

# State Dominance and Peasant Resistance in Post-1949 South China<sup>\*</sup>

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*South China in the first thirty years after 1949 went through drastic changes in the political and socioeconomic life of its peasantry. This research, based on corporate lineage and peasant localism, suggests that the southern peasantry maintained distinctive regional identities after 1949. The southern mode of corporate lineage developed a deeper political consciousness that extends beyond purely class considerations imposed by the state. The southern Chinese peasant society is still internally segmented and this segmentation is manifested in lineage, dialect, and religious groups. These southern parochial groups are coterminous and their divisions have persisted throughout the communist era.*

*This paper explains the paths of the state dominance and the patterns of the southern Chinese peasant resistance in the post-1949 period.*

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South China in the first thirty years since 1949 has undergone drastic changes<sup>1</sup> in the political and socioeconomic life of its peasantry. These changes in the nature of state-society relations in rural China have been categorized into five models: (1) the patron-client model (Jean Oi); (2) the center-periphery model (Vivienne Shue); (3) the moral political model (Richard Madsen); (4) the participation model (John Burns); and (5) the single-lineage village model (Anita Chan, Richard Madsen, and Jonathan Unger; Sulamith Potter and Jack Potter; and Helen Siu).

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<sup>1</sup> Earlier in 1947, Mao drew up an outline for such a change. See Mao Tse-tung (Mao Zedong), "Present Situation and Our Tasks" (December 25, 1947), in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. 4 (Peking [Beijing]: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), 164-65.

The patron-client model as applied in Jean Oi's *State and Peasant in Contemporary China* (1989) suggests a mutually beneficial bond in which the peasantry provides services or gifts, whereas local cadres provide protection and assistance. Oi sees this relationship reinforced by cultural values of respect for superiors and generosity toward inferiors. Thus, the patron-client model views interest articulation as being an important factor linking the peasantry and the local cadres.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, state extraction is not seen as a threat to peasant livelihood. The basic underpinnings fundamental to an understanding of peasant-state relations, namely an understanding of the peasant values and norms, have been overlooked. Instead, this paper suggests that peasants were neither content with state extraction, nor did the state have much legitimacy in peasant eyes; peasant attitudes are clearly revealed in a wide range of resistance against the state.

The center-periphery approach is suggested in Vivienne Shue's *The Reach of the State* (1988). Shue disagrees with the functional explanation of the process of social integration attendant on the expansion of central authority. Edward Shils, for example, stresses the normative aspects of central authority and thus the weakening of primordial values and loyalties as central authority reaches toward the periphery.<sup>3</sup> Shue, instead, argues that in the decades following the 1949 revolution the cellular structure of the periphery persists. This cellularity, or vertical segmentation, is essential to the traditional peasant social formation.<sup>4</sup> Thus, important hallmarks of traditional peasant social formations survived thirty years of socialist transformation. The overarching element of Shue's thesis is that as the Chinese socialist state extended its authority over the periphery after 1949, it also preserved and strengthened the old peasant social formation on three integrative dimensions; namely, political, economic, and normative integrations. Yet, when Shue points out the resilience of peasant social formation it is an empty abstraction without content. Peasant becomes pale, hollow, motionless, and unfeeling, with no sickness or pain.

Richard Madsen, in *Morality and Power in a Chinese Village* (1984), lays out four types of cadre-peasant relations in terms of cadres' moral outlooks: the communist gentry, the communist rebel, the moralistic revolutionary, and the pragmatic technocrat. According to Madsen, cadres attempted to use different moral visions for two

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<sup>2</sup> Jean Oi, *State and Peasant in Contemporary China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 7-10.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Shils, "Center and Periphery," in *Selected Essays by Edward Shils* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 1-14.

<sup>4</sup> See Vivienne Shue, *The Reach of the State* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988), 48-54, and Vivienne Shue, "Peasant Culture and Socialistic Culture in China," in *Moving a Mountain*, ed. Godwin C. Chu and Francis L. K. Hsu (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1979), 305-40.

objectives: to gain the support of the peasants and to further the political agenda that the moral visions themselves dictated.<sup>5</sup> One major problem in Madsen's work is in terms of the logic of peasant collective action. Using the moral political action interpretation of cadre-peasant relations, Madsen fails to address the inherent problem for collective action. Since the individual peasant attaches no value to the provision of collective goods, to translate the cadres' moral judgments into peasants' political action is problematic. Morality is inadequate to explain peasants' political actions because it fails to account for rational barriers to action that cannot always be overcome by principled moral thinking. It is also static, and provides no dynamic explanations of the interaction between the state and peasant.

