

Songs on Terraced Fields *

-A Study on Ideological Education in Chinese Villages during the Period of Learning from Dazhai in Agriculture¹

Liu Jing; trans Wang Yuting²

Abstract: The attraction of the study of the Chinese revolution lies not only in its “path” of encircling the cities from the rural areas and finally achieving victory in the cities and even the whole country but also in the "path” of socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics. The construction of new China led by Mao Zedong has distinct characteristics of the times. The people, despite the shortage of material resources and low living standards, went into production and labor impassionedly and with fighting spirit. Dramatized labor scenes were once the reality. In villages, labor and production were organized by officials at the grass-roots level, and the morale that pervaded the time was stimulated by and cultivated through “political education” within the village system. It was a "politics-oriented" education for all. It was also through political education and its practical usage that a strong ideological tie was established between the Party and Chinese people.

Keywords: Labor dramatization, Political education, Ideological tie

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¹ A campaign organized by Chairman Mao Zedong in the year 1963. Noted by the translator.

² Liu Jing, lecturer, School of Journalism and Communication of Southwest University of Political Science and Law, China. Bachelor of Sociology, Peking University, China, MA and Ph.D. of Literature, School of Arts, Peking University; Postdoctoral Fellow, track of Cultural Industry, School of Arts and Media, Beijing Normal University, China. Her research interests include Cultural Sociology, Media Sociology, Internet Industry, Cultural and Creative Industry. The courses she offers include Social Science Research Methods, Empirical Research and Market Research, Media Sociology, Communication, etc. Wang Yuting, translator; research master student of philosophy, Radboud University, the Netherlands; research assistant, SUSTech, China.

I. Introduction

The unique form and profound influence of China's socialist revolution have attracted the attention of scholars both at home and abroad repeatedly. Western scholars, especially those from the United States, regard the analysis of the Chinese revolution as the key to understanding the real China. With more than half a century of revolutionary practice in China, the theoretical investigation on the Chinese revolution and construction has also been continuously updating and deepening. At present, three images of socialist society are depicted by comparatively influential research: the image of totalitarianism, the image of pluralistic-interest groups, and the image of neo-traditionalism.³

Totalitarianism emerges from the disputation between socialism and capitalism, and the confrontation between the Eastern and Western camps afterward. Therefore, this theory has a tone of ideological conflict. The theory depicts socialist society as:

- (1) In a totalitarian society, state power represented by the ruling party is “all-present” and “all-powerful.”
- (2) The Party carries out comprehensive social transformation based on its ideology; and demands absolute obedience from people.

In this sense, totalitarian society has two prominent features: (Walder, 1986) First, the tie between totalitarian parties and their vigorous followers is formed on shared ideological belief as well as psychological and political identification. Second, interpersonal isolation, social ties that fail to realize the party goals will be eliminated - this feature is called social “atomization.” Totalitarian societies deny the existence of boundaries between the private and public spheres. The criticism of the totalitarian theory is about its emphasis on the “ideal condition” of socialist society while neglecting the “actual” mechanism of socialism that exists; the theory is also criticized for little attention paid to the actions of social members. (Li Meng, Zhou Feizhou, Li Kang, 1996) However, totalitarianism discusses the “ideal condition,” a theoretical ideal model

³ The three images of the Communist society and the related discussions in the third part are mainly referred to Andrew G Walder's *Communist Neo-traditionalism* (Walder, 1986), “Looking at Society from Factory - Walder's Communist Neo-traditionalism Theory” by Sun Liping (*China Book Review*, 1995, No.3) and “Danwei: Internal Mechanism of Institutionalized Organization” by Li Meng, Zhou Feizhou and Li Kang (*China Social Science Quarterly (Hong Kong)*, 1996, No.16).

of socialist society⁴, which is inspirational for analysis on socialist ideology and its practice from the perspective of “ideal and reality.”

After totalitarianism, the pluralistic-interest groups theory came into view. The theory emphasizes the tendency of “convergence” between socialist and capitalist societies. When political terror and mass mobilization subside, according to the theory, competition among groups within the framework of political control will appear. Totalitarian societies and pluralistic societies are treated as the two extremes of a spectrum. “The more that a totalitarian system ‘liberalizes’ and allows limited pluralistic competition, and the more group politics pervades bureaucratic institutions, the less pronounced become the differences between the societies of East and West.” (Walder, 1986: 4) The key premise of the pluralistic-interest group theory is that the so-called real “political activities are carried out by groups⁵.” (Meng Li, Zhou Feizhou, Li Kang, 1996)

Andrew G Walder's *Communist Neo-traditionalism* was published in 1986. The book, for the first time, treated danwei (单位, workplace) as the basic unit in Chinese society analysis. And the focus of investigation also shifted from major historical figures and events to the micro-operation of society, from political parties and ideology to individuals who can make rational choices (Meng Li, Zhou Feizhou, Li Kang, 1996). In Walder's book, the discussion on the development of the Chinese socialist society seems to follow such a hidden thread: the Communist Party was, in the beginning, a group based on common “ideological orientation” or political belief. However, when the Party seized power throughout the country and controlled politics and economy, it met the requirements to place outsiders in a dependent position, both politically and economically and acquired the ability to treat people differently by controlling them politically, materially, status-wise and career-wise. When the group uses the resources at hand to incorporate outsiders into its ideology, the nature of “ideological ties” was fundamentally altered (Walder, 1986:123). In such a process of “politicalized rewarding,” the purpose of individual action becomes: To obtain all kinds of resources controlled by the Party, one must believe in and stay loyal to the ideology advocated by the Party. In this sense, loyalty to the official ideology is only a (possible) expression of loyalty to power and resources it represents.

⁴ We believe that sociological discussion on social phenomena is always based on a certain “ideal model.” The essential defect of the totalitarianism theory lies in its conception of an ideal model describing socialist operation based solely on socialist theory, which makes it a “theoretical ideal model.”

⁵ Quotations from non-English sources are translated by this translator unless otherwise noted.

