same amount of grain ration could be preserved among the teams. This system provided the production teams with material incentives. When the teams actually harvested more than the projected amounts, they could distribute more grain and cash to the members and set aside more funds and reserves. Therefore, the teams took good care of the land to increase productivity, and put pressure upon the members to work hard.

An individual’s income was determined by the number of work-points he or she earned throughout a year. The standard for work-points was set by giving 14 work-days (*gong*) equivalent to 140 work-points (*gongfen*) when one cultivated one *mu* of land from plowing to harvest. A certain number of points were assigned to each task. A collective piece-work system was applied to most agricultural works. Under this system, a production team or a group of team members was assigned to a certain task rated at a certain number of work-days; thus when they completed the task, they were awarded the

work-days attached to the task. Individuals who participated in the task divided the points according to how much labor each had contributed. The tasks were usually assigned to the members who had similar abilities, for instance, the same labor grade, so they evenly divided the work-points they earned together in most cases. The “democratic evaluation of work-points” (*minzhu pingfen*) system was also adopted during radical periods, such as at the height of the Cultural Revolution. In this system, the participants of the task themselves evaluated the contribution of each, namely the work-points, emphasizing the individuals’ political attitudes.

Those who worked outside the team were mostly engaged in non-agricultural sectors. When they earned wages in cash, they were allowed to keep a part of it and had to turn over the remainder to their own team in exchange for work-points. Construction workers, for example, earned 3 to 4 *yuan* per day. They kept one fifth or one sixth of them and received 15 work-points for the remainder they turned over to the team. At that time, 10 points, the highest rate for one-day of agricultural work, were roughly worth 1.5 to 1.6 *yuan*, so not only did they earn but they also contributed to their own team more than the team members engaged in agricultural work. Chenguang production brigade members were engaged in several jobs outside. There were three jobs in which more than ten members were engaged. Construction work outside the brigade had always been available, and it was one of the highest-paid jobs during the commune period because it needed skilled and strong workers. Eighteen brigade members started to work at the salterns in Hangu in 1966 as contract workers most of whom became regular employees later. Some members also started to work at the railway stations in Lutai and Hangu as stevedores. Other than these three occupations, one to three members worked at the several bureaus and the factories run by the county or the commune. Also, about 100 members worked at the two brigade factories that opened in 1972.

Even though those who engaged in jobs outside the team split their wages between themselves and their own teams in various ratios according to the kinds of jobs, they

usually earned substantially more money or work-points than those who did agricultural work within the team. Moreover, because these jobs, except construction, were regarded as cleaner and less strenuous, there had always been the potential for conflicts surrounding the recruiting opportunities among the peasants. When the brigade received requests for workers from the commune or it needed them itself, it chose them by lot among qualified applicants to avoid the eruption of conflict.⁷⁹ One more important consideration of the leaders was not to hurt agricultural production. So, they tried to recruit workers from all the teams in proportion to the number of laborers of each team so as not to cause a labor shortage to any team.

Household income was tightly linked to the income of the production team to which it belonged. The two collective income sources for the team had been agricultural production and sideline activities before 1972. After two brigade factories opened in 1972, each sector of agriculture, sideline activities, and industry constituted about one third of brigade's gross income, but the first two provided the team with the income distributable to peasant households because profits from brigade enterprises were set aside as the general reserve fund (*gongjijin*) for future investment. Sideline income included the earnings from sales of reed mats that almost all households wove, the wages of the workers described above, the earnings from transportation services, and so forth.

Agriculture during the commune period was primarily oriented toward the subsistence of the whole population, including not only the peasants themselves but also the urban residents. Grain cultivation held the predominant position in agricultural income—about 85 percent of agricultural income came from grain production in the case of Chenguang. After harvest, 20 *jin* per *mu* of grain had to be set aside for seeds (*zhongzi liang*). The team had to fulfill state purchase quotas for rice, wheat, and corn (*zhenggou liang*), too. Additionally, a certain amount of grain was set aside for several other objectives, such as animal feed (*siliao liang*), provisions for those mobilized for capital

⁷⁹ This process of selecting workers will be fully discussed in the later section.

construction (*shengchan liang*), and collective reserves (*chubei liang*). Grain rations (*kou liang*) were distributed on the basis of age. The standard was set at 360 *jin* of rice a year for those between 16 and 60 of age. Grain rations for those who belonged to age groups of between 8 and 15, between 5 and 7, over 60 and under 5 were determined according to the age distance from the standard age group.

Among the grains stored, sold, or consumed, seeds had to be set aside and stored at any cost for next year's cultivation. The next priority went to the grain procurement. Even though the state purchase quotas could be reduced when the harvest of a production brigade fell down to less than a half of the usual harvest, those occasions were very rare. Actually Chenguang has never failed to meet the quotas except in 1960 and 61, the so-called two bad years. The remaining grains were allotted for the other purposes. That is, when the harvest was good, more grains were allotted for animal feed, grain for the capital construction workers, collective reserve grain, and vice versa. After a certain amount of grain was set aside, the remainder was distributed among the member households, applying both of the principles, "to each according to his need" and "to each according to his work." The ratio between the per capita distribution and the work-point distribution had been kept at 7 : 3 from the Higher-level APC to the end of the commune system except during the short period of the GLF. The idea was that while the collective, in this case the production team, guaranteed the subsistence of its members, it could also provide material incentives for them. Throughout the period of collective agriculture, the harvest of Chenguang had always been good enough to meet the fixed amount of grain ration except in the two bad years.

All the collective income of production teams was distributed to the members solely based on work-points accumulated throughout the year. First, the team's net income was determined by subtracting gross expenditure from gross income. Second, state taxes and collective withholdings (*jiti jilei*) of the general reserve fund and the welfare fund (*gongyijin*) raised through setting aside two to three percent of team's net income were

deducted from the team's net income. Third, the remaining amount was divided by the total work-points accumulated by all members during the year so that the monetary value of a work-point of the team could be calculated.⁸⁰ Fourth, the monetary value of each member's earnings was calculated by multiplying the work-point value by his/her total work-points. Fifth, the followings were debited from the household's calculated work-point income: the cost of grain rations, whose price was set in the same way as the state procurement price, vegetables which was cultivated collectively at the team's garden plot and distributed to its members on a daily basis, pork which was distributed three *jin* and one *jin* per person at the Spring Festival (*chunjie*) and the Mid-autumn Festival (*zhongqiujie*) respectively, and other goods distributed by the team during the year, cash advances, and any debts to the team. Then, each household finally received the remainder in cash. There existed big differences in income after settling accounts among the households in a team. Generally speaking, the decisive factor for the household income disparities was the proportion of laborers to dependents. While the households which had many work-point earners got large incomes, those which had too many dependents got small, sometimes even ran into debt to the team. Among the households that could not earn enough work-points to cover their expenditures were those whose major labor force could not normally work due to illness, those which consisted of the elderly, and so on. Even if a household could not earn enough work-points to cover its debts, the team never stopped distributing grain rations or vegetables. That is, the collective agriculture system of China guaranteed the subsistence of the peasants.

We have seen that the team was primarily an economic unit responsible for agricultural production and management of the labor force for productive activities. In comparison, the production brigade was a multi-functional unit which acted as intermediary between the commune and the production teams under the three-tier system. Economically,

⁸⁰ The value of a work-point was different for each production team. Under the *bao gong bao chan* system, each team could assign different work-points to a similar task. Each team could also have different number of members who worked outside who contributed more to the team. These factors all resulted in different values of a work-point.

it supervised and coordinated the teams' economic activities. It also owned and managed its own enterprises. Politically, it was responsible for implementing the policies sent down from the higher-ups and representing the teams and peasants to the outside and the higher-ups. It provided social services, such as social welfare, education, and medical care, to its members. In addition, in the case of Chenguang, the brigade was the social unit with which peasants primarily identified themselves. Peasants had long identified themselves with their village, and it had been strengthened by the fact that Chenguang village had been a natural village without being separated into hamlets and, at the same time, an administrative village without other villages included in it. This situation had not changed during the period of collective agriculture except while Chenguang constituted the Higher-level APC and the production brigade with other villages between 1956 and 1961.

Even though the teams carried out most agricultural work, the brigade coordinated their work and took charge of the work beyond the team level. For example, the brigade decided which portion of land each team cultivated, how to grade the land, which crop each team would plant in what amount according to the production targets sent down from the commune, how each team would distribute the harvest among grain procurement, grain ration, grain for the capital construction workers, collective reserve grain, and so forth. Especially rice planting needed brigade level coordination because all the paddy fields had to be filled with water after plowing. So the exact dates for plowing and for harrowing and transplanting after irrigating were decided by each team, following the brigade-wide schedule. Another job that needed the brigade's coordination was the irrigation system. When the brigade needed to repair or expand the irrigation canals or to dig wells, it mobilized the money and labor force to carry out the work.

Besides these brigade activities concerning collective agriculture, it established and managed enterprises of its own. In 1972, the Chenguang Brigade opened two factories. One was a processing factory that manufactured carpet (*ditan chang*). A state organization in Tianjin City provided the factory with knitting wool and took the carpets after paying for

the process (*jia gong*).⁸¹ Workers wove all of the carpets by hand, so it took a long time to finish, and the payment was too low to yield any substantial profit.

The brigade decided to transform it into a straw bag factory (*caodai chang*) in 1974. The factory wove straw bags using rice straw bought from the teams in the brigade or from other places when the straw within the brigade was not enough. Then the products were sold to the commune supply and marketing cooperative. They usually paid three *mao* for four *jin* of straw that would be made into bags worth of five *mao*. They made a lot of money, but the factory disappeared after the earthquake in 1976 the factory building was destroyed and the person who was in charge of the factory died.

The other factory which opened in 1972 was a plastic factory (*suliao chang*). It first manufactured bags for chemical fertilizers, and later, mainly packing bags for mosquito nets that were exported to Japan. The raw materials were bought from the Tianjin Sixth Plastic Factory. Establishment and operation of this factory needed much more money and connections (*lianxi*) than the other factories. While those two factories needed neither machinery to produce carpets or straw bags nor many connections to purchase materials and sell products, this factory required several machines, agreements with the factory in Tianjin to purchase the raw materials, and contracts with the chemical fertilizer factory in Lutai and the fishing net factory in Tianjin for marketing products. Yet, the factory yielded profits proportionate to its investment.

The contribution of these factories to the brigade economy was substantial. According to “the village annual report on revenue and expenditure compiled by the village,” in 1975, they paid 15,600 *yuan* to the employees, which constituted 10.24 percent of the total income of the brigade households and also contributed 19,030 *yuan*, 46.92 percent of the collective withholdings. The brigade credited factory employees with work-points and remitted their wages to the teams they belonged to. The wage was set at about the average of the work-point values of its six production teams, which was 0.0743 *yuan*

⁸¹ No one I interviewed in the village remembered the exact name of that organization.

per work-point in 1975, but the cash each worker received at the end of year was different from team to team because each team had different work-point values. So, the factory workers who did exactly the same job earned different wages in cash, but not in work-points, according to the overall economic performance of their teams.

The Chenguang Brigade, like its production teams, owned its own properties, such as the headquarter building, tractors, diesel engines, a transformer, wells for drinking water and irrigation, small trailers, and so forth. Most of them were purchased and maintained with the general reserve fund for which each team set aside three to five percent of its income. This fund could be used by each team but the brigade also had the right to spend it for the entire brigade. The Brigade sometimes purchased its property by mobilizing a special fund from every team; the purchase of a transformer exemplified this practice.

The brigade was also responsible for providing certain social services. The Chenguang Elementary School was opened at a three-section house confiscated from a rich peasant in 1952. In 1955, the brigade constructed a mud brick (*tupi*) building for the school that was demolished in the 1976 earthquake. For more than two years classes had been held in plastic tents until the brigade finally constructed a brick school building now used as a storehouse. In addition to the building, all the expenses for the operation of the school, except for the teacher salaries which were paid by the central government, were covered by the brigade.

Medical care began to be provided by Chenguang Brigade in 1958. There was neither a clinic nor a barefoot doctor, just a midwife (*jieshengyuan*) whose primary job was to attend home births and treat simple diseases, until the brigade sent Zhang Zhenwen to Lutai to be trained as a barefoot doctor in 1965. The brigade health clinic, which was staffed by Zhang Zhenwen and the midwife, was also opened the same year. Two barefoot doctors and one cashier worked in the clinic since 1969. The staff members were paid through their production teams. The brigade paid their salaries to the teams in cash, and the

teams credited work-points to them. The barefoot doctors' work-points were set a bit lower than the brigade cadres', but they did not have to engage in physical labor.⁸² It was indeed a privilege just a few brigade members enjoyed. The brigade bought all the materials for medical treatment including medicine, syringes, bandages, and so on, from the medical material cooperation run by the county. The brigade members paid only for medicine with a fifteen percent profit margin, but all the other materials, office visits, doctor's visits to a patient's home, and all the treatments were free. Since the income from the medicines was a far cry from covering all the costs of the clinic's operation, the brigade made up the balance.

The final social service I would like to explore is the livelihood protection for the households in financial difficulties. Typical of such households were those which consisted of a widow, orphans, elderly without children, and the disabled, and those which had several members but whose main member(s) could not work due to illness and the like (*tekun hu*). These households could not earn enough work-points to make a living due to unavoidable circumstances. One other category of households receiving protection of the brigade was a soldier's family (*junshu hu*). Even if the household did not experience difficulties in making a living, it was entitled to receive favors from the brigade because military service was considered as one of the best ways to serve the nation and people. The respective teams provided these households with grain, vegetables, and a small amount of money, and the brigade paid for the teams' costs with the welfare fund.

Major policies were formulated at the central level and sent down through the intermediate levels of province, county, and commune to the brigade level. Even though the production team was the lowest level of the administrative system, policy implementation was mainly carried out at the brigade level. The most important reason for this, I think, was because the brigade branch was the lowest level of the CCP organization. Throughout the history of the PRC, the Politburo of the CCP, more precisely, the Standing

⁸² I will discuss about setting the brigade and team cadres' wage levels, of course in the form of work-points, in the next section.

Committee of the Politburo, has been the site where every important decision about the national policies has been made, and the party branch of each level has had the initiatives in the process of formulating and implementing those policies.⁸³ There had been several short periods of time when the government organizations took the initiatives, but most of time, the party has dominated the government organizations, and the Chenguang Brigade is not an exception.

The other role of the brigade was to represent its constituents to the outside and to higher levels. That is, it was expected to protect grass roots peasant interests against the intrusion of outside forces, mainly the state. As I will closely examine in a later section, the brigade cadres performed this dual role.

The commune was the highest level of the three-tier system. It shared similarities and differences with the brigade. It had its own enterprises and funding but it was not directly involved in collective agriculture. It also provided its constituents with the education, usually at the secondary level, and health service. The health clinic in the Hongxing Commune treated patients who were sent by the brigade health clinics, but its medical staff and facilities were far from able to deal with complicated cases. So, those who had major illnesses were referred to the hospitals in Lutai or Tianjin City.

The commune was also an intermediate unit between the county above and the brigade below. Yet, it was inclined to take on the supervisory role vis-à-vis constituent brigades to make sure that they closely followed the state's policies and directives, rather than the role that represented and protected peasants' interests. Commune officials were basically insensitive to peasant needs and interests because they were not in direct touch with the peasants. Moreover, the top commune leaders were the state cadres who "ate the state rice," and whose future depended upon the estimation of the higher authorities rather than upon the support of the lower cadres and the peasants.

⁸³ We had glimpses of the leading role of the CCP in the previous discussion of the collectivization movement.

2. The Ruling Body of the Production Brigade and Team

There were two lines of ruling bodies in the village; one was the party, and the other was the government. The CCP played a key role in the revolution and war that led to the seizure of state power in 1949. After a while, the party started to expand its organization to the point that the party stood “in alter-ego fashion alongside every organized unit of state and society” (Schurmann 1966: 139). During this process of party construction, the village party branch was established in Chenguang in 1955, but the governing body at the local level had not been stabilized throughout the 1950s because the administrative and economic systems of rural society were constantly changing. From the end of 1961 until it was dismantled in the early 1980s the reformed commune system had remained intact. Next, I will explore what kind of work the brigade and team cadres did, how they were elected or appointed to their posts, and how they were paid for their jobs.

The brigade head (*daduzhang*) mainly took charge of the economic activities that needed coordination at the brigade level, such as setting the dates and arranging labor forces for plowing, irrigating, and transplanting at the paddy field, maintaining and expanding the irrigation system, and managing mobilized labor force in the capital construction outside the brigade. In relation to these duties, he attended meetings in the commune as a brigade representative. Besides, he assisted the party secretary or the work teams in various political work including campaigns.

The accountant (*kuaiji*) was in charge of all the documents. He kept the household registration, recording births, marriages, deaths, and transfers of *hukou*, and issued all the certificates regarding them. He collected brigadewide information about the population, labor force, property, production, state procurement of grain, income, and so on, and reported it to the commune. All men aged 18 to 30 belonged to the militia (*minbing*). During the farming season, the militia did not have particular activities except occasional meetings usually to educate members about state policies. During the winter, a slack

season, the militia head (*minbing lianzhang*) called a meeting every morning, in which they had physical exercises and washed before breakfast, and sometimes he took the members to work on the irrigation system or water supply and drainage system. His most important duty was to supervise villagers' work on capital construction jobs with the brigade head because most laborers mobilized in those jobs were militia members. The public security officer (*gong'anyuan*) maintained public security, dealing with thefts, fights among villagers, damages to public property, and so on. The director of the Women's Federation (*funü zhuren*) took care of women's affairs. She attended the Women's Federation meetings at the commune level, and she also led female laborers in brigade-wide work. Family planning has become the most important part of her job since the late 1970s.

The director of the Poor and Lower Middle Peasants Association (*pinxie zhuren*) was in a somewhat peculiar position among the brigade cadres. The *pinxie* was established in 1964 with all the poor and lower middle peasants as its members during the Four Cleanups Campaign (*siqing yundong*)⁸⁴ in order to represent their standpoints about public affairs in the brigade and team.⁸⁵ The *pinxie* members of each production team elected three representatives who again elected one to be a member of the *pinxie* committee. Therefore, there were six *pinxie* committee members and eighteen *pinxie* representatives in Chenguang Brigade. The director was elected by the all *pinxie* members. He regularly attended the brigade cadre meetings in order for the opinion of peasants with good class backgrounds to be heard in decision-making of public affairs. The whole committee was involved in the decision-making process in such cases as the construction of new school buildings and the conversion of farmland into a residential area, which could exert considerable influence on the brigade as a whole.

Since 1961 when the production team became the basic unit of accounting, production, and distribution, the team head (*shengchanduihang* or *xiaoduihang*) came to

⁸⁴ This campaign was a part of the Socialist Education Campaign (*shehui zhuyi jiaoyu yundong*). The main purpose of this campaign was to re-educate or eradicate corrupt and incompetent cadres in lower-level rural state apparatus.

⁸⁵ In case of Chenguang, the poor and lower middle peasants embraced about 90 percent of villagers.

be responsible for management of most economic activities—he decided when and how to do various agricultural activities, assigned tasks to each team members, and distributed products and incomes according to the regulations. Therefore, his leadership and management skill exerted a huge influence upon the overall economic performance of the team that would ultimately decide the members' income. The deputy team head (*fu shengchanduizhang*) assisted the head exclusively in the area of agricultural production. There was also a women's team head (*funü duizhang*) who supervised female workers when the jobs were done separately.⁸⁶

The work-point recorder (*jigongyuan*) recorded each member's work-points three times a day—from dawn to breakfast, from breakfast break to lunch, and from lunch break to sunset—according to the tasks assigned by the team head. The team accountant received a recording book from the work-point recorder everyday and issued a bill of work-points (*gongpiao*) to each member twice a month in order to ensure the accuracy of the recorded work-points. He kept all the information concerning team's economic activities, which would be reported to the brigade accountant and eventually to the center, the highest level; this would thus serve as the basis of the understanding of the countrywide economic conditions. He was also responsible for distributing the grain and vegetables that were collectively cultivated to each household, and for keeping account of each household's income in the form of work-points and expenditures in the form of grain ration and vegetables.⁸⁷ The cashier-storehouse keeper (*baoguan*) took charge of team property and dealt with team-owned cash. He actually distributed cash to each household at the year-end according to the accountant's recording of its account. As I mentioned above, there were three representatives of the Poor and Lower Middle Peasants Association in each team.

⁸⁶ Most of agricultural jobs were done separately along gender lines, except during the busy seasons of seeding and harvesting. The women's team heads supervised the jobs conducted by female team members, and the director of the Women's Federation oversaw brigadewide female members' work. But when the work was carried out by both male and female team or brigade members, the team head or brigade head respectively took charge of the work. It is worth noting that even if the male laborers got more work-points than the female laborers, in the case of rice transplanting or weeding, the latter received almost the same amount of work-points as the former because they did the work better and faster.

⁸⁷ Pork distributed to each household twice a year was also included in the account's recording.

When important cases occurred, for example, when the team needed to aid the hospital bill of a member, the representatives participated in decision-making process with the head, deputy head, and accountant.

The brigade was the lowest level of party organization run by the brigade party branch committee (*dadui dangzhibu weiyuanhui*). When the village branch was first founded, the committee consisted of three members. Through most of the commune period, seven members comprised the committee headed by the secretary (*shuji*). Even though the party organization was supposed to deal mostly with political and ideological work, it exercised direct leadership over every unit it attached to, and the secretary was the one who had the final say at each unit. The Chenguang Brigade was no exception. The party branch committee made all the important decisions in every sphere of the peasants' life. This aspect was reinforced by the fact that main brigade cadres, such as the brigade head, the accountant, and the militia head, were concurrently members of the party branch committee in most cases. The secretary took care of most of the affairs of the committee. All the other cadres at either the brigade or the team level asked for his help and direction whenever they faced problems they could not solve by themselves. Zhang Hongfeng says, "I controlled everything" (*shenme dou guan*). He also served as a main route through which the local society communicated with the outside world, especially the higher authorities. He attended the meetings mostly held in the commune five to six times a month, which covered a variety of topics. He conveyed the orders, directives, and intentions of higher authorities to the brigade and teams and played a leading role implementing them in the local society with the help of other cadres. He also delivered the peasants' view and opinions to the higher levels.

There was a brigade branch of the Chinese Communist Youth League (*zhong qing tuan*). This mass organization was established in 1922 with the name of the Chinese Socialist Youth League and its name was changed several times and finally to the CCYL in 1949. The young people between 14 and 28 who had good class background were

allowed to join the organization. There were about thirty members in Chenguang. Among them, those who wanted to become party members and showed enough loyalty to the party and state were allowed to apply for admission to the CCP after 18 years of age. The members had meetings twice a week in the busy season and every day in the slack season to study Chairman Mao's thoughts. They were expected to become a model for the other villagers to emulate.

How were the cadres elected or appointed to their posts? The party branch committee members were elected in the party branch general meeting held between New Year's Day (*yuandan*) and the Spring Festival (*chunjie*). The incumbent committee members and the commune party branch discussed who would become candidates for the next committee. In the case of Chenguang, the brigade secretary usually consulted with the commune secretary about the need to replace some members. If they agreed that the replacement was needed, they discussed the candidates for that position. Otherwise, the incumbent members were reelected. Zhang Hongfeng had remained in the office of secretary from 1955 to 1981 when he resigned, and other committee members were similarly rarely replaced. All the attendants of the meeting received voting papers on which all seven committee candidates' names were written. They put marks on the names of candidates that they consented to. If they did not consent to some candidates, they could nominate other party members for the committee instead, but there had not been one case when the candidates nominated beforehand were not elected. Once the committee members were elected, they divided work among themselves—the secretary, the deputy secretary, and those who would be in charge of production, organization, propaganda, and so on. The important positions, such as the secretary and the deputy secretary, were decided beforehand by the commune party committee. Therefore, this election left few choices to the members, being held under the tight control of the commune party branch.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ These decisions were made through consultation with the village branch. In the case of Chenguang, the village secretary mainly discussed personnel matters with the commune secretary. The process of the resignation of Zhang Hongfeng and the appointment of his successor, which I will explore in the next chapter, will show how it worked.

The party committee decided on the candidate for brigade head and got an approval from the commune. Then, the brigade members voted for or against him by a show of hands. The brigade head remained in office unless there were special situations. Among six brigade heads during the commune period, four resigned from the post. One took a better job as manager of a commune factory. Another became the director of the Revolution Committee (*geming weiyuanhui zhuren*), equivalent of the brigade head, during the height of the Cultural Revolution because he was a *pinxie zhuren*. He returned to the *pinxie zhuren* position after about three years when the Brigade Revolution Committee was dissolved. The remaining two had personal reasons. One died in the earthquake in 1976 and the last one lost his job because the commune system was dismantled in 1982. The militia head was appointed by the armed forces branch of the commune with the recommendation of the brigade party branch committee. The public security officer was appointed by the commune police station also with the recommendation of the party committee. The elections of brigade cadres were presided over by a commune cadre and held once every two years.

The team cadres were elected by the team members every year. The main brigade cadres including party committee members participated in the selection of candidates for the team head, the deputy team head, the accountant, the cashier, and the work-point recorder, considering the opinions of the team members.

The most important and difficult one to elect was the team head. It was important because a team's overall performance as a unit depended very much on the head's ability and desire, and it was difficult because virtually no one wanted to assume that position. Not only was the team head's job very hard (*hen xinku*), but the team members were often disgruntled at the head (*nao qingxu le*). The team head faced team members' complaints about work assignments, at any rate, day in and day out. He had to implement state policies, however unfavorable they were, and work just like other members with little reward for his extra time and energy. Therefore, the brigade cadres needed to work hard.

They first asked the team members whether they wanted the current head to remain in office or to be replaced. In the former case, they had to persuade him to continue his job as a team head. In the latter case, they had to find a new candidate and persuade him to take the job, but this was not easy because there were only a few people with the ability and willingness to assume the position. Once the candidate was chosen, the team members were informed. If anyone was dissatisfied with the candidate, he could freely nominate someone else. Then, all the team members voted by a show of hands, which always resulted in the election of the candidate nominated by the brigade cadres. The votes sometimes proceeded by using paper ballots because some candidates who did not want to become team heads argued that the vote by a show of hands would restrain the members' free choice. They did not change the expected results anyway. Sometimes, the brigade cadres had to select the second candidate if the elected candidate strongly refused to take the job. In Chenguang while the First, Fifth, and Sixth Team heads had remained in office for a long time, the heads of the rest of the teams frequently changed because the team members were disobedient and complained a lot.

The brigade cadres all got paid by the brigade. The pay of the secretary, the deputy secretary, the brigade head, the accountant, and the militia head were determined by picking three men per team who earned the most work-points in each team and averaging those 18 men's work-points, and then multiplying the average work-points by the six team's average monetary value per work-point (*guafen*).⁸⁹ While the secretary's pay could be ten percent higher than the other cadres' according to the regulation, on the secretary's insistence, all of them received the same amount in Chenguang. These cadres were required to work with other brigade members and received work points for that labor even though their incomes were decided not by the amount of work-points they earned from their own labor but by *guafen*.⁹⁰ The public security officer and the director of the

⁸⁹ The literal sense of the word '*guafen*' is 'divide up' or 'partition.' Here, it refers to the method of computing work-points as I explained.

⁹⁰ The main brigade cadres worked in the fields of teams that were relatively short of labor.

Women's Federation did not have much work to do as cadres, so they participated in collective labor with other team members. They received compensatory work-points for their attendance at meetings. When their work-points were substantially less than other cadres, they were raised to the level equal to the others'.⁹¹

The work-points of the team head, the team accountant, and the cashier-storehouse keeper were also fixed by *guafen*. That is, the team head's work-points were the average work-points of five or ten members who earned the most points in his team.⁹² The accountant got the exactly same amount of work-points as the team head, but the cashier's work-points were slightly less than the accountant's because his workload was lighter than the accountant's. While these cadres did not often work in the fields, the deputy team head and work-point recorder always worked with other team members. Their income level was often higher than the team head's because the deputy team head was usually the best laborer in the team, and the work-point recorders got an additional 300 to 500 points to those they earned through labor because they recorded the team members' work-points while the others were resting.

Before concluding this section, I want to briefly discuss gender inequality in rural China. It is well known that Chinese society had been strongly patriarchal and that the CCP attempted to abolish those traditional attitude and practices. These efforts contributed to the advancement of women's rights in the legal domain (Croll 1984). However, they succeeded to a very limited extent; women were still discriminated in many other areas. The assignment of work-points is a good example. Female workers received about thirty percent fewer work-points than their male counterparts for doing agricultural work, except for a few jobs that required great physical strength, such as plowing and harrowing. In spite of this, female laborers did as well as male laborers, or at least their work

⁹¹ In case of the director of the Women's Federation, her work-point total was adjusted to 70 percent of other cadres' work-point total because while most able-bodied male laborers received 10 points a day, most female able-bodied laborers got 7 points a day.

⁹² The numbers of highest-earning members included in the computation of cadres' work-points were different team by team. The smaller the number was, the more the team head's work-points were, of course.

performance level was not as low as the work-point system indicated. Village leadership was another area where gender inequality was remarkable. Except for leadership positions which were supposed to be assumed exclusively by women, such as the director of the Women's Federation and the women's team head, a woman never held any other leadership position in Chenguang. A similar pattern is found in other villages. In Wugong, the old base area of the CCP, for example, several women actively participated in political work during the periods of the resistance to the Japanese army and the civil war. Once the CCP established control over the region, women's role in political area rapidly decreased. Women's positions in the party branch were also very weak. There was only one female party member in Chenguang in the Maoist era. She was simultaneously the director of the Women's Federation and the party committee member.⁹³

We can draw several points which are important for further analysis from the discussion above. The first point is about the cadres' role. Broadly speaking, they had done jobs that can be classified into three categories. First, they controlled the economy. The upper level, usually the commune, handed down and issued directives and targets concerning production and consumption of agricultural goods at the brigade and team level, and the cadres were responsible for ensuring that they were followed without deviations. Furthermore, the cadres had to manage all the economic activities under the collective system except the cultivation of private plots and raising livestock on a small scale.

Second, the cadres were in charge of the political and ideological education for the peasants. The cadres' role as educators was intense during the early years of the PRC when socialism was new to most villagers and the new system was in the process of consolidating. During the commune period that started about ten years after the establishment of the PRC, there had been several policy shifts from higher levels, oscillating between the right and the left, which needed to be rationalized and explained to

⁹³ In 1995, there were five women members in the party branch. One was the former director of the Women's Federation and one was the current director of women's work. The remaining three who were recruited in the post-Mao era due to the party's policy that emphasized recruiting experts were in managerial posts of the village bag factory.

the peasants.⁹⁴ From 1968 on studying Chairman Mao's thought became quite an important activity during the slack season and the cadres took charge of that activity. The cadres played a crucial role in making the peasants understand and follow the ideological and political stance of the state in all those policy changes.

Finally, the cadres were also the representatives of the villagers. They were supposed to deliver the peasants' opinions to the upper levels through formal channels so that they could be reflected in the formulation and implementation of state policies. They were also expected to play a leading role in protecting local interests against state intervention, which was often done informally or sometimes illegally. We can observe a remarkable example of this role in the struggles over the harvest between the state and the peasants. I will examine those struggles and the cadres' role later. It seems to me that this part of the cadres' work was not done actively, and it fell short of the expectations of peasants.

The second point concerns the election or appointment of cadres. Some cadres, such as the militia head and the public security officer, were appointed by the corresponding units of the commune with recommendations of the brigade party branch committee. The other brigade cadres on the government line were elected to their posts with the nomination of the party committee and the approval of the commune. The party branch committee, the locus where most important decisions were made, was elected at the party branch general meeting. The commune party branch directly controlled the process from nomination to the election. The election of team cadres was led by the brigade cadres, but it was still under the indirect control of the commune level.⁹⁵ In sum, the brigade party

⁹⁴ Chairman Mao represented the left and Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping the right. State policies leaned toward the left during the GLF and changed the direction to the right during the economic adjustment period between 1962 and 1964. The wind began to shift direction to the left in 1964 when the Four Cleanups Campaign started and reached the peak during the early stage of the Cultural Revolution. In the early 1970s, the direction of the wind began to swing once more toward the right.

⁹⁵ Some brigades had trouble in election of the team cadres. In those cases commune cadres were directly involved in the election process, but Chengguang had never been in that situation.

branch committee played a decisive role, under the supervision of the commune level, in the appointment and election of the brigade and team cadres.

The third point is about how the cadres were paid. Some brigade and team cadres received the salary determined by *guafen*. In case of the rest of cadres, most of their income came from their own labor as team members, and in addition they received a small amount of reward for their work as cadres. In either case, the cadres were paid not by the state, but by the collectives.⁹⁶ That is, they ate “their own rice,” rather than “the state rice.”

The final point I would like to note here is that the local cadres rarely had chances to be promoted to the state cadres. After having served for a long time as local cadres, some of the Chenguang Brigade cadres took jobs in the organizations owned and/or run by the Hongxing Commune or Ninghe County, such as factories, banks, an old people’s home, as state cadres.⁹⁷ Those jobs were better paid yet less burdensome than were the local cadres’ job. So, the higher level offered those jobs to the local cadres as a form of compensation for their hard work, but it could hardly be regarded as promotion. This situation was closely related to the *hukou* system. Getting urban *hukou* was almost a necessary condition to become state cadres at the level of commune and up, but it was very hard to change one’s *hukou* from agricultural to urban. In the early 1950s when the *hukou* system had not been applied strictly, some of Chenguang village’s young men who were literate tried to get urban *hukou*. The higher level cadres, however, did not allow them to do it because they thought that those young men were essential to consolidate the management of the village. They had worked in the village and later in the brigade until they got jobs in the commune-run organizations in their old age.⁹⁸ Therefore, the local

⁹⁶ This is a way to differentiate the local or grass roots cadres from the state cadres. The cadres in the level of county and up were all state cadres, and a part of the commune cadres also belonged to this category. The rest of the commune cadres and all the brigade and team cadres were local.

⁹⁷ They were state cadres in that they ate “the state rice,” unlike most state cadres; however, they maintained agricultural (*nongye*) *hukou*, therefore they were not eligible for other benefits, especially the retirement pension.

⁹⁸ Zhang Hongfeng and Liang Songde were examples of such case. They began to work in the commune-run organizations in their fifties after having worked for more than 20 years in the village.

cadres were stuck in the brigade or team with few chances to go up a ladder of bureaucratic hierarchy beyond the level of local units.

3. The State and Peasants in the Maoist Era

In 1949, when the CCP succeeded in seizing power and establishing the new nation-state, Chinese society was already very weakened. Civil association, autonomously organized and representing social interests, was virtually nonexistent, especially at the level of region or nation. Under these circumstances, the state could make decisions that would thoroughly transform the society and change people's lives without any significant input from the society. The state did not confront strong opposition, at least not openly, in the process of implementing its decisions. Here, we are dealing with a strong state and a weak society.

While many studies assume that the relationship between the state and the society is oppositional, it can be formed in various ways. The society sometimes disengages itself from the state (Azarya and Chazan 1987), or the two even have a cooperative relationship at some point of time or about particular matters (Hammergren 1977; Nugent 1994; Pike and Stritch 1974; Schmitter 1975). As Nugent (1994) well illustrates, the relationship can also change as time goes by. I would like to discuss the relationship between the state and the peasant society in China through exploring the implementation process of major policies.

(1) Strategies and counter-strategies of the state and the peasantry

The Chinese state formulated and implemented various policies to transform the society, which used be based on class relations, into a socialist one which was based on collective economy.⁹⁹ These efforts were especially intense in the early years of the PRC.

⁹⁹ It seems that there was no indigenous concept of "class" in China, as the Marxist defined (Kuhn 1984). The Communists introduced the foreign concept. However, classes, in the Marxian sense, existed in pre-

The major policies that exerted great influence upon the rural society during the period between 1949 and 1958 include land reform, the collectivization movement that ended up with the People's Commune, and the United Purchase and Sale of Grain. As Zhang Hongfeng's statement indicates (see chapter 3), the peasants were basically receptive to state policies; this is one of the reasons why the implementation of those policies was so successful. It would be wrong, however, to assume that all the state's policies, directives, and regulations were followed by the peasants wholeheartedly and implemented as they were originally intended even during the period of cooperative relationship between the state and society.