In the participation model suggested by John Burns in his *Political Participation in Rural China* (1988), the nature of state-peasant relations on the village level is twofold: (1) legitimate forms of participation, such as letter-writing, voting in elections, visiting officials, and attending local assemblies, and mass organizations, and (2) when the legitimate methods fail, peasants turning to passive resistance and collective violence such as withholding, bribery, and demonstration.<sup>6</sup> Yet, Burns' somewhat sterile descriptions of peasant behavior miss the substantive elements that undoubtedly shape peasant political attitudes and behavior. Since a peasant's political behavior is only one aspect of his total behavior as a social being, one cannot neglect the wider context in which political action occurs. One is bound, therefore, to consider the possible effects of other social and cultural factors on peasant political behavior.

Anita Chan, Richard Madsen, and Jonathan Unger's *Chen Village* (1984, 1992),<sup>7</sup> Sulamith Heins Potter and Jack M. Potter's *China's Peasants* (1990),<sup>8</sup> and Helen Siu's *Agents and Victims in South China* (1989)<sup>9</sup> all focus on single surname lineage villages in Guangdong Province. In general, these works are ethnographic descriptions of the cultural web of local villages in South China.

This paper, based on corporate lineage and peasant localism, suggests that the southern Chinese peasantry maintained a distinctive

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<sup>5</sup> Richard Madsen, *Morality and Power in a Chinese Village* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), chap. 1.

<sup>6</sup> John P. Burns, *Political Participation in Rural China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 8-13.

<sup>7</sup> Anita Chan, Richard Madsen, and Jonathan Unger, *Chen Village: The Recent History of a Peasant Community in Mao's China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984 and 1992), 17.

<sup>8</sup> Sulamith Heins Potter and Jack M. Potter, *China's Peasants: The Anthropology of a Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 256.

<sup>9</sup> Helen Siu, *Agents and Victims in South China* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), 45-54.

group consciousness after 1949. The southern mode of corporate lineage developed a deeper political consciousness that extends beyond purely economic considerations. The southern peasant society is still internally segmented and this segmentation is manifested in lineage groups, dialect groups, and religious groups. These southern parochial groups are coterminous, and their divisions persisted throughout the communist era. The southern Chinese corporate lineage group identity exists even in the absence of common property. Common southern dialects, common southern customs, and the manipulation of agnatic relations through seniority and common actions are substantial expressions of group cohesiveness.

Moreover, research for this paper differs from the others in the following ways. First, on the level of analysis, Oi's patron-client approach focuses on the dyadic relations between cadre and peasant, and Burns focuses on the collective level, whereas this paper focuses on an intermediate level. Group differentiations are liable to identification only on this level of analysis. Subtle southern Chinese peasant actions were undertaken by parochial groups. As such, these groups are probably best explained in terms of intermediate group dynamics.

Secondly, none of the previous studies focus on the southern peasantry in the post-1949 period as a whole. Previous studies tend to focus on the trees; they fail to recognize the forest. This paper attempts to fill this vacuum by expanding to three southern Chinese provinces.

Thirdly, new county-level data from county gazetteers provide new information with regard to general patterns of peasant resistance. By recognizing the social and cultural basis for southern peasant political behavior and the political ecology of the southern peasant society, we are able to comprehend the real South China and southern Chinese peasant life as a whole during the period 1949-78. This comprehensiveness of the south better situates one to comprehend the region's role in China's future as a focus on a dyad, a village, or a leadership state could never do.

In essence, southern peasant localism deserves special attention. This paper explains the paths of state dominance and the patterns of southern Chinese peasant resistance during the period 1949-78. This explanation especially pertains to the absence of revolt, as depicted by general theory on peasant rebellion, by the southern peasantry in response to state dominance and exploitation. It is an analysis of a way of resistance by the southern Chinese peasants who, for decades, have been distinct from the northerners in terms of dialects and ecology. The southern peasants fought for their own cultural heritage by safeguarding their own unique culture and way of life. They

absorbed the shocks of state dominance without relinquishing the essence of their cultural tradition.

In sum, this paper examines: (1) the economic dynamics of southern peasant resistance; (2) the cultural mechanism of peasant resistance; and (3) the patterns of peasant resistance during the 1949-78 period.

### **Economic Dynamics of Southern Peasant Resistance: Lineage and the Southern Peasant Localism**

By 1950, the communist leadership faced new tasks after it controlled the newly-conquered three southern provinces of Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong. These tasks involved consolidating political stability, establishing peasant associations, organizing local militia, rehabilitating agricultural production, and most importantly, commencing land reform. The communist leadership faced these challenges as well as special problems of uprooting the centuries-old social structures in these three southern provinces. In general, South China posed special problems for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which was more experienced in the hinterland of North China than in South China.