Ideological orientation, competition for interests, and "principled particularism" set a "role model" systematically and encourage the "patron-client network" between superiors and subordinates. By repeating such a cycle, the "neo-tradition" of power based on particularism and personal loyalty emerges in the modern organizational setting, and at the same time completes the final degeneration of ideological ties. (Walder, 1986: 124)

Walder focused his research on the relationship between the Party and people and summarized their relationship as a "neo-traditional" relation of power. His research is insightful and inspirational. However, due to the selection of interviewees⁶, his research lost its grasp on the big picture of the age - It was a time when passion burned hotter than fire. That era cannot be summarized as gloom and displeasure, as presented in Walder's research, even though existence of gloom and displeasure were undeniable. Walder failed to convey key features of the age, as a result, his understanding and interpretation were seriously affected. Besides, Walder intended to explain the essence of the ties between the Communist Party and people, from ties of "ideological orientation" at the beginning of the revolution, to "degeneration of ties" after the establishment of the national political power: The core of his theory lies in "degeneration." However, how did ideological ties come into being in the first place? This question remains the blind spot of Walder's discussion. Studies in the past on this issue also lack in-depth exploration of this question⁷. Taking the whole country into consideration, it was not during the Anti-Japanese War or the War of Liberation when the ideological ties between the Party and people were established or peaked, it was the period when the Party led by Mao Zedong carried out socialist construction after establishing power. Even to this day, ordinary people who have experienced the age still have complicated feelings about it: They still hold on to their affection and care for the tie. Therefore, it can be said that the attraction of Chinese revolutionary research lies not only in its "path" of encircling the cities from the rural areas and finally achieving victory in the cities and even the whole country but also in the "path" of socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics. Indeed, both paths are of great significance in the study of human civilization and cultural forms.

Our research goes back to the villages, and to the era of "Learning from Dazhai in Agriculture." We try to go deep into an important question that has been raised repeatedly when

⁶ The majority of the interviewees of Andrew G Walder's 1986 book are a group of exiles who fled from the mainland to Hong Kong in the 1960s and 1970s. In-depth interviews with this group are the basis of Walder's research.

⁷ A review of studies on the relationship between the Communist Party of China and the people can be seen in Liu Yigao's article "China's Reform and Rural Society." (*China Book Review*, No.4, March 1995)

studying the Chinese revolution: Why do Chinese farmers support the Chinese Communist Party?

It was an era when ordinary farmers, just like revolutionary artists, feared not to be vigorous and grandiose when expressing their love for the mountains and rivers of the Motherland. Ordinary farmers were the vast majority at that time. They lived a hard life: low living standards, a shortage of food and clothes. They drove themselves into the ground in rounds and rounds of organized hard labor. Romantic exaggeration was blind and they were exhausted. However, no matter how suffering and spent they were, they faithfully trusted and supported the “path” that the Party pointed to, and all-heartedly loved and worshiped the leaders who led them to live such a life.

Why did they make such a decision?

II. Rural New Look

The village we entered was an ordinary mountain village in the old liberated areas of northern Shaanxi, belonging to Wubao County (吴堡县, Wubao xian) in Yulin (榆林)⁸. The village was home to 168 households and a population of nearly 600. Except for several households of other surnames, the rest surnamed Liu. A small stream plentiful of water runs through this mountain village from north to south, hence the name: Liujiagou (刘家沟)⁹. Liujiagou Buddha Temple hangs a big clock cast in the 33rd year of Wanli (万历) in Ming Dynasty (1605 AD), which makes it more than 400 years old. According to senior villagers, the ancestors of Liujiagou settled here about 500 years ago.

Liujiagou is an ordinary and quiet mountain village today. Like thousands upon thousands of ordinary and in-slight-poverty villages in China, it lacks bless of nature and is not able to swim with the tide of China's economic reform and growth. Like those thousands upon thousands of ordinary Chinese villages, Liujiagou went through the era of “vigorous field and irrigation construction” led by Chairman Mao Zedong. Admittedly, the village is remote and unknown but terraces on the yellow mountains and dams and weirs between ridges and ravines

⁸ Wubao County is “a remote small county only 40 li in width and 80 li in length, with a population of 80,000 living in 8 towns and 221 administrative villages.” Quotation taken from Huo Shaoxiang’s book *Men Wu Bao*, p. 1, Xi’an Map Publishing House, 2003. (Li, unit of length, equal to half a kilometer, noted by the translator.)

⁹ The literal meaning of Liujiagou is “the stream of the Liu clan.” This note is added by the translator.

are murmuring the story to newcomers about the era of boiling enthusiasm. “Follow Chairman Mao and build a new China, transform homeland with sweat” is the collective memory and lifeblood of that farming generation.

(1) All-out Hard Labor in Songs: Tough Life with Boosted Morale

In *Painful Memory*, Wei Junyi said: “I remember once when I visited an artificial terrace. Four farmers carried a large stone, gasping, and put it in the middle of a slope. Of course, such terraces are very delightful to the eyes, but fields were built manually like this, ..., four people can only install four stones in a day! ... Of course, they are very hardworking, we should admire their spirit.”¹⁰

What Wei Junyi describes is a glimpse of the labor scene of that age. Behind this detailed depiction, there exists the grand and awe-inspiring picture of the period when hundreds of millions of farmers carried stones to build dams. It is “the period of Learning from Dazhai in Agriculture” in the oral memory of Chinese farmers¹¹.

During the period of Learning from Dazhai in Agriculture, Liujiagou Village was called the “Liujiagou Production Brigade.”

[Learning from Dazhai] (We) began learn from Dazhai, more and more efforts year after year. From 1969 to 1979, good efforts in ten years, making terraces and dams. “Learn agriculture from Dazhai and Learn industry from Daqing,” two flags set for you. The whole country was like this. Work harder, work harder, year by year, year by year! (Farmer B)

In Chairman Mao’s time, we did a lot of farmland and water projects, to change the face of

¹⁰ This quotation is taken from Xiao Wuliao’s *Passion and Fashion-Chinese Art and Life in the 1970s*, p. 10, Shandong Pictorial Publishing House, 1st Edition, 2002.

¹¹ Learning from Dazhai in Agriculture was a movement launched in China in the 1960s, based on Mao Zedong’s instructions issued in 1963: “Learning from Daqing in Industry, Learning from Dazhai in Agriculture, Learning from People’s Liberation Army in the Whole Country.” (“工业学大庆，农业学大寨，全国学解放军”) At that time, Dazhai was an advanced model and a banner on China’s agricultural front. In the 1950s and 1960s, under the leadership of Chen Yonggui, then secretary of the Dazhai Branch of the Communist Party of China, local farmers carried soil from the foot of the mountain to build fields on the stone ridge and dug reservoirs on the mountain top. The so-called “thousands of loads plus thousands of li equal one mu of land” improved the living conditions of the village and was praised by the government. Mao Zedong believed that it was in line with the doctrine of “hard work and self-reliance,” (“艰苦奋斗，自力更生”) so he called on farmers across the country to learn from Dazhai. At that time, the movement of Learning from Dazhai in Agriculture was mainly about organizing rural laborers to carry out farmland and irrigation construction in the absence of governmental investment. The movement continued until the end of the Cultural Revolution. Relevant information refers to the online article “Learning from Dazhai in Agriculture” from Xingdao Global Network www.singtaonet.com.