It is important to consider how much state policies coincided with the peasants' interests because peasants responded differently to state policies according to the correspondence between their interests and the policies. The peasants easily accepted the state's policies when they corresponded with their own interests, and thus the policies were likely to be successfully implemented. In contrast, they sometimes actively or passively resisted the policies when they were considered to encroach on their interests.

The conversion of the Lower-level APC to the Higher-level APC is an example that the policy was coincident with most peasants' interests. With the conversion, the major means of production privately owned by the members of the Lower-level APC would fall into the collective ownership of the Higher-level APC. Nothing would be paid to any member as rent for agricultural implements or land. Some of the former middle and upper middle class peasants¹⁰⁰ refused to join because they had been very satisfied with their socio-economic situations after the Land Reform Campaign. They owned more property than other villagers did, and they did not suffer from their class labels. Those who had

revolutionary China (Watson 1984). In rural area, this concept was first used in class classification. Class labels were assigned according to the ownership of the means of production, especially land, during the Land Reform Campaign. If it may not be quite appropriate to consider Chenguang village as the society based on class relations, we can find apparent class divisions in Ninghe County region on the eve of the Socialist Revolution.

¹⁰⁰ Less than ten percent of families fell into these two categories at the Land Reform in Chenguang village.

little or no labor power also opposed to the transformation because they relied heavily on income from their land and other investment to the Lower-level APC. Most villagers, however, thought the conversion would bring them more income.

As a result, the state did not encounter much opposition from the local society in implementing the policy. The Chenguang village cadres, with the help of township and district cadres, had successfully persuaded a small number of dissenters and converted six Lower-level APCs into one Higher-level APC (*Chenguang she*) with six production teams.¹⁰¹ Actually the responses of the peasants and local cadres were beyond the central leaders' expectations because the conversion was achieved throughout the country amazingly fast, even faster than they intended and planned.

Second, the policy that prohibited peasants from engaging in private trading was neutral to most peasants. The interests of those engaged in trading were severely affected by this policy, but it did not have much to do with the majority of villagers. It was implemented without much difficulty but it was not effective throughout the Maoist period, either. With the exception of the initial stage of the implementation and the period of the high radicalism that culminated in criticism against private business as a capitalist road, small-scale private trading by the peasants had never disappeared. Former cadres of Chenguang said that although they tried to suppress it by tightly controlling the peasants' labor, ten to fifteen villagers were nonetheless occupied with trading, mainly of fodder. They also said that they could not force the traders too much because they did not want to be accused of not having sympathy (*renqing*).

Finally, grain procurement can be classified into the policies that interfere with the peasants' interests. Through the implementation of the United Purchase and Sale of Grain in 1953 and its more advanced form of grain policy in 1955, the state came to decide not

¹⁰¹ My data and interpretation on this matter is very different from those of Friedman, Pickowicz, and Selden (1991). In the study of Wugong village, the highly publicized model unit, they reported strong resistance to the organization of a villagewide semisocialist unit (the Lower-level APC) in 1952 and the transformation of this unit to the socialist one (the Higher-level APC) in 1955. According to the authors, villagers feared being taken advantage of, and loss of household control of resources.

only the kind, quantity, and price of grain the peasants had to sell but also the kinds and quantity of grains they had to cultivate. Chenguang received its targets from the Hongxing Commune for major agricultural products. Production teams also had a little bit of flexibility in planting crops. As a villager put it, “Planting a crop either a little more or less than the assignment was acceptable (as long as they fulfilled their grain procurement quota).” We should not make too much of the flexibility because the production teams were under the scrutiny of the state. The Hongxing Commune also gave directives on what portion of harvest went into the hands of state, collectives, and peasants in the forms of agricultural taxes, grain procurement, seeds, animal feed, provision for the capital construction workers, collective reserves, grain ration, and the work-point distribution. In short, the state made decisions about production, consumption, and distribution of agricultural goods.

This led to direct conflicts between the state and the peasantry with regard to the division of the harvest that has been a basic issue of peasant politics (Oi 1989a). Thanks to the land reform, most peasants were no longer struggling with landlords over the harvest. This time, however, all the peasants had to deal with a much stronger and stricter counterpart than the landlords. In spite of the characteristic of this policy that could severely hurt the peasants’ interests, as I described in the previous chapter, the state did not face strong resistance from the villagers at the time of implementation.¹⁰² This does not mean that the peasants completely gave in to the state’s demands. The peasants and local cadres (especially production team cadres) constantly tried to increase their share of the harvest against the state’s share. The peasants adopted “everyday forms of resistance” similar to the ones the tenants used in the pre-revolutionary period (see chapter 3). The team cadres helped the peasants by being “intentionally” negligent in attending to their duties. Occasionally, they actively colluded with team members.¹⁰³

¹⁰²Other villages show similar trend (see Friedman et al. 1991 and Seybolt 1996).

¹⁰³ The complicity of local cadres, especially team cadres, tacit or active, was indispensable to the peasants’ practice of everyday forms of resistance because it was basically impossible for the peasants to deceive the cadres. There were more than forty cadres in the Chenguang Brigade overlooking the activities of villagers.

Higher authorities were aware of the fact that peasants and local cadres had constantly tried to evade the state's unfavorable policies, and grain procurement was certainly one of them. They devised several counter-strategies to thwart peasants' evasion at the local level. In order to make sure that the constituent units followed the directives from above, in addition to examining a series of team reports submitted by team leaders to the brigade and up, the commune and the county carried out on-site joint inspections (*liancha*) several times a year.¹⁰⁴ The Hongxing Commune joint inspection team was composed of the secretary of the commune party branch (*gongshe zhibu shuji*), the head of the commune (*gongshe zhang*), the secretary of the commune (*gongshe mishu*), the secretaries of brigade party branches, and the heads of brigades. They made trips to all the brigades of the commune to inspect whether or not the assigned amount of crops were planted and to make sure that accurate crop estimation (*ping chan*) was done during the harvest season. The commune invested more time and energy in the latter because it was more difficult to do and it served as the basis not only for preventing local cadres and peasants from cheating but also for the preliminary plan of crop distribution,.

The Hongxing Commune divided the inspection team into two groups: brigade cadres from the northern area led by some commune cadres and those from the southern area led by the other commune cadres. The former group was sent to the southern area and vice versa, employing a divide-and-rule strategy to ensure honesty. The inspection team compared their estimation with that of the brigade and team's own cadres. Then they again compared their estimation of each brigade's harvest with that of neighboring brigades' harvests and with harvests from other years to ensure further accuracy.

Next, came the county inspection team that consisted of county cadres, including the secretary of the county party branch (*xian zhibu shuji*), the head of finance and grain bureau (*cailiangjuzhang*), the secretary of the county (*xian mishu*), some commune cadres,

¹⁰⁴ Because of a tendency for the local cadres to pursue their own and/or local community's interests at the expense of the goals set by the higher levels, higher authorities did not completely trust the reports drawn up at the local level.

and some brigade cadres (four brigade representatives from the Hongxing Commune). They selected several brigades in each commune, picking equally from those expecting a good harvest, a bad one, and an average one. They estimated the average harvest of each commune by comparing brigade harvests. Then they also compared the estimation of each commune's harvest with one another and with harvests from other years to see if the brigade's internal estimation and the commune's joint estimation were done properly.

Harvesting was also under close supervision of the state to make sure that careful reaping and threshing (*jing shou xi da*) and the delivery of grain to the granary (*ke li gui cang*) were done without any waste or theft of grain. Team and brigade cadres were primarily responsible for the supervision of the harvesting process, but joint inspection teams were also mobilized to double-check it. Besides, throughout the whole course of cultivating, higher level cadres rather casually but constantly inspected the agricultural work of the units under their jurisdiction to see if plowing, harrowing, weeding, and so on were done properly and on schedule.

The villagers admit that the on-site joint inspections were quite effective in obstructing the pursuit of individual and community interests. Production Team Five of Chenguang Brigade once violated a regulation by planting corn that the Hongxing Commune prohibited. This production team was apparently too flexible in planting crops. When the inspection team discovered it, they were ordered to pull up all the corn. Another incident happened to Production Team Three. The inspection team found that the reported amount of harvested rice of that team was suspiciously smaller than other teams; thus, it closely examined the estimated amount of harvest, an account book, and the situations of Team Three and other teams. At last it discovered that this team's harvest was underreported and the difference between the actual amount of harvest and reported one was distributed to the team members. The team leader and accountant were dismissed from their posts. In spite of my efforts, I was not able to identify cases other than these two, involving agricultural violations, but the villagers implied that the evasion of grain policies

were far from rare.¹⁰⁵ Especially the former cadres admitted that it had been impossible for the upper level cadres to supervise everything in the village that they had wanted to control.

Many China researchers argue that religion was one realm in which the state was unsuccessful in its control during the Maoist era.¹⁰⁶ Their argument is based on the facts that the peasants retained many traditional religious practices against the state policies and that traditional popular rituals rapidly emerged once the pressure from the state stopped in the post-Mao era (see Chan et al. 1992; Huang 1998; Jang 1998; Kipnis 1997; Parish and Whyte 1978; Siu 1989b, 1990). As a matter of fact, regardless of constant pressure from the state, peasants managed to maintain many traditional religious practices; such as ancestor worship, seasonal holidays, funerals, wedding ceremonies, and the like usually in simplified and modified forms, but rarely altered to the extent that the state dictated.

However, the sphere of religion was also well within the reach of state control. Traditional religious practices that the state strongly prohibited or forced to change disappeared or changed. Graves were scattered all over the fields in Chenguang village, but the upper level authorities ordered the villagers to remove graves from the fields in 1958. Naturally, the villagers were reluctant to do so, so members of the CCP and the Communist Youth League were forced to follow the order first as a model for the rest to follow. The next year, all the graves in the fields were removed either by leveling the grave mounds or by moving graves to nearby wasteland. Since there was not enough space to accommodate all the graves in the wasteland, many of them just disappeared, returning into cultivated land.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ The villagers were extremely reluctant to talk about those incidents to me, a stranger, a foreigner, and an important guest to them. I heard about the incidents after spending more than one year there. They were afraid that they might lose 'face' because they assumed that I would think practicing various strategies to evade state policies was not the right thing to do.

¹⁰⁶ There were two main reasons why the Communists attacked the traditional rituals. One is an ideological reason. The leaders saw the rituals as superstition, thus as an obstacle to progress. The other is a practical reason. They thought the rituals were expensive and useless, therefore a waste of resources.

¹⁰⁷ It seems that the removal of graves from fields was common throughout rural area, but occurred at different times. In Wugong village, Hebei Province, graves on the fields were either transferred to a common site or leveled in 1959, which was almost the same time as Chenguang (Friedman et al. 1991). In other villages, it occurred a little later. For example, graves were removed from the field in an effort to expand farm land in Lin village, Fujian Province in 1962 (Huang 1998). Kipnis (1997) reports the move of graves to a "public grave" (*gongmu*) in 1964, and the leveling of all graves in Fengjia village, Shandong

Funerals are another such case. During the Maoist period, though large-scale funerals were rare, partly because the villagers could not afford them, and partly because the state prohibited them, they nonetheless existed. An example was the funeral of Zhang Hongfeng's (then the village party secretary) mother's in 1956. The funeral lasted four days. Not only almost all villagers, but also the cadres of neighboring villages and the higher levels, came. It cost about 1,000 *yuan*, which was four or five times as much as the usual cost of funerals in Chenguang at that time.¹⁰⁸ However, there was not a single case of a large-scale funeral in Chenguang from the Four Cleanups Campaign in 1964 to the end of the Maoist era because the state strongly controlled the ritual activities. During that period, filial clothes (*xiaofu*) as well as bands were not allowed at funerals.¹⁰⁹

(2) Campaigns, the ultimate means to achieve the state's goal

The state used campaigns as a special means to achieve the goals that could not be accomplished through the ordinary ruling system. For example, when the state wanted to bring about radical changes, or suppress or purge a group of people who might strongly resist, the state launched campaigns. Not all such campaigns directly influenced peasant life. Some concentrated more on urban areas than on rural areas and vice versa. Some of them targeted higher-level administrative units rather than the grass roots level. Others targeted special groups of people, such as intellectuals, the national bourgeois, and party members.

Province, in 1966 during the Cultural Revolution. In Hongqi village, Tianjin City, family graves were leveled also during the Cultural Revolution (Jang 1998).

¹⁰⁸ Parish and Whyte (1978) roughly estimate the average cost of the funerals during a similar period at only 50 to 150 *yuan*.

¹⁰⁹ Similar incidents are said to have happened, but the prohibited items and the times when these prohibitions were made were not identical among villages. Jang (1998) reports that filial clothes were replaced by black armbands and the village band was disbanded for a while in Hongqi village. But he does not specify when these happened. In Fengjia, weeping, *ketou*, incense, etc., were prohibited during the Cultural Revolution (Kipnis 1997).

I asked a villager who had been a cadre during the commune period, “How many campaigns were launched in the Chairman Mao era?” He answered, “In that era, there were too many campaigns. Who remembers?” To my next question about the major campaigns¹¹⁰ he enumerated several campaigns—the Land Reform (*tudi gaige*) Campaign, the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries (*zhenya fangeming*), the Three Anti and Five Anti (*sanfan wufan*) Campaign, the High Tide of Cooperativization (*hezuohua gaochao*), the Anti-Rightist (*fan youpai*) Campaign, the Great Leap Forward (*dayuejin*), the Four Cleanups (*siqing*) Campaign, the Cultural Revolution (*wenhua dageming*), the Purify the Class Ranks (*qingli jieji duiwu*) Campaign, and the Campaign to Criticize Lin Biao, Criticize Confucius (*pilin pikong*). Based on the information given by the villagers, I separated out the campaigns that exerted tremendous influence upon Chenguang village. They are the Land Reform, the High Tide of Cooperativization, the Great Leap Forward, the Four Cleanups, and the Cultural Revolution. The villagers especially always include the United Purchase and Sale of Grain policy in the list with the mention that even if it was not a campaign, its influence upon peasant life was as great as any campaign.

Now, I would like to explore one campaign more fully to show why the state needed to launch a campaign, how it was formulated by the center and implemented at the local level, and what role it played for the state and the peasant society. I pick the Four Cleanups Campaign as an example for four reasons.¹¹¹ First, it shows how the typical major campaign proceeded, involving work teams that used to be brought in from outside when the required changes were too radical or the suppression was too strong for the native cadres of target locales to carry out. Second, its main target was the local cadre on whom the state depended a lot for the regular governance of the society. We can also get a hint

¹¹⁰ By major campaigns, I mean those which were implemented throughout the country with strong intensity and lasted a relatively long period of time.

¹¹¹ Almost all studies that deal with the 1960s touch on the Four Cleanups Campaign. Several studies analyze the campaign in the context of national politics (see Baum 1975, MacFarquhar 1983, and Lieberthal 1993). To know how this campaign proceeded at the grass roots level, see Chan et al. (1992), Huang (1998), Ruf (1998), and Seybolt (1996). Among them, Chan, Madsen, and Unger describe the campaign in detail, focusing on village level power relations.

through this campaign of how the local cadres made a compromise between official obligations and personal interests. Third, the process of formulation embodies the power struggle among top leaders, which would eventually led to the Cultural Revolution. Four, generally speaking, the campaign progressed under the state's control, but we can get a glimpse of the deviations from the standard provided by the higher authorities in its implementation process.

When the Central Committee formally approved the economic adjustment policies in 1962,¹¹² Mao raised the need for party rectification. He thought the revolution was suffering a setback. He recognized that the top leaders represented by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping were leading the country away from the revolutionary spirit of class struggle and egalitarianism, and there were morale and discipline problems among the basic level cadres. The central leaders agreed that rectification was needed, but they did not agree on how to implement it. This disagreement was revealed in the subsequent events.

In May 1963, the Central Committee adopted the Former Ten Points (*qian shi tiao*) that was drafted under the control of Mao and would represent the basic guiding principles of the Socialist Education Campaign (*shehuizhuyi jiaoyu yundong*) as a rectification movement. Mao argued that the mobilization of the poor and lower middle peasants had to be an essential part of its implementation because it could contribute not only to rectification of the party organ but also to uplift of the class consciousness of the masses. However, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping led the drafting and promulgation of the Later Ten Points (*hou shi tiao*) in September 1963, which called for the formation of work teams, instead of the large scale mobilization of the peasants, to carry out the campaign. Following the initiation of Liu, the Four Cleanups Campaign, a part of the Socialist Education Campaign, was launched in 1964 based on the Revised Later Ten Points (Lieberthal 1993).

¹¹² The adjustment policies consisted of the reduction of the commune size, the introduction of material incentives to the agricultural production, the redistribution of private plots, the reopening of rural markets, and so on.

In Chenguang village, the Four Cleanups Campaign (so-called the Big Four Cleanups Campaign) started with the arrival of a work team in March 1964 and ended with its departure in October of the same year. The work team consisted of sixteen members all of whom were from Ninghe County. All of them but two came from outside of the Hongxing Commune, so they were virtually strangers to the villagers.

After they had collected all the necessary information about the general situation of the brigade from the cadres in four days, they suspended all the cadres except the production team heads on the next day.¹¹³ The team head and the committee member of the Poor and Lower Middle Peasants Association (*pinxie*) took responsibility for the production of each team, and the director of the *pinxie* took charge of the production at the brigade level. Two work team members were assigned to each production team and the remaining four members coordinated matters at the brigade level. In order to gain the respect and trust of the villagers with good class background, poor and lower-middle peasants, the work team members practiced the “three togethers” (*santong*)—living, eating, and working together with them. While getting closer to them, work team members collected information about all kinds of errors (*cuowu*) that the cadres had committed, such as stealing public funds, eating at team and brigade’s expense, accepting bribes, and beating and cursing villagers.

Based on what the villagers said, accusations were compiled against the cadres. The work team organized “struggle sessions” where the cadres made self-confessions, and the peasants were instigated to “speak bitterness” against the cadres. The cadres were allowed to defend themselves if they thought they had been falsely accused. The first step of the struggle sessions was the “small session” (*xiaohui*) or “small tub bath” (*xiaopen xizao*). Each team cadre had to get through the struggle meeting attended by three *pinxie* representatives of his team and two work team members assigned to the team. The meetings were also held for each brigade cadre by all the *pinxie* representatives of the

¹¹³ In order not to hurt production activities, the production team heads who were primarily responsible for the production continued their work.

brigade including the director and all the work team members. Since the attendants pressed charges against the brigade cadres on behalf of their team members, the leading cadres (the party secretary, the brigade head, and the accountant) had to attend several sessions to get through this stage. Next came the “middle session” (*zhonghui*) or “middle tub bath” (*zhongpen xizao*) held team by team. All the members and work team members of the team participated in the meetings and brought charges against each team cadre. The brigade cadres had to go through the sessions with all six teams. Team cadres finished with the middle sessions, but the brigade cadres had one more to go. This was the “big session” (*dahui*) or “big tub bath” (*dapen xizao*) held in the school, in which all the brigade members and work team members participated. One session was enough for each brigade cadre, but it took several hours because the cadres had to repeat self-confessions about the entire brigade and its members. The goal of this session is clearly demonstrated in the opening address of the head of the work team. “Today we’ll have the big tub bath. This person passed both the small tub and middle tub bath. I’m afraid they weren’t thorough enough, so we called on all the villagers to attend this meeting. Listen carefully. After you hear him out, if there is anything missed, you must bring it up.”

The campaign set the goal of cleaning things up in the fields of politics, economy, organization and ideology, focusing especially on the economy. Therefore, the peasants’ accusations against the cadres tended to concentrate on the cases of corruption (*tanwu*), accepting bribes (*shouhui*), taking and/or eating more than one’s share (*duochi-duozhan*). The peasants were encouraged to expose and criticize every instance of the cadres’ conduct that could be regarded as erroneous, and they did. When the cadres denied the accusations and provided different explanations for the matters, the leaders of the campaign investigated the matters.

For example, a reception expense of 71 *yuan* was called into question because the receipt was not appended to the brigade accounting book. Zhang Hongfeng spent the money when he entertained the workers of a chemical fertilizer factory in a restaurant in

Lutai to discuss the brigade's purchase of the fertilizer. He explained that he found it embarrassing to take the receipt in front of the guests he invited. He fell under suspicion of embezzlement. The director of the *pinxie* took charge of the investigation of that matter. He visited the restaurant and all the people who ate together at that time, and asked them to write statements about what they had eaten and drunk and how much they presumed it had cost. As the estimated amount of expense matched the amount recorded in the accounting book. Thus, Wang was able to clear himself of the embezzlement.

Not only did all the usual or unusual expenditures of public funds fall under suspicion of embezzlement, but the personal economic activities of cadres were also looked at through the lens of corruption.¹¹⁴ All the cadres' personal income and their spending of public funds were scrutinized according to strict standards, so a great deal of cadre activities that used to be regarded as normal turned out to be corruption or taking and/or eating more than one's share. The work team made the cadres return the parts of their income which was determined to have been earned illegally, and they were forced to reimburse the amounts of public funds judged to be overspent or embezzled. The total amount of money all the cadres paid back was 460 *yuan*, which was not much, considering the number of cadres and the period of time they were in office. No cadre was dismissed for his error. The work team organized elections for the production teams and brigade after the struggle sessions were all over. All the cadres were reelected to their former posts. Summing up these results, the leadership of Chenguang village can be considered to have been sound. Villagers' estimation of the cadres at that time was positive. An old man said, "The cadres were not bad. They led the agricultural production well, and they were not too corrupt." The comparison with other villages from other studies also support this observation.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ The head of Team Four could play a wind instrument. He sometimes played it at funerals in the evening after all the production activities were finished, and received three or four *yuan* for his service. This was classified as 'taking more than his share,' and he was criticized mainly for receiving money. He then had to return all the money he received to those who paid him for his services.

¹¹⁵ For example, in Houhua (Seybolt 1996) and Lin (Huang 1998) villages where the leadership was stable and sound, only one cadre in each village was demoted or removed from the brigade level post. On the other

Next, the work team organized struggle meetings against the four bad elements (*silei fenzi*), in which only the work team and the public security officer participated.¹¹⁶ Before the meetings, the work team investigated all the questionable things they had done since the revolution. When they made self-confessions in the meetings, they were criticized for what they had done. If their confession did not correspond with the information the work team collected, they were criticized more severely.

The campaign proceeded in different ways in different places. In a neighboring village of Chenguang, the secretary of the party branch was removed from office because he embezzled about five thousand *yuan*. In order to repay it, he had to sell a newly built house and a part of his income had to be deducted for several years. In another brigade of Ninghe County, the work team led the campaign overzealously. Even though the secretary of the party branch persistently asserted his innocence, the work team forced him to seal the document with his thumb, which accused him of embezzling several thousand *yuan*. He was removed from office, expelled from the party, and made to wear the hat of the four bad elements. Later, the county dispatched three work teams to investigate that matter, and they found the secretary innocent.¹¹⁷ There was also a case in which the work team caused a

hand, in Chen village, four of ten team heads, the militia head, and the deputy party secretary were changed (Chan et al. 1992). Four brigade cadres—the brigade head, the accountant, the cashier, and the director of the Women’s Federation—were dismissed due to corruption or incompetence in Qiaolou village (Ruf 1998). The last two studies also mention that the cadres had to pay back the money they took illegally, but do not contain specific figures. I think the big difference between the first two villages and the last two has something to do with the selection of the research sites. As widely known, the researchers have not been able to freely select their research sites in the PRC; various government units have done it. Houhua village was under the strong and competent leadership of the party branch secretary, Wang Fucheng, between 1954 and 1984. Lin village was also a model village in the region of southern Fujian Province, which had made great progress after the Liberation and the reforms. In contrast, the book *Chen Village* is a result of the research based on émigré interviews conducted in Hong Kong. It means the Chinese government had nothing to do with the study. Qiaolou village was selected as a fieldwork site because it was a model of rural socialist development. The village is famous for early development of brigade-run enterprises and strong collective welfare. I cannot find any evidence that the village was more advanced than the usual villages throughout the country.

¹¹⁶ During the Anti-Rightist Campaign in 1957, rightists (*youpai*) were added to landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, and criminals, making it five bad elements (*wulei fenzi*). Since the influence of the Anti-Rightist Campaign was insignificant and no one was labeled as a rightist in Chenguang village, the villagers usually mention it as “*silei fenzi*” even talking about the matters after 1957.

¹¹⁷ It seems that these kind of incidents were not uncommon because the work team’s task was to discover corrupt cadres and punish them (for other examples of the errors by the work teams, see Huang 1998). If it could not find such a cadre, it was not considered to have accomplished its task. Furthermore, the work

conflict among the peasants in a brigade of the Hongxing Commune. The villagers were split into two factions—those who attacked the cadres and those who protected them. The work team members were also divided along those two factions. They could not effectively carry out the campaign at all. Moreover, the villagers who opposed the cadres did not let them go when they were ready to leave the village. The commune, thus, organized another work team with the secretary of the commune and seven party secretaries of the brigade branches. This team worked for one month to complete the former work team's tasks and to do the additional task of resolving the division among the villagers.

The Four Cleanups Campaign had two goals. One was to raise the revolutionary spirit and class consciousness of the peasants, and the other was to rectify the rural leadership, especially at the basic level. Primary stress was laid on the second goal, and the work team was the main means to achieve it. This meant that Liu and Deng's program had been adopted instead of Mao's. The work teams were supposed to carry out the directives from the higher authorities. Although there were deviations from the planned course in some places, generally speaking, the work teams performed their duty in a very disciplined way. Throughout the campaign, the state defined the criteria that the cadres had to conform to and the fate they would face if they failed to do so. As a consequence, the state succeeded in tightening the grip on local cadres and peasants, but it lasted less than two years due to the Cultural Revolution.

The Four Cleanups Campaign shows many typical features of the Chinese state in the Maoist era. We can find similarities and differences between this campaign and the Cultural Revolution. However, the most striking difference between the two campaigns was the method of organization. In contrast to the Cultural Revolution, the Four Cleanups was organized at the national level, and below that, every province, prefecture, and county had its branch office to coordinate the campaign. The work teams were organized by the communes, and the team members were taught the reason for this campaign and the

team was rewarded on the basis of the number of corrupt cadres or the amount of embezzled money it discovered.

methods to be used to carry it out (Huang 1998). In a word, it was a well-organized campaign. Thus, the activities of work teams in the villages and the villagers' responses were similar from village to village.

Nevertheless, we can find many variations in the specific process of the campaign. For example, the preparation for and proceedings of the struggle meetings against the cadres were different in details in Chenguang and Chen village (see Chan et al. 1992). In addition, while the destruction of so-called "feudalistic or superstitious" items was an important part of the Four Cleanups in Lin village, it was mainly carried out during the Cultural Revolution in other villages including Chenguang (see Chan et al. 1992, Huang 1998, Jang 1998, Kipnis 1997, and Potter and Potter 1990).

In chapters 3 and 4, I have dealt with the relationship between the state and society during the Maoist era. How can we define the Chinese state during that period? As many researchers and my own data suggest, it is apparent that Chinese state was far from an ideal totalitarian one. We can find tensions, conflicts, and bargaining between different cliques of top leaders, different ministries and sectors of the government, and different levels of the administration system. We can also find variations in policy implementation and the undertaking of campaigns. Moreover, the grass roots cadres and peasants were engaged in resistance, mostly in everyday forms, to the policies that interfered with their interests. However, the state was powerful enough to introduce many radical socio-economic changes to the rural society. Considering the vast area, the huge and diverse population, and the poor transportation and communication systems of the country, I argue that the CCP succeeded in establishing and ruling one of the strongest states that had existed. When Migdal states, "China...comes closest to this ideal type [of total transformation]"¹¹⁸ (1994:25), and Nathan admits, "If there was ever a regime in world history that came close to totalitarianism, ... , Mao's China was it" (1992: 238), both authors emphasize how strong the state was during the Maoist era.

¹¹⁸ By total transformation, Migdal means that "the state's penetration leads to the destruction, co-optation, or subjugation of local social forces and to the state's domination" (1994: 24).

Chapter 5

THE CHANGES IN VILLAGE ECONOMY AND POLITICS AFTER THE REFORMS

The primary chaos caused by the Cultural Revolution subsided in 1968 with the disbanding of the Red Guards and the mobilization of the People's Liberation Army. Though the Cultural Revolution officially ended in April 1969, and completely ended by 1976 with the purge of the Gang of Four, state policies continued to be focused on egalitarianism, class struggle, and the Soviet economic development plan until the end of 1978. The Chinese state, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, implemented several measures to cope with difficulties that faced the country. In this chapter, after a brief overview of the post-Mao power struggle among the state's top leaders, I will explore the processes of formulating and implementing economic and political reform measures that were applied to rural society at the national level, and then the implementation processes at the local level. Finally I will discuss changes in economics and politics in Chenguang village.

In April 1976, Deng Xiaoping, who had been in charge of the government since January 1975, under attack from the Gang of Four and Hua Guofeng, was relieved of his posts as the first vice-premier, vice-chairman of the party, vice-chairman of the Military Affairs Commission, and the People's Liberation Army chief of staff. Hua Guofeng was appointed premier and the first deputy chairman of the party.¹¹⁹ One month after Mao's death on September 9, 1976, Hua arrested the Gang of Four with the help of old comrades, putting the power struggle with the Gang to an end. He came to hold the reins of the party, government, and military. Since he had not proved himself as a competent and strong leader, he had to depend on Mao's blessing for his legitimacy.¹²⁰ Thus, he and his

¹¹⁹ The appointment indicated that he was selected as Chairman Mao's successor.

¹²⁰ It is reported that Mao said to Hua, "With you in charge, I'm at ease" (MacFarquhar 1993: 305).

supporters, who were mostly the beneficiaries of the Cultural Revolution, had no choice but to uphold the same policies that had brought about the Cultural Revolution.¹²¹

After the fall of the Gang of Four, the front line of the power struggle formed between Hua's group and the survivors of the Cultural Revolution, the old comrades. The latter, whose primary goal was to restore order and to overcome economic depression, demanded Deng Xiaoping's return. In July 1977, Deng was reinstated in all his former offices at the Third Plenum of the Tenth Central Committee. While the "whatever faction"—the beneficiaries of the Cultural Revolution—tried to stick to the Maoist model, Deng and his supporters—the survivors of the Cultural Revolution—rejected that model in favor of material incentive-based policies and more balanced and steadier economic growth. The shift of the party's emphasis from ideological to pragmatic policies was formally approved at the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee in December 1978. Using his authority which derived from his status as a member of the core group that had led the socialist revolution in China, from his experiences as one of the top leaders of both the party and the government, and from his deep connections with the party and the military, Deng provided a driving force for the reform (Fairbank and Goldman 1998). By August 1980, the top posts of the party and government were filled with his supporters, especially Hu Yaobang, as a leader of the newly reconstituted secretariat, and Zhao Ziyang, as a premier. Deng also tried to prevent the conservative revolutionary veterans from hurting his protégés and the reform programs (MacFarquhar 1993).

At the central level, the new leaders obtained dominance through power struggle. They formulated and implemented new policies, so called reform policies, to overcome various difficulties that the country was facing. In this chapter, I will examine how these new policies were formulated and implemented at the local level and what changes they provoked in the economy and politics of the village.

¹²¹ Hua and his supporters are called the "whatever faction" because they accepted the following formula. "Whatever policy Chairman Mao decided upon, we shall resolutely defend; whatever directives Chairman Mao issued, we shall steadfastly obey" (MacFarquhar 1993: 312).

1. Dismantling of the People's Commune

(1) Return to the family mode of production

It is well known that the early success of reform policies in rural areas gave the reformers power to overcome actual and/or possible objections from all sectors of the society and thus to spread their mission throughout the country. The goal for rural areas was to improve labor productivity and the standard of living. In the case of grain production, which the state had strongly stressed, total output had increased steadily during the Maoist era, but it had been partially offset by the large increase of population, which meant that the per capita output of grain had stagnated. The commune system, which operated with the work-point system failed to motivate peasants to work harder. Therefore, the reformers tried to provide peasants with material incentives by establishing a direct connection between the quantity and quality of work and a person's income. This eliminated excessive egalitarianism in the work-point system of distribution. Peasant income and living standards had stagnated during the Maoist period, too. In spite of increases in agricultural production, low agricultural prices set by the state and the high cost of agricultural machinery, fertilizers, pesticides, plastics, and so on, hampered improvements in peasant incomes (Watson 1983).

To cope with these problems, the state introduced the responsibility system as a means of giving peasants incentive to work hard by relating income more directly to output. It also raised procurement prices and reduced procurement volume to promote work incentives and raise the living standards. Private plots, sideline activities, and private markets, which were all attacked as capitalist practices during the Cultural Revolution, were promoted in order to unleash peasants' creativity as well as enthusiasm. The results were very successful. Not only did per capita output of agricultural products began to rise substantially after 1978, but per capita income in rural areas also increased rapidly in the early years of the reform period.

However, various evidence suggests that the state did not have a master plan for the reforms in rural areas. This is most evident in the implementation of the responsibility system. The system varied considerably from one area to another; it was introduced to different places at different times; and in many places, the peasants adopted particular practices that the state had prohibited at the early stage of reform. Moreover, the responsibility system spread to every corner of the country and moved quickly toward decreased collectivity and finally to the dismantling of collectives. The responsibility system was the focal point of rural reforms which resulted in far-reaching changes in rural society. Therefore, I would like to explore the evolution of the responsibility system and the role that the state and peasants played in it at the local level and the national level.

Who led the process of decollectivization, the peasants or the state? This is a very important question because decollectivization has not only influenced rural economy but also the political and social life of peasants. This question reveals much about the relationship between the state and peasants in the post-Mao era. In order to answer to the question, I will first examine the adoption of various types of the responsibility system by the local units and the center's stance on them.

As early as the spring of 1977, peasants in Anhui Province started to adopt family farming to raise per capita grain production that had fallen below the level of 1952 (Howard 1988; Kelliher 1992).¹²² Severe drought in 1978 sped up the spread of small group and household management systems. Wan Li, who became the first secretary of Anhui, approved experimentation with family farming. Due to the party's official position which strongly opposed household contracting at that time, Wan Li and provincial leaders of Anhui avoided publicly supporting the experiments. Wan said, "It should not be publicized, it should not be promoted, and it should not appear in newspapers. Let practice demonstrate whether or not it is correct" (Zweig 1997: 14). Meanwhile, in an attempt to

¹²² Family farming, according to Kelliher, refers to the responsibility system in which peasants occupied land and promised to fulfill a quota of sales to the state. The most common form in the late 1970s was "contracting output to households" (*bao chan dao hu*).

seek remedies for the stagnant agricultural production, secretary Zhao Ziyang and the Sichuan provincial government called for a system that linked productivity to work points. Zhao supported three types which peasants were practicing—“specialized contracts” (*zhuan ye cheng bao*), “contracting output to laborers” (*bao chan dao lao*), and “contracting output to groups” (*bao chan dao zu*). *Bao chan dao lao* began to be adopted as early as late 1977, but from 1978 when Zhao began to support it, *bao chan dao zu* spread all over Sichuan Province and to neighboring provinces, such as Guizhou and Yunnan (Zhou 1996). In Anhui and Sichuan, and to a lesser extent, Gansu and Shaanxi, reform-minded provincial leaders made the transition to the household responsibility system earlier and more easily than elsewhere. However, the household responsibility system was not adopted in most provinces until it was officially approved.