In Mao's world view, the political power base in rural southern China under the Kuomintang (KMT, Nationalist Party of China) needed to be entirely destroyed. So did the lineage authority, ancestral temples, religious authority of village gods, and the masculine authority of husbands. As part of putting this radical grand scheme into practice, Mao attempted to produce a fundamental redirection in shaping the new political and economic order in southern rural China.

In Fujian, the land reform took about two years to complete. It began in August 1950, in a three-stage process. The first stage involved 2,816 townships (*xiang*); the second, 2,500 townships; and the last, 502 townships. In total, some 6,058 townships of the 66 counties underwent the process of property confiscation and land redistribution, and some ten million peasants received class designations.<sup>10</sup> Averaging 252 townships per month, or 8.4 townships per day, or 638.82 villages (*curi*) per day, the heavy workload inevitably involved hasty and arbitrary judgments.

In theory, Mao's basic strategy of land reform was to rely on the poor peasants and rural laborers, uniting with the middle peasants, and neutralizing the rich peasants to wipe out the system of exploitation. In reality, southern peasants' attitudes toward the land

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<sup>10</sup> *Fujian ribao* (Fujian Daily), December 19, 1951, 2; and June 28, 1952, 1.

reform seem ambivalent. Unlike the land reform in old liberated areas which underwent harsh class struggle, land reform in South China became a "peaceful" land redistribution.<sup>11</sup> It was peaceful in a sense that class struggle method did not work effectively as the communists expected. In essence, three characteristics depicted the real land reform in South China. One involved the peasants' reluctance to attack the landlords. Another involved the continued influence of the landlords. The third involved the peasants' passivity toward the new communist authority.

After the land reform, autonomous capitalistic tendencies existed among the peasants, especially among the well-to-do middle peasants. Some peasants, in the form of mutual-aid teams, engaged in sideline businesses such as vegetable oil mills, rice-noodle mills, and rice-grinding mills; others, seeking construction jobs in urban areas.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, Mao was quite right to anticipate the difficulties in dealing with the peasants after the CCP came to power. In his "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship"<sup>13</sup> and "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People,"<sup>14</sup> Mao states that the most serious problem of the CCP is to "educate" the peasantry. Mao maintains that since the peasant economy is scattered, the collectivization of agriculture, judging by the Soviet experience, will require a long time and painstaking work. Without the collectivization of agriculture, there can be no complete, consolidated socialism. The steps to socialize agriculture must be coordinated with the development of a powerful industry having state enterprises as its backbone. Mao's strategy for the collectivization of Chinese agriculture, therefore, requires a process of destroying the historical peasant economy. This shift of principal emphasis to industrialization was to steadily increase the state's controls over the peasantry and to extract the available surplus from the agricultural sector of the economy.

Mao was also right about the attitudes of the middle peasants toward the revolution—whether they are for or against it is a factor determining its victory or defeat. And this was especially true when the middle peasants became the majority in the countryside after the 1949 communist revolution. According to Mao:

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., June II, 1951, 1; "On the Rural Reform in Jiangnan," *Xinhua yuekan* (New China Monthly), 1950, no. 5:1218-19.

<sup>12</sup> *Fujian ribao*, January 5, 1953, 2; January 7, 1953, 2; January 8, 1953, 2; January 14, 1953, 2; January 31, 1953, 2; and February 1, 1953, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Mao Zedong, "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship" (June 30, 1949), in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* 4:411-21.

<sup>14</sup> Mao Zedong, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" (February 27, 1957), in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. 5 (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1977), 384-421.

They [the middle peasants] form about 20 percent of China's rural population. They are economically self-supporting (they may have something 10 lay aside when the crops are good, and occasionally hire some labor or lend small sums of money at interest); and generally they do not exploit others but are exploited by imperialism, the landlord class and the bourgeoisie. They have no political rights. Some of them do not have enough land, and only a section (the well-to-do middle peasants) have some surplus land. Not only can the middle peasants join the anti-imperialist revolution and the Agrarian Revolution, but they can also accept socialism. Therefore the whole middle peasantry can be a reliable ally of the proletariat and is an important motive force of the revolution.<sup>115</sup>

Generally, lineage-owned land constituted an extensive proportion of land in Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong. The percentage of lineage land on the eve of land reform on the county level is listed in table I.