In this article, learning from Dazhai, (people’s) commune (人民公社), big collective (大集体), etc. mostly refer to the period of socialist construction led by Mao Zedong, which is the time span that our research focuses on. When quoting oral data, this article retains the farmers’ own expression and does not make any other explanation. (The second paragraph of this footnote has been edited by the translator according to the adjustments made during translation.)

our mountain and improve the living standards of people. We built terraces and dams, to control soil erosion. We lost soil, then, Henan (河南) riverbed (elevated), disaster. Can't go on like this! Mainly treat this (problem). (Farmer C)

The primary projects of Liujiagou Brigade were “terracing mountain slopes” and “building dams and weirs” during “Learning from Dazhai and conducting farmland construction.”

[Terracing Slopes] Terrace our fields, fields are flat, good for farming. To govern our place ... Some people carried 20 jin¹² (stone), some carried lighter. Carry heavy, more work points, more grains at year end. (Farmer I)

“Liujiagou learned from Dazhai and built a dam called Yuanzigou with 180 mu¹³ of silt land, most of which are for farming, a small part is for fish, about 30 mu of fish ponds, attracting various gourmets.”¹⁴

[Dam and Weir] First deep plowing, then making terraced fields, and then dam-building. Dam-building means building dams and weirs, in the stream, the country builds a big dam, we build a small dam. Stop water, prevent soil erosion, the soil becomes rich, plant crops. (Farmer J)

Dam-weir, is this bad ditch, rotten canal. (People) stop this water, more water, slowly, year by year, more water, became a dam-weir Making the dam-weir, Liujiagou women suffered. It rained and snowed not heavy ... (they worked as usual); show up in the morning, this path in the ditch. Put stones on the dam ridge. Pull the plow in February and March. Water is ice in February and March. Mud, digging, digging, digging. Dug a trench in the mud. And put in a hose this long. People on two sides dug out the mud in here. The mud can fertilize the corps ... Mud covered wives and girls. In winter, they worked dam-weir every day, wives and girls, built it. (Farmer G)

Liujiagou Production Brigade had six production teams (Teams were the unit for labor). Organized farmers spent their life day after day, year after year in demanding collective labor. In the era of planned-economy, to complete the fixed production targets and arranged construction projects given by the superiors, farmers in a certain village may work day and night to cultivate or reclaim fields on the mountain. Farmers labored to earn their work points, similar to attendance management in modern factories. Every adult labor must be on duty for 25 days monthly. However, during the slack season, farmers often gathered and worked non-stop, from the second day of the New Year till the end of December (Lunar calendar).

¹² Jin, Chinese unit of weight, equal to 0.5 kilograms. Noted by the translator.

¹³ Mu, Chinese unit of area, equal to 0.0667 hectares. Noted by the translator.

¹⁴ Huo Shaoxiang, *Men Wu Bao*, p. 418, Xi'an Map Publishing House, 2003.

[Grasp on Production] In agricultural commune, (we) “grasped on production,” (we) worked day and night! Sometimes people didn’t have time to cook. Learning from Dazhai in Agriculture, (compared with which it is like that) now people are all in nursing homes. (At that time) whoever can move have to join labor, no idlers. (We were) fried! (Farmer A)

In “grasp production and revolution” and big collective time, people were giving you tasks! The county pressed the commune and the commune pressed the brigade. Your brigade, this year was 100 mu, or 80 mu of terraced fields, and farmland construction tasks. When you finished it, you (were OK); If you didn’t, you can’t get through the commune. They would deal with you! (Laughter), a lot of pressure! Most (from) production. (Farmer I)

Look at those years, gave you “campaign” every day, and construction farmland was dams or terraces. Like now¹⁵, people can't stop at all. As soon as the crops are harvested, began to build terraces. Ah! At that time, the grasp was tight, and people were never free in winter. (Farmer C)

[Daily] Time (set schedule) to work together. There’s a bell in our village. It's a clock. It was ringing, every family had a radio. It told you to ‘go there to make terraces.’ You go. If you don't want to go, there is a rule. Dock your work points, and (affect) food rations. Don't give you food to eat. You can't stand it. In those two years, our life was hard. It was all corn from the Northeast, relief grain! (If) they didn’t give us for a while, people (would starve) starved to death. (Farmer J)

(We are) farmers, (when) woke up (in the morning), team leader said, “Let's go! Let's go to work!” (A day of collective labor starts) (Farmer E)

[Yearly] (We) have to work 25 days a month, and (we) don't stop work until December twenties (Lunar calendar). (Farmer I)

During the 60s and 70s, everyone was working hard! Every year, no break. At this time of the year¹⁶, (people were) still working in December! Look at the mountain, it was full of people. That generation, they were really hard. (Farmer C)

Such great work and hard work. The deepest memory of the old people in the village is “hunger” rather than “sweat.” Those people who worked hard and dared to achieve the apparent impossibility through dogged perseverance cannot indulge their appetite. They can barely eat enough. Rice and white flour were luxuries, and there was also a serious shortage of other necessities. The period of Learning from Dazhai was also an era when coupons were required for

¹⁵ Refers to the time when the interview was conducted, in mid-to-late November.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

purchasing necessities in small quantities.

[Hunger and Toil] During the agricultural commune, there was not enough food. And no white flour at all! Unless it was New Year's Day or festivals. (Farmer A)

That's people's commune, that's, you were poor and I was poor, everyone was poor. Food was, food was not enough, clothes not warm. The policy was, for example, clothing coupons for clothes. One person got 3.8 chi¹⁷ clothing coupon. Do you think it's enough? It's good? It's far from enough! Don't even mention food. Food, at most, one person can get 100 kg or 200 kg of coarse grain. Life was for sure awful difficult... Don't even mention full stomachs. People had to eat grass and leaves. Like sweet potato leaves, potato leaves. Don't people eat those like diet food now? In the past, they were so thin that their legs were like this (gesture with hands). So, life was really hard at that time. (Farmer F)

Hungry, hungry really, really hungry. When the agricultural commune, ate leaves, also ate grass. Eat up all the leaves. (Farmer G)

So hungry, no food to eat. (People) cooked some juncha (a local wild herb) in the food. Press some sorghum, add some juncha. Just like a potato pancake, ate it like that. Slap the pancake, slap it with hands, like those cooked on the pot. Eat them. Cadres and their families all ate like that. (Farmer E)

In Chairman Mao's time, in people's memory. Life was bitter, people worked their fingers to the bone. Hungry... we have never enjoyed stuff... in our whole life. (Farmer C)

Overload, hunger, shortage of necessities, ..., daily life was difficult. But the difficulty cannot conceal the morale unique to the special period. People worked with enthusiasm and fighting spirit. In those days, miracles were believed.

