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# COMMUNE EDUCATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA

by

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## Acknowledgement

In writing this paper, the author has drawn upon his observations in a field trip taken in December 1976 to two rural communes in Guangdong province, namely, Huancheng Commune (population: 59,000) of Xinhui County and Dali Commune (population: 68,000) of Nanhai County. This field trip was conducted by a group of social scientists from the Chinese University of Hong Kong who have been jointly undertaking a project to study the role of the people's commune in the social and economic development of China. The project is carried out under the auspices of the University's Social Research Centre and is supported by funds from the Trustees of Lingnan University.

# COMMUNE EDUCATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA

Pedro Pak-tao Ng

## I. Introduction

China is predominantly a rural country with over 80 per cent of its population living and working in the countryside. Although its productivity and standard of living on the whole are still quite some distance behind the world's developed economies, China has, during the last three decades or so under the Communist government, managed to produce sufficiently for its people, to provide them adequately with health, educational, and various welfare services, and in effect to enhance the general quality of life to a degree unheard of or even downright impossible before 1949. On the face of it, China has made considerable progress in material terms. But this is only half the story. The other half lies in the fact that the human factor has been highly important in bringing about what China has achieved in its rural development. As is well known, China's rural development since 1958 has proceeded mainly through the design of the people's commune which has effectively implemented China's collectivized mode of production. The success of the communes rests heavily on the human factor, for collectivization requires ideological

commitment and mass mobilization. Certainly, a country's educational system is directly involved in creating and shaping the kind of human factor considered appropriate for the country's development. In the case of China, education is regarded as a strategic instrument not only for transmitting the knowledge and skills necessary for China's development but also cultivating the new "socialist man" who has both the culture and the socialist consciousnes so vital for building China into a strong socialist country. Education is therefore highly purposive and instrumental. In China, as in many developing countries, education plays a very important role in social, economic, and political development. This importance is perhaps much greater in China than in other developing countries, both at the normative or ideal level and in practice. In the following pages we shall examine the role of education in China's rural development.[2] What are China's developmental tasks in building and transforming its rural, agricultural economy? How are these tasks performed by the commune system? Given these developmental tasks, what are the characteristics of China's rural education? What are the consequences of education for rural development? These are some of the questions which must be addressed.

## II. Tasks of rural development in China

The basic strategy in China's economic development since the 1960s is that "agriculture is the foundation while industry is the leading factor".[3] This is essentially in accordance with the principle of "walking on two legs" (liangtiaotui zoulou) advocated ever since the Great Leap Forward. While large scale industries are generally concentrated in the urban areas, and play a major role in China's industrialization development, the livelihood of China's huge population depends heavily on raising the productivity of agriculture in China's vast countryside. To develop agriculture, however, from the impoverished and chaotic situation of three decades ago required extensive institutional transformation and in effect a reconstruction of China's rural society. Such reconstruction consists of political, social, cultural, technical, and physical changes.

Political changes. Although land ownership and the mode of production have long been changed from a fragmentary, landlord-dominated and uncoordinated situation to a centrally coordinated but locally self-administered collectivized system, a major task of rural development is the continuing and growing institutionalization of various socialist practices to make collectivization work for the interest of the peasantry. The socialization of the rural masses for

their participation in and acceptance of such basic socialist values as "self-reliance" and "serve the people" is in many ways a political socialization process.[4] The institutionalization of propaganda teams and activities and the integration of formal education with productional activities promote the process. The commune is the structural framework for implementing the social and political changes accompanying a collectivized mode of production.