When the land reform work teams confiscated and redistributed these lineage properties to the poor and middle peasants of same lineages, it undermined the very southern associations' mode of lineage values and norms which favor corporate resources of lineage cohesion. It also destroyed the financial resources of mutual funds to sponsor annual festivals and ancestral worships. In actuality, poor and middle peasants were reluctant to accept the redistributed land for two reasons. Some still owed strong loyalty to lineage, and others were afraid of possible repercussions from landlords.<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, the land reform effected a partial reshuffle of land. Only the landed properties of landlords, rich peasants, and lineage land were involved in the confiscation and redistribution. In other words, the size of the distributable pool in any southern locality was a function of the extent of the economic domination of the landlordship as well as the southern mode of corporate lineage system.

When we examined the percentage of lineage land in the total amount of the land for redistribution, in Zhejiang 45.68 percent of the redistributive lands were lineage lands (see table 2). When those former poor peasants received new redistributive land, it mostly belonged to their lineage.<sup>17</sup> These poor peasants must have been keenly

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<sup>15</sup> Mao Zedong, "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party" (December 1939), in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. 2 (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), 323.

<sup>16</sup> Chen Yicheng, "Three and a Half Months of Rural Work in Wu County," *Xinhua yuekan*, 1950, no. 5:1223.

<sup>17</sup> Communist leadership obviously recognized this issue. See Rao Shushi, "To

**Table 1**  
**Proportion of Lineage Land: Zhejiang and Fujian**

| County/Province    | %     | County                | %     |
|--------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|
| Xiangshan/Zhejiang | 19.60 | Linhai/Zhejiang       | 8.76  |
| Xianju             | NA    | Kaihua                | 12.55 |
| Xiaoshan           | 8.31  | Yiwu                  | 46.76 |
| Changshan          | 15.27 | Yuhang                | 20.90 |
| Qingtian           | 28.88 | Yongkang              | 36.18 |
| Chun'an            | 9.80  | Shengxian             | 45.58 |
| Jiande             | 8.10  | Suian <sup>1</sup>    | 23.47 |
| Wuyi               | 35.77 | Xuanping <sup>2</sup> | 35.77 |
| Pujiang            | 45.14 | Lanxi                 | 21.83 |
| Yongchun/Fujian    | 39.24 | Youxi/Fujian          | 51.49 |

1. Suian was incorporated into Chun'an county in 1958.

2. Xuanping was incorporated into Wuyi county in 1958.

**Sources:** *Xiangshan xianzhi* (1989), 210; *Xianju xianzhi* (1986), 78-79; *Xiaoshan xianzhi* (1987), 216; *Changshan xianzhi* (1990), 140; *Qingtian xianzhi* (1990), 178; *Chun'an xianzhi* (1990), 190-91; *Jiande xianzhi* (1990), 148; *Wuyi xianzhi* (1990), 173, 175; *Pujiang xianzhi* (1991), 122; *Linhai xianzhi* (1989), 270; *Kaihua xianzhi* (1989), 161; *Yiwu xianzhi* (1987), 100; *Yuhang xianzhi* (1990), 124; *Yongkang xianzhi* (1990), 89; *Shengxian xianzhi* (1989), 68; *Lanxi xianzhi* (1989), 229; *Yongchun xianzhi* (1990), 187; and *Youxi xianzhi* (1989), 229.

**Table 2**  
**Percentage of Zhejiang Lineage Land for Redistribution**

| County    | %     | County    | %     |
|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Changshan | 36.09 | Wuyi      | 62.99 |
| Jiande    | 19.75 | Chun'an   | 35.86 |
| Shengxian | 63.71 | Suian     | 46.64 |
| Kaihua    | 30.01 | Qingtian  | 38.86 |
| Linhai    | 16.97 | Yuhang    | 44.22 |
| Yiwu      | 78.21 | Pujiang   | 80.27 |
| Yongkang  | 70.40 | Xiangshan | 39.43 |
| Xianju    | 40.97 | Xiaoshan  | 26.63 |
| Average:  | 45.68 |           |       |

**Sources:** *Xiangshan xianzhi* (1989), 210; *Xianju xianzhi* (1986), 78-79; *Xiaoshan xianzhi* (1987), 216; *Changshan xianzhi* (1990), 140; *Qingtian xianzhi* (1990), 178; *Chun'an xianzhi* (1990), 190-91; *Jiande xianzhi* (1990), 148; *Wuyi xianzhi* (1990), 173, 175; *Pujiang xianzhi* (1991), 122; *Linhai xianzhi* (1989), 270; *Kaihua xianzhi* (1989), 161; *Yiwu xianzhi* (1987), 100; *Yuhang xianzhi* (1990), 124; *Yongkang xianzhi* (1990), 89; and *Shengxian xianzhi* (1989), 68.