How did the official stance on responsibility system change? By late 1977, while reformers called for the reintroduction of material incentives in rural areas, it was rejected under the influence of the “whatever faction” or the Maoist hardliners, if you will. During the fall of 1978, national and provincial leaders expressed their support for these reforms. A debate over the basis of “truth” changed the attitude toward the responsibility system. The reformers, following Deng Xiaoping’s lead, resurrected Mao’s slogan of “seeking truth from facts” (*shi shi qiu shi*), that is, only a policy’s effects could determine its validity (Zweig 1987). Finally, at the famous Third Plenum in December 1978, payment based on output was officially accepted, but fixing output quotas on a household basis and the division of land for family farming were both prohibited.

Household contracting was finally permitted in backward areas at the Fourth Plenary Session in September 1979. At the work conference with all first secretaries of province level in September 1980, household contracting was finally authorized. During late 1980 and most of 1981, there were many debates on the issue of household contracting. The key question was whether or not it was compatible with the socialist system. Initially, negative opinion prevailed, but it gradually became more positive with

the system' success. The majority agreed that the collective economy would be maintained as long as land remained in the hands of collectives and the planned economy continued to be dominant. In April 1982, "comprehensive contracts" (*da bao gan*)¹²³ appeared in the People's Daily and they became more acceptable and widespread in the summer of 1982. During late 1982 and early 1983, the reformers who dominated central leadership put pressure upon the lower level cadres to implement "comprehensive contracts" or "contracting everything to households".

Kelliher (1992) and Zhou (1996) particularly maintain that the spontaneous and unorganized actions of farmers had opened the specific path for decollectivization, despite the opposition of the central leadership. To both authors, all the reformers did, even the most radical reformers did, was to not curb the farmers' movements. However, as Zweig (1997) argues, both provide only partial explanation for the decollectivization process by relying totally on peasant power. Considering the political and ideological power of the Chinese state in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the reformers' acquiescence and wait-and-see attitude toward local experiments did a lot more than Kelliher and Zhou assume. The central leaders could have crushed the peasant moves toward decollectivization, if they had wanted to. But they "chose to let the process work itself out" (Zweig 1997: 14).

Table 5.1 clearly shows the relationship between the official stance on "contracting everything to households" and its increasing popularity. Specifically, widespread adoption of "contracting everything to households" during late 1982 and early 1983 resulted from the state's push for universal implementation.¹²⁴ Therefore, the decollectivization process

¹²³ It is practically the same as "contracting everything to households" (*bao gan dao hu*). It involves the division of land, farming implements, and animals among households in return for taxes, sale quota, and contribution to collective funds. The household has autonomy on the production and consumption of agricultural products. Thus, even if land is retained by the collective, adopting "comprehensive contracts" actually means the decollectivization of agriculture.

¹²⁴ Unger (1985) makes this point clear by showing that twenty-four out of the twenty-eight villages in his sample adopted the "comprehensive contracts" system but the decision was made exclusively by levels far above the village. My data also support this point as we shall see later.

Table 5.1 Nationwide Adoption of the Production Responsibility Systems (in percent)

| | Jan. 1980 | Dec. 1980 | June 1981 | Oct. 1981 | June 1982 | Dec. 1983 |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Short-term work tasks (<i>xiao duan bao gong</i>) | 55.7 | 39.0 | 27.2 | 16.5 | 5.1 | |
| Contracting of specialized tasks (<i>zhuan ye cheng bao</i>) | — | 4.7 | 7.8 | 5.9 | 4.9 | |
| Contracting output to groups (<i>lian chan dao zu</i>) | 24.9 | 23.6 | 13.8 | 10.8 | 2.1 | |
| Contracting output to laborers (<i>lian chan dao lao</i>) | 3.1 | 8.6 | 14.4 | 15.8 | 12.6 | |
| Partial contracting output to households (<i>bufen bao chan dao hu</i>) | 0.03 | 0.5 | — | 3.7 | 2.2 | |
| Contracting output to households (<i>bao chan dao hu</i>) | 1.0 | 9.4 | 16.9 | 7.1 | 4.9 | |
| Contracting everything to households (<i>bao gan dao hu</i>) | 0.02 | 5.0 | 11.3 | 38.9 | 67.9 | 97.9 |
| Total of forms relating income to output | 29.05 | 51.8 | 64.2 | 82.2 | 94.6 | |
| Total, all types | 84.75 | 90.8 | 91.4 | 98.7 | 99.7 | |

Source: Yang (1996)

can be fully understood only if we recognize the combination of peasants' initiatives and the reformers' protective attitude toward the peasants' spontaneous actions.

Tianjin City and Ninghe County exemplify cases in which the leadership cautiously followed the official stance on responsibility system. They were quick in implementing "comprehensive contracts" when the central leadership showed strong support for this practice.¹²⁵ In Tianjin City, the number of production teams that adopted "comprehensive contracts" grew rapidly from about 40 percent in the first half of 1982 to about 70 percent in the second half. Under the strong influence of the Central Document No. 1 (1983), which argued for the need to support the masses' demand for adoption of the contracted family operation wherever it existed, at the end of 1983 84.1 percent of all teams in the city practiced "comprehensive contracts"—the proportions were high in five counties, being over 90 percent, but low in four suburban districts and three coastal districts being 58 and 57 percent respectively (DTNB 1990).

In the early years of the reform period, the production responsibility system was introduced to Ninghe County as quickly as the national average—more than 90 percent of production teams in the county adopted various forms of the responsibility system in July 1980. However, the adoption of the types in which income was directly related to output and individual peasants and households had more decision-making power in agricultural activities was somewhat slower. In May 1981, while 98.5 percent of production teams adopted responsibility systems, compared with national average of 91.4 percent in June 1981, 38.5 percent of them used the types in which payment was determined according to production; only 2 percent implemented "contracting everything to households", compared with national average of 64.2 percent and 11.3 percent respectively in June. The evolution of the responsibility system sped up in a year. The proportion of production teams that adopted the types in which peasants were paid according to their production jumped to 72.3

¹²⁵ Official documents clearly show that Tianjin City and Ninghe County had made intensive efforts to push the implementation of "comprehensive contracts" to realize the spirit of the Central Document No. 1 (1983) (DTNB 1990, NDBW 1991).

percent, and “contracting everything to households” was adopted by 57.4 percent of teams in August 1982. Ninghe County, however, was still one of the regions where the evolution of responsibility systems was slow (see Table 5.1 for the comparison). Between late 1982 and early 1983, it finally caught up with other regions—most of teams (97.4 percent) adopted “comprehensive contracts” in March 1983 (NDBW 1991).

The Chenguang Brigade was one of many brigades that adopted “comprehensive contracts” at the end of 1982. This means that it was one of the places that adopted “comprehensive contracts” late in terms of the national average but did so soon after the central leadership began to push for the adoption. For one reason, Chenguang village had been obedient to the higher authorities’ requests, as the collectivization process of the village illustrates. Furthermore, collective agriculture was successfully implemented in the brigade; in spite of its small per capita cultivated land, both the state purchase quotas for grains and the income level of Chenguang Brigade had been one of the highest in the commune. As in many places where collective farming was working well and the peasants were relatively better-off, the adopting of “comprehensive contracts” occurred quite abruptly and involuntarily.

Chenguang villagers were not unfamiliar with the situation at that time, though. As central leadership began to approve of household contract systems, the villagers read newspapers and heard radio reports of how these systems worked and how successful they were in many places. They also knew that they were spreading rapidly and widely throughout rural areas. They, therefore, thought they might have to implement some kind of household contract systems someday, but they were still surprised that the day came so quickly and so suddenly.

The villagers accepted the fact calmly and without open resistance. An old man told me about the villagers’ reaction to this change. “We all knew that when the higher level decided to do something, there was nothing we can do about it. We had already seen and learned enough. We also knew that it was dangerous to support or oppose to state policies

in loud voices after experiencing so many policy changes.” Generally speaking, most of villagers welcomed the changes that would give them much more autonomy and freedom in economic activities, as they had done in the early 1960s when they were given material incentives to raise productivity and income. This time, however, some of them worried that too much autonomy would result in decreased protection from the collective.

Specifically, the families that lacked labor power worried that they might not be able to produce enough grain to feed themselves after paying taxes and contributing to collective withholdings and fulfilling sales quotas to the state.¹²⁶ Some cadres and former cadres were among the most confused and anxious. The current cadres at that time worried that individual farming, even without individual land ownership, would seriously undermine the basis of the power and advantages they had enjoyed under the collective system. Some long-time party members were frustrated. Zhang Hongfeng, who had just retired from the brigade party secretary, expressed his feelings at that time:

I was disturbed. The party had long propagandized how good the socialist revolution and collective agriculture had been to us peasants. I worked very hard to follow the party’s lead because I believed what I had been told and I liked most of changes after the socialist revolution. Then, suddenly we had to adopt the responsibility system which was close to the capitalist farming. I was confused and upset.

In a sense, the party’s movements, to them, were no more than self-negation, thus their own self-negation.¹²⁷

The implementation of household contract system was started by dividing up farmland among village households. There are two ways of land division. The first way is to divide land on a per capita basis, and the second way is on a labor force basis. While the

¹²⁶ It is interesting that the households that lacked labor power objected to the organization of the Higher-level APC, the collective agricultural system (see chapter 3).

¹²⁷ This is the reason why the central leadership got involved in the heated debates in 1980 and 1981. The radical reformers won out by arguing that the household contract systems would remain within the boundary of socialist agriculture as long as the land was retained by the collectives. However, we can barely find socialist elements in those systems, especially in “comprehensive contracts” that became universal form of agricultural management system.

former focuses on maintaining equality among households, the latter relies on maximizing productivity, thus conforming better to the spirit of reform. Chenguang village chose to compromise between the two, giving more weight to the latter. That is, 70 percent of all cultivated land except private plots was distributed to households on the basis of labor force (*an laodongli fen*) and the remaining 30 percent on a per capita basis (*an renkou fen*).¹²⁸

All the arable land, except the section of private plots in the brigade, were divided into six sections, and each household was allotted one piece of land from each section. Thus, each household's land was scattered to all six sections. First, the size of each household had to be determined. If the section belonged to the land distributed on the basis of labor, one able-bodied male laborer was reckoned to be one person and a half, and all the others were reckoned to be one person. In the section distributed on a per capita basis, all villagers had equal rights to land. Which particular pieces the households would get was determined by drawing lots. How much land they would cultivate was measured not in terms of area but in terms of projected grain yield of the strips. That is, they adjusted the area of the plots each household would get according to their expected yield. The smaller the expected yield of grain from the plot allotted to a household was, the larger area the household would get. The per capita area of land distributed to each household, therefore, varied according to the quality of land. Finally, the villagers made arrangements that closely-related households, such as father-son and brothers, would get adjacent pieces. Those arrangements made it easier to help each other in the busy season, or to cultivate

¹²⁸ Several studies acknowledge the use of these two criteria for land distribution (e.g., Christiansen 1987; Hartford 1985; Potter and Potter 1990; Putterman 1989; Selden 1993). Most of the studies that deal with the land distribution process do not delve into this subject. For example, the researchers simply state that the land was distributed on a per capita basis in the villages of Chen (Chan et al. 1992), Fengjia (Kipnis 1997), Gao (Gao 1999), Hongqi (Jang 1998), Houhua (Seybolt 1996), Lin (Huang 1998), and Qiaolou (Ruf 1998). That does not mean, however, the labor force criterion was not applied to the land distribution process in these places, not only because except for Jang and Ruf, the researchers describe the decollectivization process very briefly, but also because they do not clearly state that the labor force criterion was excluded. There are two studies that give instances of using the labor force criterion; half the rice land was distributed to households on per capita basis and half on the basis of labor force in Zengbu (Potter and Potter 1990), and land was allocated to households by a combination of 70 percent per capita basis and 30 percent per labor force basis in a village in Jiangxi Province (Hartford 1985).

others' land.¹²⁹ It was a return to an old way of helping each other once the institutionalized cooperation and social protection of collectives had gone.

The Document No. 1 (1984) lengthened the period of household land tenure up to at least fifteen years. Chenguang village decided to keep the tenure of seventy percent of the land intact for fifteen years. At the same time, population changes had to be taken into account to maintain fairness in land distribution. So, the village allotted a section of land distributed on a per capita basis for that purpose. They planned to redistribute that section every five years and actually did so twice until they adopted a new system in 1995. About one *mu* of farmland was allotted to each person, including paddy and dry fields.

In return for the land households received from the collective (brigade), they paid a “contract fee” (*chengbao fei*) between 100 and 40 *yuan*, according to the quality of the land. The brigade, later the village, assumed the roles of collecting the fees and paying for agricultural taxes, saving for the general reserve fund and the welfare fund, meeting production fees including electric charges for irrigation, the maintenance and depreciation charges of the irrigating machines, and wages of irrigation workers, and paying salaries of the village cadres.¹³⁰ They were also required to fulfill the state grain quotas—80 *jīn* of unhusked rice per *mu*.

Besides land, some of the collective property, mainly draft animals and farm tools, was also distributed to the households. The village cadres set the prices for donkeys, horses, carts, hoes, harrows, tractors, small trailers, diesel engines, and so forth, and then collected applicants for each item. If the number of applicants was greater than the number of items, lots were drawn to determine the buyers. Some collective property was kept in the hands of the village. The village continued to own a transformer and water pumps

¹²⁹ There were many cases in which elderly parents divided their land among their sons in return for their living expenses. There were also several cases in which brothers cultivated land in place of others who had moved or who were too busy with other businesses.

¹³⁰ It is called “lump-sum tax (or rental) obligation on the part of peasant tenants” (Kueh 1985: 124).

which were operated by village employees, as well as farming tools like electric motors, and *tuoliji* which were rented to the villagers for agricultural use.¹³¹

The village implemented a new system of land distribution in 1995. They divided the farmland into three types: “grain ration land” (*kouliangtian*), “contract land” (*chengbaotian*), and “collectively-managed land” (*jiti jingying de tian*). As grain rationing had guaranteed the subsistence of peasants under the collective agricultural system, the grain ration land was distributed among households, on a per capita basis, which would remain unchanged for six years. 1085 *mu* of paddy fields were divided up among the villagers, so every eligible person received 0.564 *mu*.¹³² That area of paddy field, even the worst in quality, could yield roughly the amount of one adult’s yearly consumption of rice in the case of a normal harvest. The distributed land was comprised of three sections, and everyone got a piece of land from each section. All the households drew lots to decide which particular portion of field they would get. At this time, the quality of land was totally disregarded because the village charged exactly same amount of money for grain ration land (80 *yuan* in 1995 and 100 *yuan* in 1996). The criteria for eligibility for receiving grain ration land were the *hukou* and residence. In principle, all the peasants who registered and lived in the village received land, but there were several exceptions. Women who married into Chenguang village before the land redistribution received land even though they had not transferred their *hukou*, and those who married out of Chenguang village before the redistribution without transferring their *hukou* did not receive land even though they still registered at the village. Therefore, while the family of a bride-to-be tried to delay the wedding until after an approaching redistribution, the family of a groom-to-be sought to hasten the wedding in order to receive the land for the newcomer (see also Ruf 1998: 129). Some of the sent-down youths who had transformed their *hukou* into non-agriculture but had not got the positions of state employees (*guojia gongren*) and their

¹³¹ *Tuoliji* is a machine used in the threshing process. It is used to separate grains from the small pieces of straw, dirt, and so on. About 10 *tuolijis* were still owned by the village and rented to the peasants.

¹³² The area of grain ration land formed about two-thirds of total farmland and four-fifths of total paddy field of Chenguang village.

children up to high school age received land, even though they did not register in the village. Because the grain ration land would not be changed for six years, several households cultivated an extra portion of land that women had received before moving out of the village.

The second type of land called contract land was basically rented to villagers in exchange for contract fees that were set by village leaders according to the quality of the plots. There are several kinds of such land. First, about 75 *mu* of paddy fields were divided into two types. About 15 *mu* was allotted to the “households that have priority to contract land” (*youxian bao de hu*). When the land was distributed in 1995, those who lived in the village but had not registered could contract 0.5 *mu* per person for six years if they wanted, of which contract terms were nearly equivalent to the grain ration land. The intention of this practice was to make these households self-sufficient in grain just like the others who received the grain ration land. They had to pay about 30 to 50 percent more than the villagers paid for the grain ration land, but it was still much lower than the amount they would have spent buying rice in the free market. The remaining 60 *mu* of rice fields were contracted out to applicants on the basis of one *mu* per household every year. The applicants drew lots to determine who contracted which piece of land; there were 127 applicants in 1996. The yearly contract fees for paddy fields were between 300 and 400 *yuan* per *mu* in 1996.

Second, there were 200 *mu* of dry fields located in the south of the village, where the villagers cultivated corn, cotton, sorghum, soy bean, and so forth. Since it was considered that cultivating those crops was unprofitable, there were not many applicants, so one household could even contract 7 *mu*.¹³³ The contracts were fixed at a term of three years and an average of 100 *yuan* per *mu* a year.

Third, 40 *mu* of dry fields located in the west of the village were divided into three pieces (15, 15, and 10 *mu*) and contracted to three villagers to grow apples and grapes for

¹³³ They contracted the land either because they wanted to feed pigs and chickens they were raising or because they did not have better jobs.

fifteen years. The contract fee was fixed at 160 *yuan* per *mu* a year.¹³⁴ Actually the use of the land was limited to growing fruit, according to the request of the township government.

The last kind of contract land was 75 *mu* of vegetable gardens (*yuantian*) which is considered as the top-quality (*toudeng*) land.¹³⁵ Two villagers contracted 23 *mu* for ten-year term at 608 *yuan* a year.¹³⁶ They grew grapes on 15 *mu* and vegetables on the remaining area. Among 52 *mu* of land where vegetables were planted, 17.5 *mu* was contracted to a villager at a yearly fee of 160 *yuan* per *mu* for nine years, and the remaining 34.5 *mu* was divided into pieces of one or two *mu* of land whose contracts were fixed at twelve years at an average of 200 *yuan* per *mu*.

A peculiar plot of land, the last category, was 140 *mu* of collectively-managed land. Instead of collecting the unhusked rice (*daogu*) from each household to fulfill the state sales quota, the village specified the use of this land as production of the rice for the state sales quota. The management method is very similar to “contracting output to work groups with payment reckoned according to output” (*bao chan dao zu, lian chan ji chou*). The village signed a contract with a group of people—17 workers of a village farm raising pigs and chickens in 1995 and 2 villagers considered to be faithful and experienced in 1996. According to the contract, the village provided the group with all the costs and materials for rice cultivation, which were determined at the usual level. The group had to hand over all the harvest to the village. The production target was set at 600 *jin* of unhusked rice per *mu* (total 84,000 *jin*).¹³⁷ If the target was exceeded, half of excess amount would be paid to the

¹³⁴ Many villagers criticized the village leaders’ decisions about this land because they thought the term of contract was too long and the contract fee too low. Even though the amount of the contract fee seemed high in 1995, they argued, it would too low in 15 years. The leaders rationalized their decisions by saying that they had to divide up the land into large pieces and they could not set the contract fee too high because of the large amount of initial investment to grow fruit.

¹³⁵ This type of land was private plots until 1992 when the county required experimenting with a new way of raising rice seedlings before transplantation. The village took the private plots from the villagers to try the new method, but it required three times as much labor as the old way. After two years of experiments, the village decided to stop and contract out the land to individuals for growing vegetables and fruit instead of giving it back to each household.

¹³⁶ The contract fee for this land seems too high, compared with the land discussed above. There are two main reasons for this. One is that grapes were already being grown there, so no investment for young trees and equipment was necessary. The other is that the value of land was rapidly rising according to the rapid growth of economy overall.

¹³⁷ The state required the village to sell 50,000 *jin* of unhusked rice a year in recent years.

group based on the free market price of rice as of November 20th of the year. If the target was not reached, the group would have to pay a penalty. In addition, the group could retain savings on cost targets. In 1995, according to the only case from I could get results, the group did not fulfill the production target, namely they failed to harvest 600 *jin* per *mu*, but no penalty was imposed on the group, and the village bore the loss.

This practice simplified the procurement process. As for the village, it could at least fulfill the state sales quota without dealing with each and every village household, pushing it to fulfill its share of quota, checking the rice, and so on. On the other hand, the villagers could also save the time and energy needed for the procurement process in exchange for about 0.07 *mu* per person.¹³⁸ This transaction was not bad for them, either, according to the villagers, assuming the work group could fulfill the production target. As the case of 1995 shows, it was realistically impossible for the village to impose penalties on the work group, thus the village could not help covering the loss, which would eventually come down as the villagers' burden.

Chenguang village's land redistribution in 1995 contains several important points that I want to address in relation to the state policy. From the mid-1980s onwards, the state promoted the commodity production and specialization in farming (Ash 1993). Following this policy, Chenguang village contracted land for growing vegetables and fruit, part of which was contracted out to individuals in large parcels. Along the same policy line, the state's compulsory procurement was replaced by a contract procurement which meant the contract became voluntary. In reality, however, the contract was often enforced (Yao 1994). As the newly-allotted 140 *mu* of collectively-managed land indicates, Chenguang had to fulfill the sales quota received from the township government, even though the quantity of quota decreased.

¹³⁸ Suppose the average rice yield per *mu* in Chenguang village is 900 *jin*. This means that each person sacrificed 63 *jin* by giving up 140 for the procurement. Before 1995, the villagers handed over 80 *jin* per *mu* of land they cultivated. Under the new system, 1 *mu* is almost equivalent to two persons' grain ration land. Therefore, the villagers gave up about 120 *jin* instead of delivering 80 *jin*.

In order to promote investment in land and enhance land utilization, the state legalized the transfer of contracted land among peasant households with or without compensation, and also introduced the new land contract that extended the term of contract by 30 years in 1994–1995. These measures were poorly realized in Chenguang because the village decided in 1995 that the grain ration land would be redistributed in six years. Only 115 *mu* out of 390 *mu* of total contract land was leased for ten or more years. Moreover, although there were several cases that villagers cultivated others' grain ration land, the arrangements for such practices were made informally between family members. That is, the formal transfer of land use rights was not yet practiced in Chenguang.

In sum, the latest land distribution in 1995 shows that Chenguang village tried to respond to the state's call for the specialization and commodity production in agriculture. It is apparent, however, that more emphasis was given to the traditional idea that "farmland was a safeguard, an insurance for farmers" (Fahlbeck and Huang 1997: 83), which was strengthened by the lack of social welfare in rural areas.

The agricultural reform first implemented in Chenguang village at the end of 1982 resulted in the decollectivization of agriculture. Once the land was distributed to the villagers, even though the ownership still remained in the hands of the collective (first the brigade and then the village), almost all the decisions about agricultural production and consumption were made by individuals.¹³⁹ Each household acted as a unit, for example, in distributing the grain ration land, contracting the contract land, paying for the grain ration land, and cooperating for the cultivation. Therefore, we can say that agricultural production activities since the end of 1982 resembled the older "family mode of production" without private land ownership.

¹³⁹ The decision-making power in some agricultural activities still belongs to the collective (a village). For example, the village makes decisions about irrigation, including when to start to grow rice seedlings and transplant them. It also determines how much grain or money households have to hand over for the state sales quota, collective withholdings, and village working expenses, including the salaries of village cadres.

(2) Reforms in the political sphere

Many leaders who rose to power in late 1978, including Deng Xiaoping, had suffered significantly during the Cultural Revolution. They blamed both the chaos and violence of the Cultural Revolution and the subsequent damages on the arbitrariness of Mao's concentrated personal power. This point of view was shared not just by the victims of the Cultural Revolution but by most central leaders as well. This was why Deng avoided assuming the highest offices and why the central leaders introduced several political reforms. They sought to institutionalize certain procedures and rules through the political reforms in order to prevent the arbitrariness of power from damaging the country (Fairbank and Goldman 1998).

On the other hand, reforms in the political sphere were necessary for economic development, the primary goal of the post-Mao leadership. That is, the economic reforms represented by marketization and privatization proved productive, and this sped up economic development. From the reform leaders' perspective, the economy had to be unleashed from the tight control of politics in order to keep up the development. However, the reform leadership did not intend to follow the Western-style system of democracy and checks and balances. This was clearly expressed in Deng's "four cardinal principles" (*sixiang jiben yuanze*): the socialist road, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the leadership of the CCP, and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought.

The people's commune system through which rural society had been managed and governed since 1958 had several main characteristics. First, it was an organization in which administrative and economic management was integrated (*zhengshe heyi*). Second, it practiced the three-tier ownership system, production teams being basic units (*san ji suoyou, dui wei jichu*). Third, there existed strict subordinate relationships between the peasants and collectives and between the upper and lower level units and cadres. Finally,

all the activities were under the highly unified control of the party. Reform policies, however, were to bring about changes in those characteristics.

The household responsibility system virtually dissolved the three-tier ownership system, and individual households replaced production teams as the basic economic units. Political reforms were introduced to change other characteristics. Two major targets of the political reforms were the separation of governmental administration from economic management (*zhengshe fenkai*) and the withdrawal of the party from daily micromanagement and administration (Bernstein 1989; Jacobs 1985; Li and Wang 1995; Potter and Potter 1990; White 1987; White 1990). The other goals were to reduce the number of grass roots cadres, to recruit younger and better-educated persons for cadres, and to promote them to the higher positions; to stabilize rural leadership;¹⁴⁰ to streamline rural administration; and to enhance village-level autonomy and peasants' democratic practices (White 1990). Then, how were the goals of the political reforms reflected in the concrete policies?

Communes and production brigades were replaced with townships (*xiang*)/towns (*zhen*) and administrative villages (*xingzheng cun*), respectively. Township people's governments (*xiang renmin zhengfu*) and villagers' committees (*cunmin weiyuanhui*) were installed to take over governmental functions. Communes' economic functions were transferred to subordinate economic management committees (*jingji guanli weiyuanhui*). Economic functions of villages were taken over by organizations with various names, such as agricultural cooperatives (*nongye hezuoshe*), economic joint cooperatives (*jingji lianheshe*), joint cooperatives of agriculture, industry, and commerce (*nong gong shang lianheshe*), or general companies of agriculture, industry, and commerce (*nong gong shang zong gongsi*), and so on. Village small groups (*cunmin xiaozu*) replaced the production teams, but the former has never played as important a role as the latter used to do.

¹⁴⁰ Stable and effective village leadership has been requested because of the deterioration of many village organs and the subsequent break-down of collective services caused by decollectivization (White 1990).

Since all those changes at the local level were closely related to the nationwide changes, I would like to examine the national trends and local movements, focusing on the village level. In many places where the production responsibility system was adopted, the rural governmental system broke down. As the economy was decollectivized, the control system, a large part of which was based on collective economy, no longer functioned. To cope with that problem, the peasants organized self-governing bodies, first starting in several villages of Luocheng County and Yichan County in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. The party committees and governments of both counties publicized the effectiveness of these village organizations in dealing with a lack of rural control, and similar organizations were formed in other regions (Li and Wang 1995).¹⁴¹

The term “villagers’ committee” first officially appeared in the PRC constitution adopted in 1982. The constitution (Art. 111) defined the villagers’ committee as a “basic level mass organization of self-government.” The CCP Central Committee in Document No. 36 (1982) requested that each region carry out experiments with the villagers’ committee. In the “Circular on Separating Government Administration and Economic Management and Setting up Township Governments” issued in October 1983, the Central Committee and the State Council more precisely prescribed how to set up the villagers’ committees and what characteristics, responsibilities, and organizing principles they would have. They also addressed the needs to enact unified regulations on the villagers’ committees. It was not, however, until 1988 when the “Organic Law of Villagers’ Committees of the People’s Republic of China” (*zhongguo renmin gongheguo cunmin weiyuanhui zuzhifa*) went into effect, that the organization’s establishment, characteristics, responsibilities, structures, and relationships with other units and organizations came to be defined in detail. For about three years there had been many meetings, debates, and

¹⁴¹ At this stage, those organizations were called like the “village public security leading group” (*cun zhi’an lingdao xiaozu*) and the “village management committee” (*cun guan hui*). The term for those organizations began to be fixed as a “villagers’ committee” (*cunmin weiyuanhui*) from the spring of 1981.

revisions in the central government, especially in the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and the Legal Affairs Commission of the National People's Congress.

Following CC Document No. 36 (1982), the Tianjin City party committee decided in the rural working conference to push for completion of reform of the commune system before the spring cultivation season (December 3-19, 1982), and the decision was published and circulated as the Tianjin City Party Committee Document No. 3 (1983) (DTNB 1990). In the wake of these movements, the Hongxing Commune transformed into a township and Chenguang Brigade into a village in 1983.

At the same time, a villagers' committee was set up to take over the governmental functions of the brigade, and two organizations were set up under the villagers' committee to take over the brigade's economic functions. One was the "Chenguang joint general company of agriculture, industry, and commerce" (*chenguang nong gong shang lianhe zong gongsi*). It was supposed to deal with all economic matters, as its name suggested, but as we shall see later, industry was its main focus. Interestingly, the village established another organization called an "agricultural cooperative" (*nongye hezuoshe*) to carry out the work related to agricultural production. Even though individual households had become the basic unit and had autonomy in agricultural production since the implementation of the household responsibility system, several tasks, especially rice cultivation, needed village-level plans and coordination, and the agricultural cooperative was set up in this regard.

The Chenguang villagers' committee consists of five members—a director (*zhuren*), a deputy director (*fuzhuren*),¹⁴² a head of the agricultural cooperative (*nongye hezuoshezhang*),¹⁴³ an assistant general manager of the joint general company of agriculture, industry, and commerce (*nong gong shang lianhe zong gongsi fuzongjingli*), and an accountant (*kuaiji*). Each member has his own work responsibilities. The director represents the village in the government administration and coordinates the village cadres'

¹⁴² People usually refer to them as a village head (*cunzhang*) and a deputy village head (*fucunzhang*).

¹⁴³ Villagers usually call him a *shezhang* or a *fucunzhang*, but the latter is not appropriate according to the formal system.

work.¹⁴⁴ He is especially responsible for the family planning work with a director of the women's works (*funü zhuren*). The deputy director is responsible for public security, dispute mediation, and the control of residential areas.¹⁴⁵ The head of the agricultural cooperative is in charge of providing village-level agricultural services and teaching scientific farming to individual peasants. The assistant general manager of the joint general company literally assists a general manager, and he mainly deals with the accounts of all the enterprises in the village. The accountant is in charge of the documents, as usual, but these officially defined responsibilities and tasks of members of the villagers' committee are somewhat different from what they actually do according to who takes which position. I will examine this point more thoroughly in a later section.

2. Two Broad Trends in Economic Change

The Chinese economy took off during the reform era. GDP (Gross Domestic Product) rose almost thirteenfold from 1980 to 1995, maintaining an average annual growth rate of over ten percent. During the same period, per capita income also increased immensely. The urban household per capita income available for living rose almost ninefold, and the rural household per capita income went up more than eightfold (CSY, 1996).

In the early years of the reform period (roughly until 1985), the main driving force of economic growth was agriculture. As we can see in Figure 5.1, the average annual

¹⁴⁴ Even though the villagers' committee is not an official part of state organizations, township government being the lowest official rung of state organization, it is expected to be a bridge between the state and society in rural China. According to the Organic Law that apparently defines the villagers' committee as a self-governing organization and not a governmental organ, the state practically treats the villagers' committee as a state organization. For example, the villagers' committee should communicate villagers' opinions, requests, and suggestions to the township governments (Art. 2); it should support the township government's work (Art. 3); it has to publicize the constitution, laws, regulations, and state policies and persuade villagers to fulfill their legal obligations (Art. 5).

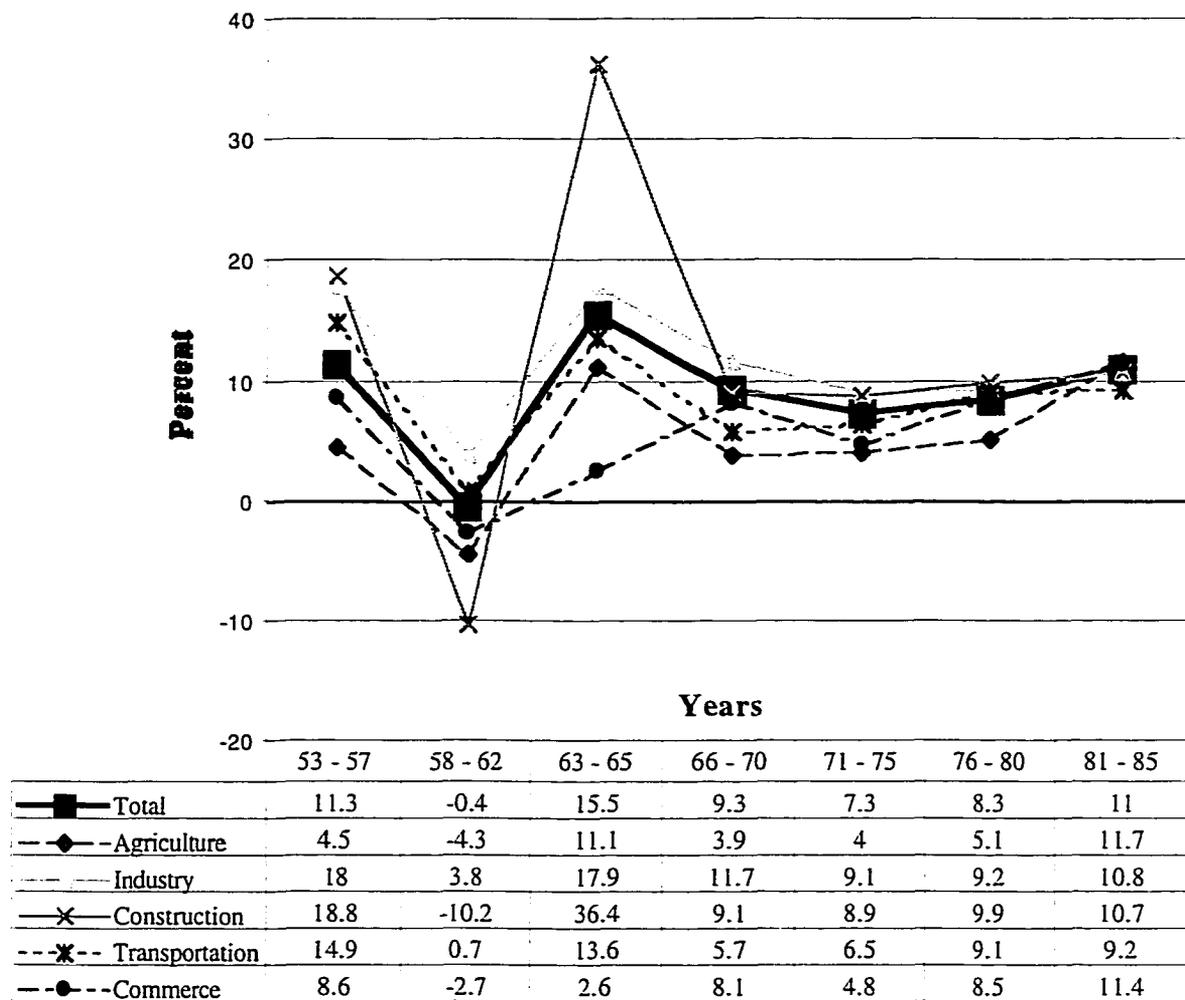
¹⁴⁵ It has been reported that peasants built their houses on the lands they contracted for agricultural use without permission in many villages. To prevent these problems, Chenguang village strictly controlled construction of houses according to the regulations. The deputy director was in charge of the distribution of building sites and settling disputes that occurred in course of construction.

increase of the total output value of agriculture was the lowest except during the period between 1958 and 1965. Thanks to several agricultural reform policies, agriculture achieved the highest growth rate between 1981 and 1985 (CSY, 1986). The growth rate of the GDP and each industry look different after 1986. Between 1986 and 1990, the GDP grew 7.9 percent annually. While the annual growth rate of agriculture dropped to its lowest at 4.2 percent, that of industry was 9.3 percent. This trend got stronger during the next five years. The average annual growth rate of the GDP, agriculture, and industry was 12 percent, 4.2 percent, and 17.8 percent respectively from 1991 to 1995. That is, industry took the lead in Chinese economic development during the ten-year period from 1986 to 1995. In addition, during the same period, construction, transportation, and commerce also grew at the high rates of 10.9 percent, 10.3 percent, and 6.7 percent respectively.