Social and cultural changes. In traditional China social relationships were typically kinship-oriented and loyalties were also largely kinship-determined. Highly earth-bound in life style, the peasantry was traditionally conservative in outlook, slow to change its folk beliefs and technology, or to introduce innovative ways of thinking. All this is unsuitable for developing a forward-looking collective economy. Social relationships in the context of a much broader collective social system, and commitment to collective needs have to be cultivated. Old values and thinking, such as those denigrating the worth of manual labour or depriving women of their rightful status in society, must be criticized and replaced by new socialist values emphasizing social equality. Thus, for example, the planned births campaign, actively carried out in both rural and urban areas since the early 1970s, is an attempt to control population growth mainly through an intensive appeal to the

new values and beliefs which advocate the participation of women in the labour force. The change in values is seen as necessary to bring about a new outlook in life among the peasants. The quality of peasants in terms of skill, ability for rational thinking, and receptivity to innovation is to be improved partly through formal education and partly through the provision of various "cultural" services and activities. The intention is to provide the peasants with opportunities to use their experience and skills to help others, e.g., teaching agricultural knowledge in schools. Consequently, their life is enriched by diversifying their experiences and broadening their social and political horizons. They are systematically socialized in the collective way of life and are encouraged to have a part, however small it may be, in the operation and improvement of the production team or brigade of which they are part. Their contribution, not only as farmers doing repetitive work but also as enlightened and dedicated commune members, is seen as vital in making the whole commune system work.

Technical changes. Given China's immense population and yet relatively scarce cultivable land, there is a limit to agricultural productivity however much the rural labour force input can be, unless agricultural technology is improved. The needed technical changes include: better utilization of land, scientific application of fertilizers, improvements in water control and management, rational approaches to planting, improved seeds, and of course mechanization. To facilitate these tasks,

China sees it important to build up various rural industries utilizing local raw materials and resources to produce machinery and other inputs for agricultural development. These industries play a significant role in bringing about the technical changes necessary for raising agricultural productivity and also, as the rural economy is diversified, for increasing employment opportunities and improving the rural population's standard of living.[5]

Physical changes. Closely related to technical changes are changes in the physical appearance of the rural areas. Thus, for instance, the lay-out of cultivated fields has to be rearranged in such a way as to facilitate more effective irrigation and maximization of planting. New cultivable land needs to be created by reclamation or removing hills and grading the surface of fields for proper irrigation and drainage. Besides, what used to be merely simple villages have to be organized in the commune system which requires the incorporation into the rural scene of a variety of amenities and facilities such as health clinics, schools, banks, shops, factories and workshops, many of which are needed to support agricultural development. Roads and pathways need to be expanded to link together the constituent parts of a commune. These are all important to provide better conditions in which agriculture may develop and on which enhancement of the quality and hence the attractiveness of rural life depends.

## III. The commune as a model of development

From the above description of the tasks of rural development it can be seen that from China's point of view rural development requires a comprehensive approach aimed at introducing fundamental changes touching on practically all aspects of rural life. In effect, the concept of "rural" is greatly modified to mean much more than "agricultural." It is meant to incorporate many elements of industrialization and modernization so that the rural areas should no longer be, as they were in the pre-Communist days, places plagued by hardship and poverty. Instead, the intention is to change rural areas into places full of productive vigour and hence able to attain their due share of progress and prosperity.

The people's commune is China's basic and unique model of rural development.[6] There are now approximately 50,000 communes in China. The average commune today has some 14,000 people divided into 15 production brigades which are subdivided into roughly 100 production teams.[7] There are variations, however. Thus, a commune in a remote mountainous region may consist of several thousand people while communes in Guangdong province, for example, may have anywhere from 20,000 to 50,000 people.[8] The basic rationale for formation

of the communes lies in the desire to organize and mobilize energies and resources on a large scale to implement the tasks of rural development.

The commune system consists of three structural levels, each with its specific purposes and functions. Thus, the lowest level, the production team, usually consists of a natural village and is the basic production and accounting unit. Income is distributed, after paying state taxes, through a workpoint system which takes into account not only individuals' but also the collectivity's work contribution. The production team also engages in certain investment activities for the interest of the team as a production unit, such as buying agricultural machinery and improving its irrigation system.

The production brigade is the intermediate level above the production team. The brigade coordinates the production plans of its constituent teams according to quotas assigned by the commune as a whole. The brigade also engages in investment and development projects which are too large for the team to handle, such as land reclamation, setting up livestock farms and fruit orchards, and operating small-scale industries (e.g., food processing, paper manufacturing).