I could eat a horse! In the year 73, I was working and ate like hell. 17, 18 years old, I ate a lot. I almost starved to death. I was starving, but had to sweat blood! Recite a few Mao quotations, leave for work. Everyone had a Mao quotation book. You must sing! Sing "The East Is Red", "Liuyang River"¹⁸ ... Such a crackerjack! (Farmer J)

At that time, built terraces, went to the construction site, and sang a model Beijing opera, together. Like "The East Is Red," at that time, farmers learned a lot of jolly songs. You can sing "*Make up your mind*" - you can sing Chairman Mao's quotations. So many! (Farmer F)

Great work and hard work in songs. Revolutionary melodies help them resist fatigue and

¹⁷ Unit of length, equal to 0.333 meters. Noted by the translator.

¹⁸ Revolutionary songs.

hunger. New rural life was hard, but full of songs and fighting spirit. "Labor has created everything. Labor has been dramatized."¹⁹ "This crop cannot be calculated by use-value and exchange-value. It is almost exchanged with human life!"²⁰ This is what our country had imagined (believe it to be achievable) and then came true.

(2) Organizational Power in New Rural Life: Grass-roots Village Administrations

Someone once compared Chinese farmers to "a plate of sand that does not stick together." What motivates new farmers to labor enthusiastically and work collectively on this land of Xintianyou singers²¹? Fatigued and hungry bodies work harder and harder while singing loudly. What makes such unimaginable dramatized labor come true? For generations of plowmen, face to the ground and back to the sky, New China has truly started a new chapter in their daily life. That which supported this brand-new lifestyle in the villages was a set of grass-roots village administrative organizations, simple but with great efficiency.

1) Village Cadres

In the era of Learning from Dazhai in Agriculture, generally, a natural village was a production brigade of its own, and a production brigade was divided into several production teams according to its size.

In a village, there are 4 or 5 teams in the large village and 2 or 3 teams in the small village. (Teams) mostly according to the (residential) areas and sometimes combine this place with that place. (Farmer I)

The cadres of the brigade include: secretary, deputy secretary, director of the village committee (brigade captain), deputy director (vice-captain), accountant, keeper, and cashier (financial officer); Team cadres include team leader, accountant, keeper, and financial officer.

[Village Cadres] Sub-committee, mostly, had 3 members: secretary, deputy secretary, and member; In total 5 in brigades, including the captain, vice-captain, and accountant. Mostly, the secretary had the final say. The secretary, the captain, are two organizations. ... (Team cadres include) team leader, deputy team leader, accountant, keeper, and cashier. Teams also have a

¹⁹ Quoted from Xiao Wuliao's *Passion and Fashion-Chinese Art and Life in the 1970s*, p. 26, Shandong Pictorial Publishing House, 1st Edition, 2002.

²⁰ Quoted from Xiao Wuliao's *Passion and Fashion-Chinese Art and Life in the 1970s*, p. 10, Shandong Pictorial Publishing House, 1st Edition, 2002.

²¹ Xintianyou (信天游), resonant folk songs of Shaanxi. Xintianyou means rambling freely in the sky. Noted by the translator.

keeper, keeping grain and money. (Farmer A)

In those days, there were two organizations of leadership in the village: The Party branch and the village committee. The Party branch had real power.

[Party Branch] The secretary (of the Party branch) was the head for sure, ..., our Party branch was there in the 50s. The branch was with the brigade, the team had no branch. The branch had the most power, team leaders must obey. The secretary was in charge of money, and the village director (brigade captain) was only the face. (Although) the director can sign everything, but the secretary made the decisions. In those days, the Party had absolute power. (Farmer B)

Party members and village cadres were selected among village farmers directly. At the time, in the village, few people had acquired an education, therefore, some intellectuals were the first choice for village cadres.

[Cadre Promotion] (I) became village accountant in (my) twenties, could read a little, knew my accounts. (I) worked as accountant for some years, then director of the brigade, and then the secretary. (Farmer A)

Compared with village cadres, the selection of Party members was much stricter.

[Selection of Party Members] Most Youth League members were (trained) in school, but Party members trained in villages. Every village had quota every year. Not easy (becoming a Party member), strict, in those days. Judge you and test you, for years. (Farmer B)

Production team was the basic unit of organizing production and labor in the village. In addition to the job of the overall task arrangement and coordination between teams, the cadres of the brigade also returned to their teams to labor. At that time, Liujiagou Brigade had six production teams.

[Team Collective Labor] At that time (Liujiagou Brigade) had 6 teams, 8 at first and 6 later. A team had 20 families. The team labored together. Orders from superiors above, county gave tasks to commune, township to brigade, then brigade to team. (Tasks were) not fixed, most. Sweet potatoes, at first, we didn't have sweet potatoes here, then, popular-ed. If this year, everyone has 5 fen²² sweet potatoes, he must plant them. Potato was 1 mu and 5 fen. (Farmer I)

Team leader's task, arrange production. Spring is fertilization, deep ploughing and cultivating. Summer is planting, plant what should plant, the end of summer, harvest. (Being a

²² Fen, Chinese unit of area, equal to 66.7 square meters. Noted by the translator.

team leader is) not a difficult job. Sometimes, simple, but (you) have to use brain (laughter). Like, you want to do something tomorrow, plan today. Who cooks, who hoes, like the head of a family, people rely on you! A village, 6 teams, village (the brigade) has eyes on you (the team leader)! This land belongs to your team, that's fixed. What you should plant, what's suitable, how far away, all very familiar. (Farmer D)

Ours most coarse grains! Sorghum, great millet, broom corn, black beans (soybeans), beans, beans only a small amount, beans, even mung beans, brown beans also! Black beans are the bean smash we make, ..., couldn't grow wheat at that time. Every team, planted all these kinds. Needs decided plant portions. Cattle eat sorghum stalks, so sorghum must plant. Grow things most for food. (Farmer C)

[Brigade Collective Labor] Terraces and dam making, brigade led. Team can't do it, not good at leading. On-site cadres announced: 70 mu today, 80 mu. No ruler, iron pliers are rulers, 8 pliers times 5 pliers, today's task. (Farmer J)

At that time, the brigade always had job to do, planning farmland irrigation. Brigade cadres would labor in the team if no work in the brigade. (Farmer I)

Farmers labored collectively every day, and the team accountant recorded contribution points. At the end of the year, contribution points were counted, and the total harvest was also calculated: grains were rationed based on the calculations.