This trend is closely related to two economic situations. One is the income of rural and urban households. While agriculture led in economic growth with high increase rates of output, the increase rates of annual per capita income of rural households were higher than that of urban households. The trend reversed, however, from 1986, and annual per capita income increased more rapidly in urban areas than in rural areas except in the two years of 1990 and 1995 (CSY, 1996).

The other situation is the rapid development of rural industry. Figure 5.2 shows changes in the composition of total output of rural society. The remarkable changes are the dramatic increase of industry in the composition of total output value while the relative importance of agriculture was markedly diminished. Besides, the proportion of transportation and commerce increased, which indicates diversification in rural economy.

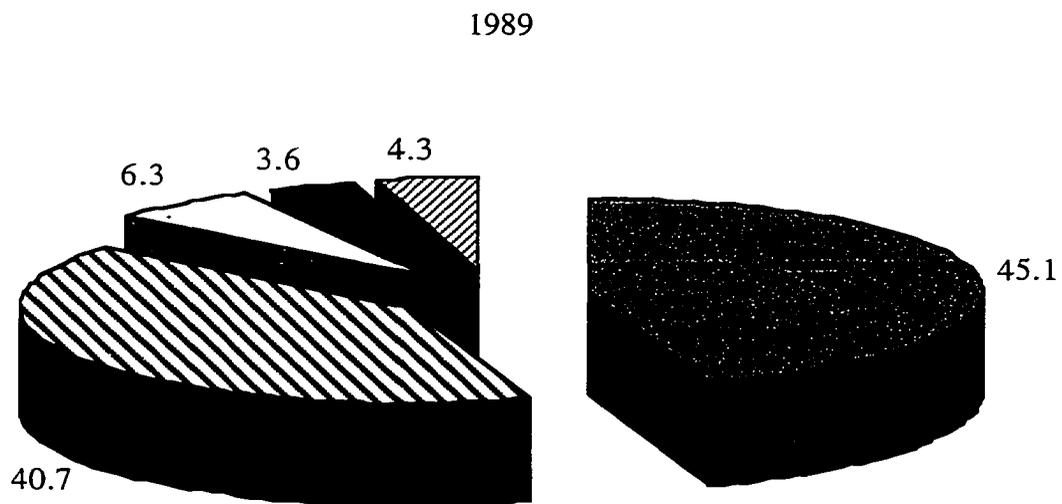
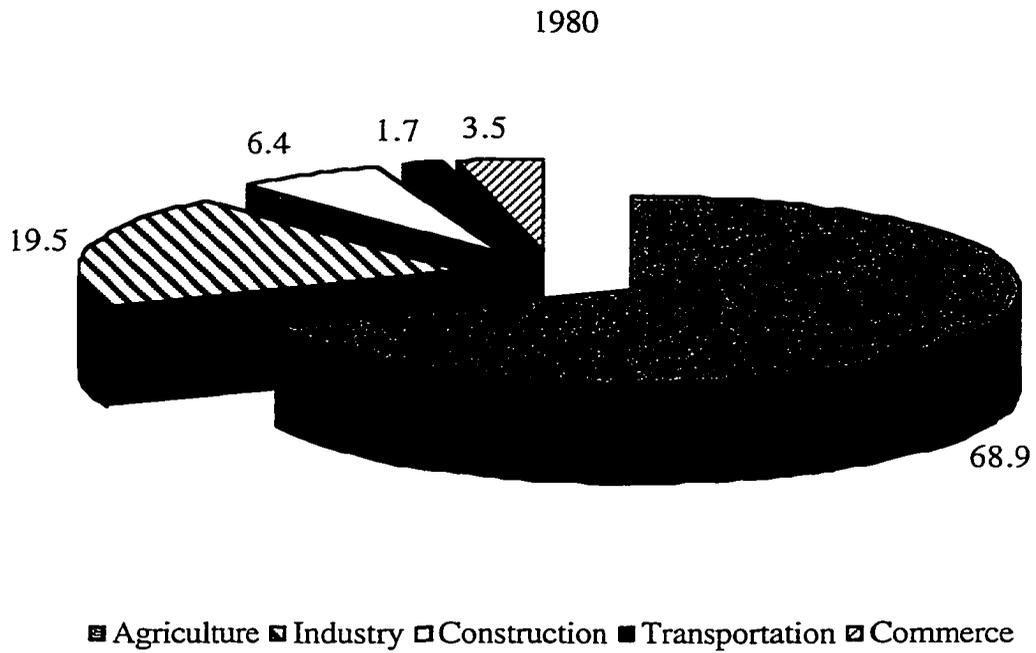
In this section, I will examine the changes in the economic system of Chenguang village. Some of the changes were led or guided by the state policies. Some of them were initiated by the peasants and later backed by the state usually in the form of measures. Yet



Source: CSY, 1986

* Total output value is the category used in the CSY, 1986

Figure 5.1 Average Annual Increase Rate of Total Output Value of Society*



Source: CSY, 1990

*1989 is the most recent year these data were available

Figure 5.2 Composition of Total Output Value of Rural Society*

there were others that occurred without much relation to the state. Generally speaking, most changes were directly or indirectly related to the reform measures.

We can find differences in economic changes at various levels of society, from the province down to the village level according to the specific conditions of their own. We can also find broad trends of changes. Two of the noticeable trends of changes in Chenguang village as well as in rural China in general, I think, are privatization and diversification.

(1) Privatization

An evident trend of economic changes we can find in Chenguang village is privatization. Economic activities previously under the control of the state or collectives have fallen into the hands of individuals. In some cases ownership has been privatized, and in others only management has been turned over to the individuals, leaving the ownership in the hands of the collective, mostly the village, which we should call “semi-privatization.” The former comprises most agricultural implements, grocery stores, and trading feed for animals and salt, and the latter includes agricultural land, animal farms, and village factories. While the privatization of ownership began early, in the mid-1980s, it was limited to small-scale, individual enterprises. Starting from around 1993, many collective estates including large-scale, collective enterprises owned by the village have been semi-privatized, namely, contracted out (*gei chengbao*) to individuals or groups of individuals who would gain the right to manage them and assume the responsibility for their management. Also, the number of estates given *chengbaos* is growing. The main questions in this section are: what were the specific processes of contract,¹⁴⁶ why the number were growing, and how far the privatization would proceed.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Since I already discussed the contract of land and farming implements in the previous section, I will deal with additional contracts here.

¹⁴⁷ The former cases will be included in the next section, the discussion of the diversification of economy.

The village chicken and pig farm and the fish farm were contracted out in 1996. Production teams used to raise pigs collectively during the commune period. They had to meet the state procurement quotas for pork and also distributed pork to the team members on the Spring Festival and the Mid-autumn Festival, but they stopped raising pigs under the strong influence of ultra leftist policies of the Cultural Revolution. The village opened a farm for raising pigs and chickens in the late 1980s by building eight stalls.¹⁴⁸ About twenty men including a manager and an accountant appointed by the villagers' committee worked there; they earned fixed wages. While the workers had a share in the profits when there were any, they did not bear any responsibility for a loss. Furthermore, there were no differences in pay according to the quantity and quality of work they performed, even though it was not easy to measure.

The village chicken and pig farm did not produce much profit. The financial situation was in difficulty and hit bottom in 1995. The main reason was that the price of feed was too high compared with those of pork and eggs. Especially in 1995, the price of corn, the main feed material doubled from the previous year but the price of pork and eggs were at a standstill. Therefore, the farm lost 370,000 *yuan* that it covered through loans from the village and banks.

The manager, Zhang Dushen, made known his intention to resign to the villagers' committee and the party branch at the end of 1995, and they decided to contract out the farm in early 1996. After several meetings in March and April attended by the village leaders, the farm was contracted to Zhang Dushen. The original proposal of the village was that the contractor would pay an annual fee of 100,000 *yuan* to the village. However, the final conditions of contract were that the contractor would pay the interest on the bank loans, thus the actual amount of the annual fee became between 40,000 and 50,000 *yuan*.

Chenguang village constructed a fish farm in 1994. The total area was about 140 *mu*, 100 *mu* of which was converted from a piece of a paddy field. In the first year, it was

¹⁴⁸ Individual households were already raising pigs and chickens on a small scale when the village farm opened.

collectively managed. After it suffered a loss, the village and the nine workers including a manager, Yang Dujin, agreed to transform management into a joint-stock system in 1995. Under this system, each party would get half of a loss or gain. This change, in an attempt to give material incentives to the workers, ended in failure, losing 180,000 *yuan* in 1995, much more than it had lost in the previous year. Even if a hike in feed prices which was out of the workers' control was to be blamed, the injuries and disease of the fish that aggravated an already bad situation were the result of poor management. The village recouped all the losses since it could not force the workers to bear their share of the loss. This led village leaders to the decision to contract out the fish farm.

From the winter of 1995, the village started to search for a contractor. It took a long time because of the high contract fee that the village wanted. In May, right after the fry were put into the fishponds, the contract fee was set at 220,000 *yuan* per year which was down from 300,000 *yuan* in the winter. The village decided to give Yang Dujin an opportunity to contract first, but he could not afford to pay that much of a fee, and he opposed the contract. He was supposed to manage the farm for eight years, not two years, according to the initial plan. Instead, the village contracted with Li Lianxue, the manager of the bag factory (*xiangbao chang*). He would pay 40,000 *yuan* a year for the first six years and then the fee would raise to 80,000 *yuan*. He would also shoulder the loan of 150,000 *yuan* that the village made to construct and run the farm as well as back pay of the workers that amounted to about 90,000 *yuan*.

In addition to the agricultural sector, the management of factories was also being privatized. There were five factories in Chenguang village in 1996. The plastic factory (*suliao chang*) has been in operation since 1972 and the rest of them—a bag factory (*xiangbao chang*), a pesticide factory (*nongyao chang*), a metal casting factory (*zhuxin chang*),¹⁴⁹ and a paper-box factory (*zhixiang chang*)—began operation in the reform

¹⁴⁹ While the literal meaning of *zhuxin* is boiling zinc, I translate the factory name into metal casting factory because that is what the factory is doing. Furthermore, I cannot find the exact meaning of *zhuxin* in dictionaries or from the interviews with villagers.

period. Among them, only two—the bag factory and the pesticide factory—were still run collectively. The others are run by individuals, and the metal casting factory was run by a man and was jointly owned by the village and him.

The plastic factory that once employed forty to fifty people reduced its business to four to five employees. Its products also changed from bags for chemical fertilizers and packing bags for mosquito nets in the early years to bottle caps. The village gave Zhang Fengyuan *chengbao* in 1994. Except for his obligation to pay the annual fee of 18,000 *yuan* to the village, Zhang Fengwen has full autonomy in running the factory.

The metal casting factory was established in 1993 with a joint investment of the village and Li Lianwen. His share of 18,000 *yuan* in the total investment was quite small, compared with the village's share of land, building, and 37,000 *yuan*. The factory run under the responsibility of Li Lianwen made 60,000 *yuan* in 1994, but it lost 40,000 in 1995. After settling all the accounts, including credit sales and loans, he got 33,000 *yuan* which was 15,000 more than his initial investment and the village took 21,555 *yuan* that was 15,500 *yuan* less than the initial investment.¹⁵⁰ The contract fee was set at 16,000 *yuan* for 1996 and undetermined for 1997. He would have full authority in factory management except in accounting. The village appointed Yan Shuhua as accountant of the factory because it needed to know the actual state of the factory's business.¹⁵¹

The paper-box factory was contracted to Zhang Zhengui in 1994, right after the factory was opened. The village made a contract with Zhang Zhengui to divide all the expenditures and revenues in half. After two and a half years of operation, the factory made a profit of 280,000 *yuan*, about 60,000 *yuan* per year for each part. The factory was operated under Zhang's complete authority. Despite strong competition, he earned a good

¹⁵⁰ When they made the contract, the two parties did not expect that Li Lianwen would be able to receive all the credit sales.

¹⁵¹ Yan Shuhua is an assistant general manager of the Chenguang joint general company of agriculture, industry and commerce.

sum of money for himself and the village.¹⁵² I will analyze the causes for his success in the next chapter.

What were the reasons for the privatization of the management of collective farms and factories? The villagers usually said, “Private management is more efficient than collective management” (*siren jingying bi jiti jingying xiaoliu gao*). Most villagers I talked with shared this view regardless of their personal backgrounds. I will examine specific cases in which collective management became privatized, and ask whether private management is really more efficient.

In April 1995, while I chatted with Zhang Huaixian, a former cadre for twenty years, the topic of the contract of the village pig and chicken farm came up. He said that the reason the farm suffered a loss was because they wasted too much labor and feed. He made his point by comparing the village farm with a pig-raising household. The private pig farmers made a profit even in 1995 when the village farm suffered a huge loss. He specifically mentioned a household whose scale was the largest among individual pig-raising households.

The household raised about 120 pigs, about one quarter of the number of pigs in the village farm. The household head, a man in his sixties raised the pigs with little help from other family members. He made a profit of over 10,000 *yuan* in 1994 and earned a little less in 1995. There are several factors that appear to have made a difference between the two farms: he mostly relied on self-supplied feed, thus was not much affected by the increase of price of feed; he sold the pigs’ excrement as fertilizer; and he did not count his labor in his costs when he settled accounts. A simple comparison between the two cases may, therefore, be inappropriate, maybe even meaningless to discuss the efficiency of collective management because the pig-raising households also lost money.¹⁵³ Zhang

¹⁵² There were about forty paper-box factories in Ninghe County alone in 1996.

¹⁵³ Actually, several pig-raising households lost money in 1995 mainly because of the bad timing of buying and selling pigs. If they bought piglets when they were expensive and sold pigs when pork was cheap, there was no way they could make money. Moreover, most of them were small-scale farms, so one or two instances of bad timing could be a decisive blow to their yearly income.

Huaixian, on the other hand, was right that the village farm employed too many workers and depended upon the market too much for the supply of feed. That is to say, there were many aspects in management that had to be improved. After the contract was done, the village head, Zhang Huaizuo, told me, “The management of the farm became private this year. It must be good (*jinnian yangzhichang shi siren jingying de. yinggai hao*).”

The situation of the village fish farm was similar to the pig farm. I had two important conversations concerning the contract of the fish farm. The first one was with Zhang Hongfeng. He said,

I was the first manager of the fish farm. I oversaw the construction and watering of the ponds. But in less than two months after putting the fry into the ponds, I quit. I didn't like the employees' work ethic. They were insincere and didn't abide by the regulations. For example, they often went home before the closing hour. When they fed the fish, they were supposed to call the fish together by knocking a wood footing with a wood stick and scatter the feed handful by handful. But sometimes, especially when it's hot, they just poured a sack of feed into a pond at once. I couldn't stand those attitudes. But what could I have done? The reason why the village fish farm has suffered a loss is that the workers' mentality is no good [*bu xing*].

In early 1995 when the village was looking for a candidate to contract the fish farm, Zhang Huaizuo expressed a strong desire to contract it. Even though it had sustained a serious loss for two years, he claimed that fish farming was still a lucrative business. He believed that its main problem was poor management. He insisted that once he took over the management, he would be able to make a great profit on it. Since he was so sure of his idea, he jokingly asked me to lend him some money.

During my stay in the village, which lasted until November 1996, there were several changes in two farms after the contract. As for the pig and chicken farm, Zhang Dushen cut down the number of workers from twenty to eight and also reduced the wages of each worker.¹⁵⁴ He also reduced the number of chickens by two-thirds because they

¹⁵⁴ Only three workers—a manager, an accountant, and a technician—continued to work there and all others were new.

were expected to be less lucrative than pigs. The workers had to work more intensely and longer after the contract, with close supervision of the manager. In addition to these internal changes, the market situation got a little bit better. Even though the price of pork had gone down, corn and bran, the major materials for feed, sunk more in price. Although I do not have accurate data that can tell us about the results of private management because the account is settled on a yearly basis, the interim findings indicate much better results.

The fish farm, on the other hand, almost finished settling accounts when I left the village. It was expected to make a profit of about 20,000 *yuan* in 1996. Other than the pig and chicken farm, there were few internal changes in the first year. Li Lianxue appointed his nephew as a new manager, and he himself was not directly involved in management. Only two workers, including the manager, were replaced, and the wages basically remained intact. Profit came from two factors: just like pig-raising, the prices of feed dropped more than those of fish; the number of fish injured or sick decreased significantly, which was a sign of better management.

The next question I will explore is how far the privatization will proceed. Deng's idea of reforms is well expressed in the "four cardinal principles" or "socialism with Chinese characteristics" (*zhongguo tese de shehuizhuyi*), which means the Chinese leadership does not have any intention of discarding socialism completely, even though it introduced market economy in order to lead the rapid economic development. The basis of socialist economy in rural China is the collective ownership of land. Therefore, under the existing system of political economy, I do not see the possibility of the privatization of land ownership in the near future.¹⁵⁵ As for the farms and township-village enterprises

¹⁵⁵ Several studies deal with relationship between the economic reform and the land use or land ownership in rural China (e.g., Ash 1993; Chen 1996; Fahlbeck and Huang 1997; Selden 1993; Zhang, Huang, and Rozelle 1997). They argue that under the household responsibility system of agriculture, the rights of peasant households over contracted land is poorly defined, and this results in the problems of the lack of investment in farmland and exploitation of the land's productivity. In order to stabilize the land contract relationship, and encourage peasants to improve the land's productivity, the term of contract extended by 30 years, and the trade of land use rights was permitted. Still, peasants are not allowed to sell or purchase the land. Furthermore, peasants are prohibited from using the farmland other than farming; that is, they cannot use the land for industrial or residential purposes. Such changes require permits from the village, or often the higher authorities. Actually, there is a widely accepted argument that only the full transfer rights of the

(*xiangzhen qiye*), it is reported that their ownership has been privatized in some places. As we have seen earlier, however, Chenguang village is one of the places where the collective economy had been run well during the Maoist era and where the collectivity is still relatively strong. Therefore, there was no plan to put them up for sale.

The remaining question is about the contract of the two still-collectively-managed factories. The pesticide factory was likely to be contracted first. It had not made a profit since it was established in 1993. It has not extended its markets as much as expected. To make things worse, it had too many expenses. According to the secretary of the party branch, Zhang Zhenxing, “The biggest problem is management. Over 90 percent of pesticide factories made profits in 1997. But our factory lost some. That’s mainly because the management was too loose.” In the spring of 1998, he replaced the manager of the factory to tighten the management. That move was not enough to reverse the trend, but it expected to lose less money than in 1997, and part of the loss was due to the heavy rain that washed the products away. The specific plan for contract has not been formed yet, but many villagers I interviewed expected the contract of the factory in the near future.

As for the bag factory, it is hard to get a clear idea about its future. The first reason is that it makes a big contribution to the village economy. According to the village revenue and expenditures report in 1994, the total output value of the bag factory constituted 67.2 percent of the village output or 73.9 percent of the total output value of industry. The number of employees and fixed assets of the factory constituted 73.7 percent and 72.9 percent respectively of those of all village factories combined.

The second reason is that it provided a lot for Zhang Zhenxing, the party secretary. Technically speaking, the bag factory consisted of two factories—Chenguang bag factory and Tongda Traveling Goods Co. Ltd. (*tongda lüyou zhipin youxian gongsi*). It was in 1992 that the Tongda Co. Ltd. was separated from the bag factory with a Hong Kong

peasants, that is the rights over the purchase, sale, rent, contracting, or inheritance of the land, would be able to clarify the peasants’ rights over the land and to enhance the land’s fertility (Selden 1993). I think this argument is absolutely right. However, there has been no sign that the state will give up the socialist ideology of state ownership of the means of production and allow the private ownership of farmland.

businessman entering into partnership. They became two different accounting units with different names and different leaders—Li Lianxue for the Chenguang *chang* and Zhang Zhenxing for the Tongda *chang*, but they have always been run as one company with one accountant and one cashier. On paper, Tongda Co. Ltd. was larger than the Chenguang *chang*. One of the important reasons to establish Tongda, I think, is that Zhang Zhenxing wanted a post in which he could be directly involved in the company management. That was expected to provide him with a means to reinforce his influence not just in the village but in the outside world, too, and it did.

But it was getting hard to run a company the size of bag factory with the way that it has been run, as Zhang Zhenxing admitted:

The enterprises are moving in the direction of integration. That is, large enterprises are forming with higher technology and developed management skill. Under these circumstances, most of township and village enterprises including our bag factory will fall behind the large enterprises in technology, scale, management, the quality of products, and so on. Consequently, we are facing a matter of survival.

The bag factory had a debt of more than ten million *yuan*, which means it had to pay about two million *yuan* in annual interest alone. It would be possible to maintain the status quo or to improve a bit if there were enough orders to put the factory into full operation. Failing to do so, as in 1995 when the factory was closed for more than three months because of the lack of orders, required new loans to cover the interest on the old ones. Getting a new loan, however, was not as easy as before because the government and banks tightened the terms of credit.

I heard several villagers criticize the leaders of the factory for their management. Zhang Zhengui, the contractor of the paper-box factory, said,

The bag factory wastes too much money. There are too many rear-service personnel who don't contribute to production activity. And their salaries are too high. The typical case of wasting money would be four trucks [*huoche*] and two cars [*xiaoche*] for Li *changzhang* and Zhang *shuji* the factory owns. Think about how much they cost—the gas, the taxes, and the

salaries of the drivers.¹⁵⁶ You can save a lot of money if you remove just one of them.

A villager also expressed a similar view by saying that it was inappropriate for Li Lianxue to have a car and a cellular phone and to go to drink and dance. Though they did not specifically mention “*chengbao*,” they set forth the opinion that the factory was not being well run and the management had to be improved.

While I talked with a former cadre about the trend of contract in the village, I expressed a doubt about the possibility of contract of the bag factory because I thought no one in the village would be able to afford it. He pointed out, though, how much the factory was in debt. If someone could deal with the loans and their interest, according to him, he could contract the factory. It was early 1996 when my conversation with him took place, which means that I had spent barely two months in the village at that time. Later I heard a lot about the advantages of private management, the inefficient management of the bag factory, the loans, and the possibility of the contract of it. If the contract of the bag factory becomes a topic of formal discourse in the village, it will be an all-encompassing and complicated one because many people’s interests, a huge amount of money, and considerable power are at stake.

(2) Diversification

The other evident trend of economic changes is diversification. Reform measures have opened up new opportunities for the peasants to make money. Not only have the peasants taken these opportunities, but they have also created more. This trend is closely related to the diversification of rural economy I mentioned in the previous section. That is, while the importance of agriculture in the rural economy has decreased, that of industry,

¹⁵⁶ In China, gas is expensive, and the taxes for automobiles are very high. Drivers’ salaries are also much higher than the fellow factory workers.

construction, transportation and commerce has risen (see Figure 5.2). Moreover, peasants are turning to agricultural activities other than grain production, which the state had required them to concentrate on. In 1993, grain production formed 44.4 percent of the total output value of farming (*zhongzhiye*) and 26.7 percent of that of agriculture, including forestry, animal husbandry, and fishery.

What was the situation in Chenguang? In 1993, grain production formed 93.3 percent of the income from farming and 43.8 percent of the income from all agricultural activities. The reason why grain production occupied such a large portion in agriculture is that paddy fields, where rice is exclusively grown, formed 81.3 percent of the total cultivated land of the village. The percentage of agriculture, however, in the total income of the village was very low at 9.3, which means that the economy has been moving in a very different direction from the Maoist era, when agriculture had been a major source of income. I have to use the 1993 data because it was the most recent available at the time of my fieldwork. If we consider the fact that more households began to raise animals from the mid-1990s and the village opened a large fish farm in 1995, it is certain that the percentage of farming was going down. The relatively large plots of land between 10 and 23 *mu* were contracted to the peasants for the cultivation of vegetables and fruits, starting from 1993. That has certainly further reduced the importance of grain cultivation in the village economy.¹⁵⁷

The land distribution practice in 1995 indicates agricultural changes. Farming, to most villagers, has been limited to the supplier of basic foodstuffs. The per capita grain ration land of 0.564 *mu* produces an amount that can barely provide an adult's yearly need of rice. Except for a few villagers who contracted large pieces of land to raise fruit and vegetables and the farms of fish, pigs, and poultry, agriculture has lost its position as the main income source of most village households.

¹⁵⁷ The effects of expanding fruit growing were not reflected in the 1993 data because it usually takes several years until fruit can be sold.

The specialized farming is also a goal government policies have pursued. Government above the township level, especially county government, has advocated the agriculture of “two highs and one excellent” (*liang gao yi you*). That is, agriculture has to be developed in the direction of high efficiency, high profitability, and excellent production. In order to achieve this goal, the government has requested that those who are competent for and willing to dedicate themselves to farming should contract land on a large scale. Furthermore, the government has also promoted the cultivation of vegetables and fruit that would enrich the dinner table of urban dwellers and would bring more cash income to the peasants. Following these policies, Chenguang village contracted relatively large pieces of land to the peasants who wanted to grow vegetables or fruit and opened a fish farm.

We can identify the diversifying trend of the economy more clearly from the distribution of household income. According to my survey data, the villagers earn their income quite evenly from all sectors and in the form of wages and business profit (see Table 2.14). During the commune period, the villagers earned most of their income in the form of wages. However, besides the work distributed and performed within the team or brigade, which was predominantly agricultural, less than 200 villagers made their living off of roughly ten kinds of non-agricultural jobs, if we include about 100 employees of the two brigade factories established in 1972. Even though the percentage of the villagers’ income from wages decreased considerably, compared with the commune period, more villagers got much more diversified jobs.¹⁵⁸

The villagers work as employees in units (*danwei*) distributed throughout the economic sectors, centered on the sector of industry. The scale of work units ranges from those which employ less than ten people, like the village fish farm, the village health clinic, and the *suliao chang*, to those which employ several hundred people, like the Yongxing Corporate Group (*yongxing qiye jituan*), the Hongxing Chemical Fertilizer Factory

¹⁵⁸ The employees of five village factories alone amounted to 450.

(*hongxing linfei chang*), and the Chenguang bag factory. Also, the work units include both the old ones, such as construction teams, stevedore teams at the railway stations, salterns, village factories, and the county and township governments. Many more villagers are employed in the new units, most of which are township-village enterprises. They have not only become the major employers of Chenguang villagers, but also the driving force of rural economic development in the reform period, especially from the mid-1980s.¹⁵⁹

There are also various areas in which the villagers are engaged in a form of self-employment or family business. Those areas are spread over all the industrial sectors, including contracting a fish farm, raising domestic animals, contracting village factories, managing construction teams, transporting goods and people, running retail shops and restaurants, doing business, and so on. This is the sphere of economy that shows a striking distinction from the Maoist period. Under the collective economic system with the redistributive mechanism dominated by the state, there had been little room for the peasants to do business on their own. The strong leftist climate between 1958 and 1978, except for three or four years in the first half of the 1960s, further decreased opportunities. A small portion of Chenguang villagers engaged in individual business illicitly, as I have shown in the previous chapter. As the state raised the bar during the reform period, peasants began to enter into various business areas. Stimulated by the success stories of fellow peasants and encouraged by the state, they rapidly penetrated into wider areas.

I divide those areas in which Chenguang villagers are engaged in business into three categories. First, peasants have taken over businesses operated by the state or the collectives. An example of such a case is small shops (*xiaomaibu*). The state had run supply and marketing cooperative (*gongxiaoshe*) between 1955 and 1990 in Chenguang village. The county government established and managed the *gongxiao she* and set up branches (*fenshe*) at the township (or commune) level and the shops run by the local people

¹⁵⁹ The reason why the major part of Chenguang villagers' income comes from wages is because the village is close to the Hongxing Township center, Lutai, Hangu, and Tanggu, where township-village enterprises are clustered.

(*minbandian*) at the village (or brigade) level. During the commune period, the commune branch supplied the goods to each brigade shop, but all the business profits were delivered to the brigade, part of which was given to the clerks in the form of work-points. But the state began to directly run the village shops from 1978. The township (then, commune) sent a clerk and took all the profits. Accordingly, the relationship between the shop and the village was actually severed.

In 1986, the first shop owned and managed by a villager opened in Chenguang. A year later two more shops opened, making three the total number until 1991. For the first two or three years, private small shops had a hard time because they had to sell a smaller selection of goods at higher prices than did the *gongxiao she*. They improved the quantity and price of goods step by step, so that by around 1989 they could compete with the *gongxiao she*. Once those conditions were satisfied, the private shops defeated the *gongxiao she* in business competition because they could fulfill the needs of the customers better than their competitor. For instance, while the *gongxiao she* kept the operating hours strictly from eight to five thirty and closed one day a month for stocktaking, the private shops made themselves available virtually at all times. The customers sometimes asked the shops to carry the goods which they did not stock, which was something the *gongxiao she* could not and would not do. In the wake of the countrywide movement toward the privatization of retail sales and the inability to compete with private shops, the *gongxiao she* was closed permanently in 1990.

“I started to make a good sum of money from the time when the *gongxiao she* was closed,” said Zhang Shuang who has run a shop since 1987, “but it didn’t last long because private shops opened like mushrooms springing up after a rain in 1992. There are nine shops now, but not a few shops have been opened and closed, and the owners have changed since 1992. It’s hard to make money by running a shop now.” The retail business in the village was no longer in good shape in 1996. If a shop sold something cheaply, others must also have lowered their prices or risked losing business. It seemed that only

one shop was thriving with the yearly profit of about 20,000 *yuan* because of the intense competition among them.¹⁶⁰

Second, peasants have expanded businesses that they have worked at for a long time. Trading feed for animals would be a good example. The villagers buy corn, wheat bran, rice chaff, rice husk, soybean cake, and fish powder, and sell them to the farms for pigs, poultry, and fish. Some villagers worked at this business even during the Cultural Revolution, but now they do so on a larger scale, covering wider regions. During the commune period, they bought the feed and sold it elsewhere not far from the village using bicycles. The means of transportation has been upgraded to tricycles with motor engines (*sanlun*) or trucks.

In Chenguang, villagers began to use motorized tricycles for feed trading in the late 1980s. They can carry up to 500 kg and easily cover neighboring counties. In the second half of 1995, five to six villagers bought trucks to do business with large fish farms that began to open in 1995. Feed trading was so prevalent that 30 to 40 households were engaged in it in 1996. Some of them, especially those who began earlier, made a sizable sum of money. They profited more than they should have by mixing stone powder with wheat bran, which was, of course, unethical. The stone powder feed naturally created ill effects on the animals, thus its trade was stopped. Then, peasants secretly mixed rice chaff with wheat bran because it was cheaper than wheat bran and although not nutritious, it was at least harmless

In spite of the villagers' various efforts to enhance the profitability of feed trading, most of them were not making much money from that business. There are several reasons for this. First, while they bought the materials in cash, they had to sell them on credit. It sometimes took two or three months to collect a bill, which meant that they needed to have a large sum of revolving capital. Second, competition in business became so intense that they were forced to sell the feed with little profit margin. Third, the number of animals

¹⁶⁰ There are several reasons why it was done well, such as good location, longer business hours, a good reputation and connections of the owner, etc., which I will discuss in detail in the next chapter.

raised in the region decreased because, as I pointed out above in the discussion of the contract of a village farm, the market situation for animal husbandry was not as good as two or three years before. Therefore, the number of villagers engaged in feed trading was reduced to about fifteen in late 1996. Some of those who had traded feed shifted to trading vegetables, beans, fish, clothing, and so on. Some of them were engaged in the transport business using their tricycles and trucks. A few even left their tricycles idle.

Finally, there are jobs that the peasants are doing in the reform period, that they had not done before. One such job is trading salt. The government holds a monopoly on salt in China, thus individuals are prohibited from legally dealing in salt. However, several villagers began to find a way to engage in that business in 1993, and over twenty villagers were trading salt in 1996.

They bought salt at the salterns in Hangu and sold it in neighboring counties like Baodi, Fengnan, Fengrun, and so on. As it was illegal, they had to use the “back door” to deal in salt. They made connections with the workers of the salterns and gave them banquets and offered bribes.¹⁶¹ After agreements on the amount, price, and the pick-up date, the buyers went to the salterns and loaded the trucks with salt. As long as they brought trucks whose freight tonnages coincided with the amounts agreed upon, they could take as much salt as possible. After they ground and packed it, they sold it to wholesalers. They had to bear the additional expenses of banquets and bribes, and sold the salt at a price lower than the official market price, but they could still make a sizable sum of money because they purchased it at a very low price.

This business contains inherent problems that sometimes come to the surface. On the one hand, there were conflicts between the salt traders and the village cadres. Despite its illegality, the business was not done in secret. It is a totally open business, at least, within the village. Seeing the heaps of “white stuff” here and there when I took a stroll in the

¹⁶¹ Eighteen villagers first started to work at the Hangu salterns in 1966, and more villagers got jobs there later on. Several villagers worked there for more than 20 years, and serve as a link between salt traders and saltern workers.

village, I did not know it was salt, at first, because it had not yet been processed. At the time, I did not know that dealing in salt was illegal. After I got to know all these facts, I asked the village cadres how it could be done so openly. They told me that they had tried to stop the traders but it was of no avail. The salt traders had absolutely no intention of quitting such a lucrative business, and the cadres did not have the proper means to stop them. However, both parties were afraid of the authorities, such as police or township and county government. If the authorities discovered the situation, the traders would be fined several thousand *yuan*, and the village cadres would be criticized. On the other hand, there were also conflicts between the salt traders and the other villagers. The traders unloaded the salt in the village, usually at the border of village road or on empty lots available. The villagers feared that salt was dissolving and draining into the ditches, especially when it rained, which would be harmful to the crops. They did not take active movements against the traders, but their complaints were mounting.

I have described the trend of economic diversification in Chenguang village, which is also true of rural China on the whole. While the importance of agriculture has decreased, other sectors of economy, especially industry, have increased in importance. Even within the agricultural sector, diversification is evident. Villagers are increasingly employed by various units and doing businesses on their own. The other economic change I discussed earlier is privatization. The introduction of the family mode of production and the dismantling of the commune system revitalized the stagnant rural economy in the early reform period. This success has convinced both the state and the peasantry that individual management is more efficient than collective management. It has led to the privatization movement—the collectively owned and managed estates have been privatized, and the peasants have begun to establish businesses of their own.¹⁶² These two trends of economic change, encouraged by the state and accepted and even furthered by the peasants, have contributed to the rapid development of the rural economy in the reform period.

¹⁶² The contracts between the collectives and individuals sometimes include the privatization of ownership, but usually management alone is privatized, as is the case of Chenguang village.

3. Changing Contents and Context of the Village Politics

Two remarkable characteristics of the commune system that the reform leadership sought to change were the dominant control of the party over peasants' lives and the integration of administrative and economic management. To implement these changes, the villagers' committee and the joint general company of agriculture, industry, and commerce were established in Chenguang village in 1983. The party was not supposed to interfere with the ordinary administrative management of the villagers' committee and the economic activities of the joint general company. The central leadership tried to lessen the role of the party even in political work, intending to depoliticize the society.¹⁶³

Political reforms and socioeconomic changes of the village formed the environment for the new politics,¹⁶⁴ but village politics unfolded in a direction somewhat different from the center's intention. In this section, I will relate village politics to the goals of the political reforms. There are several key questions I will address. Did the organizational changes implemented by the state bring about a division of power and the autonomy in the economic sector, and if not so, why? What was the basis of the cadres' power and how was it exercised? Was the decision-making process in the village as democratic as the state intends?

(1) Division of labor among cadres

Both decollectivization of agriculture and administrative changes considerably reduced the number of cadres and the amount of work for which they were responsible. First, after production teams were replaced by villagers' small groups (*cunmin xiaozu*), all

¹⁶³ Actually there has not been a campaign in the post-Mao period as influential as the major campaigns were in the past.