The commune, of course, is the level at which major decisions involving the interests of the whole community are made. It is responsible for projects beyond the scope of the brigades, such as water conservancy projects, road construction, and factories for the manufacture of certain agricultural machineries. The commune is also the lowest level of state authority and is thus responsible for implementing national policies in the countryside and serving as the major administrative link between the rural community and the xian (county) to which it belongs. Important social services for the whole community such as education and public health are also coordinated at the commune level.

The commune is thus both an agricultural production unit and a unit of local administration combined in such a way that the various aspects of rural development may be better coordinated. The three-level organization as just indicated is designed to mobilize manpower and allocate resources to where they are most needed in support of a collectivized economy. Areas of responsibility are fairly well defined while at the same time communication linkages are built into the whole organizational network of the commune to encourage coordination which is necessary if the commune is to perform the various developmental tasks

effectively and efficiently. In the process of performing such tasks local initiative is always encouraged to deal with local problems. It can be seen then that administratively this mode of operation requires personnel who are especially committed to the needs and goals of the collectivity and who also share the vision of the role of the commune system in China's national development. Furthermore, the fact that the commune development model rests heavily on the establishment of rural industries of various types and scales both to support agriculture and to link the rural sector with the urban sector of industrial development means that to a large extent manpower must be trained in the commune in order that rural industrialization may be most readily and efficiently carried out.

Because the commune is usually a huge collectivity, it is not difficult to understand that its functioning depends substantially not so much on its formal organization as on the way in which people work together. The implications for education are clear. Rural education must be geared towards the needs of commune development. Even more important is the necessity for each commune to shape its educational system in accordance with the particular concerns of the commune in question.

## IV. Characteristics of commune education

Prior to the Cultural Revolution, rural education was not adequate in quantity or quality to meet rural needs.[9] Full-time regular schools were concentrated in the cities. Age and examination restrictions required for entry to these schools and the expenses involved were highly unfavourable to peasant children. Although a variety of non-regular rural schools, such as the "cultivate-study schools", emerged during the early 1960s, school attendance rates were still quite low.

The important change in rural education policy came in 1969 with the announcement of the "Draft Programme of Rural Secondary and Primary Education."[10] That was about one year after Mao Ze-dong made his famous "May 7th directive" that the length of schooling should be shortened and that education should be revolutionized. The Draft Programme called for the running of primary schools by production brigades and secondary schools by communes. It also recommended shortening primary education from six to five years and secondary education from six to four years. Soon this pattern was adopted throughout the country. As a result, the primary schools in the brigades also offer the first two years of secondary education (junior secondary), while the secondary schools operated by the communes are

actually two-year senior secondary schools. Of course, this places considerable financial burden on the communes. Very little state subsidy has ever assisted the commune schools. Under the principle of "self-reliance," the commune schools have met their expenses typically through relying on local resources and generating income by operating small farms and small factories which actually serve the production needs of the communes.

In recent years, with the system of commune schools in full operation, popularization of basic education in the rural areas has been greatly enhanced. In most cases, upwards of 90 per cent of primary school age children are able to receive primary education.[11]

What are the main characteristics of the kind of education that the commune schools offer? For our purposes, these characteristics may be described under three inter-related aspects: (a) adaptation of the educational content and teaching methods to agriculture and to the realities of commune life, (b) making the schools directly serve the productional needs of the commune, and (c) encouraging mass participation in commune schools.