[Points and Provision] A man labor (a day) is 10 points and woman gets, at most, 9 points. (Farmer G)

Points, at most is 10 points, there are also 7 points, 8 points. Like, young people, just started, can do nothing. I just left school; 19 years old. I earned 7 points in the first year, 8 points in the second year, 9 points and 10 points at last. If you can score 10 points, that means you can take hold all of your work. (Farmer D)

Year end, teams counted points in the team. It also depends on the harvest in the team, but also reserves for other use. (Farmer J)

Year end, a labor, 10 points, earns 18 cents, 18 cents a day. Sometimes 28 cents, 38 cents. That's not always true! Depends on year's harvest, good or not. If good, then it'd be higher. Because, at that time, sorghum, 1 jin sorghum 82 cents, I don't know how much wheat was. At that time, it's converted. You got this food, potato, sorghum, wheat, this big soybean, changed it into money and divided it just as your points. (Farmer F)

The end of the year is not only the time to calculate contribution and divide the grain but also the time for villages to make an appraisal of their cadres. New team leaders and brigade heads were democratically elected by the farmers; and the ceremony was often held with the presence of cadres of immediate superiority. There was no fixed tenure, or re-election or re-placement rules for village cadres. Their ability and performance were much visible in a place as small as the village, procedures were unnecessary.

[Cadre Election] Usually, in year end, (you) did a good job, (villagers) chose you again. Special mistakes happened, also replace (you), but that happened very little. Replace brigade chief, commune people would come; Select team leaders and brigade cadres would come. (Farmer I)

Team leader, good leadership, support you again, for 10, 20 years you can also work, no re-election. Members elected leaders, some people thought they cannot do it so retired. (Farmer J)

In the era of Learning from Dazhai in Agriculture and collective labor, village leaders were the backbone of village life. The team leader was like a parent and the brigade captain a grand-parent. The team was subject to the leadership of the brigade, and the brigade was subject to the leadership of the commune (township). Those who had made outstanding achievements in village work would have the opportunity to be promoted to the commune (township) or county-level departments. In villages, nearly all directors (brigade captains) had passed the test of the Party and became Communists. Leadership positions in the commune (township) and county were nearly all held by Party members. Cadres at the grass-roots level came from the villages and were trained in their work. They can combine the lessons they had learned from the higher-level leading organs with their own experience and talents, so the will of the new country would be fulfilled at the most grass-roots level with vividness.

2) On-site Cadres

On-site cadres were from the township and stationed in the villages. They were people to pass on the orders from above and assist in leading the villages.

Today's villages no longer have this form of cadres. However, in the era of Learning from Dazhai in Agriculture, on-site cadres played a special and vital role in the grass-roots political system.

[On-site Cadres] Every village had cadres (on-site cadres) from inside the township, to pass on policies and spirit from above. Every house (listen to) broadcast, then TV, and knew all central government policies... At that time, if you don't pass them on, (you) don't know (policies). (Farmer C)

On-site cadres, all from communes and townships. At first (when they arrived at the village, we) didn't know each other, but later we knew each other. Most (of them) are Party members. They all did their studies together in the township and then came and lived in the village. A brigade had one on-site cadre, had a cave office in the village (providing accommodation for on-site cadres). (Farmer I)

On-site cadres would assist village governing. Their responsibility covered all aspects of production and rural life.

[Grasping Production] On-site cadres controlled the overall (situation), production tasks, policies, national taxes; assisting production, agricultural technology, wheat planting, rational close planting, these advanced technologies, they also (received) training in the township; Or, (contact) township (for the village), agricultural technicians. Arrange (help). (Farmer D)

On-site cadres assigned work and reported to the above. How much corn planted, how much sorghum planted, report, do you complete assigned tasks, and report the autumn harvest results. (Farmer B)

On-site cadres were the bridge between the commune and the villages. They made the propaganda of "grasping production tightly" tangible for the villages. At the same time, on-site cadres also broadened the understanding of culture and art in the villages generously: farmers sang the songs taught by the on-site cadres when laboring on the terraces with an empty stomach.

[Culture and Literature] Then learned Chairman Mao's quotations, or sang model Beijing operas, learning them! On-site cadres taught (us). (Farmer H)

On-site cadres taught model Beijing operas, taught us, then rehearsed and danced model operas. Township group training, county training, went back to teach. (Farmer I)

Teaching singing, that's, singing Chairman Mao's quotations. Musicians made matching tune, they made scores! Like (singing) "The Red Army fears not the trials of the Long March²³." On-site cadres taught, on-site cadres learned in the township study, and then they went to the production team, taught farmers, taught you, a short break, such as the time you making terraces

²³ A line from Chairman Mao Zedong's poem *The Long March*. Noted by the translator.

on the mountain, or they had a study meeting. Those time they can teach a passage. No music, study songs like this, no test, people got together, you pull yourself together, sing a passage. (Farmer F)

On-site cadres were normally local people, but not from the same village. And often, according to the decisions of the commune, they also swapped between villages. They were familiar with the local customs, and they also brought information from the outside world, from the Party and the country into the villages. At the same time, objectively speaking, they also linked villages horizontally.

Thanks to on-site cadres, the township (commune) were able to lead the villages in two ways: On the one hand, the villages and their cadres were under the leadership of the township (commune); on the other hand, the will of the state was conveyed directly to villagers through on-site cadres. On-site cadres were like a safety in the grass-roots governing system, effectively ensuring the leadership of the commune (township) over villages. This dual-system of leadership, which combined the efforts of cadres both inside and outside the village administration, not only secured the implementation of state will at the rural level, but also set up a framework for the promotion of the Party revolutionary ideal in the villages.

(3) Improve “Political Awareness” in Daily Life: Political Education and Practice in Villages

During the period of Learning from Dazhai in Agriculture, the governing system of the village was not complicated. However, at that time, it was a system as simple as such that led Chinese farmers to “fight against heavens and earth²⁴” and to challenge the limit of human bodies. Fearlessness and passion were the shared attitude of that era. The simple rural system was imbued with unneglectable power - spiritual power, that which made the special era shine with glory.

Premier Zhou²⁵ once made an incisive comment on the spirit of Dazhai. “The principles of ‘prioritizing politics’ and ‘ideology in the lead,’ the spirit of self-reliance and hard struggle, and the Communist style of loving the country and the collective group, which Dazhai Brigade adheres to, are all worthy of great advocacy.”

“Grasp the revolution and promote production,” the revolution is ahead of production!