¹⁶⁴ The new politics here means that the reduction of the power of the party branch (actually the secretary), democratic management of the village, and autonomous decision-making in the economic sector.

the production team cadres disappeared, including team heads, deputy team heads, women's team heads, accountants, cashier-storehouse keepers, and work-point recorders. In addition, village small groups have not had any meaningful activity, which means there is no cadre below the village level. Even at the village level, some cadre positions were abolished. The militia (*minbing*) and the Poor and Lower Middle Peasants Association (*pinxie*), which had important roles in the Maoist era, ceased to exist, thus the leaders of these organizations disappeared.¹⁶⁵

The tasks of village cadres have also undergone big changes, and new posts were formed to take care of some of the new tasks. The implementation of the household responsibility system seriously reduced the cadres' role in agriculture—a head of the agricultural cooperative was in charge of pre-production and post-production services (*chan qian chan hou fuwu*). Instead, village leaders' interests were now concentrated on development of the industrial sector, which was supposed to be led by a general manager of the joint general company of agriculture, industry, and commerce. The village party branch and the secretary would not only lose much of their dominance but their participation in the various activities of village would also be reduced in the reform period. How, then, have the changes of leading cadres' tasks and the division of their duties been realized in Chenguang village?

There were two lines of ruling bodies in the village: the party and the government. The party was led by the village party branch committee, and the government was led by the villagers' committee, just like in the old times when the party branch and the brigade head represented the two lines. Although the latter is defined as a "self-governing mass organization" different from the old brigade, it was, in reality, similar to the brigade in its functions. In spite of the state's efforts to separate the party from governmental administration and economic management, the party branch committee was still dominant in

¹⁶⁵ The *minbing* contributed significantly to the state's capital construction projects and the *pinxie* represented the viewpoints of peasants with good class backgrounds. Both also played a major role in various campaigns.

every sphere of village management. “The party makes all the important decisions in China,” said the village head, “and it is also true of our village.”

The village party branch committee consisted of five members—the secretary (Zhang Zhenxing), the deputy secretary (Zhang Huaishang), the village head (Zhang Huaizuo), the manager of the bag factory (Li Lianxue), and the director of women’s work (Cui Yongxia). Li Lianxue and Cui Yongxia limited their work to factory management and family planning respectively, without active participation in village decision-making. The first three cadres were the main leaders.

A chart in the office of the village party branch showed the positions and duties of those three leaders. Zhang Huaishang, the deputy secretary, led discussions and planning of the village work at hand in the party committee, and he was responsible for consulting party members about their opinions on those matters and for informing them the results of the work. Zhang Huaizuo, the village head, led discussions of the village work at hand in the villagers’ committee, and collected the opinions of ordinary villagers and informed the final decision to the villagers. Throughout these processes, Zhang Zhenxing, the secretary, played a leading role. Therefore, he had the final say about all village matters. Moreover, he concurrently held the position of general manager of the Chenguang general joint company of agriculture, industry and commerce, which meant he secured a means to directly control the village economy, especially the village factories.

Among the villagers’ committee members, Zhang Huaizuo and Yan Shuhua were involved in the decision-making process of most village matters. Yan Shuhua was a deputy general manager of the Chenguang general joint company of agriculture, industry and commerce whose duty was to supervise the financial affairs of village factories and also to be responsible for the management of the Welfare Sports Raincoat Factory (*fuli yundong yuyi chang*).¹⁶⁶ He also kept household registration records and issued all the

¹⁶⁶ This factory consists of two workshops—the paper-box factory and the plastic factory, but only on paper. It has nothing to do with sports or raincoats, and was established for the purpose of tax evasion. The two totally independent factories, the paper-box factory and the plastic factory, receive tax exemption on the condition that they employ the disabled villagers, which is part of the welfare policy.

certificates associated with it, which was a village accountant's job.¹⁶⁷ He had never been in the position of commander, nor had he been a party member.¹⁶⁸ He had, after all, taken care of clerical work ever since he became a cadre; thus, he did not have much influence on the village decision-making. This left only three powerful leaders, Zhang Zhenxing, Zhang Huaishang, and Zhang Huaizuo.

A closer look at the leaders' use of offices allows us a better grasp of their activities. The brigade office (*dadui bangongshi*) moved several times before the brigade constructed a four-room building in 1977. In 1987, the village constructed its office building with six rooms, which was still in use. There were the villagers' committee office, the party branch office, and the family planning office. This building was a center of village politics where the cadres frequently gathered until Yan Shuhua moved to a room on the second floor of the bag factory's office building constructed in 1992.

That building was better located, sunnier, and better heated in the winter than the village office building. There was a telephone in Kan's room for convenience. Yan Shuhua was the only cadre who regularly worked at the office. Zhang Zhenxing came to Kan's office once or twice a week to deal with business and rarely came to the party branch office.¹⁶⁹ Zhang Huaizuo also dropped in at the office a little bit more frequently than Zhang Zhenxing. Zhang Huaishang and Cui Yongxia dropped in once in a while.¹⁷⁰ Li Lianxue, whose office was downstairs in the same building, rarely came to Kan's office, and he also had rarely been involved in village affairs. Zhang Huaihong, the deputy director of the villagers' committee, and Zhang Fuye, the head of the agricultural

¹⁶⁷ He was doing it because he had been a brigade accountant for twenty years.

¹⁶⁸ As he explained, he turned down the suggestion of Zhang Hongfeng, then the party secretary, that he should apply for party membership. He was satisfied with his position and work, and thus he did not want to put himself in complicated situation.

¹⁶⁹ I saw him at the party branch office only once when the village leaders were working on the election of the Hongxing Township Eleventh People's Congress.

¹⁷⁰ Cui Yongxia usually uses the family planning office in the village office building. After Zhang Huaishang's job changed from the manager of the pesticide factory to the supervisor of family planning work in the early 1996, he and Liu sometimes came together to Kan's office to see Zhang Zhenxing.

cooperative, also dropped by from time to time to deal with the matters for which they were responsible.

In conclusion, the party's goals of separating the administration from the economy and the withdrawal of the party from routine management have failed. Party secretary Zhang Zhenxing was the most powerful figure in Chenguang village who controlled almost everything just as Zhang Hongfeng did during the Maoist era. He reinforced his influence upon the village economy and secured the formal channel to do so by concurrently holding the positions of general manager of the Chenguang joint general company of agriculture, industry, and commerce, and manager of Tongda Traveling Goods Co. Ltd. Under his leadership, village cadres divide the work among themselves according to their positions.

(2) Exercise of cadre power

As I pointed out above, the reform policies reduced the number of cadres as well as their workload. It is also said that their power and status have been weakened in the reform period as well (e.g., Burns 1985; Latham 1985; Potter and Potter 1990; White 1987; Yan 1995). They do not have the means to directly control the peasants' economic conditions any more. The abolition of class labels and depoliticization deprived them of an effective means to control the peasants' political and social lives. Their high income in their production teams or brigade disappeared. Some villagers who have made the most of new opportunities of the reform era are much ahead in economic terms.

However, cadres still retain considerable advantages and power through new resources and new ways of exercising their rights. On the one hand, they decide which collective property will be contracted out, to whom, and under what conditions. For example, the contract of 23 *mu* of top-quality vegetable garden shows this point. Before the pesticide factory moved to the western part of the village, this factory had been located in middle of the village. Zhang Huaishang had been its manager until the end of 1995. As

it opened, it contracted 23 *mu* of the land located at the back of the factory. Zhang Huaishang called his second elder brother, Zhang Huaisheng, who worked at the bag factory and Li Ruihe, a son of a former cadre, and put the land under their charge. They planted grapes on fifteen *mu* and vegetables on the remaining eight *mu*. As the pesticide factory moved, the village collected and put up the land for contract again. It was contracted to Zhang Huaisheng and Li Ruihe for ten years at a contract fee of 608 *yuan* per *mu* per year. The fee was much higher than that of other vegetable garden land contracted in pieces of one or two *mu* at an average of 250 *yuan* per *mu*. That is because when the contract was made, the equipment for cultivating grapes had been completely set up with the pesticide factory's investment. Therefore, villagers regarded the deal as advantageous to the contractors. Besides, the village gave Zhang and Li the first opportunity to contract the land because, according to Zhang Zhenxing's explanation, they had been cultivating the land. As the village and the two men reached agreement on the contract terms, no other villagers ever had a chance to bid for the contract. If the contractors continue to be chosen in this way, they will continue to cultivate that piece of land as long as they want to.

Concerning contracts, many villagers believed that the village leaders benefited from those who got them at the expense of majority's interests.¹⁷¹ To make things worse, those who benefited were mostly leaders themselves or their kinsmen or close friends. There were many such cases. In addition to the 23 *mu* I talked about earlier, contracts for the village pig and chicken farm and the village fish farm are considered very lucrative deals for the contractors—Zhang Dushen, who had been in the position of the head of agricultural cooperative, the village head, and the latest manager of the farm, and Li Lianxue. The establishment and contract of the metal casting factory was also a good deal for Li Lianwen, who was a cousin of Li Lianxue and a brother-in-law of Zhang Huaishang. On another occasion, Zhang Zhenwen, who had long been a barefoot doctor and a party member, made a contract of 15 *mu* of dry field and let his sister's family

¹⁷¹ *Chengbao fei* forms a large part of the village revenue, thus setting it low increases the burden for all the households.

cultivate that land. The problem was his sister's family members were not Chenguang villagers, but from Hangu. Even though he was not a village leader, he had been a good friend of Zhang Zhenxing and Zhang's mother had been his long term patient.

On the other hand, the leaders decide who will supervise the collective property, especially the village factories. In the case of the Welfare Sports Raincoat Factory, Yan Shuhua does not have any control over its two workshops that are actually two independent factories and contracted to individuals. Li Lianxue is the manager of the bag factory in fact as well as in name. He was recruited by the party after he had become the manager. Even though he is a member of the party committee, he rarely participates in the political arena. That is, he does not try to spread his economic influence to the political sphere.

Zhang Zhenxing has an official title of the president (*dongshizhang*) of Tongda Traveling Goods Co. Ltd. which is a separate accounting unit but run as one company with the bag factory. He takes part in the factory's external relations with government offices and agencies, utilizing the connections made through his positions as the party branch secretary and a member of the Ninghe County People's Congress Standing Committee. He enjoys the synergism of his positions in the economic and political spheres. Besides, the factory provides him with a car, a driver, and a cellular phone.¹⁷²

Zhang Huaishang used to be a manager of the pesticide factory but he was different from all the cases above. He was different from Li Lianxue in that his political career preceded his economic career as manager. He directly managed the factory with full responsibility. During an interview with Zhang Zhenxing, he indirectly expressed dissatisfaction with Huaishang's managerial capability. Several villagers hinted that Zhang Huaishang was guilty of embezzlement. They suspected him because of his excessive spending compared with his income. The suspicion became a stronger conviction as his new house was being completed. Yan Shuhua, Huaishang's brother-in-law, expressed his concerns:

¹⁷² It paid about 400,000 *yuan* for a Toyota car and was paying tens of thousands *yuan* a year for the taxes, gas, maintenance, salary of the driver, and the cellular phone.

Huaishang is spending too much money on building new house. Together he and his wife earn about 10,000 *yuan* a year, but the house will cost him way over 100,000 *yuan*. As far as I know, he hasn't saved enough money for the new house. Moreover, he is a village cadre who manages the pesticide factory. Other people may think he has embezzled money from the factory. This is not good at all.

Actually some villagers talked about the specific amount of money he was believed to have embezzled, which amounted to tens of thousand or even a hundred thousand *yuan*.¹⁷³ It seems that even Zhang Zhenxing was convinced that the pesticide factory's poor business showings had something to do with Huaishang's corruption, considering the changes he made in cadres' work divisions at the end of 1995, an incident I will fully explore in the next chapter.

Another important way for cadres to exercise their power is using their extensive social networks. The two following cases are illustrative. Family planning is one of a few areas that the state has strictly controlled in the post-Mao era. The family planning policy, which was first launched in the early 1970s, has become a focal point of central leaders' interests since the late 1970s. Implementation of the one-child policy is a serious issue, especially in rural areas.¹⁷⁴ There are exceptional circumstances in which a couple can have two or more children. If a couple meets the conditions in this category, an application form is filled out. After the village certifies the application form, it is sent to the township and county. Although the final decision is made at the county level, the decision by the Township Office of Family Planning (*jihua shengyu bangongshi*) is the most important because the County Family Planning Committee (*jihua shengyu weiyuanhui*) usually

¹⁷³ Of course, they did not have specific evidence that could prove his embezzlement or the amount they believed he had embezzled. But their speculation or suspicion was not groundless because villagers had rough ideas about the financial state of his family—its regular income, possible other income, expenditures, etc. Actually no one is free from being the object of neighbors' speculations, especially if they spend a lot of money.

¹⁷⁴ In rural areas, a preference for sons is still strong. There are two main reasons for this preference. Peasants still value the patrilineal descent, and sons are expected to take care of old parents because there is no proper social welfare system in rural areas.

approves the township's decision. After a couple gets an official certificate, they have to fall within the village quota, which is usually one-half or one-third of the number of certified couples, in order to get permission for the woman to get pregnant.

Zhang Hongguo's family had only one male descendent in each generation for four generations, and his grandson was the fourth-generation-only-son. He strongly wanted to have one more grandson although his son and his daughter-in-law were not in the appropriate category. So, he used the back door. First, he contacted village cadres and obtained consent for them to have second grandchild on condition that he would receive a medical certificate from the township health clinic, showing that his grandson was disabled. He received a fake certificate from the health clinic; then, he asked for approval from the deputy head of the township in charge of family planning. Before he was granted an official certificate, the deputy head was transferred. Zhang Hongguo asked him through various channels, and finally received the certificate from the new deputy head of the township. In the course of the matter, village cadres, mainly the deputy secretary of the party branch and the director of women's work, who were in charge of village's family planning work, provided Zhang with the connections he needed, namely those with the township health clinic and the deputy head of the township.

The second case involves salt trading. An official who worked for the County Bureau of Industry and Commerce (*gongshangju*) happened to see the piles of salt while he was in Chenguang village on other business. He reported the matter to the office, and several days later three officials came to the village to confirm the report. Two days later, eight officials from the bureau came to the village again. They took pictures of the heaps of salt and got information from village cadres on salt trading by the villagers. One week later, police officers from the township branch began to investigate the matter. Unexpectedly, the matter was settled quietly, without even fining the salt traders. Village cadres had actively contacted higher level cadres to settle the matter not only because of the

salt traders' requests that they intervene, but also to protect their own reputation and face.¹⁷⁵

It is well known that connections (*guanxi*) are very important in social life, especially in economic and political spheres.¹⁷⁶ The cadres' ability to provide villagers with necessary connections is one of their important sources of power. Nowadays the cadre's role as a political broker who makes connections with higher level cadres for the villager's personal interest is remarkable.

In the Maoist era, control over peasants' lives through brigade and team cadres was tight, but the duties and rights of cadres were relatively well-defined and their power was well-allocated. In addition, higher authorities constantly examined the actions of grass roots cadres to see if they were doing their job properly.¹⁷⁷ However, power has been more concentrated on a few village leaders and their exercise of power has become more arbitrary in the post-Mao era. Although there are state regulations and guidelines on the duties of cadres, the division of work among them, and the procedures for decision-making and execution of the decisions, the cadres do not closely follow them. They sometimes pursue their private interests over the village's broader interests, their exercise of power exceeds the limits defined by the state and villagers, and a small number of cadres make decisions on village affairs and carry them out without considering other villagers' opinions or informing them of their decisions.

(3) Villagers' participation in village politics¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Money was an important means of solving problems for both cases. Zhang Hongguo spent about 5,000 yuan to get permission for having second grandchild. In the second case, salt traders raised the funds among themselves to settle the matter without being punished. I was not able to learn how much they spent.

¹⁷⁶ For the discussion on *guanxi*, see Hwang 1987; Jacobs 1982; Kipnis 1997; Smart 1993; Yang 1989, 1994.

¹⁷⁷ The Four Cleanups Campaign was the peak of the state's efforts to keep an eye on and check grass roots cadres.

¹⁷⁸ My usage of the term, "politics", mainly stems from the tradition of the so-called "action theory." Thus, "village politics," as I use the term, refers to the events which are involved in making and implementing decisions on the matters that are closely related to the interests of the majority of villagers.

The central leaders of the post-Mao period were critical of the concentration of power on a party secretary in each and every unit. In most villages in China, the secretary of the village party branch committee was the most powerful figure. Thus, when the central leaders implemented political reform policies in rural areas, they tried to enhance grass roots democratic practices and reduce the power of the party secretary (Bernstein 1989; White 1990). Judging from earlier discussions, it seems that while only a few leaders are active in village decision-making, power has been concentrated more in the hands of the party secretary, Zhang Zhenxing.

Several factors can explain the monopoly of power by a small number of cadres in Chenguang village. First, the reform leaders have concentrated their energy on economic reforms rather than political reforms. Second, even though the state issues regulations and laws that encourage democratic practices in local politics, it does not have enough power to enforce them when the local cadres are not willing. Third, because most villagers are not much interested in the process of village decision-making, there is little attention paid to cadres' power. I will delve into this final point in this section.

There is about 75 *mu* of top-quality vegetable garden land in Chenguang. That land used to be divided into private plots distributed to each household, allowing villagers to produce enough vegetables for household consumption. In 1993, following the county government's request, the village leaders decided to take the private plots from the villagers to experiment with a new method of growing rice seedlings before transplantation. After two years of unsuccessful experiments, the leaders decided to contract the land out to individuals to grow vegetables and fruit, rather than gave it back to each household.

I heard complaints about a series of cadre decisions related to the use of this land. There had been several shifts in policies regarding private plots following political directives from the central government. Private plots were first distributed to each household in 1955 when the Higher-level APC was established. All the land was collectively cultivated without exception during the GLF period. The villagers received

private plots again in 1962, but they had to give them in to the brigade with the start of the Cultural Revolution. They cultivated private plots once more between 1978 and 1992. When the village took private plots from villagers and converted them to collective land in 1993, it was different from the previous situations. That is, the village leaders and the villagers were not under strong pressure from the central government or even from the county government that issued the request. The villagers did not like the decision. After the experiment failed, and the leaders decided not to return the land to each household, villagers were again disgruntled. Moreover, most villagers who did not contract the land complained that the terms of contracts were too advantageous to the contractors.

The other example I would like to give is the fish farm. Village leaders made a decision to build a fish farm to respond to the county government's call for diversification of agriculture. About 100 *mu* of the fish farm's total area of 140 *mu* was converted from paddy fields. This means that the land that would be distributed to the villagers as grain ration land was reduced by 100 *mu*. Even if the villagers did not welcome the decision, they did not much mind losing around 0.2 *mu* per household because if the farm made money, they would pay less to the village. However, it kept losing money, which aggravated the burden of each household. Accordingly, the complaints of villagers rose to the point that they began to criticize the initial decision of the leaders. They became increasingly upset when they saw the process and the terms of the contract. Though only a handful of villagers were interested in or capable of contracting the farm, many villagers complained that the opportunity to contract it was not open to everyone, and the contract fee was too low.

Decisions that affected all the villagers' interests were supposed to be made publicly. The proper procedures were as follows. After the party branch committee and the villagers' committee jointly discussed issues and sought solutions, an enlarged session (*dang zhibu kuoda huiyi*) or a general meeting (*dangyuan dahui*) of the party branch was called, and the proposed solutions were brought up for further discussion. Then, the

results were announced to the villagers and either a meeting attended by the representatives chosen by the villagers (*cunmin daibiao huiyi*) or a village general meeting (*cunmin huiyi*) was called in order to solicit the villagers' views. A series of decisions of the two cases—conversion of private plots to collective land, contracting of that collective land, and construction of the fish farm—fell into the category of public decisions. It seemed, however, that those matters did not follow proper procedures.

In reality, most village decisions were made in brief meetings (*pengtou hui*). Those who attended the meetings differed according to the issues. The secretary and the village head were fixed members regardless of the issues. When the issues concerned agriculture, the head of the agricultural cooperative attended, and when they concerned industry, Yan Shuhua and the manager of the particular factory attended. The head of women's work and the assistant (and Zhang Huaishang in 1996) attended the brief meetings about family planning. Since the two cases above were mainly agricultural matters, the brief meetings concerning them were attended by Zhang Zhenxing, Zhang Huaizuo, Zhang Fuye, and sometimes Zhang Huaishang and Yan Shuhua sat together.

The problem was that what was supposed to be an initial discussion and decision for further examination became the final step, skipping the stages of enlarged sessions or general meetings of the party and village general meetings. Even the joint sessions of the party committee and the villagers' committee were replaced by meetings attended by core members of both organizations, that is, those who attended the brief meetings. This resulted in the lack of input from outside the close circle of leaders, and complaints from villagers who were excluded. When I raised the issue of procedure to Zhang Zhenxing, he answered, "From the standpoint of the whole village, those two cases were not very important, so we skipped the complicated intermediate stages. However, we did inform the villagers about the decisions and ask them to let us know if there was any problem with them. But nobody told us anything, so we assumed that they agreed with our decisions."

I asked one villager who argued that the vegetable garden should have been distributed to the village households after the experiment was over, why he did not tell the cadres so. He said, "I don't have time and energy to do that. I work at a factory in Lutai. After coming home from work, I have to go to work in the grain ration land. Besides, even if I told them that we didn't like the decision, it wouldn't have changed anything at all. Then, why bother? Basically I don't care what they (the cadres) say or do as long as it doesn't hurt me." I heard comments like this from quite a few villagers.

There were several reasons, I think, why villagers did not want to actively participate in the village decision-making process. In the Maoist era, everything tended to boil down to ideology and politics, and the villagers experienced a great deal of problems because of such tendency. The post-Mao reforms considerably reduced the direct influence of politics upon people's lives, which made it possible for the villagers to live without being involved in "political things." Most expressed a desire to engage in politics as little as possible. They were not interested in whether or not the decisions were made following proper procedures, nor in the definition of proper procedures. In other words, the villagers did not care about democratic decision-making.

On the other hand, the new leaders gave the economy the highest priority. The villagers responded well to this call. Most considered prosperity the most important and urgent task, and this priority improved their economic conditions. Villagers concentrated on making money, and did not want to take part in politics unless their interests were severely threatened. As for the two cases described above, even though the decisions might eventually damage nearly all the villagers' interests by the village leaders' arbitrary decisions, and many of them were aware of the potential damage, they ignored the situation. Compared with the economic conditions of most households, the damage was relatively insignificant and did not warrant shifting attention away from their own economic activities.

Most of all, villagers did not want to come into conflict with the cadres. If they participated in the decision-making process uninvited, or if they publicly disagreed with the cadres' decision, they would risk displeasing the cadres. This would likely lead to overt or covert conflicts. The experiences of the past taught the villagers that being at odds with the cadres was not wise. Though the village cadres' power, status, duties, and relationship with others, changed since the reforms, to most villagers, the cadres still had the villagers under their thumbs. Actually they were capable of influencing many village interests. In addition to the right to decide contracts, the cadres had more or less control over employment by the village¹⁷⁹ and village factories, contracts concerning the village farms and factories,¹⁸⁰ family planning,¹⁸¹ and so on.

As a consequence, the villagers' participation in village politics was minor or insignificant. In spite of the state's promotion of democratic practices, the cadres regarded it as troublesome or even threatening. From the villagers' perspective, they did not want to engage in politics for the various reasons discussed above. Villagers' indifference to or avoidance of public affairs and cadres' activities resulted in a monopoly of power by a small number of cadres.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ The village employees include announcers of the village public-address system (*guangboyuan*), electricians (*diangong*), irrigation workers (*fangshuiyuan*), a manager of water supply facilities, and temporary workers for village projects. All the jobs except electricians do not need any skill, so basically anyone can do the job.

¹⁸⁰ Contracts of the feed supply and transportation of produce for the farms and those of transportation of materials and products for the factories are included in this category.

¹⁸¹ There are not many things that the cadres can do at their discretion. Still, they can do something about fines for birth control violations and approval for giving birth to second or later children.

¹⁸² Can the popular elections at the village level increase villagers' interests in village politics? Can the popular elections promote democratic practice of village politics? These are two important questions concerning villagers' increasing adoption of popular election of their leaders. The answers, according to several studies, do not seem positive. In spite of Chinese state's push for the popular elections at the village level which are required to be free and fair—more candidates than the number of available posts, secret vote, nomination by villagers, and so on, only 82 of 478 villagers (17 percent), according to the survey carried out in late 1997, had held elections with primaries (O'Brien and Li 2000). Generally speaking, it is expected that the increasing income and higher education level will have positive relations with people's support for democratic village politics and, thus the village elections. However, several studies indicate opposite. Shi (2000) shows that citizen education and wealth have only weak or no correlation with people's participation in politics and their attitudes towards power and authority. Furthermore, Oi and Rozelle (2000) predict that if the trends of rapid industrialization and increasing liberalization (marketization) continue, peasants' electoral competitiveness and political participation in rural China will wane, at least in the short run.

There are two questions concerning the relationship between the state and society in the post-Mao period. One question is who led the process of decollectivization. It seems that the spontaneous action of the peasants in several regions played a crucial role in initiating decollectivization. Even at this initial stage, we can find the reform leaders' contribution in their tolerance and wait-and-see attitude that had an effect of protecting the local experiments. After settling ideological problems around the household responsibility system, the state put pressure upon peasant society for the nationwide implementation of "comprehensive contracts," the most decollectivized form. Actually the state had to overcome considerable resistance from grass roots cadres and peasants, especially those who were better off under the collective system. Therefore, we have to acknowledge the crucial role of the state as well as the peasants in decollectivization of agriculture.

The other question is how strong the state has been in the post-Mao period. The reform leadership's primary goal was economic development, especially the improvement of the standard of living. The state succeeded in rapidly developing economy, but the role of the center was reduced as results of reformers' deliberate decision and spontaneous economic forces. We can see similar trends in the economy of Chenguang village. Village economy has rapidly developed in the reform era due to the new policies. It is also much freer from the state's control than it was during the Maoist era. However, the state's influence is still substantial, as we have seen through the grain procurement, the two-land system, and the diversification of agriculture.

In the political sphere, however, reform policies did not enjoy much success. A small number of village leaders, the party secretary being at the top, exercised monopolistic power over public affairs, encompassing economic, administrative, and political matters. In other words, the state's political reform goals of guaranteeing autonomous management of economy, reducing party's interruption in administrative and economic management, and enhancing peasants' democratic practices were not accomplished. The village cadres' power did not totally stem from the state, as it had during the Maoist era. Village cadres

obtained their power mainly by their manipulation of their official positions in village politics, often exceeding their authority granted by the state, and the use of their extensive connections with the outside world (I will discuss more on this point in the next chapter). In conclusion, the state's power weakened and the peasants acquired more autonomy in the post-Mao era. However, the state still exerted strong influence on peasant society, especially in economic sphere.

Chapter 6

ADAPTATION OF INDIVIDUALS TO NEW SITUATIONS

It is apparent that the state's leaders of reform did not have a well-prepared blueprint of how to lead the society. They often appeared to take the people's lead. Society's initiation played an important role not just in changes at the local level, but also at the regional or national level. Chenguang, however, was not the kind of village that was innovative and set the pace for others. The villagers followed countrywide trends and tried to adapt to the changing circumstances. At the same time, their efforts gave shape to some concrete changes in the villages. Consequently, constant interactions between individual villagers and the circumstances surrounding them shaped and reshaped specific courses of the village's changes. In this chapter, I devote my attention to the individual villagers, focusing on their activities in the spheres of economic and politics.

First, I will deal with "entrepreneurs" who became outstanding figures during the reform era. Their success in the economic sphere is one of the most noticeable features of the Chinese reforms, and their influence on others is crucial to understand the particular changes in their society. Second, I will take the cadres and former cadres into account. What impact have the reform measures had upon the cadre position, and how are the current cadres adapting economically and politically to the new circumstances? Finally, who has gained the most and who has lost the most during the period of reform? Who do the villagers consider the winners and losers, and why? These questions will lead us to inquire about not only the causes of individual success and failure but also the villagers' value system.

1. Entrepreneurs in the Reform Period

While most studies about Chinese entrepreneurs define their research subjects as the owners of private enterprises, I lay “innovation” at the center of the definition of entrepreneur.¹⁸³ According to my definition, therefore, entrepreneurs, the topic of this section, are those who have brought innovation to Chenguang village. I picked ten villagers who are, I think, entrepreneurs in the village. Throughout my discussion one of the important questions will be “how new” are the innovations they carry out in the village. Some of them started a whole new business, some made alterations to an existing business, creating a somewhat new business, and others worked in an existing business but in new ways.

Zhang Shuang opened a small grocery store (*xiaomaibu*) in 1987. As I described in the previous chapter, his store was one of the first three private stores in the village, and he struggled to compete with the larger and established village branch of supply and marketing cooperative early on. Hard work paid off, and he had two good years before the competition among private stores started to heat up in 1992. However, according to my definition, it was hard to call him an entrepreneur in 1996. As the competition among the village small grocery stores intensified, not only did he fail to take the lead, but he could not keep up with competitors who introduced various new strategies to attract customers.

Zhang Huaiqun and Zhang Huaixin are the entrepreneurs who started salt trading, a new but illegal business in the village. First of all, salt trading was started at the Hangu area¹⁸⁴ in this region, and the two men above were the first Chenguang villagers who engaged in this business. They were soon followed by more and more villagers. About twenty Chenguang villagers were engaged in this business in 1996. Second, they took advantage of the changed conditions of the reform era—they were able to find links with the Hangu salterns through the saltern workers in Chenguang village, and the loosened

¹⁸³ The concept of innovation also requires more discussion, which I have done in chapter 1.

¹⁸⁴ Hangu lies to the southeast of Chenguang village (see Map 2).

state control enabled them to engage in such an illegal business. Third, they risked getting caught and fined several thousand *yuan* by the authorities. They were also faced with the problem of finding someone to buy their salt at a good price. Conflict with fellow villagers was another risk because salt can be hazardous to farming.¹⁸⁵ They made about 1,000 *yuan* per deal of one truck with a three-ton capacity in 1996. The profit would be reduced to 500 or 600 *yuan* after subtracting all expenses, such as truck rental fees, wages for the workers, and bribes.¹⁸⁶

Zhang Fumao can be regarded as an entrepreneur in a slightly different way. He is the first villager to grow fruit on a large scale. Every production team had a piece of land where fruit was grown during the commune period. He was an accountant, and was also in charge of the fruit growing of the Third Team. With his experience, he contracted one hundred *mu* of dry field on the outskirts of Lutai Zhen as well as fifteen *mu* in the village. When he first began to grow peaches and apples on both fields, other villagers, including the cadres, were skeptical about the profitability because fruit growing needs a large initial investment. However, he never doubted his decision because he believed that the consumption of fruit would increase with increase in people's income. He expected to make about 50,000 *yuan* net income in 1996, which was very high in the income distribution of the village, especially in the area of agriculture.

Li Haishang was the first to buy a truck in the village in 1994. It was a used one with a loading capacity of three tons. He decided to trade animal feed, which the villagers had long engaged in by using bicycles or tricycles. The truck enabled him to buy materials more cheaply by purchasing them in more remote areas and in large quantities. He usually bought wheat bran in Qing County and Raoyang County of Hebei Province,¹⁸⁷ corn in

¹⁸⁵ I discussed this problem in detail in chapter 5.

¹⁸⁶ I was not able to obtain detailed information on the trading itself and traders because those who were directly involved in the business refused to talk to me about the topic. Thus all the information provided here is the result of my observation and interviews with those who knew something about the trade or traders but who were not directly involved.

¹⁸⁷ Qing County and Raoyang County are located about 120 km and 220 km southwest of the village respectively.

Fengnan, Fengrun, and Yutian County of Hebei Province, and fish bone powder in Yutian county. He was also one of the first villagers to mix stone powder with wheat bran, as discussed earlier. Recently, while most truck owners engaging in feed trading had suffered losses, he was still making a sizable sum of money because of his connections. It is very important for the traders to get information on where they can buy the materials at low prices and where they can sell the feed at high prices. As the first one in the village to begin trading feed with trucks, he has established the most extensive business connections, which helps him get accurate information on market conditions faster than others.¹⁸⁸ In addition to this, long-term buyer-seller relationships can evolve into special relationships, in which mutual trust develops. That is, buyers normally have to pay in cash to buy materials, but they can buy on credit after forming special relationships with sellers. Furthermore, neither has to pay much attention to small price differences when they are convinced that they will have the best deals in the long run. On the other hand, the buyers of the feed sometimes pay in cash when the sellers who are long-term clients are in special need of cash.

I would also include Wang Youhe in the category of entrepreneur. He bought a truck in 1996, one and a half years later than Li Haishang. He had been driving others' trucks for five years before he decided to buy one. At that time, feed trading was no longer profitable, so he carefully investigated various conditions and options in order to decide what he would do with his truck. When he was convinced that he would be able to make a considerable amount of money with the truck, he persuaded his brother-in-law to buy the truck with him jointly because he did not have enough savings to buy one by himself. They agreed that Wang Youhe would have full authority to do business with it, but they had not decided how to divide the profits or loss between themselves.

¹⁸⁸ The information on market conditions is hard to get. The prices of materials in the newspapers are far from the actual prices. They have to call someone in the producing area (*chandi*) to get information, and then go there to confirm it. Therefore, if a trader can get accurate information fast and from extensive areas, he can save a lot of money and time.

There were about 30 villagers who worked as stevedores in Tanggu port about 60 km south from Chenguang (see Map 2). When a cargo boat came into the port, they had several days' of work, so they had to stay there, but they returned to the village when there was no cargo. They stay in the village until they were informed of the arrival of cargo boats. This meant that they had to maintain lodging in Tanggu as well as their own houses in the village. Wang Youhe persuaded them that commuting from the village to Tanggu would be a lot cheaper than lodging in Tanggu. In 1996, when there was work, most of them commuted to Tanggu in Wang's truck for a fare of four *yuan* per day.

Wang also had a transport business. When he took the commuters to Tanggu, he did short-haul transportation jobs during his stay there. When there was no one to take to Tanggu, he did a variety of transport work. He did not care how far the destination was, how long it took, and what he carried. He was also one of the truck owners who carried salt for the traders in the village. Therefore, in addition to such a usual transportation business, he discovered a new area, commuting business, which would give him extra income more or less in a fixed amount.

Zhang Hejin thrust himself into an area of business that was already keenly competitive, the grocery business. He opened a small grocery store in 1993 when there were already seven of them open. His shop has been thriving since the year it opened, and it stood tall among nine shops in the village.¹⁸⁹ First, it was located at the best spot in the village, the middle of the village main road, which made it the easiest accessible store. Second, it was the most spacious of all the stores. He utilized the large space of his store to attract villagers. He furnished the shop with several tables and chairs that were usually occupied by people watching TV and chatting, and he stayed open as long as they were around, often until eleven or twelve o'clock at night. Third, he started to sell several daily necessities with a small or sometimes no margin, which earned him a good reputation. He led the competition in price reduction and thus became the target of criticism from other

¹⁸⁹ For detailed discussion about the village groceries, see section 2 of chapter 5.

shop owners.¹⁹⁰ Finally, his father-in-law, who lived with him, provided help. He was very good cook and had tableware for serving many people and kitchen utensils for cooking a large amount of food. He was called on to prepare banquets for funerals and weddings and to lend tableware. In return, those who were in charge of banquets bought drinks, cigarettes, snacks, and so forth, at Hejin's store, which usually amounted to 1,000 *yuan*.

The people described above carry out innovations in one area or another, but there is no one in the village like Zhang Zhenshui, who has proved himself successful entrepreneur over and over again. He was one of the first to buy a motorized tricycle (*sanlun*) and for doing business. He bought it in 1985 and dealt in vegetables. He bought vegetables in Chenguang and the neighboring villages and sold them in towns and villages in the region where the vegetables were not abundantly produced. He saved money from that business and opened the third small grocery store in the village in 1987. He was the only shop owner who used a tricycle to buy goods, while others used bicycles.¹⁹¹ He did very well until 1991, as I described above, and the grocery was still a paying business until 1993. When the business began to suffer from excessive competition, he switched back to trading, this time adding fish to his trade goods. As people's income increased, production and consumption of fish grew rapidly. Thus, dealing in fish brought him a decent income—he earned about 25,000 *yuan* through this business in 1995.