Adaptation of education to agriculture and to commune life

To ensure that a child's schooling be relevant to his future contribution to the development of the commune system,

commune education is shaped according to the needs of the commune. In the curriculum, "agricultural basic knowledge" carries considerable weight, along with the basic subjects of language (both Chinese and English), arithmetic, and politics. Experienced peasants and workers are invited to help with the teaching of certain subjects where necessary. More important, systematic "link-up" (guagou) arrangements have long been established between the schools and their respective brigades or communes to facilitate teaching and learning beyond the confines of the classroom in such a way that the educational value of "outside" resources and facilities is added to school learning. Indeed, the realities of life in the commune generally constitute the "large classroom" and the conventional school classroom is the "small classroom". Students are often taken to visit factories, fields, workshops, and different units in the brigade or the commune to observe various aspects of life and production and to relate these aspects to what they learn in the school classroom. This they do to implement the principle of "coordination of theory and practice". They may watch experienced peasants at work or workers assembling some farming machinery or listen to elderly villagers telling stories of their past sufferings before the communists came to power. The basic rationale for such activities is simply to help students acquire a first-hand

experience of what it means to live and work in a commune and what the "socialist construction" in China is all about.

Making schools serve the productional needs of the commune

Just as students are given the opportunity to widen their educational experience beyond the classroom by going out into their surroundings, they are also provided the chance to familiarize themselves with the tasks and processes of production by working. Commune schools, primary and secondary alike, typically have their own small farms and small factories or workshops where students can learn agricultural and industrial skills. Experienced peasants and workers are invited to assist in setting up these facilities and to provide certain specialized training where needed. These facilities at the primary school level are naturally much simpler than at the secondary school level. The amount of the students' participation in labour is geared to their age. Very young children may simply learn to plant seeds and make toy parts, but the intention is to enable them to adopt a positive attitude toward manual work and to cultivate a concern for the collectivity. At the same time, the work that the students perform is often part of an actual production process. It may be toys or matchboxes in the case of primary schools; it may be mechanical parts or farming tools in the case of secondary

schools. Sometimes, a secondary school with adequate equipment and appropriate technical support from the commune may operate a small factory that produces insecticides or chemical fertilizers. Alternatively, a secondary school may have a workshop in which students learn to service and repair certain agricultural machines such as light tractors and water pumps.

In addition to operating small farms and factories/ workshops in the schools, it is also quite common for secondary schools to maintain "link-up" arrangements with nearby brigades and their factories to provide practical training in production. The students spend specified lengths of time in brigade factories or farms learning various technical skills from experienced workers and peasants. Thus, for example, at the Huancheng Secondary School of Huancheng Commune in Guangdong province, the students in the second year of their senior secondary education are divided into four specialization groups all of which spend some time in the brigades learning the skills relevant to their group. The "rural culture" group, for instance, learn propaganda work while the "agricultural machinery" group learn mechanical maintenance and repair. The latter also assist the production teams in such activities as field ploughing and setting up electric wires for lighting in the fields.

To further strengthen the role of education in supporting the developmental tasks of the commune, all schools are expected to participate actively in "scientific experimentation" projects which aim at improving the technological level in agriculture. Through cooperation with agricultural technicians and experimental farms in the communes, many commune schools have mobilized their teachers and students in such endeavours as the development of new wheat and rice breeds, manufacture of agricultural medicines, design of new pest control methods, and improvement of planting systems. Many of the results of these projects have actually been adopted and popularized in production activities.[12]

All the examples cited above point to the fact that not only do students in commune schools learn knowledge and skills directly relevant to production in the communes in ways that combine theory with practice but they also have numerous opportunities of applying these skills immediately and systematically in their own communities. This being the case, the schools and their educational activities are closely tied with many other functioning parts of the commune. It is, in many ways, a multi-faceted manifestation of Mao Ze-dong's directive that education should be combined with productive labour.

Mass participation in commune schools

That the education offered by commune schools is oriented toward local needs is largely the result of placing rural education completely in the control of the communes and the general policy of encouraging mass participation in educational matters following the Cultural Revolution. The basic rationale was that since education was to serve the needs of the masses the latter ought to play a substantial part in the shaping and implementation of education. Throughout the late 1960s and up until most recently school management has been in the hands of school revolutionary committees the membership of which include representatives of peasants and local militia units. Funds for running the schools come from the production brigades (primary schools) and the communes (secondary schools) as many of the teachers are paid on the basis of workpoints like other commune members and incomes are generated from products and services of the schools' small farms and factories. The planning and implementation of educational matters have become an integral part of the responsibility and leadership of the production brigades and the communes generally, so that each brigade or commune is able to influence and shape local education directly in accordance with local conditions.