Struggle for the Completion of the Rural Reform in East China," *ibid.*, no. 4:792.



aware that the change from former land tenancy to land ownership was not without cost. Their new redistributive benefits in terms of land ownership deprived by its very foundation their primordial loyalty to lineage as a social institution. As a result, such a high degree of lineage land for redistribution directly contributed to the transfer of lineage land to the former tenants in Zhejiang.

Overall, poor and middle peasants were beneficiaries of land redistribution. In terms of net gains of land, middle peasants received a modest percentage of increase. Table 3 illustrates the percentage of land middle peasants gained as a result of the land reform in Zhejiang. In Youxi, Fujian, middle peasants gained 14.84 percent of their land as a result of the land reform.<sup>18</sup>

In Zhejiang, middle peasants, according to land reform data, constituted 32.19 percent of the peasant population at the time of land reform, which is much higher than Mao's 20 percent figure (see table 4). The high degree of commercialization in pre-1949 Zhejiang may have contributed to these high percentages of self-supporting small peasants. Yet, Mao's land reform policy deliberately alienated this economically self-sustaining group since Mao's radical policy to destroy lineage as a social institution, as well as social values, directly confronted this social group. This has significant implications for our understanding of the political attitudes of this category of southern peasants during and after the land reform period. It also paved the way for their later bold collective action of withdrawing from state-imposed collectivization in 1955 and 1957.

As for the poor peasants, data indicates that an average of 149.53 percent of the population in pre-1949 Zhejiang belonged to this category. It also is in contrast with Mao's 70 percent figure. In Youxi county of Fujian, the percentage of so-called middle and poor peasants was 31.07 percent and 53.36 percent respectively, which is compatible with the Zhejiang data.<sup>19</sup> The percentage of land that Zhejiang poor peasants received as a result of land reform suggests that on average, poor peasant households seemed to have gained much more than they had rented previously (see table 5). In the case of Youxi, the percentage of poor peasant land before the land reform 115.76 percent, which became 53.56 percent after the land reform, net gain for poor peasants in Youxi was 44.94 percent.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *Youxi xianzhi* (Gazetteers of Youxi county) (Fuzhou: 1989), 115-16.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

**Table 3**  
**Percentage of Land Zhejiang Middle Peasants Gained**

| County    | Before % | After % | % +   |
|-----------|----------|---------|-------|
| Changshan | 21.97    | NA      | NA    |
| Jiande    | 35.30    | 43.40   | 8.10  |
| Chun 'an  | 46.28    | 50.70   | 4.42  |
| Suian     | 28.88    | 38.43   | 9.55  |
| Qingtian  | 31.97    | 35.11   | 3.14  |
| Yuhang    | 28.80    | 37.20   | 9.40  |
| Hangxian' | 46.10    | 48.50   | 2.40  |
| Yongkang  | 29.46    | 40.58   | 11.12 |
| Wuyi      | 22.76    | 36.20   | 13.44 |
| Xuanping  | 38.00    | 35.11   | -2.89 |
| Shengxian | 20.94    | 39.66   | 18.62 |
| Kaihua    | 27.96    | 33.17   | 5.21  |
| Linhai    | 35.70    | 41.70   | 6.00  |
| Yiwu      | 23.21    | 41.24   | 18.03 |
| Pujiang   | 22.62    | 37.42   | 14.80 |
| Xiangshan | 24.35    | 33.61   | 9.26  |
| Xianju    | NA       | 43.00   | NA    |
| Xiaoshan  | 39.57    | 41.78   | 2.21  |
| Lanxi     | 30.19    | 36.08   | 5.89  |
| Average:  |          |         | 8.15  |

1. Hangxian was incorporated into Hangzhou city in 1958.

**Sources:** *Xiangshan xianzhi* (1989), 210; *Xianju xianzhi* (1986), 78-79; *Xiaoshan xianzhi* (1987), 216; *Changshan xianzhi* (1990), 140; *Qingtian xianzhi* (1990), 178; *Chun'an xianzhi* (1990), 190-91; *Jiande xianzhi* (1990), 148; *Wuyi xianzhi* (1990), 175; *Pujiang xianzhi* (1991), 122; *Linhai xianzhi* (1989), 270; *Kaihua xianzhi* (1989), 161; *Yiwuxianzhi* (1987), 100; *Yuhang xianzhi* (1990), 124; *Yongkang xianzhi* (1990), 89; *Shengxian xian-Zhii* (1986), 68; and *Lanxi xianzhi* (1989), 229.