Dealing in fish and vegetables attracted the attention of those who were looking for a new business, especially the attention of those who used to trade animal feed using tricycles because they were in trouble due to the low profitability of the business. They started to go into the business of trading fish and vegetables, which resulted in a low return on investment. By the end of spring 1996 it dropped to a point that was unacceptable to

¹⁹⁰ Zhang Shuang blamed Zhang Hejin for his leading role in excessive price reduction that threatened some village shops' existence.

¹⁹¹ He saved time and money by using a tricycle because a tricycle was faster and could carry many more goods than a bicycle. He went to Lutai less often and bought goods in lower prices by buying in large amounts.

Zhang Zhenshui. Instead, he organized a construction team. This was not at all new to the village because when he organized one in September 1996, there already were two teams in the village.

The situation changed in 1995, however, when the village distributed new house building sites to forty households. The village regulations stipulated that those who were granted house sites had to build within two years. Thus when Zhang Zhenshui organized a team, more than ten houses were under construction and more were to be constructed. The construction team usually consisted of about twenty men and women. The head of the team (*jianzhuduizhang*) made a contract for building a house, with agreements on building design and contract fees.¹⁹² The construction team was only responsible for the labor, and the building owner supplied all the construction materials. Therefore, the team head paid wages to the members with the contract fee, and he got the remainder. The contract fee to finish a three-room house sharply increased from about 1,200 *yuan* in 1995 to about 2,500 *yuan* in 1996 due to excessive demand. The daily wages in 1996 were 30 to 35 *yuan* for a skilled worker (*jishugong*) like a plasterer, 20 to 25 *yuan* for an unskilled worker (*xiaogong*), and 15 *yuan* for a female worker. In the case of Zhang Zhenshui, he himself worked as a plasterer, earning 30 *yuan* a day, and his wife, as an unskilled worker, earned 15 *yuan*. He estimated that the total income for him and his wife would be about 3,000 *yuan* a month, which was a bit more than the previous year's income.

So far, I have examined the entrepreneurs who engaged in private businesses, as many China specialists define the private businessmen as entrepreneurs. I think, however, as the Schumpeterian definition of entrepreneur clearly indicates, the possession of private business cannot be the only factor in determining whether or not one is an entrepreneur. The criteria should be what he is doing and how he is doing it. Thus, only small portion of the villagers who engaged in private businesses are included my discussion. For the same reason, I include the next two men in my list of entrepreneurs in Chenguang village.

¹⁹² Not only did the houses in the village have very simple designs, but those built in similar times also tended to have similar styles. Therefore, there were no difficulties in deciding the designs and total costs.

Zhang Zhengui is the man who contracted the paper-box factory and had full authority over the management of the factory. Before we discuss his success in business, first, I think, we need to look back at his career. He was one of seven young cadres first elected under the control of the CCP in 1951, responsible for civil administration (*minzheng*). He became a village head in 1952 as successor to Zhang Zhenshu, the first village head, because he was smart and a good speaker. Unfortunately, he had been too manipulative and had shown little loyalty to the party and higher authorities. He was dismissed from office for disobedience in 1955. He had lived as an ordinary peasant until 1972 when he got a job in the plastic factory.

Among the five village factories either contracted or collectively managed, the paper-box factory was the only one to make a considerable sum of profits. The two important reasons for that are management and connections. Zhang Zhengui closely watched many successful and unsuccessful enterprises while he worked in the plastic factory and realized that many enterprises failed in business due to inefficient management. They often employed too many people, especially rear-service staff, wasted money on extravagant office buildings and office fixtures, and allowed embezzlement by employees. He figured that the scale of the paper-box factory whose total output was one million *yuan* and employees numbered thirty-five in 1995 was small enough for him to control tightly. Not only did he himself closely oversee the revenue and expenditures of the factory, but his family members actively participated in the management—his fourth son assisted him in managing the factory and drives the factory truck, and his daughter-in-law worked as a cashier. The accountant, a kinsman of his, was the only rear-service staff except for his son and daughter-in-law among thirty-five employees.

As other important factor is his good connections. While he purchased materials and sold products for the plastic factory, he had contacts and made connections with many government officials and factory workers. They later came to work for the economic committees of government at various levels, including Tianjin City, counties, and

townships in the region, and for the various enterprises as managers and presidents. They bought packing boxes for their products from him or introduced him to enterprises in the areas within their jurisdiction.

The other person I would like to mention is Zhang Zhenxing. The Chenguang bag factory was established in 1980 under the lead of Zhang Hongfeng. It actually started to manufacture bags in 1982 under Zhang Zhenxing through making connections with the Tianjin Foreign Trade Company for Recreational and Sporting Goods (*Tianjin waimao wenti gongsi*). This company bought various sporting goods from factories, like Chenguang bag factory, and sold them to foreign buyers. In the 1980s, the bag factory kept dealing with the Tianjin Foreign Trade Company. At first, the bag factory had ten sewing machines and thirty employees in a building where the village office building now stands. As the Tianjin Foreign Trade Company ordered more and more bags, the bag factory's scale of business grew. The factory constructed a large two story manufacturing building (*shengchan dalou*) in 1988 and then a bit smaller but better decorated two story office building (*xingzheng lou*) in 1992.

Zhang Zhenxing played a decisive role in development of the factory. He attended to nearly all matters dealing with the outside, such as the purchase of materials, marketing of products, and making loans from banks or credit cooperatives. He made another important move for the bag factory in 1992. A Hong Kong businessman who had bought bags produced by the Chenguang bag factory through the Tianjin Foreign Trade Company wanted to deal directly with the bag factory in the late 1980s. Searching for the appropriate way in 1990 and 1991, they agreed on the establishment of a joint company in 1992. As a result the bag factory was divided into two parts and one part turned into a joint company, the Tongda Traveling Goods Co. Ltd. The Hong Kong businessman invested in the Tongda Co. Ltd. for its equipment and materials but he has not participated in the management of the company. He earned thirty percent of the company's profit. His main purpose was to have a production line in the mainland which he could use as his own, and

thus both parties agreed that the Tongda Co. Ltd. had to give priority to his orders. On the other hand, the bag factory came to sell the products at higher prices by eliminating a broker. Moreover, the Tongda Co. Ltd. was designated as a bonded factory as soon as it was established, which contributed to the increase of exports.¹⁹³

Through this new company, Zhang Zhenxing made personal gains. He had been involved in the management of the bag factory from the beginning as leader of the village that owns the factory. He was recognized as a good village leader by the higher authorities mainly due to the success of the bag factory.¹⁹⁴ As he became president (*dongshizhang*) of the Tongda Co. Ltd., he came to be recognized as a capable manager, which brought him more influence in the region as well as in the village, and at last the position in the Ninghe County People's Congress Standing Committee. It also came to be more natural for him to enjoy the luxuries of good food and drink, dancing in the karaoke clubs, riding in a Toyota car with a driver, and using a cellular phone, all as company expenses.

Diversification of the village economy discussed in the previous chapter is closely related to the activities of entrepreneurs. Villagers opened their own small grocery stores, following Zhang Shuang and Zhang Zhenshui. Some of them were successful in their business, some merely survived, and others failed. But the small stores became a solid part of village economy, and other entrepreneurs, like Zhang Hejin, emerged from it. Li Haishang brought about a small boom of purchasing trucks in the village. At first they engaged in feed trading just as their model did. Later, some of them had to search for other work they could do with their trucks due to the decreasing profitability of the feed trading business. Wang Youhe succeeded in the trucking business by using his creative thinking.

I could not find a good example of a female entrepreneur in the village. Zhang Hejin's wife, Li Shulan, and Zhang Zhenshui's wife, Gao Jinhua, actively participated in

¹⁹³ The bag factory is now directly dealing with buyers from various countries, such as the U.S., England, France, and Japan.

¹⁹⁴ It was already in the top ten among the village-owned-factories in Ninghe County in terms of total output in 1986. It was also continuously recognized by the Tianjin City government as well as the county government as an excellent township and village enterprise in the 80s and 90s.

business. I saw Li Shulan keep the store as much as her husband, and I heard that Gao Jinhua worked with her husband all the time. However, I was unable to learn exactly what their roles were in their family businesses; that is, how much Li Shulan influenced the management of the store, and how much Gao Jinhua was involved in the decisions about their business changes. Since I could not decide whether or not I should include them in the category of entrepreneur along with their husbands, I mentioned only the husbands as the representatives of their families.

The reform policies have opened up new possibilities and new opportunities, and entrepreneurs have taken advantage of them. It is not that they have done it from scratch. There were others who started to do the same things elsewhere, maybe even in neighboring villages, but they were the first ones in Chenguang. It is also certain that their achievements have exerted influence upon other villagers by providing them with examples to follow. Their examples are realistic paths to success under the new circumstances, unlike the success stories reported by the mass media or by word of mouth. Villagers know what resources village entrepreneurs had and how they utilized them. They also know if they themselves have enough resources and abilities to successfully follow these paths. Some villagers break new ground while they follow the forerunners, others fail at their endeavors. In this way the villagers are expanding the area of their economic activity. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, we need to closely look at the interactions of individual villagers and the circumstances created by state policies to understand the particular developments of the village economy.

In order to more fully understand the role of entrepreneurs in the development of village economy, I compare Chenguang case with several cases from the China literature.¹⁹⁵ One of the important factors in the development of the village economy was the distance between the villages and urban centers. Villages close to urban centers, such

¹⁹⁵ The problem is the term, "entrepreneur." Since entrepreneurs refer to the owners of private enterprises in all the studies I examined, I could not strictly compare my case with others. When cases were described in detail, I interpreted them according to my point of view.

as Chen Village (Chan et al. 1992), Hongqi Village (Jang 1998), Lin Village (Huang 1998), and Chenguang Village, tend to have early development of enterprises, diverse job opportunities, low percentage of income from agriculture, and high income level. The villages which do not have such locational advantage, on the other hand, such as Houhua Village (Seybolt 1996), are likely show the reverse tendency in the village economy.¹⁹⁶

To examine the relationship between the more specific trajectory of village economic development and entrepreneurship, it is useful to compare the villages with similar geographical and economic conditions. Chen village belongs to the country that borders Hong Kong and is about 10 kilometers from the market town. Lin village is located on Xiamen Island, Fujian Province, and is also about 10 km away from downtown Xiamen City. Both villages have been greatly benefited from the “open-door” policy of the reform period, and maintain the highest household income level among Chinese villages. They have some differences as well.

While non-agricultural enterprises began to be established in the late 1960s in Chen village, which was a decade earlier than Lin village, the industrial sector was more developed in the latter by the early 1990s. As of 1990, the main income of Chen village households was money sent by family members from Hong Kong, money received by renting land to Hong Kong businessmen, and salaries earned by working various enterprises. Villagers’ investments were mostly restricted to rural-style ventures, such as crude brickworks, orchards, fish ponds, and chicken farms.

In Lin village, wage and rent also constituted a large part of household income. However, there was active investment in the industrial sector. After the successful establishment of several, small-scale sand brick factories owned by production teams and brigade in the late 1970s, the brigade opened several more factories. There were two big movements that greatly influenced village economy in the early 1990s. In 1990, the village struck a deal with a Taiwanese investor who was looking for the land for a souvenir

¹⁹⁶ As discussed earlier, due to the process of research site selection, it is hard to find the research projects on villages which are economically backward in the Chinese rural standard.

factory. The Taiwanese-owned factory opened with 800 workers, and in 1996, the number increased to more than 3,000. The village established an electrified zinc plating factory in partnership with the Xiamen City Electricity Bureau and the same kind of factory in Hangzhou in 1992. It was the biggest factory owned by the village with some sixty-odd workers. In addition, there were about twenty small-scale, private-owned factories that manufactured or processed construction materials, such as street rail guards, lampposts, roll-up steel doors, aluminum windows and doors, and die-casting tools, for Xiamen's needs.

Whereas in Chen Village, the villagers' investment concentrated on agricultural sector, Lin villagers engaged in various private businesses in industrial sector, and the village was still active in economic sphere after decollectivization. Although I cannot say for sure that this is because of entrepreneurial activities, I am sure that entrepreneurs were an important factor in determining the different paths of economic development of the two villages.

Hongqi Village (Jang 1998) and Chenguang Village also have similarities and differences that make comparison worthwhile. The two villages have locational advantages; both are close to towns and metropolitan center of Tianjin City. While Hongqi is closer to urban centers, Chenguang is close to the sea (*Bohai*). The area of cultivated land in the two villages is similar, but the population of Chenguang is about two times as large as that of Hongqi. Peasants of both villages have relatively abundant opportunities to work outside the villages, thanks to the strategic locations. As of the early 1990s, similar numbers of villagers were engaged in similar private businesses, and brigade enterprises contributed similar percentages to the village gross and net income.

We can also find differences in the village economy, especially in the industrial sector, through a closer examination of the two villages. In Hongqi village, a sheet metal processing factory was established in 1963, by a proposition from four young villagers who had been urban workers. One of them provided connections for marketing, and the

four men and another young villager learned skills for manufacturing. This factory greatly contributed to the village economy for a long time. For example, in 1975, it contributed about 47 percent of brigade's net income, while in the Chenguang Brigade, the brigade factories contributed 12 percent. Between 1985 and 1991, village-run factories' average annual contribution to village gross income and net income was 69 percent and 59 percent respectively in Hongqi, and 64 percent and 32 percent respectively in Chenguang.

The Chenguang village factories—the carpet weaving factory and the plastic factory—first opened in 1972. In 1992, there were still two factories—the bag factory established with about 30 workers in 1980 and the plastic factory. The bag factory rapidly grew during the mid-80s, and by 1992, its number of employees increased to more than 300 people. Based on the success of the bag factory, the village established two factories in 1993 and one more in 1994.¹⁹⁷ Zhang Zhenxing, the village party secretary, played a crucial role in the expansion of the village industrial sector and the establishment of the joint company with a Hong Kong businessman, as discussed above. Furthermore, as the entrepreneurial activities of villagers intensified from the mid-90s on, they played a decisive role in economic development of the village. It seems that Hongqi villagers did not engage in private business as actively as Chenguang villagers. Considering that Hongqi data were gathered between 1991 and 1992, however, direct comparison does not seem appropriate. The entrepreneurial activity of the four young villagers in 1963, and of the village leaders who established the chicken coop factory in 1983 and the medical appliance division in 1988 led the development of the village economy in Hongqi.

2. Cadres and Former Cadres

(1) Former cadres

¹⁹⁷ This is why five village factories appear in my research which was done between 1995 and 1996.

There were about fifty offices filled by various individuals in the Chenguang Brigade under the commune system. This means many villagers had been cadres between 1951 when the formal political organization was installed and 1983 when the commune system was dismantled. I could not track down all the former cadres. As it is widely known, the term “cadre,” the English translation of “*ganbu*,” refers to various positions.¹⁹⁸ I narrowed down my research objects to those who had been at the major cadre positions, namely brigade head, accountant, and members of the party committee at the brigade level, as well as team head, accountant, and cashier at the production team level. I checked 32 of such former cadres, which, I think, was enough to understand the current situation of former cadres.

A remarkable trend is that many former cadres still maintain ties with the village if they can. First, I will take a look at the seventeen former cadres who had no connection with the village. Among the seventeen I examined, ten of them retired from social and economic activities due to age and/or illness. Two of the remaining seven engaged in farming. Yang Dugang, who had been a team accountant, was suffering from the new situation created by the reforms, and discuss later. Zhang Zhensheng, who had been the militia head before the reforms and the first village head after the reforms, was basically engaged in farming. I will discuss his case later, too. Three others were employees of a construction team, a stevedore team, and a distillery. Their salaries range from 5,000 *yuan* to 7,000 *yuan*, about average for villagers at their age, in their forties. There were only two men who had incomes of more than 20,000 *yuan*, substantially more than the average in 1995. They were Zhang Huaili, who had been a team head and was the head of a stevedore team in Lutai, and Zhang Fumao, the entrepreneur, who grew fruit.

I located fifteen former cadres who were still connected with the village. I will examine their jobs and whether or not they received preferential treatment. Irrigation work taken by seven of them was needed mainly in spring during the initial stage of rice farming.

¹⁹⁸ Cadres can roughly be categorized into three: people who draw state salaries, people who do mental work, and people who occupy positions of formal authority. The last category applies to my use here.

After plowing the rice field, they filled the field with water through an irrigation system to prepare for planting and transplanting rice seedlings. The irrigation workers' job was mostly done at this stage. They were also supposed to do the maintenance on the irrigation canals year round but actually did little. The workers were paid little, but they also had little work to do. Therefore, it was said that having this job was a privilege because, for those who were over sixty, it did not require much physical strength and for those who were still economically active, it was a good second job that barely affected a primary job. One former team head had another good job for a man of sixty-nine. He was the pesticide factory watchman at night, which required no more than sleeping in the factory building.

Two former cadres worked at the bag factory restaurant opened in 1987 with the construction of the manufacturing building. The restaurant was to provide meals for the bag factory workers from other counties and provinces who stayed in the village. At first, there were about fifty of them, and at one point the number increased to one hundred. There were still about ten of them in 1995 but none in 1996. It also served meals and drinks to guests at the bag factory and other factories, the village, and the two village farms, all of whom were mainly officials.¹⁹⁹ The manager, Zhang Huaixian, planned the menu for each occasion and bought ingredients at the market. He kept the accounts for each work unit (*danwei*) and settled them. He also helped the cook with preparing food and washing dishes; the cook did all the cooking. The cook, Li Changhe, had been a former production team head in his late sixties and had cooked there since the restaurant opened. The manager was in his late fifties and a former deputy secretary just before Zhang Huaishang. Their working hours were not long. The meals of bag factory workers basically consisted of a main dish, a soup, and steamed bun (*mantou*) or rice. While the visitors of work units were entertained with far more dishes, at least six, they did not come

¹⁹⁹ Since it was the only restaurant in the village, I also ate there while I was in the village. In 1996, because there were no bag factory workers from outside, I often ate there alone.

frequently.²⁰⁰ There was no guest at all in a month at one point during my research period. Sometimes there were two or three groups of guests at the same time. They prepared the dishes for outside guests approximately once a week. They usually worked about three hours a day, and even on a busy day they worked less than eight hours. The work was not physically demanding and the hours were short. We can therefore say it was a good job.²⁰¹

Two former accountants of production teams worked as accountants of the pesticide factory and the paper-box factory. The pesticide factory accountant was one of the first three village party members. He had long been a team accountant, then became a clerk at the brigade branch of the supply and marketing cooperative. The shop closed down, and he was appointed accountant of the bag factory, and later that of the pesticide factory. The accountant of paper-box factory had been a team accountant and a stevedore after decollectivization. He was recruited to the paper-box factory as it was opened and contracted to Zhang Zhengui. The former, in his early sixties, was regarded as one of the old cadres (*lao ganbu*) who had significant experience as clerical staff, and his household income was high.²⁰² The latter became the accountant not only because he had an ability and experience in that kind of job, but also because he was a kinsman of Zhang Zhengui's. A former cashier of a production team dealt with supply and marketing in the bag factory. His ability and experience was the major reason why he was in that position.

There is something unique in Wang Dehuan's case. He was a committee member of the party branch and a secretary of the village branch of the Chinese Communist Youth League. He seemed to be a young village leader with a future. He was the first manager of

²⁰⁰ The guests mostly came at lunchtime. There were seasonal fluctuations in the number of guests to the restaurant. The busiest time of the year was about one or two weeks before the Spring Festival and the Mid-autumn Festival. Guests tended to come least in the winter except during the Spring Festival season.

²⁰¹ Even though neither of them engaged in any other economic activity, it would have been perfect if they had engaged in farming. Other than most wage earners who had to work in the field after returning from their work places, beginning at about seven or even eight in the evening, they could have finished all their farm work before six o'clock.

²⁰² His son was a truck driver working for the bag factory, and his daughter was a middle school teacher. Their income easily exceeded 10,000 a year.

the bag factory, but after two years he was demoted to the position of assistant manager, and then to the manager of the plastic factory far smaller than the bag factory, and finally to the assistant manager of the pesticide factory. He is two years older than Zhang Zhenxing, and they were rivals, but the power balance leaned toward Zhang Zhenxing as he became the secretary. Zhang became slowly estranged from the center of village politics and economy and could never get back. In contrast, Zhang Zhengui became one of the most successful villagers in the reform era, in spite of his age.

In conclusion, former cadres who had nothing to do with the village did not benefit from their old positions. Zhang Fumao can be said to have a slight connection with the village because he contracted fifteen *mu* of dry field to grow fruit, but at the time of contract no one else wanted that parcel of land primarily because, according to other villagers' judgment, the fee was too high to make profit from growing fruit. However, most of former cadres who worked for the village or the village factories appeared to be receiving preferential treatment, such as shorter working hours, lower intensity of work, and higher payment. However, we have to consider several factors to decide whether they were actually receiving preferential treatment. First of all, they were elected or appointed and worked as cadres because they were capable in the first place. Most of them had leadership skills, a good sense of responsibility, intelligence, and were literate (in the case of accountants and cashiers); these are desirable qualities for any job. Secondly, if their experiences as cadres have influenced on their jobs in different areas, I should say their former positions have made differences for them. Lastly, I do not have accurate information on whether former cadres took jobs over other villagers who were equally qualified. Although, it is not evident that these former cadres took advantage of their former positions, it is clear that the easier the job is, the more likely it is to be given to former cadres.

(2) Current cadres

We turn to the current leading cadres next. I will take the members of the party committee and the villagers' committee into account because, as I described in the previous sections, those two committees had the strongest decision-making power, and they included all the important cadres as members. There were five and four members respectively on each committee in 1996, and the village head belonged to both committees.²⁰³ Among eight cadres, three of them started their careers as cadre during the Maoist era. Zhang Zhenxing, Yan Shuhua, and Li Hailu had been cashier of the production team, accountant of the village pig and chicken farm, and village accountant. The remaining five members started their cadre career during the reform era. The ages of cadres were quite evenly distributed. Two were in their fifties, and the remaining six were in their forties and thirties. The educational level of cadres was high by village standards. Except for Li Lianxue who had an elementary level education, and Zhang Zhenxing, who did not complete middle school due to the Cultural Revolution, all of them were middle school graduates. Their standard of living was also somewhat higher than the village average. This was because their spouses worked rather than because their salaries are high.²⁰⁴

There are important comparisons between the cadres in the reform period, and those of the Maoist period. Throughout the Maoist era, many people wanted to become party members or cadres, seeking high status and actual advantages. While party membership usually meant prestige rather than actual benefits, cadre positions were often accompanied by actual benefits. However, party membership was more difficult to get than cadre position, and the former had its own advantages that were rather indirect. During that

²⁰³ When I first got to the village, there were five villagers' committee members. The personnel changes made in early 1996 reduced the number of the villagers' committee to four. Zhang Fuye was transferred to the position of manager of the pesticide factory, so dismissed from the villagers' committee.

²⁰⁴ In the case of Yan Shuhua, his wife does not have any income so he lives roughly at an average level. Li Lianxue is also the sole income earner of his family, but he has a luxurious life, a point I will get back to later.

period China was a society where the Communist Party was absolutely dominant, and class labels and individual class consciousness exerted tremendous influence upon all parts of their lives. Being a party member, one was publicly seen as having a good class background and correct political attitude, and this provided advantages in such a society. Party members could influence fellow villagers and village decision-making. On the other hand, the main actual benefits that cadres enjoyed were that they got relatively high wages and they usually spent less time in the fields doing strenuous agricultural work.²⁰⁵ More often than not, party members assumed the leading cadre positions, such as brigade head, brigade accountant, militia head, security officer, and the director of the Women's Federation.

The situation changed after the reforms. The overall importance of the party and cadres in the village has decreased. Along with the state's efforts to reduce the party's involvement in the administrative and economic management of the village, the reforms replaced the Maoist regime's emphasis on "class struggle," "ideological mobilization," and "equality among individuals" with those of "economic development," "material motivation," and "accumulation of wealth by individuals." This has led to the decline of the party's prestige. The reforms have also weakened the cadres' power to control peasants' lives and significantly lessened the cadres' economic advantages over fellow villagers. From this perspective, being a party member or a cadre means a lot less now than before. As a matter of course, the number of people who want to become party members or cadres has also decreased.

Zhang Zhenxing, the village party secretary, talked about this trend in the village:

There are not many young villagers who want to join the party. Among those who hold administrative positions in the village or the village factories, there are a few who want to join the party, but most peasants and workers do not see any point in being the party members. To their way of thinking, membership means no more than the burdens of membership fees and the obligation to attend meetings. There are also only a few people who

²⁰⁵ Among the cadre positions, team head was the least desired and sometimes actively avoided by the villagers because of a heavy workload in comparison with the income, power, and prestige they enjoyed.

want to be cadres. Before the reforms, many people wanted to become cadres because they thought they could get power and high status, but this is not the case anymore. If someone wants to raise his social status, he'd better make a lot of money by doing business.

Actually, among those who became party members in the reform era, six were recruited from the bag factory, two joined the party when they were in the military service, and the last one was the director of women's work.²⁰⁶ The fact that the majority of new members come from managerial posts of the bag factory was due to the party's policy that emphasized recruiting experts. The state also aimed to recruit younger and better-educated persons to cadre posts, which is a necessary but difficult task, especially at the village level. Zhang Huaizuo, the village head, said,

Why in the world does a young and highly educated person want to become a village cadre?²⁰⁷ I work very hard but get no respect from villagers. Moreover, my salary was 4,000 *yuan* last year [1995], which was less than the salary of the director of a workshop at the bag factory that I once had been. The young with high education have many opportunities to get jobs much better than the job as the village cadre. I myself sometimes think about quitting as the village head.

About cadres and their jobs, Zhang Zhenxing pointed out that the village cadres' work became somewhat lighter, compared with the commune period:

During the commune period the cadres were directly involved in not only the management of agricultural production but also in the production itself. Though there were a lot of cadres, they had many things to do and heavy responsibilities. Now, we have a lot fewer cadres and a lot fewer duties. Agricultural production is almost totally up to individual households. The cadres make arrangements to support their production activity, such as irrigation, growing seedlings, electricity for thrashing machines, and so on. In addition, peasants can engage in whatever economic activities they want as long as they don't violate the laws.

²⁰⁶ The six members were the manager, two assistant managers, and three directors of workshops.

²⁰⁷ The villagers' standard for high education is the level of middle school graduation and up.

Zhang Huaizuo had somewhat different ideas on the cadres at brigade/village level.

He emphasized the difficulties of his work as the village head:

Under the commune system, there were forty to fifty cadres in the brigade. Because they divided the work between themselves, each cadre had lighter workload than each does now. Brigade cadres usually didn't have to be involved in the specific work, but team cadres did. But now I, the village head, have to have direct contact with the villagers, hearing their complaints, explaining things to them, and persuading them, which sometimes leads to conflicts. To make matters worse, the peasants' way of thinking now and then are entirely different matters [*liang ma shi*]. At that time when the economy was underdeveloped and the peasants' education level was low, they readily obeyed the brigade's orders or instructions. The party secretary or the brigade head was like an emperor. But now,... There have been developments in various spheres—economy, society, educational level, thoughts. Our work is getting more difficult to be done.

He continued to express his thoughts about the party secretary both in the Maoist and post-Mao eras. His main point was that even though the party secretary's work had not changed much since decollectivization, he bore less responsibility and enjoyed more benefits than before:

The party secretary's job is much more extensive and complicated than the village head's job is, as it was during the commune period. But it seems to me that the secretary's job was more difficult in the past than the present. The hardest part was that he was ultimately responsible for everything that was happening in the brigade, and he had to accomplish his tasks by all means. Also, just like other peasants, he received work-points, which were just a little bit more than the average.²⁰⁸

It seems that the former cadres had quite a different opinion about cadres in the reform era. Zhang Huaixian, the restaurant manager, pretty much represented the opinions of others:

The cadres of these days don't work. In the past when we were cadres, we didn't have a choice but to work. Nowadays? The cadres don't necessarily work. Of course, it doesn't mean there is nothing for them to do. If they

²⁰⁸ This does not mean that the salary of the party secretary is much higher than other cadres' or villagers' average income these days. In the case of Zhang Zhenxing, his wife also has an income as an elementary school teacher, but his living standard seems quite high in comparison with his household's known income.

look for something to do for the village or villagers, there are a lot of such things. But why should they when they don't have to? On the other hand, people don't easily obey the cadres. They do what they want to do regardless of what the cadres want them to do. Thus, in reality, there are not many things the cadres can do. For example, as you saw, twenty or thirty villagers laid pipes underground to supply water to the bunch of newly built houses in the eastern part of the village about two months ago. If it were in the past, we, the cadres, would have persuaded and mobilized the villagers. It should not have been an easy task. But now they just hired and paid some villagers to do the construction work. How easy! It is true that even if the cadres had wanted to do the work in the old way, it would have been almost impossible. My point is the cadres don't even think of other options, only the easiest one. Considering all these situations, I would say the cadres of today are not as enthusiastic as those of the past about their jobs.

Cadre positions and party membership did not look very attractive from the standpoint of power or other advantages, but there was competition for the position of party secretary, the most powerful position of all in the village. Zhang Zhenxing actively participated in the Cultural Revolution as a Red Guard while he was a student at a half-work half-study agricultural middle school (*bangong bandu nongye zhongxue*). After the school closed and the fervor of the Cultural Revolution considerably cooled down in 1968, he worked at his production team before he entered the navy in 1969. He joined the party during his service period of seven years and one month. After being discharged from military service, he became a temporary worker in a chemical fertilizer factory in Lutai in April 1976. The Big Earthquake of Tangshan in 1976 brought about big changes in his life. His father, Zhang Huaixuan, who had long been the closest colleague of Zhang Hongfeng and the number-two-man in the village, died in the earthquake. He was concurrently a brigade head and a deputy secretary at the time of his death. Zhang Hongfeng had Zhenxing return to the village and appointed him as a militia head and a member of the party committee. Zhang Hongfeng resigned and designated Zhenxing as his successor in January 1981. Since there was much concern, from himself as well as from high levels, about Zhenxing's young age (30 years old then) and lack of experience, Zhang Hongfeng agreed with the secretary of the commune party committee that he would assist

him as deputy secretary. After six months of a transitional period, Hongfeng became party secretary of the commune's brick factory. Zhenxing has been the village party secretary ever since. While he owed much of his very rapid rise to the top of the village leadership to his late father, he had to prove that he was the right man for the position and he did. When I was in the village, having been in that position for fourteen years, he was the indisputable number one man in the village.

In the early days of my stay in the village, I sensed just a little bit of tension between Zhang Huaishang and Zhang Huaizuo. In reality they were competing for the position of the village party secretary. The competition became evident when Zhang Zhenxing announced that due to his poor health he would entrust Zhang Huaishang with part of his work of supervising the village enterprises. It brought about a lot of confusion, guesswork, and conflict, which will be seen in the following episodes.

On January 12, 1996, Zhang Hongfeng, Yan Shuhua, Zhang Huaishang, and Zhang Huaizuo dropped by my room that was near Kan's office. Zhang Hongfeng and Kan often came to my room and chatted with me, but that day, Kan told us some big news, Zhang Zhenxing's announcement. It was big news because the most important part of Zhenxing's work was the supervision of village enterprises. But at that time nobody knew even what the "special situations" (*teshu qingkuang*) were that Zhang Zhenxing referred to about his move. We were all guessing about the real meaning of his move and what influence the move would have on village politics. Then, Zhang Huaizuo appeared with a very dissatisfied look and told us the other news that Zhang Zhenxing had made more personnel changes. Zhang Fuye would fill the empty seat of the *nongyao changzhang* (the manager of the *pesticide factory*) that Zhang Huaishang left, and Zhang Huaihong would take over the post of the head of agricultural cooperative held previously by Zhang Fuye. Zhang Huaizuo would have the additional duty of the deputy village head, the security. Zhang Huaizuo was unhappy both because he had to cope with more work added to his own that had already been too much and because he fell behind Zhang Huaishang in the

competition for the position of the party secretary. On the contrary, Zhang Huaishang showed up with a big smile later that day. He did not mention anything about the changes, but it was clear that he was quite satisfied with his new work assignment.

The next day, I was invited to a party held in the bag factory restaurant, celebrating the New Year (*yuandan*) among village cadres. Zhang Hongfeng and I were invited to the party as special guests and later the cook and manager sat down together. It was the first time I got together with all the village cadres. The party began with Zhang Zhenxing's toast including a small speech in which he acknowledged the cadres' good service in 1995 and requested more effort from them. He proposed another toast, wishing me health and successful research. I responded to the toast wishing him the best of health.²⁰⁹ Then we just talked about various things informally. Since twelve persons were sitting at a very long table, I mainly talked with several men sitting near me—Zhang Hongfeng, Zhang Huaishang, Yan Shuhua, Zhang Dushen, Zhang Huaizuo, and Zhang Huaixian. Zhang Dushen said to Huaishang, "Congratulations on your promotion! Aren't you happy?" He responded, "Not really. It's a big burden to me." Yan Shuhua chimed in, "Of course he is happy." Then, Huaizuo spoke bluntly, "I think Zhenxing's health is not that bad. He should continue to do all his duties." It was like pouring cold water on the pleasant atmosphere.

I went to Zhang Huaizuo's house the next evening to get an idea how he felt about the recent incidents. While we were watching TV and chatting, a villager stopped by. He asked Huaizuo whether or not Zhenxing was resigning from the office of secretary. Huaizuo burst into a rage and cried, "Who told you that? What kind of person was saying like that? Zhenxing will be OK and come back soon to the front. You will never speak such words again."

About a month later, it turned out that Zhenxing's moves had nothing to do with his retirement or Huaishang's succession to him. He made the personnel changes to pull

²⁰⁹ When I first met him at the restaurant of the Ninghe County government's guest house, I was amazed at his drinking capacity, but he was drinking Sprite that day.

Huaishang out of the position of the manager of the pesticide factory. He figured out that while most pesticide factories in the region had a good year in 1995, Chenguang pesticide factory suffered a loss, which was due to bad management. He could not and would not directly release Huaishang from the post of manager of the factory for various reasons.²¹⁰ So he made Huaishang leave the post by giving him a promotion. Claiming that he recovered his health, he took his old job back from Huaishang and put him in charge of the family planning which had been a part of the village head's tasks.²¹¹

Now, I will describe the brief personal histories of Huaishang and Huaizuo and the relationship between them. Zhang Huaishang was 39 years old. His uncle (his father's elder brother) was a village head under the control of the Communist Party before the political organization of the village was established. There were some leading village figures in his family. Yan Shuhua is his eldest sister's husband, and Li Lianwen, who contracted the metal casting factory, is his second eldest sister's husband. His wife's brother is Wang Dehuan. After graduating from middle school, Huaishang first became a deputy village head in 1982. The next year, he joined the party and the village party branch committee. After being a village head for several months in 1988, he became the deputy secretary of the party in 1991 and still was. He concurrently held the position of manager of the pesticide factory between 1993 and 1995. He supervised the operation of family planning policy in 1996.

²¹⁰ Direct discharge would clearly mean the reprimand of Huaishang, which would not be appropriate considering the situation. Most of all, such a movement would have looked very bad for him as well as for Huaishang. They had been colleagues for over ten years, and it is he who appointed him deputy secretary and the manager of the pesticide factory. In addition, if he tried to release him from the post, Huaishang might disobey his order.

²¹¹ I reconstructed this story based on a series of personnel changes, villagers' responses, comments, and interpretations and I am relatively certain that it was what really happened. Zhang Zhenxing had never disclosed his intentions or calculations behind his moves, though. Even if he never directly accused Huaishang of embezzlement during the interview with me, I am also sure that he knew many villagers were accusing him of it and discharging him was his answer to those accusations. However, I am not sure that he had direct evidence for embezzlement or other corruption. I discussed Huaishang's financial situation in section 3 of chapter 5.