## V. Implications for rural development

Having briefly described the major characteristics of commune education, we must now ask the important question, "What implications does China's commune education have for its rural development?" It will not be possible to answer this question exhaustively here, but an attempt is made to highlight certain main points. It should be noted that in doing so we need to keep in mind China's tasks of rural development as outlined earlier and the basic premise in the Chinese conception of development not merely in economic and material terms but in human terms and in terms of building the values and moral incentives of a socialist country.[13]

(1) By building a school system within each commune, with the size of the system geared to the population of the commune, the task of expansion of education and universalization of basic education among the huge rural masses of China is made much easier. Inasmuch as a basic level of literacy and educational attainment is fundamental to any substantial social and economic development, the existence of commune schools has a definite instrumental value.

(2) Since the planning and organization of the commune school system is basically the responsibility of the commune and its constituent production brigades, education may be

related more closely to local production needs and manpower requirements. Just as the commune itself is a fairly autonomous unit of local administration, so educational matters are in large measure subject to decentralized management. Education is thus made more responsive to local conditions in the rural areas. Furthermore, the viability of the commune as a model of development is strengthened because education is actively engaged in promoting commune goals.

(3) By adapting the content and methods of education to the realities and needs of production in the commune, education is made highly relevant to the development of the commune. Not only can children and youths acquire a practical training that provides them with a clear notion of their potential contribution to the commune, the commune is also assured of maintaining and developing a pool of suitably trained manpower on which the future of the commune can depend. There have been numerous reports indicating the preponderance of locally educated technicians, peasants, workers, administrators, and other personnel in the communes. Some of these may have received further training at higher level institutions in urban areas but have returned to serve the commune they come from. Of course, there are also technical and administrative personnel despatched from other

areas or trained elsewhere, but the fact that the communes themselves are capable of training a considerable proportion of the manpower they need, especially that at an intermediate level, greatly strengthens their potential for development.[14]

(4) As indicated earlier, one important task of rural development in China is the establishment of a variety of rural industries to support the development of agriculture. These industries capitalize on local resources, stimulate the development and diffusion of indigenous technology that can serve local needs, and provide considerable employment opportunities for the rural population. The supply of technical manpower to serve in these rural industries (e.g., fertilizers, farming machinery, facilities for machinery repair, light consumer goods, food processing, etc.) and the growth of these industries are facilitated by the practical orientation of commune education. As already mentioned, the schools make provision for training their students in various agricultural and industrial skills, and are also keen to contribute to technological improvement through various "scientific experimentation" programmes.

(5) In addition to transmitting useful knowledge and skills, the commune schools are highly instrumental in socializing the young toward an understanding and acceptance of an ideology which stresses the overarching importance of

the collectivity. Throughout the schooling years, the students are constantly taught both in theory and in practice the meaning and necessity of "serving the people" and the spirit of "self-reliance". In fact, the bulk of the commune schools themselves have been set up according to these cardinal principles. The learning experience obtained from the "large classroom" (the community) and from participating in productive labour serve to widen their horizon to become concerned with the interests of the larger collectivity. Furthermore, it also serves to develop in them a positive attitude toward manual work. The latter is highly important since education in many developing countries has too often produced an intellectual elite who aspire only to white collar and managerial jobs and who would hardly want to serve in the countryside. With such a vast countryside and a huge rural population, China cannot afford to have such an intellectual elite. This was precisely part of Mao Ze-dong's intention when he called for a thorough reform in education during the Cultural Revolution. Mao wanted China to become an egalitarian society in which not only would there be an equitable distribution of wealth (through a collectivized economy) but, moreover, the barriers that separate people from each other would be removed.[15] One such barrier which is characteristic of traditional Chinese

society is that between those who "work with their minds" (intellectuals and administrators) and those who "work with their hands" (peasants and workers).