²⁴ Chairman Mao’s quotation. Noted by the translator.

²⁵ Zhou Enlai, 1898-1976, the first Premier of the People's Republic of China. Noted by the translator.

(Farmer D)

The Prime Minister's expression of "prioritizing politics and ideology in the lead," as well as the farmer's words of "grasping revolution," both refer to "political education" at the village level. Political education was the systematical origin of farmers' spiritual power in that era.

1) Scenes of Political Learning in the Villages

Politics was the first principle guiding village work; and political education was more important than production. The entry of political education shook rural traditions; the old rhythm of daily life in the village was also interrupted, introducing intensity and busyness that has never been seen.

Political education in the villages was small in scale but complete in content. The villagers were organized by the village committee to learn Chairman Mao's quotations, read newspapers and documents, and learn revolutionary songs promoting political ideologies, model operas and other more flexible forms were adopted later.

[Political Education] Villages had public caves. Learned at night and in the morning. (Morning) In the dark, someone is responsible for (ringing the) bell. Just like students studying, dock points if come late. Go back to work after studying in the morning. (Study at night) Roll call. If teams are together, then do roll call together. Both men and women go. Children and old people not going. Recite quotations, only one two bits, pick articles on the newspaper, read those. We recite, not do articles, we do quotations: "Make up your mind, not afraid of sacrifice, surmount all difficulties and strive for victory!" All can recite it. We need to learn more, Party members have Party constitutions, and quotations are printed together. They were free, in some years. (Farmer B)

Sometimes grasped tight. When I was an on-site cadre in Ren Jiagou, sunrise at 8, but at 5, the chickens croaked, the bell rang, called everyone to come and learn the documents. After studying for half an hour, or an hour, it was still dark, "labor!" someone announced how many this winter, we should build public caves, 3 or 5... (Farmer J)

(In the morning) the brigade (waked) up and gathered together, bell rang, learn quotations, and learn at night. In the middle, people teach model operas, and during the break, rest on the terraces for a while and learn some Chairman Mao's quotations, or sing model operas. Learn them! On-site cadres were teachers. (Farmer I)

Meetings every now and then, big meetings in the village. Then, there were 400 or 500 people in the village. Women and children not go, mainly man laborers. Read newspapers, learn Mao Zedong Thought, quotations, (learn) long live Chairman Mao! (Farmer A)

During the Cultural Revolution, political education was pushed to an extreme.

Back that time, politics was tight grasp! Meeting every night. During the Cultural Revolution, learning a lot quotations, and everyone farmer had a quotation book. It's tight grasp! At that time, you ask for instructions and report day and night. In the morning, hold a meeting first, and then learn quotations in the evening. Ask for instructions and report day and night, and learn quotations twice (a day). (Farmer F)

Time for study, a lot! During the years of Chairman Mao and Lin Biao²⁶, also ask for instructions and report day and night. Every family hung a red sun in the room. Ask for instructions is, cadres stood in front of Chairman Mao, asking for instructions, reporting, it's a form, Lin Biao's idea. Chairman Mao portraits and signs everywhere, people fight for them. Learn quotations, repeat after (the teacher), learn in meetings, learn in the fields also. Farmers only learn quotations at night. (Farmer J)

Political education was mandatory for all Chinese in those days. The policy was, one has to admit, strict and inflexible.

You can't "don't learn," (we were) not easy. Say you were too tired at night, but you had to go, they dock work points. (We) were all tied by the rules. (Farmer B)

Ideological education is tight grasped. If you fail, go to "learning class," leave the village to the township. (Farmer I)

In solitary confinement, they deal with you, it's easy. (Farmer A)

In those days, village life revolved around political education. It was like a built-in alarm in every farmer: "Keep politics in mind, not relaxed for a second!" (Farmer B); farmers did political education during learning time, and the rest of the day was an examination of their daily learning results. "Everything you learned, you need to use them, you can't just say it but don't do it, they can see you through." (Farmer A). Villagers were evaluated based on their political education and daily performance, the result can make a difference to one's career, or even fate.

It affects you! If not (good) don't use you on important spots, back then, your job first depends on your political performance! Good performance means coming early to the meeting,

²⁶ Lin Biao (1907-1971), a Marshal of the People's Republic of China. Noted by the translator.

labor, be active, and good at study. Ahead in all ways. The Party's ideological path, carry it out, set an example. Good Party members, love learning, newspapers, books, (be kind) to people. Young people are much more active. If not active, can't join Party, can't join Youth League, then (you) can do nothing. That's examining your political performance and that's your identity. (Farmer B)

At that time, selecting cadres, the first thing, look at your thoughts and your files. And investigate you too. (Farmer C)

2) Value of Political Education in the Villages

Chairman Mao Zedong said: "The most serious problem is to educate farmers." Premier Zhou Enlai added: "Politics is in command and ideology is in the lead." Farmers responded: "Revolution goes first, production second!" It was generally accepted by organizations from the central government to the villages that political education was the most important concern in socialist construction. What has political education brought to Chinese villages?²⁷

At that time, for most backwater villages in China, political education brought with it the opportunities of modernization to the local community. Most Chinese farmers learned how to read through political education. A large number of modern words were brought into villages through quotation books, newspapers, revolutionary songs and model operas, along with which modern ideas were also brought into the traditional rural sphere.

Party propaganda in villages communicated abstract concepts such as "state" and "collective" based on universal equality to farmers, as well as the modern concept of "selfness." Political education in New China entered the rural stage while holding the banner of collectivism and breaking private ownership. It challenged with success the traditional peasant economy, and at the same time helped farmers realize and develop social connections with others beyond blood ties. On the basis of modern social connections, brand new community identities were established.

Big water in big rivers, small rivers can flow. If the country has difficulties, everyone'd bear

²⁷ In the era of socialist construction led by Mao Zedong, political education was carried out by the villages. It is a social event with rich and complicated definition and influence, and should be the core of research on China's revolution and construction. Its content, its agreement with China's local society, and its relationship with the spirit of traditional culture and other issues need more objective theoretical research. We are here only to talk about an important aspect of its influence on the villages, from how it is accepted by the villages. This important aspect can answer the question this article proposes to a certain extent: How to realize the dramatized labor during the socialist construction period led by Mao Zedong. It is also the premise for us to further explain the establishment of ideological ties between the Party and the people.

some. Chairman Mao and Premier Zhou worked so hard, for what? Isn't it for people the whole country? Chairman Mao didn't cause hard life. It's the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea. The United States bullied us and the Soviet Union chased us for debts. True, poor at that time. A few years, work for a few years, it'd be better. If there's water in big rivers, good for small rivers. (Farmer F)

The Party helped the farmers place themselves into the "state-collective-individual" framework: the master of the new country. Therefore, the recognition of the new country was combined with the re-identification of selfhood, identity and value. As a result, Chinese farmers translated their joy of obtaining a new identity into love for this abstract new country that has given them identity and status. They also took on an abstract yet concrete responsibility for their new country quietly.