Zhang Huaizuo was 36 years old and had a relatively short career as a village cadre. His uncle (his father's eldest brother) is Zhang Hongfeng.²¹² After finishing middle school, he was in the military service between 1978 and 1983. He joined the party in 1983. As soon as he was discharged from military service, he worked at a brick factory. In the same year he changed his work place to the old age home where he had worked as a cook for three years.²¹³ He returned to the village in 1986 to become a workshop director of the bag factory. Finally, he was appointed the village head and a member of the party committee in 1992.

Due to his intelligence and good family background Zhang Huaishang was the first village cadre picked by Zhenxing. He was a good speaker with a sense of humor. He also knew how to adapt himself to circumstances. At the same time, he was the kind of man who made a full use of his resources and more. He had the help of Yan Shuhua and Wang Dehuan in the early stage of his career, and he later helped Li Lianwen and Zhang Huaisheng, his elder brother, get contract from the village. He also helped his wife become the accountant of the village health clinic, which was regarded as one of the best jobs for women in the village because she earned a high salary but worked little. In addition, he liked to maintain a luxurious style of living. He was one of the first people in the village who bought a cassette recorder, a black and white TV set, a color TV set, a washing machine, a refrigerator, a component audio system, a VCR, and a telephone. In 1996, still less than ten percent of village households owned the last three items. Due to his life style, he had often been under suspicion of corrupt actions. His new house made this suspicion stronger. Moreover, he was well known for his hot temper.²¹⁴

Zhang Huaizuo's character and the villagers' estimation of him were quite contrary to Huaishang, who was said to be faithful to his duties and his principles. He was at the

²¹² Zhang Hongfeng insists that he had nothing to do with Huaizuo's political career. It may be true, but I cannot ignore his potential influence, considering Zhang Zhenxing's career.

²¹³ It was no wonder when he invited me to the dinner at his home, he himself usually prepared various dishes. He was also called to prepare dishes for wedding and funeral banquets in the village.

²¹⁴ When he found out that a salesman of the pesticide factory embezzled 20,000 *yuan*, he beat him up and publicly humiliated him. Later, the man fled to Guangdong with his wife.

middle level in terms of household income and house building. He possessed a washing machine, a refrigerator, and a telephone, which put him at the upper middle level. He was also a warm-hearted person,²¹⁵ but he was not as smart and adaptable as Huaishang. He had good knowledge of government policy and village situations. When he talked about them, he liked to use a lot of official terms easily found in official documents and press, but he sometimes failed to deliver the points or use the terms appropriately.

In every respect—age, career, capability, reputation, and background—even though they were the top contenders for the position of party secretary, the most powerful position in the village, their competitive relationship was not easily detected in normal situations. It did not catch my eye until the incidents of personnel changes I explained previously had occurred. As I kept an eye on the relationship between them, it was clear to me that they were not on good terms. They constantly tried to show off their superiority over the other, usually tacitly but sometimes manifestly. Moreover, they did not like each other, quite naturally.

It was Zhang Zhenxing who would decide the winner of the contest. The current situation was very similar to the one in which Zhang Zhenxing succeeded Zhang Hongfeng. Just as in the case of Zhang Hongfeng, no one in the village could match Zhenxing in political career, status, and power. His influence upon the selection of his successor would be decisive. There existed differences between the two cases as well. While Zhang Hongfeng's resignation took place rather abruptly, Zhang Zhenxing set his resignation time and was carefully estimating the possible successors. Zhenxing commented, "I'm planning to leave all official positions in two or three years. I haven't decided whom I will recommend as my successor yet. Huaizuo and Huaishang are closest, but it's not easy to pick one over the other because each has his own strengths and weaknesses. Huaishang is clever (*congming*) but sometimes too tricky (*xiacongming*).

²¹⁵ When his wife's brother died young and later the widow was going to remarry, he adopted the baby girl. As he already had a daughter, it was the kind of thing that most people could hardly do in Chinese society, where family planning was very strictly practiced.

Huaizuo is sincere but not so clever.” Furthermore, the winner can get many more spoils than before. That is, Zhenxing was at least as powerful as Hongfeng had been and enjoyed many more material benefits. Therefore, the competition will get hotter and hotter as the time of Zhenxing’s resignation became closer.

3. Winners and Losers in the New Era

(1) Winners

Chinese peasants have responded positively to the reform leadership’s new slogan, “To get rich is glorious.” Not only do they make every effort to get rich, but they also value wealth above all. One’s success is judged primarily by how much money a person makes. Therefore, those who have become wealthy can be said to be the winners in the reform period.

By this standard, most of the entrepreneurs I discussed earlier belong to the circle of winners.²¹⁶ There are also other villagers who have taken full advantage of the new policies and become prosperous even if they are not included in the category of entrepreneurs. Most of them engage in private business, such as transportation or commerce, as the entrepreneurs do, but I do not call them entrepreneurs because they do not carry out innovations. They are making a lot of money by following in the footsteps of entrepreneurs.

We can find the most evident case that shows the striking differences of state policies and peasant reactions between the Mao and post-Mao era in Li Lianxue, the manager of the bag factory and member of the party committee of the village. He is a member of the Li family, which was the wealthiest and most powerful family in the village before the socialist revolution. The family rented 200 *mu* of farmland and owned two houses—one with fourteen and the other with seventeen rooms. In addition, his father (Li

²¹⁶ Among them, Zhang Shuang is the only one that does not belong to the category of winners even if he once did.

Ruisui) was the head of tenants (*zhuangtou*), and the second elder brother of his father (Li Ruishan) controlled the villagers on behalf of the Japanese army. As a matter of course, this family suffered a lot throughout the Maoist period. They were the biggest enemy of the people and thus received the harshest treatment in the Land Reform Campaign. His father and uncles were designated as rich peasant elements. Afterwards, those who were designated as one of four bad elements were often called, humiliated, criticized, and denounced during the time when the central leadership emphasized class struggle, revolutionary spirit, and ideology, especially during the Four Cleanups Campaign and the Cultural Revolution.

Li Lianxue worked as an unskilled construction worker in Lutai when the brigade was about to construct the bag factory building. He worked as a construction worker and was recruited as an office worker of the bag factory. Later he was promoted to assistant manager in charge of supply and marketing. He was finally chosen as manager by Zhang Zhenxing after he had been with the factory for two years. A son of the rich peasant element had become the manager of the largest factory of the village! Even if he had been a very capable businessman with decisiveness, positive drive, and lots of brains, and the reform leadership declared the end of class struggle, it was a big event that surprised many villagers. It occurred in less than one year after agriculture was decollectivized and the commune was dismantled. His predecessor, Wang Dehuan, was a member of the village party branch committee with a good class background. Moreover, Li joined the party and became a member of the party committee right after becoming the manager.

His glorious rise from the bottom of social stratification to the top also brought him material prosperity. The factory provided him with a Buick, a driver, and a cellular phone. He also enjoyed luxurious living. His house was well-furnished with a big screen TV, a cordless phone, and an air conditioner, the only one in the village. When I visited his house at the Spring Festival, I was served Maotai, foreign wine, and various snacks all of which I had never been served, not just in the village, but anywhere else in China either.

(2) Losers

The new policies have produced not only winners but also losers. The changes of the reform period hurt some villagers. The most obvious negative change may be found in the area of social welfare. That is, while the peasants have obtained considerable autonomy in political and economic activities, they have lost a good deal of protection previously given by the state and collectives. This caused severe suffering especially to those who were unable to get decent jobs.

One of the most notable examples can be found in Yang Dugang's family. When Yang Dugang married, his parents were against the marriage because his intended wife had diabetes. His life was not bad after the marriage, though. He had a decent income as a production team head. At first, his wife's disease was not very serious, and they had five children—the first three and the last one were daughters, and the fourth was the only son. Later, after suffering for quite a while, his wife died of her chronic disease. Diabetes made the family's life a hell. The second and third daughters also died of diabetes. In 1996, the last daughter was seriously ill with the same disease—she could hardly move and became blind. His son, who had two sons of his own, developed diabetes as an adult and had to stop working. Even though Yang Dugang's daughter-in-law began to work at the bag factory 1995, and Dugang did everything to make money in the intervals between farm work, the cash income of the family was just two-thousand *yuan* in 1995. It was too little for six family members to scratch a living, not to mention to have proper medical care.

The village did nothing to alleviate the suffering of this family. When I visited his house for an interview, the daughter was angry with the village leaders, especially Zhang Zhenxing. However, as the fact of the only son's illness came to be known to the villagers, it stirred up public sentiment that something had to be done to help the family. A villager said, "If the son dies, his wife is most likely to take her sons along and remarry.

Then the family will die out. We cannot let it happen; we can do something about it.”

Village leaders decided to launch a drive to raise funds. Six old men were selected, and they visited house after house to collect contributions. All the households participated in the drive, contributing between four and two hundred *yuan*. This two-day drive ended with a collection of 5,799 *yuan*, enough to help the family ease the tress and buy some medicine.

If this had happened during the commune period, the situation would have been very different. First of all, Yang’s wife and daughters would not likely have died or gone blind without receiving proper medical care. When members of the brigade got sick, they were treated at health clinics of the brigade or commune with the help of the brigade. When the illness was too serious to be treated in local clinics, they were referred to the hospitals in Lutai or Tianjin City. After being treated, they were often unable to pay the medical fees because treatments of such major illnesses cost at least several hundred *yuan*, too much for the peasants to pay at that time. In such cases, after the hospitals investigated the financial situations of debtors for several years, they remitted parts or all of the medical fees.

Second, his family would have received livelihood protection from the brigade. The brigade provided financial aid for young orphans, the old without children, and the disabled under the program of “five guarantees.”²¹⁷ It also assisted poverty-stricken households whose major work force could not work due to illness or other legitimate reasons. Yang’s family surely would have received assistance from the brigade as a poverty-stricken household.

Under Mao the collectives had been the main providers of social welfare in rural areas, and the state’s role had been very limited. This tendency has not much changed since the reform, that is, the collectives have assumed responsibility for taking care of the peasants. Furthermore, economic decollectivization has dismantled the units that had been primary providers of social welfare for peasants. The peasants are now expected to

²¹⁷ This program intended to guarantee the provision of food, clothing, housing, medical care, and burial expense.

practice self-reliance and mutual help. Even though the township and village try to fill the vacuum of protection and care for the peasants left out by old collectives, they do so unevenly.²¹⁸ Care for the elderly, disabled, martyrs, soldiers' families, and incapacitated veterans continue to be provided by the village, township, and the state.²¹⁹ It is relief of the poor and medical care that has been greatly damaged by decollectivization. On the eve of decollectivization, in addition to remission of medical fees by the hospitals, brigades covered part or all medical fees if the amount was not too much. Now individual peasants have to pay for the medical care from barefoot doctors in the village health clinic or outside clinics and hospitals.²²⁰ Hospitals do not admit patients with major illness without deposits. Therefore, Chenguang village leaders collect contributions from the villagers to help those who are in extremely needy situations, like Yang Dugang. There were another two such cases since the decollectivization.

There were several other families experiencing hardships due to illness. For example, a man and his wife were sick in most of 1995, which forced them to quit full-time job and to take just part-time jobs whenever they were better. Not only could they not receive proper medical care, but the family of four, including a fifteen-year-old daughter and thirteen-year-old son, had to live with a total family income of 1,500 *yuan* in 1995. Another man's family was in trouble in 1995, too. He and his daughter-in-law were sick and received insufficient medical treatment. Though his son's income was at an above average level as an individual income, it was very small as the sole income for the family of six.

²¹⁸ Similar points on social welfare in the Maoist and post-Mao era are made by several researchers (Ahmad and Hussain 1990; Davis 1989; Dixon 1981; Feuchtwang 1987; Leung and Nann 1995; Wong 1995, 1998).

²¹⁹ Chenguang sent two old men and one disabled man to the elderly home managed by the township government. The expenses were shared by the villages and township. The villages that sent villagers to the old age home annually contributed four hundred kilograms of rice and five hundred yuan per person to the old age home. The majority of the disabled in the village could get jobs at the village factories if they wanted, as a form of village support. The township pooled funds from the villages and supported the soldiers' families, and the county supported disabled soldiers and incapacitated veterans.

²²⁰ "By 1985, ... , only 5 per cent of villages had retained the medical schemes" (Leung and Nann 1995: 107).

In addition to villagers who have suffered due to the reduced basic social security provided by the state and collectives, there are some villagers who have lost a lot because of other changes of the reform era. In the previous chapter, I talked about the village's pig and chicken farm that had been in the red and private farms in the black. That is not always the case. A few villagers suffered losses in animal husbandry. Most such cases happened because of fluctuations in the prices of feed, pigs, chicks, pork, chickens, and eggs. One gained little or even lost when the purchases and sales were untimely. The most notable case of failure was Wang Lu. He and his wife started raising 800 chickens in 1995. Their inexperience, the high price of feed, ill-timed purchase of chickens and sale of eggs and chickens cost him over 10,000 *yuan*.

I also examined the cases of the villagers who succeeded in private business. On the other hand, there were the villagers who lost in keen competition as well. A villager bought a used truck in 1995. Before long it began to break down. So he sold it at 20,000 *yuan*, 5,000 *yuan* less than the buying price. If we include repair charges and everything, it is estimated that he lost between 7,000 and 8,000 *yuan*. In another case, Zhang Dumin and Zhang Huailun bought a truck in 1995, investing 26,500 *yuan* each. They engaged in feed trading with the truck but the business did not pay for the first several months. Zhang Dumin thought that the business would not get better because the prices of materials for feed kept on rising during that period. It was also very hard to find good suppliers and clients due to keen competition. So he sold his share to an other villager at 25,000 *yuan*. It means that he lost about 3,000 *yuan* in all. Right after the sale of the share, the business began to prosper. The prices of materials went down and those of feed went up. They also found and secured good suppliers and customers. At last, each was expected to make at least 10,000 *yuan* out of feed trading in 1996.

However, those who failed in their businesses are different from those who face difficulties due to the lack of social welfare. The former apparently had done well before because they started the business with their savings in the first place. Therefore, it was

expected that they would be able to recover from the losses they had suffered.

Nevertheless, I include them in the category of losers because they failed in the short run, due to misjudgment, shortsightedness, impatience, lack of effort, and so on.

(3) The winners in the hearts of the villagers

It is true that Chinese people in the reform period regard wealth as the most important thing they pursue. This does not mean that money is the only criterion in deciding whether a person is a winner or a loser. Sometimes people envy someone for his or her wealth, but they despise him or her for other things. On the other hand, people may respect someone even though he is not wealthy at all. I would like to discuss this point by exploring specific cases.

Not just how much money someone makes but how he makes money also matters. Even if the villagers may envy someone who has become wealthy, they do not hold him in respect, if he has made money in an illegal or immoral way. There are several cases that attract our attention in this sense in Chenguang village.

Salt trading is one such case. As I discussed in detail above, private salt trading is illegal and many villagers criticize it. One villager, a former cadre, talked to me about salt traders and the people's thoughts in the reform era:

About twenty villagers engage in salt trading now. And it's being done quite openly. They're making a lot of money. Besides, it's easy money. If someone has or cultivates a good connection, he can easily make money. The mentality of people in the reform era is that they make money by hook or crook. That's why fake goods are all over the country. However, there are not many people who dare to violate laws and to confront village cadres and fellow villagers as the salt traders do. Things like this were unthinkable in the past.

Another villager expressed similar opinion to me somewhat angrily:

I'm also doing whatever I can do to make money. Most people I know are just like me. But I think there must be a line that we are not supposed to cross. The line may differ from person to person. I know there are quite a few villagers who are willing to engage in salt trading if they can. But I think the salt traders have gone too far. That's why I don't like them, and a lot of villagers don't like them.

Some feed traders have also made much money wrongfully. They received illicit gain by mixing stone powder into feed which sickened and sometimes killed the animals that ate it. The gains were enough to make villagers rush into the business of feed trading, but the number of villagers who could start the business was limited. One reason was that he had to have a considerable amount of savings.²²¹ According to the usual practice of the business, the feed trader needed a large sum of revolving capital. He also had to have a means of transportation, such as costly trucks or motorized tricycles, to engage in this business. The other reason was because there were quite a few villagers who were not willing to engage in such an immoral practice.

The practice of mixing stone powder did not last long, and the profitability of feed trading dropped because of too much competition among feed traders and the decreasing number of feed buyers in the area. Then, the traders started to mix rice chaff with wheat bran to make a profit out of their tough business.²²²

One villager who engaged in feed trading talked about the recent trend of the feed trading business and tried to defend his unethical practices:

I know that mixing stone powder was wrong. But in that way we could make much money at that time. That's why some villagers started feed trading. Many villagers also wanted to start the business but they couldn't for one reason or another. So it's not that they didn't do it because it's not right but that they couldn't do it because they were short of money or something. Now, we mix rice chaff, instead of stone powder, with wheat bran. It's at least harmless to the animals. The business environment of feed trading has gotten worse in the last several months. Mixing rice chaff

²²¹ The reason why it became the factor that limited the number of possible feed traders was that it was very hard for an individual peasant to get a loan from banks and, even if he got a loan, the interest rates were too high for the debtor to net a good profit.

²²² I am not saying that all the villagers who engaged in feed trading did mix stone powder or rice chaff into the feed.

is not because I'm too greedy but because I can't survive in this business without it.

An old man who did not seem to like the changes in the reform period strongly criticized such practices:

I don't think there is much difference between mixing stone powder and rice chaff. If the latter seems a little bit less bad, both of them are immoral after all. Several villagers have made a good sum of money through those unjust means. So what? I don't think people's enthusiastic search for wealth in the reform era is wrong. But I think how to make money is also important. The recent trend that people try to make money by fair means or foul is just not right. Those who make money by cheating have to be ashamed of themselves.

Villagers criticized not only those who made money by foul means but also those who enjoyed a more comfortable life than they deserved by abusing their power. Some village leaders were the objects of villagers' criticism. Zhang Huaishang was one of them. Many villagers suspected him of misappropriating pesticide factory's money to provide for his luxurious life style. Furthermore, he was arrogant enough to show off his life style, which provoked more criticism from the villagers.

Li Lianxue and Zhang Zhenxing were also under fire because villagers thought they enjoyed too much privilege. Criticism grew in 1996 because of a slump in the business of the bag factory.²²³ A young truck driver complained about the bad management of the bag factory by Li Lianxue, the manager of the bag factory, and his abuse of power:

The village [actually village factories] is in debt for total of twenty million *yuan*. The bag factory has the largest debt. It is in debt to the banks more than any village in this area, which means something is wrong with the management. But Li Lianxue is using a car and a cellular phone, and giving banquets to government officials and business partners with the factory's money. He even transferred his *hukou* to Lutai half a month ago.

²²³ I witnessed the bag factory's difficult situation of 1996. The factory had been in full-scale operation with night work everyday until the end of November 1995. There had been occasional night work but the rate of operation dropped significantly until the mid-April 1996. From then on, the factory completely suspended operations for about three months over three times in 1996 due to the lack of orders. After April 1996, all the outside workers left as well.

It seems that nobody knew exactly how much the village debt had risen. According to the informants, it ranged from ten million *yuan* to twenty million *yuan*. I first heard about the transfer of Li's *hukou* from the truck driver, and it turned out few villagers knew about it at that time.

A former cadre also expressed discontent with the management of the bag factory:

The debt of bag factory exceeds ten million *yuan* now. And yet, the two persons in charge of factory management—Li Lianxue and Zhang Zhenxing—waste too much money. Do you know how much they paid for the purchase and maintenance of two cars? I've heard they cost about one million *yuan* for the purchase and two hundred thousand *yuan* per year for the maintenance. The interest for the bag factory's loan would be more than two million a year. How could they spend so much for their convenience? Moreover, they're using the cars and phones to go to have drinks and dance with other businessmen and cadres.

Then, he answered my question about the *hukou* transfer:

Zhenxing's *hukou* was already transferred to Lutai. I don't know about the situation of Li *changzhang's* *hukou*. His son's family transferred their *hukou* to Lutai before. I don't have specific information on how they could do that. *Hukou* is under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Civil Administration. I speculate that they used connections with the officials in county government.

When the villagers talked about those three men, they implied the abuse of their positions and power for personal gain. It had never been specifically proven that they were guilty of corruption, but various circumstances suggested the possibility. I had close relationships with several retired cadres who spent most of their cadre career during the Maoist era.²²⁴ They were concerned and critical about widespread corruption in the country and they assumed there was also corruption in their own village in the post-Mao era.²²⁵ I was shocked to hear the extreme comment Zhang Zhensheng furiously made. He said,

²²⁴ Unless they had felt comfortable with me, they would not have talked about the dark side of the glorious success of their country and village with a foreigner like myself.

²²⁵ Many researchers also pay attention to corruption in post-Mao China (e.g., Levy 1995; Oi 1989b; Ostergaard 1986; Rocca 1992; Yan 1991).

“All the cadres at the level of the village party secretary and the section chief of the county government and higher should be executed by shooting.”

In contrast, it seemed that cadres in the Maoist era were less involved in corruption. Of course cadres committed wrongdoings and abused their power, such as assigning rather easy tasks to the kinsmen and friends, taking and/or eating more than one's share (*duochi-duozhan*), accepting bribes, and embezzling public funds. Sometimes cadres embezzled more than one thousand *yuan*, as did the party secretary of a neighboring village of Chenguang. As the thorough investigations during the Four Cleanups Campaign suggested, corruption of the cadres had never been a big problem in Chenguang.

It is useful to take a brief look at the personal history of Zhang Hongfeng in order to understand the differences between the cadres in the Maoist and the post-Mao era. He is a representative figure of the cadres of the past in Chenguang. He started his career as one of the seven cadres first elected under the complete control of the CCP in 1951. He had been the first secretary of the village party branch between 1955 and 1981. During his tenure of office he coped with many predicaments. He pointed out four major ones, hunger during the Great Leap Forward, public criticism and humiliation during the Four Cleanups and the Cultural Revolution, and severe damage to the village due to the Tangshan Earthquake. The biggest challenge came with the Four Cleanups because of the exhaustive investigations and criticisms of his ten years' work as the most powerful man of the village. In the end it was concluded that he had done his work appropriately because his and fellow cadres' faults were trivial, and they were all reinstated at the end of the campaign.

When the village recovered from the damages of the earthquake, he resigned. The secretary of the commune party committee initially objected to his resignation, but he had to accept that it was at the right time. Zhang Hongfeng was already fifty-five years old, and the whole country was in the middle of huge transformations that would be hard for an old cadre to deal with. He was appointed the party secretary of the brick factory owned by the

commune in July 1981. Two years later he became the director of the township's old age home. He came back to the village in 1992 as an ordinary peasant, and he briefly served as the manager of the village's fish farm while it was being constructed in 1994 before he retired from any official position whatsoever.

In the 1950s he had several chances to move to Lutai, but the higher authorities persuaded him that he was essential in establishing the basis of state control in the village. When the secretary of the township party committee told him that it was hard to find a director for the township old age home, he agreed to take that position. The advantage urban residents had enjoyed compared with rural residents in the Maoist period is well known. And while the party secretary of the brick factory was one of the best positions at that level in terms of salary, benefits, and prestige, the director was one of the worst.

This does not mean that he was unrealistic. Actually he knew precisely how much better-off he would have been moving to an urban area or remaining at the brick factory. He just did his best to follow the party's lead and guidance. His devotion and contribution as the party secretary was recognized by the higher authorities—he was elected for the Fourth Ninghe County Party Committee between 1971 and 1985. He received respect from the villagers as well, even if some of them, especially those who had suffered under his leadership, as four bad elements, did not like him. Even they, however, seemed to recognize that he was fair and unselfish in carrying out his duties.

The kind of people the villagers perceived as winners reflect the villagers' value system. I included two questions in my questionnaire in order to get a glimpse of the villagers' value system. They were about the respondents' wishes for their children's or grandchildren's education level and occupations. Ninety-one respondents answered the first question about education level. An absolute majority (90.1 %) wanted their children or grandchildren to have the education level of college or higher. Among the seven occupations I listed, the top choice was teachers, including professors (22.4 %), which was followed by officials and medical doctors (13.3 % each). Workers (who could have

non-agricultural *hukou*) were the fourth (12.2 %). The same number of people answered that any occupation appropriate for college graduates would be good. A surprising number of people (10.2 %) wanted their children to become scientists/engineers, even if it was not on my list. Owners or managers of companies were the next choice (7.1 %).

I asked the respondents why they wanted their children or grandchildren to have the occupations they chose. Only fifty-five people gave me answers.²²⁶ Twenty people specified the reason as contribution and service to the country and people. The second choice given most by nine people was, of course, to make money, which was followed by the security cited by seven people as a reason. Three people picked the combination of the service to people and money.

I was somewhat surprised at this result because contribution and service to the country and people was clearly the number one choice of the villagers. After scrutinizing the survey results, I found out that money was the respondents' most important concern. If they meant getting wealthy by making money (*zhengqian*), they meant a considerable amount of income in the form of salary by the security of living. Eleven people who said any occupation suited to college graduates would be acceptable also implied that a certain level of income was expected.

Consequently, the villagers during the reform period attached great importance to money. It seemed, however, that honor was as important to them as money. They wanted their children or grandchildren to have college education because, it is safe to assume, that they valued high social status as well as money. Owners or managers of companies assumed to have the highest income level were not a favorite choice of the respondents. Rather they gave priority to teachers, medical doctors, and scientists/engineers, occupations that were assumed to receive respect. Even though the reforms have made money the central concern of the peasants, old values, such as "serve the people," "sacrifice for the

²²⁶ That is, I think, because people had not given much thought to the future of their children. Some of those who gave me answers thought for a while or hesitated before they told me.

country,” and so on, have not faded away. At least, it is certain that they did not want “only money.”²²⁷

The reform leadership has tried to make getting wealthy the primary goal of the Chinese people, and it has been successful, especially in rural areas. Chenguang is not an exception, as we have seen so far. The villagers are doing their best to make as much money as possible. Some of them became wealthy and the envy of fellow villagers. They are winners of the new era. Top leaders of the village also belong to that category, maintaining the highest level of living standard in the village, but not all of them are winners in fellow villagers’ hearts. Those who enjoy what they have earned by illicit and dishonest means have not won others’ respect. Ironically some of the former cadres who are not doing well from an economic or political standpoint have won respect for what and how they did as village leaders.

²²⁷ Only five people gave answers that fell into the category of ‘only money’—one chose doing business (*zuo shengyi*), one driver, and three said any job that paid a lot would be enough.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

I. Local Cadres between the State and Peasantry: Return to the Starting Point and Beyond

In traditional Chinese society, the monarchial power stopped at the county level. It depended on the lower local gentry for the propagation of its moral authority and the important administrative functions, including tax collection and conscription. At the same time, the peasants sought protection from the gentry against the monarchial power encroaching on local interests (Fei 1946). Local elites continued to play this role of cultural and political brokers during the Republican and Japanese occupation periods. Sinologists often compare the local cadres of the PRC with the local elites of previous eras in their dual role.

Three important studies about state-society relations in the Maoist China (Oi 1989a; Shue 1988; Siu 1989a) approach to the topic from the angle of the dual role of local cadres—as representatives of state authority and as representatives of peasant interests. While Shue places stronger emphasis on the cadres' latter role, Siu argues that the cadres heavily leaned on their role as state agent. Oi's perspective can be put somewhere between the two. She recognizes the widespread practice of everyday forms of resistance by the peasantry surrounding the grain procurement system and the local cadres' participation in it. She also acknowledges the importance of the patron-client relationship between the cadres, mainly team heads, and ordinary peasants, based on self-interests of both parties rather than public interests of the community. This mutual self-interest, she argues, ultimately undermined state control over the cadres and peasants.

Shue, Siu, and Oi's studies were the starting point of my research. One of my goals was to compare state-society relations between the Maoist and the post-Mao eras, by investigating the dual role of local cadres.²²⁸ Through examining the roles of local cadres and their interactions with the higher authorities on the one hand and with the ordinary peasants on the other hand, I aimed to discern the main features of the relationship between the state and society and their changes over the time.

The analogy between local cadres in the Maoist period and lower gentry or local elites in the previous periods is to a certain degree appropriate. The two are distinguishable in that while the latter had had a great deal of autonomy from the state or monarchical power, the former depended on the state for their positions; that is, the only legitimate source of cadre power was the state. The state also relied on local cadres to deal with various situations, such as policy implementation, ideological education, and prevention of peasants from evading state control.

The state in the Maoist era, however, did not have many means of controlling local cadres. It did not have economic leverage to control them because their income came from the collectives, either the brigade or the teams. That is, they ate "their own rice," rather than "the state rice." In addition, local cadres with agricultural *hukou* rarely had the opportunity to be promoted to state cadres with non-agricultural *hukou*. The expectation of promotion to state cadres hardly motivated local cadres to obey higher authorities.

One apparent state means of controlling local cadres was the power of appointing them. Most local cadre positions had economic, political, and social advantages, which were desired by the peasants.²²⁹ In the case of brigade cadres, higher authorities admitted candidates who were elected, or they directly appointed them. Team cadres were elected or appointed under the charge of brigade cadres following the guidance of higher authorities.

²²⁸ The term, "local cadres" refers to the brigade and team level cadres in the commune period and the village level cadres in the reform period.

²²⁹ Among leading cadres, team head was the position least desired by peasants.

This appointing power alone cannot explain the Maoist state's strong control over local cadres. They sometimes worked very hard to implement state policies that were so unpopular that they had to overcome strong, overt or covert, opposition from the peasants. Why did local cadres tried hard to implement state policies often against peasants' wills? We have to take ideological and emotional factors in the context of the development of various situations into account.

First of all, we have to consider the class background of cadres. Between the summer of 1948, when the CCP seized the region of Chenguang village, and the autumn of 1951, just before the launch of the Land Reform Campaign, the leaders of the Poor Peasant Association, which had been organized based on preliminary class classification, were in charge of the village works. The work team, which arrived at Chenguang in August 1951 for the Land Reform Campaign, recruited young activists with good class backgrounds. They helped the work team along with the old cadres of the Poor Peasant Association. Among them, seven were elected as village leaders, most of whom formed the backbone of village leadership throughout the Maoist era. None could become either a cadre or a party member if he had a bad class background. Good class backgrounds meant that they or their parents had been poor peasants or agricultural laborers, thus they had suffered from the suppression of superordinate classes—landlords and rich peasants, mainly—before the CCP came into power.²³⁰ Thanks to the CCP, those who had once been poor and powerless came into power. This is one factor that helps explain the local cadres' loyalty to the state.

Second, terror or memories of terror played an important role. Violence, verbal or physical, had always been a part of numerous campaigns launched throughout the Maoist period. Some of campaigns were more violent than others, and also some exerted greater influence upon the village than others. For example, the Land Reform had a huge influence upon the political, economic, and social lives of Chenguang villagers but was not

²³⁰ Only one of the seven elected leaders had a middle peasant class that was not "good" but an acceptable class background.

considered terribly violent, at least physically, in the village. Nevertheless, the villagers were by no means free from the violence of the campaign. They were encouraged to verbally attack class enemies as harshly as possible. They were also forced to witness open executions of class enemies on several occasions. In addition, they heard a lot about severe punishments to enemies that almost always involved violence.

Violence was an important factor of many campaigns. One message the peasants reminded of over and over again was that if they did not obey the state, they could receive the same punishment. As for the cadres, they had more opportunity to witness or to hear about those incidents than did ordinary peasants. Moreover, they became the main targets of several campaigns—the Three Anti and Five Anti Campaign, the Four Cleanups Campaign, and the Cultural Revolution.

Finally, ideological pressure was perhaps the most important factor to induce local cadres' obedience and cooperation. Socialism was new to most peasants, certainly to Chenguang villagers. The state had much to teach peasants in order to make them think and behave according to the standards of the socialist state. When the state launched a campaign or implemented a policy, the first thing it did was to educate the local cadres and then ordinary peasants. The cadres of higher units taught local cadres why a campaign or a policy was necessary, what the goals were, and how they had to carry it out, in educational sessions usually held in the commune. On several occasions, work teams or higher level cadres stayed at the village (brigade) to lead the campaign or policy implementation. The most important part of their work was to indoctrinate the cadres and peasants with the ideas, needs, and goals of a campaign or a policy. That educational work at the regional level was accompanied by heavy propaganda by mass media. Through all those processes, local cadres were required to think and behave with higher standards, to become models for ordinary peasants to emulate.

The relationship between local cadres and ordinary peasants was based on the fact that local cadres had had leverage to control peasants' economic activities since the start of

collective agriculture, more precisely of the Higher-level APC. Under the collective agricultural system, they distributed duties to the peasants, which would determine the intensity of the work and the level of income in the form of work-points. Even if the work-points were fixed to each job, some jobs were relatively easy in relation to the work-points earned, and vice versa. The assignment of jobs also influenced income from sideline activities and cultivation of private plots because the time and energy peasants had for those activities depended on their job assignments. Local cadres could also make a difference in a peasant's life through allocation of employment opportunities outside the brigade, and welfare and relief funds. Even though this allocation was regulated by rules, there was room for manipulation on the part of cadres. In addition, by carrying out campaigns or implementing policies, they could make a person's life harder or easier. They were so powerful that they sometimes criticized or even insulted those who disobeyed or did not closely follow the cadres' orders or directives.²³¹ Thus, as Siu argues, the cadres were primarily agents of the state who had the ability to hurt the peasants in many ways.

On the other hand, local cadres were members of the community as were the peasants. Cadres also depended on fellow peasants for their well-being. After all, cadres and peasants were in the same boat. Moreover, cadres were the representatives of the community and its members. They formally had a duty to communicate grass roots peasant opinions to higher authorities. As leaders they were expected by their fellow community members to protect the community's interests against the encroaching state.

Chenguang village began to participate in the large-scale capital construction in 1958. This program, based on the mobilization of peasants, lasted until the end of the Maoist era. Therefore, the villagers were mobilized for projects in the region every winter. In the early 1970s when the Chaobai River was being excavated, the Hongxing Commune requested the Chenguang Brigade to mobilize one hundred laborers. The Chenguang Brigade, however, was urgently needed to repair its own irrigation canals. So the brigade

²³¹ It is reported that local cadres used violence to punish peasants in some places.

cadres, the party secretary and the brigade head, appealed to the commune and the county and succeeded in reducing the quota to fifty laborers.

Local cadres also unofficially or covertly engaged in community protection. When several natural villages formed one administrative and production unit, for example, when Chenguang incorporated with two other villages to form the Yuguang Cooperative in 1956, and when seven villages including Chenguang constituted the Yuguang Brigade in 1960, leading cadres of each village were appointed to the leader positions of a new unit. As the villages were regarded as sub-units under the incorporated unit, the cadres struggled with each other to maximize their own village's interests.

Generally speaking, team cadres showed a much stronger tendency to protect their own unit's interests than did brigade cadres. Everyday forms of resistance, such as stealing grain, hiding production, and foot dragging, could not be practiced by the peasants without help of team cadres.²³² Team leaders passively connived, or actively participated in, those practices. There were several reasons for this. Above all, team cadres and members depended on each other for their economic well being. A team's economic performance was by and large the result of the cadres' leadership and the members' cooperation. Moreover, team cadres were paid solely based on a team's overall economic performance and/or their own labor. Secondly, team cadres' activities as leaders, concentrated on the economic sphere. Political or ideological work was mainly carried out at the brigade level, such as the party branch, the militia, the Poor and Lower Middle Peasants Association, and the branch of the Chinese Communist Youth League. The final reason for team cadres' eagerness to protect their team's interests was that team cadres did not have to make direct contact with the authorities beyond the brigade level. All the orders, directives, and guidance came down from the county or commune through the party secretary or brigade head. Team cadres received them through brigade cadres. Furthermore, the brigade cadres were in charge of the elections or appointments of team

²³² I have discussed such instances in chapter 4.

cadres without the commune's involvement. Therefore, team cadres were largely free from the upper levels' direct pressure and tightly bound to fellow team members. While brigade cadres had more power and prestige that stemmed from the state than team cadres did, they were, at the same time, more dependent upon the state.