Where such a barrier exists it is difficult to implement rural developmental projects in accordance with such principles as "self-reliance" and "serving the people" since these principles call for a deep commitment to collective causes. Although that barrier has not been totally eliminated, it would still be accurate to say that in China to-day people are well accustomed to appreciating the importance of productive labour, be it in the factories or in the fields. Education may be said to be largely responsible for bringing this about.

(6) Finally, since the commune schools are typically outreaching in their educational endeavours, their students and teachers are expected to be highly concerned with the welfare of the commune or its constituent parts (brigades, teams). In the course of carrying out teaching and learning activities, they may engage in various kinds of community service work such as offering technical assistance in irrigation projects, developing better feeds for livestock, and planting experimental fields in cooperation with commune members.[16]

In this way not only is the value of "serving the people" reinforced, but also the students and teachers become highly aware of the various needs of the commune. The new generation thus trained have not only the skills but in addition the commitment and willingness to serve their own community. Their satisfaction lies in helping the countryside prosper. Insofar as this quality is indeed achieved in its manpower, there is substantial hope for rural development.

## VI. Conclusion and discussion

The spread of education is itself part of the development process since the provision of education, like that of health and other welfare services, is necessary to meet the basic social needs of a population. But this is mainly the consumption aspect of education. In addition, education may be viewed as investment in human capital with the hope that the product of education will have a useful input into the development process. This perspective is generally taken in the developing countries and usually advocated by writers on development.[17] What is likely to be problematic, however, is the linkage between education and other spheres of development. Is education designed in such a way as to meet local manpower needs? Is the education that the young

receive such that the latter are suitably equipped and committed to work for rural development? Does education contribute to a diversification of the rural economy? Is education capable of instilling in the young the ideology on which the whole social structure of the society rests? These are among the major questions particularly relevant to China's rural development.

We have pointed out that primary and secondary education for the rural population in China is organized and operated by the communes which are by now well-established bodies of rural local administration as well as units of large scale collectivized production. We have also described the ways in which this commune-run educational system is oriented closely toward local needs and adapted to agricultural requirements. This has been made possible by the implementation of a policy which stresses the following: (1) the development of human resources not only in pure manpower requirement terms but also in terms of value commitment as required for building a socialist country; (2) the importance of integrating education with local administration, production activities and rural life in general in order to maximize education's relevance and utility in rural development; and (3) the need to use education as a means to strengthen the commitment of not just

the leaders and administrators but also the rural masses to the commune system and the many tasks of "socialist construction" for the sake of a more egalitarian society. To appreciate the significance of these policy emphases more fully, let us dwell on their meaning a little longer.

First, it must be remembered that China's development objective is basically to become a modern socialist country by the end of the present century. In many ways, this requires not just technology and the boosting of economic growth but also the commitment to a set of socialist values. From the Chinese point of view, such values call for both an orientation to collective needs as a primary action goal and the principle of "walking on two legs" as a strategy to achieve that goal. Thus, "to serve the people" is the action goal and "self-reliance," which is directly relevant to development of rural potentials and is an application of the "walking on two legs" principle, becomes a development strategy. Although China is now much more outreaching in international relations compared to a few years ago and has embarked on a number of projects to absorb Western experience to facilitate its own economic and technological growth, this can be seen as basically a more extensive application of the "two legs" principle, without any substantive change in the core of China's socialist values. As has been observed by many writers on

Chinese development, the combination of modernization efforts and commitment to socialist values is China's unique quality as a development model.[18] The viability of this model therefore hinges greatly on the degree to which education can cultivate and strengthen value commitment at the same time as it is training manpower.

Secondly, given the centrality of socialist value commitment, education must seek ways and means to demonstrate the rationale of such values. If the content and methods of education are integrated with the realities and needs of the commune, the viability of the commune model and the values which this model represents are more effectively demonstrated.

Finally, and this is closely related to the above two points, assuming that commune education does indeed serve the instrumental purpose of cultivating a socialist value commitment, the responsibility of supporting and facilitating the future of the commune system and hence rural development generally falls in effect on the shoulders of the commune masses themselves. This is especially so with the accumulation of the results of rural industrialization and diversification of rural economic activities.