Party education in the villages has broken the circle of turning to tradition in the rural area from generation to generation. Chinese farmers have embarked on the linear process of development ever since.

We started education when we went to school! People in the village we learned: Japan, Kuomintang, oppression, people exploit of people, no land, lifelong farmhand for landlord, no food. But Chairman Mao, he fought rich people to help poor people and gave people land. So land everyone have, very support Chairman Mao's policy. And they grasped politics firmly, studying, educating and meetings. So (we) know, (we) understand, in communism, poor people enjoy good fortune. (Farmer C)

In Chairman Mao's time, (talk about) all day long how to realize socialism and communism. No matter what, he had a goal and hoped for realization of communism. After realization of communism, we don't need to pay for anything. We take what we want. We all rush to the big goal and have great energy. (Farmer B)

Political education launched by New China in villages enabled farmers to learn: The establishment of New China marked China's entry from a "feudal society" into a "socialist society" and the Party has led the people into a higher social form. The highest ideal is the "communist society."²⁸ Our country needs the participation and efforts of the masses, of each

²⁸ As for the understanding of human historical development and social form, the Party's understanding of the people is based on Marx's theory of the development stages of human social form. China has localized a simple, easy-to-understand and easy-to-spread version: Prehistory-society, slavery society, feudal society, capitalist society, socialist society and communist society. In the slavery society, feudal society and capitalist society, the ruling class exploited the working people through the possession of means of production. After the founding of New China, China entered a socialist society. Workers occupied the

individual, to develop and realize an ideal society almost as beautiful as heaven. - An abstract and ever-developing concept of history has spread in the thinking of Chinese farmers. Individuals found their place in the linear process of history. And this place, in the framework of "state-collective-individual," endows individuals with responsibilities and missions in the process of development - a heroic undertaking of serving the country and pushing history forward.

Political education established new spatial and temporal concepts of "state-collective-individual" and "feudalism-socialism-communism" in the consciousness of Chinese farmers. The new order of life gave farmers status and value, and at the same time re-formatted their spiritual world. Individuals in the new order are active, and the development of the overall situation depends on the activeness of individuals. The activation of individual spirit is called "improving awareness." The key of awareness improvement is in daily practice. And the best practice is "labor." As a result, labor becomes the way to "help oneself" and then "help the world." It links the material reality with the spiritual world and works as the fulcrum of spiritual transformation in the material reality. Therefore, labor is of secularly ethical significance, and labor itself is also sacred. As a result, hungry bellies would work harder and harder in songs, "Like us in Chairman Mao's era, we hell-bent working." (Farmer D) Dramatized labor became the expected reality. It took roots in the new country and created unique and spectacular social morale at that time.

Max Weber's famous analysis of Protestant ethics and the rise of capitalism places special emphasis on shared morale. He said, "Without its power, overshadowing everything else, no moral awakening which seriously influenced practical life came into being in that period." If we ignored this morale, we would never understand the lives and life at that time.

III. Ideological Ties Linking the Party and Chinese Farmers

Political education and its ideological function - leading farmers to the meaning of life - makes the Party, the designer and leader in the practice of political education in villages, different from political groups in the general sense. And the relationship between the Party and

means of production (public ownership of the means of production), fundamentally changing the social system in which a few people exploited the majority by virtue of their possession of the means of production.

its subject of education – farmers, is also of ideological color.

How was the ideological tie between the Party and farmers established?

National ideological ties between the parties and the people were generally established after ideological parties seizing state power. Only by mastering the state power can the grass-roots governing system in the village as mentioned above be generally established. The system effectively ensures the Party's will being truly in contact with the ordinary farmers in China, thus triggering an earthquake to shake the traditional life of farmers as well as their spiritual world. As can be seen in history, under the condition of absolute power, the Party has set off revolution nationwide without hesitation.

“Absolute belief in the Party and Chairman Mao” is the basis of this revolution and the core of it. The belief requires non-stop strengthening in its process of promotion. And the core of the ideological ties between the Party and the farmers we are talking about lies in the “absolute belief in the Party and Chairman Mao.”

The discussion of the ideological ties between the Party and the farmers that totalitarianism and neo-traditionalism offer, especially concerning the early stage of its establishment and development, is too much reduced to the extent of absolute spirituality. Totalitarianism discusses interpersonal relationships within socialist ideological groups. The theory holds that interpersonal relationships in socialist society are isolated, which is to say, social relations that cannot help realize the Party goals will be eliminated. This feature can be understood as the “atomization” of society. It denies the existence of boundaries between the private and public spheres. “Loyalty that is not directed to the Party is considered potentially dangerous. Individuals are connected together only through their ties with a shared authority, rather than establishing direct ties with each other in the same group interdependently. The existence of the atomized masses is not only necessary to secure power, but also ensuring the possibility of mobilizing people nationally without hindrance, which is exactly the key feature of totalitarianism. However, those who hold this view also admit that after the establishment of the communist society, with the normalization of social life, the dependence on political terror and mass mobilization will decrease.” (Walder, 1986; Li Meng, Zhou Feizhou, Li Kang, 1996). Neo-traditionalism regards the ideological ties in the initial stage as the relationship of a pure shared ideal. Its theoretical development is around the helplessness of gradual secularization of the pure ideal in the material life and in the traditional interpersonal interactions.

We believe, instead, that even in the initial establishment and even at the most extreme stage of its development, the ideological tie between the Party and the farmers, where "the farmers have absolute belief in the Party and Chairman Mao," cannot be simply discussed as pure shared spirituality. If one insists that Chinese farmers' belief in the Party are instilled by the Party, and that to maintain the ideological ties between the Party and the farmers, it must struggle against the inclination of secular materialization constantly, then one must admit that this struggle has existed since the beginning of the establishment of the ideology. However, such tension between revolutionary ideals and materialized world never ceases to exist in ideological ties that have practical significance. Fundamentally, the reason why the Chinese Communist Party successfully established this ideological tie between the Party and the people is precisely that the Party has successfully managed this tension at a specific stage and against a specific social background. From the indoctrination of ideology to real life, the Party has successfully incorporated this tension into the future it has promised. And the Party also has incorporated various contradictions between heroic and romantic revolutionary ideals and the reality into its organizational campaign, making them confront-able, explain-able, and transform-able.