According to my understanding of the Chenguang village situation, local cadres acted more as state agents, as Siu has argued, than as representatives of the villagers during the Maoist era. They were often forced to implement unpopular policies and lead campaigns. They also had power over ordinary villagers, and had various means to control them. This cadre power, however, was granted by the state; the state picked cadres from subordinate positions and made them leaders. Their vulnerability to and dependence upon the state for their power is evident in such cases where they were suspended by the work team during the Four Cleanups Campaign, and they were forced to step down by the rebels (*zaofantuan*) during the Cultural Revolution. Local cadres could also be dismissed if the higher authorities concluded that they were disobedient, dishonest, or lacked leadership skill. Zhang Zhengui, for example, was dismissed from the post of village head because he did not obey orders from the higher levels, and Zhang Zhenshu was dismissed from the village head position because his father resisted joining the *Chenguang she*, the Higher-level APC.

Judging from the position and role of local cadres, the state was much more powerful at least in the context of Chenguang than Shue argues. According to Shue (1988: 131), "[T]hese stubborn, savvy, and often cynical local officials came to constitute a formidable obstacle to real and effective central penetration and control on the ground."²³³ This does not mean, however, that through local cadres, the state was able to realize all its plans and intentions. I have shown how villagers resisted and evaded state policies, with the active or passive support of local cadres.

²³³ By local officials, Shue means cadres at the levels of commune and below.

I will delve into the topic of clientelism in rural China in order to pin down my assessment of the cadre's role in it. Oi and Siu both examined this question, but the two scholars differ in their viewpoints on how pervasive clientelist politics were at the local level. According to Oi, local politics in rural China were structured along clientelist lines under the commune system. In order to maximize their interests, a team head and his team members formed patron-client relationships based on mutual dependence. Such a pervasive practice of clientelism could have severely undermined the state's capacity to control peasant society.

Based on my findings in Chenguang, it does not appear that team heads had enough power to control resources and make their team members clients. There was a tendency for team heads to assign their friends, relatives, or family members jobs which were less strenuous and less time-consuming, but highly rewarding. However, if fellow team members considered the job assignment unfair, they were not reluctant to argue with their team heads, and appeal to the brigade cadres. According to my research in Chenguang, many factors that Oi assumed to be under the team heads' control were actually beyond their reach. Assignment of private plots and opportunities for outside employment were not only decided by lottery, but also controlled at the brigade level; thus, team heads had virtually no power in those areas. The allotment of welfare and relief funds was also controlled by the brigade cadres, not by the team cadres.

It seems that there are great discrepancies between Oi's data and my data about the duties and power of team head. I surveyed other studies on commune systems of rural China in order to explain the discrepancies. Concerning the allocation of work-points, team heads did not have much room to maneuver. Under the piece-rate system, every single task in the repertoire of work that was administered by teams or the brigade was listed with corresponding work-points in the work-point book which had been drawn up by the brigade cadres (Potter and Potter 1990). According to the time-rate system, the other main method of measuring collective labor, a team member's income depended upon

his or her labor grades. Team leaders, including the team head, deputy team head, women's head, accountant, cashier, and work-point recorder, determined each team member's labor grade upon deliberation once a year according to the member's ability and skill. In reality, the most important criteria were age and sex.

Oi (1985) argues that a team head could affect a household's income from private sources in three ways. First of all, however, there was not much room for the team head to exert control over assignment of private plots. Private plots were distributed to team households on a per capita basis. To maintain equality and fairness, the plots were assigned by lottery (Potter and Potter 1990) or the location was rotated every year (Printz 1973).²³⁴ Permission to work outside of the team framework, such as in brigade enterprises and various units at the level of commune and beyond, were given by the team head (Huang 1990; Potter and Potter 1990). Since those jobs were usually much desired by peasants, the team head had to be very careful for the nomination. Otherwise it could trigger conflicts with the team and damage to the head's authority. Finally, I cannot find any study that mentions how collective tools and animals were rented for use on private plots and how much leverage the team head had in this practice, and I also did not pay attention to this issue during my field research. Therefore, I cannot simply comment on this issue.

The team head's power in the allocation of welfare and relief, contrary to Oi's observations, did not seem to be strong. In the comprehensive study about Chinese welfare system, Dixon (1981) shows the rural welfare system changed several times during the commune period. In the early years, the welfare system was administered by brigades. By the end of 1963, the production team had acquired full responsibility for welfare administration. The decision-making on the distribution of a team's income, including welfare and relief, went through several steps. The team leaders and the representatives of the Poor and Lower Middle Peasants Association and the Women's Federation discussed

²³⁴ Oi also acknowledges the cases that private plots were reassigned annually or every few years.

the team's welfare need. Then the team leaders had a meeting with needy households and heard their situation. Team leaders drafted a distribution plan, including the welfare proposal, and revised the draft after discussions among team leaders. The plan was finally approved at a general team meeting. Even though all production teams did not adopt such decision-making procedures for the use of welfare funds, the team head's influence on the decision-making must have been very limited, if teams accepted the importance of discussion and agreement between not just the team leaders but also among all the team members. In Lin village, like Chenguang, production teams contributed welfare funds to the brigade, and the latter administered the welfare program (Huang 1998).²³⁵

Clientelist politics existed at the local level, but not as pervasively as Oi argues. As Oi and others (e.g., Burns 1988; Gao 1999; Huang 1990; Potter and Potter 1990; Printz 1973) point out, team heads were under the constant scrutiny by upper level cadres, mainly at the brigade level, and by fellow team members. According to Oi, a team head depended both on the state and on the team members for his or her power, thus a patron-client relationship between a team head and the team member was very unstable. Nevertheless, Oi maintains, a team head's power within the team was not necessarily affected by his or her dependence on higher-level officials. Various data, including mine, suggest that team heads did not have enough power or autonomy to form long-term patron-client relationships. In addition, the position of team cadre, as pointed out in chapter 4, was the most unwanted office in the brigade and production teams; in Chenguang it was considered a thankless job.²³⁶

When I asked the former cadres about the reasons why they followed the orders that they did not want to, their typical answers were as follows: "What else could we do? If the upper levels asked us to do something, we had to. We had no choice (*meiyou*

²³⁵ When I did fieldwork, I did not know that the welfare system had been changed several times during the commune period. I did not specifically ask about when the welfare program the informants described had been practiced. Therefore, my data may be about the welfare program before 1963, and so are Huang's data.

²³⁶ Similar conclusion was found in other studies (e.g., Burns 1988; Chen et al. 1992; Gao 1999; Huang 1990).

banfa). Disagreeing (with the upper levels, that is, disobeying orders) was out of the question (*bu tongyi bu xing*).”

Siu (1989a) also acknowledges that practice of patronage and clientage among the cadres and peasants was not uncommon. However, Siu argues that ideological pressure of the party-state did not allow local cadres to have enough autonomy to maneuver as patrons to fellow villagers. Not only did the capacity of cadres to grant political and economic favors to fellow villagers rest on their dependence on the state, according to Siu, but their patronage also “served to incorporate the clients into the state system rather than to protect them” (1989a: 211).

I argue, based on my data, that Oi overestimates the importance of clientelism in local politics of rural China. I also think that Siu put too much emphasis on the state’s ideological pressure upon local cadres. And she does not give enough credit to the fellow villagers’ pressure upon local cadres into protecting local interests. This pressure combined with personal interests to a certain extent influenced the cadres’ performance, even though the cadres leaned toward the role as state agents. Therefore, judging from the position and role of local cadres, my position on the relationship between the state and society lies between Oi’s and Siu’s.

Peasants have gained much autonomy in their economic activities mainly due to the decollectivization of agriculture and the introduction of a market mechanism. Their enthusiastic and creative effort to improve their economic conditions have been a driving force of economic development in post-Mao rural China. The reform leadership has tried to depoliticize the society so as not to hurt the rapid rural economic development. As part of this effort, the leadership has nullified and removed class labels and restrained itself from launching new political campaigns. In the wake of these changes during the reform period, the position of local (village) cadres has been weakened. Not only did they lose economic and political means of controlling ordinary villagers, but they also lost many of their economic advantages over fellow villagers; they fell behind many other villagers who

had successfully adapted to a new environment. As a result, the position of village cadre and party member is not as attractive to villagers as during the Maoist period. The same can be said of party members. The prestige and advantages they enjoyed during the Maoist era has declined. In addition, the village party branch became virtually inactive. Important decisions about the village's public affairs were supposed to be discussed in enlarged sessions or general meetings of the village party branch, but this was rarely the case. Although the party branch committee was still dominant in village management, its dominance was not exercised organizationally but was based on personal influence of a few committee members.

The new house sites which were distributed in 1995 to cope with a population increase were located next to the office building of the bag factory, facing the main road of the village. The space allowed for ten rows of houses, four houses in each row. In the first row from left to right, Zhang Huaishang, Zhang Huaisheng, his second eldest brother, Zhang Hongguo, the accountant of the pesticide factory, and one other villager were building houses. When the foundation work of the houses of Zhang Huaishang and Zhang Huaisheng were finished, Zhang Hongguo found that the back foundations of two houses were about two inches longer than the village prescribed. He was furious because he thought it looked bad and was unfair. He wanted to match the size of his foundation to the other two houses. The village cadres did not allow that and the fourth villager who already laid his foundation also objected to the idea. Zhang Hongguo had a heated argument with Zhang Zhenxing, Zhang Huaizuo, and Zhang Huaishang in Yan Shuhua's office. After an hour-long quarrel, they moved to the scene in question. Zhang Hongguo's son jumped in, raising the intensity of the argument a notch, and extending it for another half hour.

I was surprised by this incident for two reasons. One was that the problem was seemingly trivial. The difference of two inches was hardly noticeable even if one looked carefully. The other issue was the way he raised the problem. His complaints and anger were openly expressed to the leading cadres. Furthermore, when they shifted to the

construction site, Zhang Hongguo's son was already loudly arguing with Huaishang's wife in a tone of voice that attracted quite a few spectators to the scene. More and more people gathered as the argument heated up. This suggests that Zhang Hongguo and his son felt comfortable openly challenging the most powerful cadres in the village.

One former cadre who observed the incident from beginning to end commented:

In the very beginning, it was Huaishang's fault. He should have been more careful. He, as deputy secretary, should set a good example for the villagers. But what Zhang Hongguo did today is just unnecessary. He didn't have to argue with the cadres. And I don't think that's a problem at all in the first place. That kind of behavior was unthinkable in the past. If one had good reason to complain to cadres, he would not dare to do it in the way Zhang Hongguo just did.

On the other hand, the changing circumstances of the reform era gave village cadres new sources of power; they had decision-making power on the contracts of collective property—village factories, the fish farm, the chicken and pig farm, and contract land. They also decided who would manage the bag factory and the pesticide factory still under direct control of the village, and they influenced who the factories would employ. This power, however, was limited due to several factors.

First, wage income from the two factories did not have a decisive influence on the economic situations of the employees. For most employees, factory work only provided supplementary household income. Furthermore, the villagers had abundant job opportunities outside the village. Second, the contract of small pieces of dry field and vegetable gardens was just another supplementary source of income, which was decided by lots. Third, the large-scale contracts that could have had a great effect on family income tended to be granted to those who were in the leader's circle, cadres themselves and their kinsmen or close friends. For example, contracts for the fish farm and the chicken and pig farm were granted to the leaders themselves. The metal casting factory, and twenty-three *mu* and fifteen *mu* of vegetable garden were contracted to Li Lianwen, Li Lianxue's cousin,

Zhang Huaisheng, Zhang Huaishang's brother, and Zhang Zhenwen, a party member and a close friend of Zhang Zhenxing.

During the post-Mao era, local cadres do not have the means to control villagers' political and social fates as much as the cadres in the past. Their power, which stems from control of the village economy can influence only a small number of villagers. Consequently, whereas cadres' power during the Maoist era was inclusive and ubiquitous, that is, they could influence every sphere of all villagers' lives, in the post-Mao era it is limited and selective. That is, village cadres influence the economic conditions of only a small number of villagers.

The relationship between the village and upper levels of state has also changed. In the commune period, the county and the commune controlled the brigade with administrative orders, and the brigade and team cadres had to follow the rigid and specific orders that they received. In the post-Mao era, those orders were replaced by guidelines and broad control. For example, Chenguang village annually receives a target for agricultural output value from Hongxing Township, which, in turn, receives a target figure from Ninghe County. The upper levels no longer care about what is grown on how much land as long as the target is met. When a village fails to produce the target amount, the village secretary and village head are criticized by the upper levels, mainly at the township level. Then, the high level cadres and village cadres search for the problems that caused the village's failure and for the solutions. The emphasis is placed on looking for the solutions, rather than criticizing the village cadres. The pressure from the upper levels on village cadres has been remarkably reduced.

However, some things have not changed. One example is grain procurement. For several recent years, Chenguang village sold 50,000 *jin* of unhusked rice and 30,000 *jin* of corn. Since only a small amount of corn was grown in Chenguang, the village had to sell corn that it bought elsewhere, or pay in cash for the difference between the market price and the procurement price for 30,000 *jin* of corn, which was considerably below the

market price. The village also had obligations to pay agricultural tax and to reserve collective withholdings—the general reserve fund and the welfare fund.

In addition, the upper levels request or encourage or strongly pressure the villages under their jurisdiction to do certain things. For instance, the “two-land” system that divides farmland into “grain ration land” and “contract land” was strongly advocated by Tianjin City and Ninghe County, and the request was strong enough to make all the villages comply with it.²³⁷ That Chenguang village gave contracts for large plots of land to the villagers who wanted to grow vegetables or fruit and constructed a fish farm was the result of policy of higher levels, especially county (I discussed this matter in chapter 5).

As we have seen, the village leaders complied with requests from above even if the requests were neither forced nor coincided with the village’s interests. Why did they do so? For example, in 1994, the total income from the bag factory formed about two-thirds of total village income, and employed about 300 villagers. The importance of the factory in the village economy was evident. Moreover, it was repeatedly recognized as an excellent township and village enterprise by Ninghe County and Tianjin City. The higher authorities held leading village cadres in high regard. The village cadres, in turn, were under pressure to maintain their reputation. This was one reason why the village closely followed the guidance of the upper levels in the area of agriculture. The other reason was that the factory’s operation often required upper level support. For example, the bag factory had more than ten million *yuan* of debt most of which came from bank loans. The factory would have been unable to get such substantial loans without help from the upper levels. The Chinese government lowered interest rates at banks and credit cooperatives twice in 1996. According to regulations, the interest rate of a loan was not influenced by later changes in interest rates. However, the village leaders managed to lower the interest rates of all the factory’s loans no matter when the loans were granted. This would have been impossible without the support of higher level government and party branches. Such

²³⁷ Hongqi Village, Jinghai County, Tianjin City also adopted the ‘two-land’ system (Jang 1998).

dependence on the good will of their superiors was probably the most important reason why the village cadres tried hard to respond positively to the higher authorities' requests.

Village cadres' role between the state and society has changed in the reform period. Their role as state agents has been reduced. In some areas, such as economic activities and ideological education, the state no longer intends to exert tight control. In other areas, such as cadres' corruption and the revival of traditional religious practices, the state is no longer as influential as it would like to be. Village cadres do not actively play the role of village representatives, either. Village cadres tended to make decisions, such as transforming private plots into fields to experiment with a new method of growing rice seedlings, then into contract land, and the construction of the fish farm, in order to satisfy the upper levels rather than to protect the villagers' interests. As suggested above, to fulfill upper level expectations may ultimately enhance the public interests of the village. However, while the causal relationship between the two is indirect and uncertain, these decisions on the use of collective property, in many cases, certainly helped keep village cadres' reputations high, and provided economic advantages for just a few villagers, the contractors of collective property.

The village cadres' role as brokers is highly noteworthy. During the commune period, brigade cadres, especially the brigade party secretary, were key intermediaries between the state and the peasants. They conveyed the higher authorities' orders and directives to the peasants and delivered the peasants' opinions to the higher authorities. In other words, they played their "dual role" (see chapter 4). After the reform, village cadres helped the peasants deal with outside world, especially higher authorities, by providing the necessary connections in order to get the job done (see chapter 5). The post-reform job of cadre is mostly concerned with the private interests of an individual or a group of individuals, whereas the cadres' brokering activity during the Maoist period concentrated on public matters concerning the village's interests. The cadres' extensive connections, therefore, have become one of their important sources of power.

While local cadres' power and authority was almost totally dependent upon the state in the Maoist era, the dependence is now weakening. A cadre's power and authority depends on his personal qualifications and ability to make the most out of his official position, rather than the official position itself.

2. The Blossoming of Individuals in the Reform Era

One of the changes the reform measures have brought about is to make room for individuals to act more creatively and independently, especially in the economic sphere. In rural areas, entrepreneurial activities flourished immediately after the implementation of reform policies. Peasants took risks and made innovations. As we have seen in Chenguang village, entrepreneurial activities were more noticeable in the private business than in any other area. Entrepreneurial businessmen exploited new areas, such as starting private grocery store and salt trading, and adopted new business tactics, for example, Li Haishang used trucks to trade animal feed and Zhang Hejin led price reduction to attract customers. They sometimes pushed the limits and crossed lines they should not have crossed, as we have seen in the cases of salt traders and livestock feed traders.

Entrepreneurs have exerted great influence on the development of the village economy. Diversification, one of the two prominent economic trends in Chenguang village, is closely related to the entrepreneurs. Their success has led fellow villagers into new economic areas, which results in a more diverse economy. Entrepreneurs' influence upon privatization, the other economic trend, is not as obvious. Privatization has more to do with the shortcomings of collective ownership and management than with entrepreneurial activities. However, entrepreneurs' success has helped facilitate the privatization process.

The other category of villagers I have focused on in this study is cadres. My interest has been in the economic success of former and current cadres during the reform

era. According to my findings, there are only a few cadres who have achieved remarkable economic success but many have received some benefits. Among the ten entrepreneurs I described, Zhang Fumao, a former team head, Zhang Zhengui, a former village head, and Zhang Zhenxing, a current party secretary, all benefited from their cadre positions. The percentage of current and former cadres among those who were considered able to maintain the highest income level in the village was lower than the percentage of them among the entrepreneurs. That is, cadre positions did not give much advantage in accumulating wealth. Rather, former cadres received preferential treatment from the village in other ways. Among the jobs at the village's disposal, former cadres received jobs that were easy to do and low in pay. These jobs were suitable for those who lacked strength and technical skills, and the old former cadres often got them.

Incumbent cadres also benefited from their positions. They often managed or contracted main collective property, such as the bag factory, the pesticide factory, the chicken and pig farm, and the fish farm. Managing or contracting collective property did not bring them much money, at least officially. But it seemed that they could take advantage of their positions. The luxurious life styles of Zhang Zhenxing, Li Lianxue, and Zhang Huaishang support this assumption.

In the political sphere, as in the economic sphere, the state gave village cadres room to maneuver. Cadres who made the most of their resources, sometimes by foul means, were able to attain stronger power, gather economic comfort and higher status. Zhang Zhenxing was a good example. As secretary of the village party branch, he was generally the most powerful person in the village. Yet due to his personal abilities, initiative and drive in the establishment and development of the bag factory and other village factories, firm control over other village cadres, expansion of his connections, he enjoyed much more than most village secretaries. The competition between Zhang Huaishang and Zhang Huaizuo for the secretary position by and large came from their desire to succeed Zhang Zhenxing. However, what they competed for, the secretary position, was only the basis

for getting the benefits Zhang Zhenxing enjoyed. Therefore, what Zhang Zhenxing's successor can get from the position will depend on his ability to utilize it.

The reform measures have certainly changed the village economy and politics, and the villagers' activities in these areas. Their value system has changed accordingly. Money has become the villagers' central concern. Some villagers do everything, by fair means or foul, to make money. The majority of villagers, however, draw limits, and consider the ideal situation to involve a balance between honor and money. Likewise, cadres can earn respect and legitimacy only when they are fair and honest. Therefore, those who have become wealthy and/or powerful do not win automatically many villagers' respect if they have used illicit or dishonest means. Surprisingly many villagers still emphasize the old values, such as "serve the people," "sacrifice for the country," and equality.

This dissertation makes two contributions. One is to the field of China studies. In Chinese studies, there have been critical controversies about the strength of the Chinese state during the Maoist era, and questions have been raised about whether state power has increased or decreased since reform. In this study, I have argued that Chinese state was very strong and powerful during the Maoist era by examining the processes of policy formulation and implementation and the dual role of the local cadres. I have also argued—by examining the changing role and weakening authority and power of the local cadres—that overall state power decreased since reform.

The second contribution of this research goes beyond its importance in the field of China studies. In studying the state and its relationship with society, "state-centered" or "statist" researchers have tended to emphasize the state's capacity to achieve a set of goals or implement formal policies despite opposition from the society, by using coercive means (Migdal 1994). These scholars also assume that the state has autonomy, which leads to the question of the boundaries of the state. This is especially the case in most studies of Chinese state and society relations.

In contrast to state-centered approaches, I argue that the state-society relationship does not have to be oppositional. It is often changing. The successful implementation of various policies in Chinese rural society during the early years of the PRC was by and large based on the cooperative relationship between the state and the peasants. The state sometimes faced extensive opposition and resistance from the peasants, as it implemented the United Purchase and Sale of Grain policy. Even when the state faced opposition, it mainly depended on its ideological power to induce consent and support from the peasants, rather than on coercive power to suppress the opposition.

I also argue that even though the state is autonomous and strong, it cannot help accommodating society's resistance or initiation. I demonstrated this point by exploring the process of adopting the responsibility system during the post-Mao era. Furthermore, by examining the role of local cadres who interact not only with ordinary peasants but also with the higher authorities, I show the boundary between the state and society can continually shift. At times, local cadres act as the agents of the state; at other times, however, they collude with the peasants to protect local interests from the state's encroachment.

The statist approach have tried to estimate the strength of a state by examining how successfully the state penetrates and transforms the society according to its plans. In doing so, this approach deals mainly with the newly independent nations, that those which were formed after the Second World War, in South America, Africa, and Asia, and which are typically underdeveloped and ruled by authoritarian regimes. My study can be positioned in relation to this approach, yet it points in a different direction. In order to estimate the strength of Chinese state, I have focused on the interactions between the local cadres and peasants in the village where the peasants come into contact with the society and between local level and the higher levels. Thus, this dissertation can be read as a case of "ethnography of the state" (Gupta 1995) or "anthropology of the state" (Migdal 1994), in contrast to studies that focus on much higher levels or the state apparatus.

Finally, there is a great deal of literature that deals with the post-socialist changes in the countries in the former Soviet Union, East European countries, Vietnam, and China. In the field of East European and Chinese studies, the market transition debate has been especially important (Szelenyi and Kostello 1996). Among the three main questions in this debate, I deal directly or indirectly with two of them: what is the relationship between markets and various forms of inequality; and do former or current cadres benefit from market reform? As I have emphasized in the dissertation, this study is based on an ethnographic examination of a particular village. This village has its own characteristics, yet by investigating the relationship between specific characteristics of the village and the changing trends, we can also gain a better understanding of the wider variation in post-socialist or late socialist socio-economic changes.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Index of Characters

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| an laodongli fen | 按劳动力分 |
| an renkou fen | 按人口分 |
| baichi | 白吃 |
| balujun | 八路军 |
| bangong bandu nongye zhongxue | 半工半读农业中学 |
| bao | 保 |
| bao-jia | 保-甲 |
| bao chan dao hu | 包产到户 |
| bao chan dao lao | 包产到劳 |
| bao chan dao zu | 包产到组 |
| bao chan dao zu, lian chan ji chou | 包干到组, 联产计酬 |
| bao gan dao hu | 包干到户 |
| bao gong bao chan | 包工包产 |
| baoguan | 保管 |
| baozhang | 保长 |
| Bohai | 渤海 |
| bufen bao chan dao hu | 部分包产到户 |
| bu tongyi, bu xing | 不同意, 不行 |
| cai liang | 财粮 |
| cailiangjuzhang | 财粮局长 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| caodai chang | 草袋厂 |
| chandi | 产地 |
| chang | 厂 |
| changzhang | 厂长 |
| chan qian chan hou fuwu | 产前产后服务 |
| Chaobai He | 潮白河 |
| chengbao | 承包 |
| chengbao fei | 承包费 |
| chengbaotian | 承包田 |
| chengshi hukou | 城市户口 |
| chenguang nong gong shang lianhe zong gongsi | 晨光农工商联合总公司 |
| chenguang she | 晨光社 |
| chi doujian | 吃斗尖 |
| chubei liang | 储备粮 |
| chuji nongye shengchan hezuoshe | 初级农业生产合作社 |
| chunjie | 春节 |
| congming | 聪明 |
| cun | 村 |
| cun guan hui | 村管会 |
| cunmin daibiao huiyi | 村民代表会议 |
| cunmin huiyi | 村民会议 |
| cunmin weiyuanhui | 村民委员会 |
| cunmin xiaozu | 村民小组 |
| cunzhang | 村长 |
| cun zhi'an lingdao xiaozu | 村治安领导小组 |
| cuowu | 错误 |

| | |
|----------------------------|----------|
| da bao gan | 大包干 |
| dadui bangongshi | 大队办公室 |
| dadui dangzhibu weiyuanhui | 大队党支部委员会 |
| daduizhang | 大队长 |
| da gongshe | 大公社 |
| dahui | 大会 |
| dangyuan dahui | 党员大会 |
| dang zhibu kuoda huiyi | 党支部扩大会议 |
| danwei | 单位 |
| daogu | 稻谷 |
| dapen xizao | 大盆洗澡 |
| dashe | 大社 |
| dayuejin | 大跃进 |
| dazibenjia | 大资本家 |
| diangong | 电工 |
| dianhu | 佃户 |
| ditan chang | 地毯厂 |
| dizhao | 地照 |
| dizhu | 地主 |
| dongshizhang | 董事长 |
| douzhenghui | 斗争会 |
| duochi-duozhan | 多吃-多占 |
| fangshuiyuan | 防水员 |
| fangzhao | 房照 |
| fanxiao liang | 返销粮 |
| fan youpai | 反右派 |
| feinongye hukou | 非农业户口 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| fen | 分 |
| fenjia | 分家 |
| fenshe | 分社 |
| fenzao | 分灶 |
| fucunzhang | 副村长 |
| fuli yundong yuyi chang | 福利运动雨衣厂 |
| funong | 富农 |
| funong fenzi | 富农分子 |
| funü duizhang | 妇女队长 |
| funü zhuren | 妇女主任 |
| fushengchanduihang | 副生产队长 |
| fuyu zhongnong | 富裕中农 |
| ganbu | 干部 |
| gaoji nongye shengchan hezuoshe | 高级农业生产合作社 |
| gei chengbao | 给承包 |
| geming weiyuanhui zhuren | 革命委员会主任 |
| gong | 工 |
| gong'an | 公安 |
| gong'anyuan | 公安员 |
| Gongchandang | 共产党 |
| gongfen | 工分 |
| gongjijin | 公积金 |
| gongmu | 公墓 |
| gongpiao | 工票 |
| gongshangju | 工商局 |
| gongshe | 公社 |
| gongshe mishu | 公社秘书 |

| | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| gongshe zhang | 公社长 |
| gongshe zhibu shuji | 公社支部书记 |
| gongxiaoshe | 供销社 |
| gongyijin | 公益金 |
| guafen | 瓜分 |
| guangboyuan | 广播员 |
| guanliqu | 管理区 |
| guanxi | 关系 |
| gunong | 雇农 |
| guojia ganbu | 国家干部 |
| guojia gongren | 国家工人 |
| Guomindang | 国民党 |
| hen xinku | 很辛苦 |
| heping tugai | 和平土改 |
| hezuohua | 合作化 |
| hezuohua gaochao | 合作化高潮 |
| hongxing linfei chang | 红星磷肥厂 |
| hou shi tiao | 后十条 |
| hukou | 户口 |
| hukoubu | 户口簿 |
| huobi dizhu | 货币地主 |
| huoche | 货车 |
| huzhu | 户主 |
| huzhuzu | 互助组 |
| jia | 家 |
| jia gong | 加工 |
| jianzhuduizhang | 建筑队长 |

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| jiaoyu | 教育 |
| jiazu | 家族 |
| jieshengyuan | 接生员 |
| jigongyuan | 记工员 |
| jihua shengyu bangongshi | 计划生育办公室 |
| jihua shengyu weiyuanhui | 计划生育委员会 |
| jin | 斤 |
| jingji guanli weiyuanhui | 经济管理委员会 |
| jingji lianheshe | 经济联合社 |
| jingshan tielu | 京山铁路 |
| jing shou xi da | 精收细打 |
| jinnian yangzhichang she siren jingying de yinggai hao | 今年养殖场是私人经营的 应该好 |
| jintang yunhe | 津塘运河 |
| jinyu gonglu | 津榆公路 |
| jishugong | 技术工 |
| jiti jilei | 集体积累 |
| jiti jingying de tian | 集体经营的田 |
| Jiyun He | 蓟运河 |
| junshu hu | 军属户 |
| kaoliang (gaoliang) | 高粱 |
| ke li gui cang | 颗粒归仓 |
| ketou | 磕头 |
| kou liang | 口粮 |
| kouliangtian | 口粮田 |
| kuaiji | 会计 |
| lao ganbu | 老干部 |

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| laolijia shi feizhujian | 老李家是肥猪圈 |
| laowangjia shi yanglaoyuan | 老王家是养老院 |
| li | 厘 |
| lian cha | 联查 |
| lian chan dao lao | 联产到劳 |
| lian chan dao zu | 联产到组 |
| liang | 两 |
| liang gao yi you | 两高一尤 |
| liang ma shi | 两码事 |
| liangshi tonggou tongxiao | 粮食统购统销 |
| lianxi | 联系 |
| manchan | 瞒产 |
| mantou | 馒头 |
| mao | 毛 |
| meiyou banfa | 没有办法 |
| minbandian | 民办店 |
| minbing lianzhang | 民兵连长 |
| minzheng | 民政 |
| minzhu pingfen | 民主评分 |
| mu | 亩 |
| nan zheng laodongli | 男正劳动力 |
| nao qingxu le | 闹情绪了 |
| Ninghe Xian | 宁河县 |
| nongcun hezuohua yundong | 农村合作化运动 |
| nongcun hukou | 农村户口 |
| nong gong shang lianheshe | 农工商联合社 |
| nong gong shang lianhe zong gongsi | 农工商联合总公司 副总经理 |

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| fuzongjingli | |
| nong gong shang zong gongsi | 农工商总公司 |
| nonghui | 农会 |
| nonghui ganbu | 农会干部 |
| nonghui zhuren | 农会主任 |
| nongyao chang | 农药厂 |
| nongyao changzhang | 农药厂长 |
| nongye hezuoshe | 农业合作社 |
| nongye hezuoshezhang | 农业合作社长 |
| nongye hukou | 农业户口 |
| nü zheng laodongli | 女正劳动力 |
| pengtou hui | 碰头会 |
| pilin pikong | 批林批孔 |
| ping chan | 评产 |
| pinnong | 贫农 |
| pinxie | 贫协 |
| pinxie zhuren | 贫协主任 |
| qian shi tiao | 前十条 |
| qingli jieji duiwu | 清理阶级队伍 |
| qu | 区 |
| quzhang | 区长 |
| renmin gongshe | 人民公社 |
| renqing | 人情 |
| sanfan wufan | 三反五反 |
| san ji suoyou, dui wei jichu | 三级所有 队为基础 |
| sanlun | 三轮 |
| santong | 三同 |

| | |
|--|--------------|
| shang zhongnong | 上中农 |
| shehui zhuyi jiaoyu yundong | 社会主义教育运动 |
| shencha gu | 审查股 |
| shengchan | 生产 |
| shengchan dadui | 生产大队 |
| shengchan dalou | 生产大楼 |
| shengchandu | 生产队 |
| shengchanduizhang | 生产队长 |
| shengchan liang | 生产粮 |
| shenme dou guan | 什么都管 |
| shezhang | 社长 |
| shi shi qiu shi | 实事求是 |
| shiwu dizhu | 实物地主 |
| shouhui | 受贿 |
| shuji | 书记 |
| shunkouliu | 顺口溜 |
| silei fenzi | 四类分子 |
| siliao liang | 饲料粮 |
| si ping | 四评 |
| siqing yundong | 四清运动 |
| siren jingying bi jiti jingying xiaolu gao | 私人经营比集体经营效率高 |
| sixiang jiben yuanze | 四项基本原则 |
| suliao chang | 塑料厂 |
| Tangshan Dadizhen | 唐山大地震 |
| tanwu | 贪污 |
| tekun hu | 特困户 |
| teshu qingkuang | 特殊情况 |

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| tiandi | 田底 |
| tianfen | 填坟 |
| Tianjin waimao wenti gongsi | 天津外贸文体公司 |
| tianmian | 田面 |
| tiantian heibai | 天天黑白 |
| tiantian kaihui | 天天开会 |
| tianxie gu | 填写股 |
| tongda lüyou zhipin youxian gongsi | 通达旅游制品有限公司 |
| touqing | 偷青 |
| toudeng | 头等 |
| tudi gaige | 土地改革 |
| tudi gaige yundong | 土地改革运动 |
| tuoliji | 脱粒机 |
| tupi | 土坯 |
| wenhua dageming | 文化大革命 |
| wuda caichan | 五大财产 |
| wulei fenzi | 五类分子 |
| xiafang de zhishi qingnian | 下放的知识青年 |
| xian | 县 |
| xian mishu | 县秘书 |
| xian zhibu shuji | 县支部书记 |
| xiang | 乡 |
| xiang renmin zhengfu | 乡人民政府 |
| xiangzhen qiye | 乡镇企业 |
| xiangbao chang | 箱包厂 |
| xiaoche | 小车 |
| xiacongming | 小聪明 |

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| xiaoduizhang | 小队长 |
| xiao duan bao gong | 小段包工 |
| xiaofu | 孝服 |
| xiaogong | 小工 |
| xiao gongshe | 小公社 |
| xiaohui | 小会 |
| xiaomaibu | 小卖部 |
| xiaopen xizao | 小盆洗澡 |
| xiaoshe | 小社 |
| xia zhongnong | 下中农 |
| Xingyi Li | 兴义里 |
| xingzhengcun | 行政村 |
| xingzheng lou | 行政楼 |
| xuanchuan gu | 宣传股 |
| yi xie ren | 一些人 |
| yongdianquan | 永佃权 |
| yongxing qiye jituan | 永兴企业集团 |
| youpai | 右派 |
| youxian bao di hu | 优先包地户 |
| you yidian jinzhang | 有一点紧张 |
| yuan | 圆 |
| yuandan | 元旦 |
| yuantian | 园田 |
| Yuguang she | 煜光社 |
| zaofantuan | 造反团 |
| zhen | 镇 |
| zhenggou liang | 征购粮 |

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| zhengqian | 挣钱 |
| zhengshe heyi | 政社合一 |
| zhengshe fenkai | 政社分开 |
| zhenya fangeming | 镇压反革命 |
| zhi(shi)qing(nian) | 知(识)青(年) |
| zhixiang chang | 纸箱厂 |
| zhongguo renmin gongheguo cunmin weiyuanhui zuzhifa | 中华人民共和国村民委员会组织法 |
| zhongguo tese de shehuizhuyi | 中国特色的社会主义 |
| zhonghui | 中会 |
| zhongnong | 中农 |
| zhongpen xizao | 中盆洗澡 |
| zhong qing tuan | 中青团 |
| zhongqiujie | 中秋节 |
| zhongzhiye | 种植业 |
| zhongzi liang | 种子粮 |
| zhuangtou | 庄头 |
| zhuanqu | 专区 |
| zhuanye chengbao | 专业承包 |
| zhuren | 主任 |
| zhuxin chang | 煮锌厂 |
| zupu | 族谱 |

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