Allowing for the existence of regional differences--some of which are still quite marked--many rural communes have increased their productivity as well as their employment

opportunities and have thus improved their quality of life over the years. This being the case, differences between rural and urban areas have been greatly reduced. To a large extent, this has been possible not only because China has chosen the commune model of development but also because a very important aspect of China's socialist value system is to strive toward a more egalitarian society. China makes no pretense that egalitarianism has been achieved already. However, as far as inequalities arising from barriers between mental and manual work, and barriers between town and country are concerned, one has to admit that a considerable social transformation has indeed taken place. By adapting rural education to commune needs, by making education a community concern, and by stressing the importance of commitment to socialist values, it seems fair to say that the Chinese have expended considerable efforts in allocating a primary role to education as an integral part of rural development. As China has recently decided to move more rapidly towards a modern economy, more attention will have to be paid to the quality of education in terms of technical skills and academic standards. The whole educational system will need to be further expanded, yet becoming much more selective and competitive than previously. In rural education, while local production needs will

continue to be taken into account and education will continue to be instrumental in manpower training and helping the spread of technology for agricultural and rural industrialization requirements, the effort towards achieving more egalitarianism through socialist value commitment may be affected. But such developments are still in the future.

## Notes

1 The idea that education is to create new "socialist men" which has gained great prominence since the Cultural Revolution was elaborated by Mao Ze-dong in one of his most important policy-forming speeches, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People," first published in 1957 and is now included in Selected Works of Mao Tse Tung Vol. V (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1977), pp. 384-421.

2 Much of the content of this paper reflects the situation of rural education in some Kwangtung areas in 1976, the time when the field trip on which this paper is based was taken. Social and political conditions in China during the last two or three years have undergone considerable changes to adapt to the country's current drive for modernization. Certain aspects of rural education have changed accordingly. The present official position on educational policy basically demands a closer relationship between education and economic development. The essence of this new policy is contained in Vice Premier Deng Xiao-ping's address delivered at the National Conference for Educational Work on April 22, 1978. See Renmin Ribao, "Address at the National Conference of Educational Work" (April 26, 1978). Other sources describing recent changes in Chinese education include: Suzanne Pepper, "An Interview on Changes in Chinese Education after the 'Gang of Four'," The China Quarterly, 72 (December 1977), 815-824; China Reconstructs, "What's Happening in China's Education?" (April 1978); and Pedro Pak-tao Ng, "Open-Door Education in the Chinese Communes: Rationale, Problems, and Recent Changes," forthcoming in Modern China.

3 The basic idea underlying this slogan can be traced to Mao Ze-dong's essay "On the Ten Relationships" written in 1956 and included in Selected Works of Mao Tse Tung Vol. V (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1977), pp. 284-286. The dual emphasis given to both agriculture and industry, treating the former as "base," began to be implemented in the 1960s as a policy readjustment following the difficulties of the Great Leap Forward.

A great deal has been written on this. See, for example, Keith Buchanan, The Transformation of the Chinese Earth (London: G. Bells and Sons, 1970), pp. 231-235; A. Doak Barnett, Uncertain Passage: China's Transition to the Post-Mao Era (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1974), pp. 124-127; Alexander Eckstein, China's Economic Revolution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 60-61; and Maurice Meisner, Mao's China: A History of the People's Republic (New York: The Free Press, 1977), pp. 274-276.

4 For a discussion of "self-reliance," see, for example, Alexander Eckstein, op. cit., pp. 284-285; for "serve the people," see, for example, A. Doak Barnett, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

5 Sartaj Aziz, Rural Development: Learning from China (London: Macmillan, 1978), pp. 52-53.

6 For an historical description of the emergence of the people's communes, see, for example, Keith Buchanan, op. cit., pp. 114-142 and Maurice Meisner, op. cit., pp. 140-160, 230-241. For recent reports and discussions on the commune system, see, for example, Ward Morehouse, "Notes on Hua-tung Commune," The China Quarterly, 67 (September 1976), 582-596; Victor D. Lippit, "The Commune in Chinese Development," Modern China 3(April 1977), 229-255; Sartaj Aziz, op. cit., pp. 46-61; and Gordon Bennett, Huadong: The Story of a Chinese Commune (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1978).