As a result, the redistribution of land changed the class structure of peasant households greatly. A 1955 survey demonstrates this effect by contrasting the pre- and post-land reform class structure.<sup>21</sup> The numbers of poor peasants decreased to about half their previous number and the middle peasants increased a great deal. The overall decline in the average area of cultivated land per middle peasant household suggests that many relatively poor peasants ascended to lower-middle peasant status. This thereby saw the land reform produce an unexpected result. The magnitude of changes suggests that the middle peasants, who now accounted for the great majority of

<sup>21</sup> *Tongji gongzuo* (Statistical Work) (Beijing), 1957, no. 10:31-32.

**Table 4**  
**Percentage of Zhejiang Middle and Poor Peasants in Pre-1949 China**

| County     | Middle Peasants | Poor Peasants |
|------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Xiangshan  | 44.20%          | 52.68%        |
| Xianju     | 41.50           | 47.80         |
| Xiaoshan   | 30.80           | 58.16         |
| Changshan  | 21.97           | 51.90         |
| Qingtian   | 29.86           | 56.01         |
| Chun'an    | 41.19           | 49.60         |
| liande     | 35.30           | 44.60         |
| Wuyi       | 36.15           | 48.92         |
| Pujiang    | 33.72           | 57.11         |
| Linhai     | 33.90           | 49.40         |
| Kaihua     | 27.96           | 55.25         |
| Yiwu       | 37.90           | 53.50         |
| Yuhang     | 31.10           | 50.20         |
| Yongkang   | 33.01           | 43.00         |
| Shengxian  | 20.94           | 49.40         |
| Lanxi      | 15.67           | 25.06         |
| I Average: | 32.19           | 49.53         |

Sources: See table 3.

peasant households, were unstable as far as their inherent capitalist tendencies were concerned.<sup>22</sup> Unlike the landlords and rich peasants, who were politically discredited, Mao needed these well-to-do middle peasants as reliable allies.<sup>23</sup> Unlike the poor peasants and lower-middle peasants, who were less skillful and less experienced in agricultural production, well-to-do peasants were major producers because they contributed the surplus to be consumed by urban dwellers, the new government, and the military.

As table 4 indicates, the middle peasants who constituted 32.19 percent of the pre-land reform Zhejiang peasant population became well-to-do middle peasants after land reform. This portion of middle peasants was better equipped, with more farm facilities and better management skills vis-a-vis the new lower-middle peasants, and later became well-to-do middle peasants. Mao was aware that these well-to-do middle peasants were wavering and did not have the political consciousness to take the socialist road. They were not

<sup>22</sup> Deng Zihui, "Opening Remarks at the Third National Conference on Rural Work," *Dangshi yanjiu* (Research in Party History), 1981, no. 1:6.

<sup>23</sup> Liu Yuqing, "A Preliminary Discussion on the Rich Middle Peasant Question in Our Country's Period of Agricultural Reform," *ibid.*, 1983, no. 6:60.

**Table 5**  
**Percentage of Land Zhejiang Poor Peasants Gained**

| County    | Before % | After % | % +   |
|-----------|----------|---------|-------|
| Changshan | 13.23    | NA      | NA    |
| Jiande    | 12.40    | 37.80   | 25.40 |
| Chun 'an  | 21.06    | 38.00   | 16.94 |
| Sui'an    | 22.99    | 51.19   | 28.20 |
| Qingtian  | 26.12    | 51.02   | 24.90 |
| Yuhang    | 21.90    | 36.70   | 14.80 |
| Hangxian  | 11.60    | 47.90   | 36.30 |
| Yongkang  | 11.76    | 46.33   | 34.67 |
| Wuyi      | 13.62    | 45.01   | 31.39 |
| Xuanping  | 11.11    | 50.21   | 39.10 |
| Shengxian | 9.63     | 47.42   | 37.79 |
| Kaihua    | 20.67    | 50.12   | 29.45 |
| Linhai    | 18.60    | 42.30   | 23.70 |
| Yiwu      | 10.07    | 48.29   | 38.22 |
| Pujiang   | 13.34    | 50.94   | 37.60 |
| Xiangshan | 12.34    | 44.99   | 32.65 |
| Xianju    | 9.47     | 44.70   | 34.23 |
| Xiaoshan  | 23.80    | 47.52   | 23.72 |
| Lanxi     | 18.37    | 43.51   | 25.14 |
| Average:  | 10.68    | 40.35   | 29.67 |

Sources: See table 3.

willing to join the cooperatives. Therefore, Mao would have to obtain support from the poor peasants, lower-middle peasants among the new middle peasants, and lower-middle peasants among the old middle peasants to form cooperatives.