In this movement of national ideological education, the Party successfully controlled the tension between revolutionary ideal and reality. The key to its accomplishment lies in the successful elevation of essential elements of secular life (such as "labor") and the successful materialization of the ideal it pictures. In the process of filling the gap between the sacred and the secular, rural life adopted the duality of sacredness and secularity. As an individual, the life of Chinese farmers is also of secular and sacred double-ness.

"Chairman Mao's era is under light, very bright!" (Farmer G)

It is enlightening to discuss the duality of rural life made possible by the Party's political education from the perspective of the identity of "Party members" and the way they participate in village life. The identity of "Party members" means people are recognized by their ideological beliefs. In daily life, Party members are the forerunners and role models of the practice of belief realization:

Believe very much (in the Party), in the villages, back then the most hard jobs, Party members and League members²⁹ took the lead, carry it out. The Party's policies, make it happen, and labor, everything should be seen from you (Party members). No matter what you do, you

²⁹ Reserve force for the Party.

have to take the lead ... No believe in myth, that's not myth; it's in front of your own eyes, the Party did the real job. They are models, leading roles. (Farmer B)

At the village level, Party members played an exemplary role in the framework of grass-roots organizations: they not only participated in governing – having absolute power, but also gained detached influence – people were not ranked by wealth and power, but by “political awareness.” Farmers were naturally ranked because of their education and performance. “Outstanding elements” would be absorbed into the governing system. It was an honor; therefore, more ordinary people were motivated, and attracted to following the Party and its ideology. On the one hand, controlling political power, the Party can reward or punish its outstanding or incompetent followers using the materials under its command - the control of resources and the command of the material world is the foundation, even though the hidden danger of “materials altering ideological ties” revealed by Walder still exists. On the other hand, the Party also puts sacredness above secularity - the secular society is under the command of the sacred ideological order.

At the individual level, every farmer, every person has the opportunity to become a Party member. That is to say, every individual has the potential to achieve sacredness. Standing before the sacred ideal, facing the abstract concept of country, and keeping the ties with the Party, every individual enjoys equal power (“atomization”). However, due to the different degrees of “awareness,” individuals also follow stratified order. Therefore, it is an over-simplification to treat Chinese society during the period of Learning from Dazhai in Agriculture as a society that lacks ranks and competition. However, ranks and difference between people are not in the sense of worldly status, but in ideological awareness and on the journey to sacredness. In other words, the Party uses its power to forcefully fill the gap of difference and inequalities in the secular world in order to rationalize the objective differences between people and incorporate it in the journey of individual ideological development, thus guiding the dynamics of interpersonal comparison and competition caused by the differences between people in the material world into the spiritual world. By doing so, the difference between people is interpreted as difference in levels of “awareness,” which can be understood by individuals and can be improved through efforts. The resulting momentum also encourages people to focus their efforts on pursuing ideological belief.

For the villages and farmers in them, the ideological belief that the Party praises is not what

they are unfamiliar with. It bears a similarity to traditional Chinese ethics and order. The Party translates traditional spirits into modern expressions, raising them to the level of Party ideology, and thus making the traditional utterance up-to-date, in the sense of evolution, and sacred, in the sense of ultimacy. The teaching of how to live a good life that the Party ideology offers (political education) in the villages is much similar to what the farmers know by heart - traditional wisdom: working hard on barren land, by the sweat of their brow, hoping for a good harvest. It is the simplest logic of agricultural production and rural life. Other than that, high saving, low consumption, steadiness, simplicity, etc., are all praised and encouraged by rural tradition. Therefore, Chairman Mao Zedong's organizational design, especially what he advocates in ethics and morality, has profound "locality" and can be understood and accepted by Chinese farmers. "We have won the hearts of the people and made our ideology solid." (Mao Ren, 茂人) Of course, these traditional qualities are measured in the abstract country under the historical framework by the new ideological belief: And through the process, old ethics enter into modernity and sacredness.

IV. Conclusion

Learning from Dazhai in Agriculture is a special era. It remains in the memory of the villages. Though some are reflecting on the past, most farmers are still strongly attached to and care deeply for the leaders of that generation.

It was an age when all good was expressed in almost dramatized exaggerations. For Chinese farmers, their way of expression is labor. They enthusiastically participated in the new life, on the same field, through the unprecedented organization of collectiveness.

In addition to manual labor, the new life also included "political education," to improve "spiritual cultivation." Labor and study were the two grand melodies of village life in that era. Through political education, the Party has created a spiritual land for the farmers. The modern abstract concept of nation and the evolutionary view of history became the basis of the modernity consciousness of Chinese farmers. In this framework, Chinese farmers realized their "self" in the new country. Their self-awakening on the stage of modernity also adds sacredness to the daily life of the villages: the core of life lies in "ideological development." In the journey of pursuing meaning and sacredness, daily life becomes the materialized

practice-field of spiritual pursuit. Experience and standards of rural life have been re-examined within the framework of shared beliefs. Old or new, abstract or concrete, equipped with their spirituality, Chinese farmers followed the powerful trend of the times.

The Communist Party of China is the designer and the drive of this revolution. The “absolute belief in the Party and Chairman Mao” is the core of the ties between the Party and the people; and it is also the cause behind every change that takes place in the villages. As an ideological party, it is able to make the people “absolutely believe.” The Chinese Communist Party successfully outlined a blueprint promising an ideal life for her people. In practice, it innovatively incorporated theory into reality, ideal into secularity, creating the era of great charisma.

Appendix

Use of oral materials in the text:

The oral data quoted in this article are interviews conducted by the author in November 2006, of the villagers of Liujiagou Village, Wubao County, Yulin District, Shaanxi Province.

A brief description of the interviewee (age at the time of interview):

Case 1 (A): Male, 61 years old, Party member. During the commune period, he served as village secretary for a long time.

Case 2 (B): Male, 75 years old, Party member. Starting as a team accountant, he once served as a township on-sit cadre.

Case 3 (C): Male, 66 years old, Party member. He started as a team leader and served as a village brigade cadre for a long time.

Case 4 (D): Male, 58 years old. During the commune period, he was a team leader.

Case 5 (E): Female, 56 years old. An ordinary villager.

Case 6 (F): Male, 67 years old. An ordinary villager who worked as a primary school teacher in a private school in the village.

Case 7 (G): Female, 51 years old. An ordinary villager.

Case 8 (H): Male, 75 years old. Village postman.

Case 9 (I): Male, 73 years old, Party member. He once served as a township on-site cadre.

Case 10 (J): Male, 67 years old, Party member. During the commune period, he was a team leader.

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