7 See F. Crook, "The Commune System in the People's Republic of China," in U.S. Congress, Joint Economic Committee, China: A Reassessment of the Economy (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975), p. 375; and Victor D. Lippit, op. cit., p. 232.

8 For instance, the populations of Huancheng Commune of Xinhui Xian and Dali Commune of Nanhai Xian, both of which the author visited in December 1976, are 59,000 and 68,000, respectively.

9 For a description of the criticisms launched in the Cultural Revolution against the "old" (pre-Cultural Revolution) educational system, see Marianne Bastid, "Economic Necessity and Political Ideals in Educational Reform During the Cultural Revolution," The China Quarterly, 42(April-June 1970), 16-45.

10 The "Draft Programme" was first published in the Renmin Ribao (People's Daily) of May 12, 1969. For a commentary on it see You Xue, "On China's Draft Programme for Rural Secondary and Primary Schools," (in Chinese) China Monthly (Hong Kong), No. 64 (July 1969), 316-319.

11 In Huancheng Commune of Xinhui Xian and Dali Commune of Nanhai Xian, it was reported to the author in December 1976 that over 95 per cent of primary school age children are able to receive primary education. Of those who finish primary school about 90 per cent will proceed to junior secondary school. Other sources indicate that this tends to be rather typical of other communes in Guangdong province. The situation of senior secondary school attendance is more variable, however. For instance, in the case of the two communes just mentioned, approximately 70 per cent of those who complete junior secondary school will go on to senior secondary school. In Doushan Commune, Taishan Xian and Luogang Commune near the suburban area of Guangzhou (Canton), which the author's colleagues visited in May 1978, the proportion of junior secondary school graduates who will proceed to senior secondary school is 50 per cent and 75 to 80 per cent respectively.

12 Guangming Ribao (Bright Daily), "Intensively criticize Lin Biao and Confucius, and insist on open-door education" (April 22, 1974), and "To teach for the revolution is a merit; to learn for the revolution is a glory" (February 28, 1977).

13 The centrality of values and moral incentives in the Chinese conception of development is discussed at length in E.L. Wheelwright and Bruce McFarlane, The Chinese Road to Socialism (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 147-163, and in Derek Bryan, "Changing Social Ethics in Contemporary China," in China in Transition, ed. by William A. Robson and Bernard Crick (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1975), pp. 53-61. See also A. Doak Barnett, op. cit., p. 13, and Peter Worsley, Inside China (London: Allen Lane, 1975), p. 202.

14 Aziz, op. cit., p. 55.

15 A perceptive analysis of Maoist educational values with reference to egalitarianism is Donald J. Munro, "Egalitarian Ideal and Educational Fact in Communist China," in China: Management of a Revolutionary Society, ed. by John M.H. Lindbeck (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1971), pp. 256-301.

16 See, for example, Guangming Ribao, "To teach for the revolution is a merit; to learn for the revolution is a glory" (February 28, 1977), and Hong Qi (Red Flag), "Open-door Education is Getting More and More Impressive," No. 12 (1975), pp. 40-43.

17 See, for example, John K. Galbraith, Economic Development in Perspective (New York: Fawcett Publications, 1962), pp. 60-76; Theodore W. Schultz, The Economic Value of Education (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), pp. 38-46; Adam Curle, Educational Strategy for Developing Societies, 2nd edition (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970), pp. 140-142; and Christopher Howe, China's Economy: A Basic Guide (London: Paul Elek, 1978), pp. 21-22.

18 See, for example, Michael Gasster, China's Struggle to Modernize (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), pp. 97-141; John G. Gurley, China's Economy and the Maoist Strategy (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), pp. 256-257; and Alexander Eckstein, op. cit., pp. 277-285.