In contrast to the lineage land pattern of the majority in these three provinces, which composed a high degree of corporate property, the She nationality (*Shezu*) and Li nationality (*Lizu*) lineage land tended to be much smaller in average (see table 6). This is because of their relatively poor physical economic conditions. The *Shezu* and *Lizu* usually populated mountain areas and the arable lands were small. Most of them were tenants cultivating land belonging to the Han landlords. The population of *Shezu* middle peasants was also much smaller than the majority in Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong. The population of *Shezu* poor peasants was much larger than the Han majority in these three provinces. This reflects a different pattern of social differentiation of the *Shezu* and *Lizu* societies in which polarization became much more acute in response to the CCP mobilization

efforts during the 1930s, and the much welcomed communist land reform in the early 1950s. The land reform must have received popular support in this region, especially when lands of the former Han landlords were redistributed to the *Shezu* poor peasants and former tenants.

**Table 6**  
**Proportion of Lineage Land: She and Li Nationalities**

| Province         | Common Land | Middle Peasants | Poor Peasants |
|------------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Zhejiang</b>  |             |                 |               |
| Pingvang         | 2.00%       | 36.5%           | 60.50%        |
| Taishun          | NA          | 31.7%           | 74.87%        |
| <b>Guangdong</b> |             |                 |               |
| Chaoan           | 4.00%       | 5.0%            | 87.50%        |
| Raoping          | NA          | 8.0%            | 83.00%        |
| Fengshun         | NA          | 16.3%           | 76.70%        |
| Zencheng         | 0.60%       | NA              | NA            |
| <b>Fujian</b>    |             |                 |               |
| Ningde           | 1.52%       | 7.9%            | 90.60%        |
| Lianjiang        | NA          | NA              | NA            |
| Luovuan          | NA          | 30.6%           | 67.19%        |
| Fuan             | NA          | 10.1%           | 90.00%        |
| Fuding           | 1.52%       | 15.2%           | 59.14%        |
| Xiapu            | NA          | 6.3%            | 88.73%        |
| Average          | 0.94%       | 16.7%           | 77.82%        |

**Sources:** *Shezu shefui lishi diaocha* (A social and historical survey of the She nationality) (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1986), 57-58, 82, 98, 104, 125-26, 137, 149-50, 167-68, 184.

At the outset, Mao proceeded to diffuse mutual-aid teams as a stage in the transition to agricultural cooperatives. The mutual-aid teams, although vigorously pressed forward by Mao, were unable to meet Beijing's target of helping to raise the poor peasants and rural laborers' economic status.<sup>24</sup> Nor did the unified purchase and unified supply of grain in 1953 solve the grain supply crisis.<sup>25</sup> In December 1953, the CCP Central Committee adopted a decision on the development of agricultural producers' cooperatives to shift its emphasis from mutual-aid teams to agricultural cooperatives. By May 1955,

<sup>24</sup> Tin Yunhui, "A Study of the Causes for the Continuing Acceleration of the Agricultural Co-op Since the Summer of 1955," *ibid.*, 1984, no. 4:5-9.

<sup>25</sup> This regulation was laid down by the State Council in 1953. It was the basic regulation covering marketing reform in rural areas, giving the state a power to buy and sell all grain and primary products. See *Fujian ribao*, August 6, 1955, 3.

some 15,000 out of 53,000 cooperatives, comprising 4,000,000 peasant households in Zhejiang, were dissolved as a result of stiff peasant resistance to the cooperative movement.<sup>26</sup> Two years later, in the summer of 1957, a year after collectives were imposed, a second massive Zhejiang peasant withdrawal from the cooperatives took place.<sup>27</sup> These Zhejiang peasants were indeed by no means what Mao called "a very small dissatisfied minority." All of these acts demonstrated a viable collective effort by the Zhejiang peasant's to resist Mao's anti-peasant policies.

In Fujian, the pace of collectivization accelerated from January to March of 1956. Within three months, collectives increased from 165 units to 6,434 units and enrolled peasant households increased from 24,000 to 1,610,000.<sup>28</sup> As in Zhejiang, Fujian peasants joined the withdrawal from the co-op bandwagon in spring 1957 when Mao made his famous speech "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People."

One of the major reasons for the Zhejiang peasants' actions lies in the fact that cadres failed to apply the principle of voluntary and mutual benefit. Work styles of compulsion and commandism were common practices among the southbound cadres.<sup>29</sup> Another reason is founded in economic considerations. The scope for placing property under Party-state ownership was too extensive, and the transferal of private livestock, poultry, small woods, and fruit trees was compulsory. Therefore, collectives froze deposits in banks, credit co-ops, and remittances from overseas. Peasants with strong labor power lost, for more labor did not gain more rewards in a collective. One worry in common among the peasants was the fear that the state now could and would keep too much of the harvest, leaving too little for villagers.<sup>30</sup> The third reason why collective opposition was possible stemmed from the fact that an overwhelming majority of middle peasants were losers in collectives and thus constituted a viable force for collective action.

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<sup>26</sup> Qiang Yuangan and Lin Bankuan, "A Study of the Dispute Within the Communist Party on the Issue of Agricultural Co-op in 1955," *Dangshi yanjiu*, 1981, no. 1:10-17; and Luo Ping, "A Realistic Evaluation on the Issue of Stabilization and Withdrawal," *ibid.*, 1984, no. 3:64-69.

<sup>27</sup> See Xiangsian xianzhi (*Hangzhou: 1988*), 31, 208; Xianju xianzhi (*Hangzhou: 1986*), 17; Linfai xianzhi (*Hangzhou: 1989*), 272; Wuyi xianzhi (*Hangzhou: 1990*), 177; Yongkang xianzhi (*Hangzhou: 1991*), 96; Qingtian xianzhi (*Hangzhou: 1990*), 51; Chun'an xianzhi (*Hangzhou: 1990*), 191; Jiande xianzhi (*Hangzhou: 1990*), 150; Changshan xianzhi (*Hangzhou: 1990*), 141; and Shengxian xianzhi (*Hangzhou: 1989*), 6.

<sup>28</sup> *Fujian ribao*, December 28, 1957, 3.

<sup>29</sup> Qiang and Lin, "A Study of the Dispute," 10.

<sup>30</sup> Gao Huaming, "A Study of the Remaining Issues of the Agricultural Co-op Movement Since the Summer of 1955," *Dangshi yanjiu*, 1983, no. 4:36.

In Fujian and Guangdong, the State Council issued a Directive on the Relaxation of Control of the Rural Market on October 24, 1956 as a temporary relief for the grain crisis of 1955.<sup>31</sup> Most Fujian and Guangdong peasants responded by giving up farming to take up trading. According to one survey, there was an increase of more than 5,200 households of petty merchants, most of whom were formerly peasants, during the two months since the free market was reopened. The decrease in income among peasants under the collective was the most important reason for them to give up farming and to take up trading. Especially since Fujian and Guangdong, particularly in the coastal region, were provinces where commerce was long developed, many small and medium-sized townships had commercial networks.<sup>32</sup> As economic crops are numerous in variety, there are always products to sell year around, Fujian and Guangdong peasants were accustomed to practicing sideline production. The resumed practice of commerce by the peasants, therefore, discredited anti-market collectives among Guangdong peasants. When neighboring village peasants witnessed the profits made by those taking up trading, they left agricultural production and fish breeding ponds unattended to take part in trading.

Thus, contrary to the conventional wisdom, collectivization, in fact, met with southern peasant resistance. Through the large-scale slaughter of livestock, or giving up farming, or by overt collective action, southern peasants gave clear signs of their attitudes toward Mao's policy. State propaganda seemed unable to change southern peasants' minds.

### **Lineage and Dialect Groups as Cultural Mechanism of Southern Peasant Resistance**

The lineage system, generally regarded as the characteristic social institution in traditional South China, plays a pivotal role in establishing and sustaining the prevailing values, in molding the life of individual Chinese, and in shaping their social relations in an orderly and stable fashion. Lineage, therefore, plays an important role in both regulation of the behavior of the individual members, and in the maintenance of social groups. It depends on social recognition and cultural implementation of relationships derived from common descent and morally involves an associated set of behavioral patterns, attitudes, and values. The resulting networks of social

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<sup>31</sup> See *Fujian ribao*, October 20, 1956, 1; November 6, 1956, I; November 15, 1956, I; December 5, 1956, 3; and August 14, 1957, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Adopt Methods for the Stabilization of the Agricultural Co-op in Guangdong Province," *Xinhua banyuekan* (New China Semimonthly), 1957, no. 1:81-82.

relations under-gird the entire structure of Chinese society. Lineage plays an important role in maintaining group cohesion and solidarity and in orienting the individual peasants to the social maze.

Emily Ahern suggested a typology of interlineage relations in China in which three types of lineage may be identified: (1) villages with a single dominant lineage; (2) villages with several lineages of equivalent strength; and (3) villages with one dominant lineage with several minor lineages.<sup>33</sup> In terms of power structure, in the type *one* village, internal segmentation of lineage is highly developed; in the type *two* village, the lineage identity is strongly developed; and in the type *three* village, the powerful lineage may either dominate the others, or political competition may center around an alliance of the smaller lineages against the dominant lineage.

The pattern of relationships among lineages in these three southern Chinese provinces was type one and/or type three, since in most southern Chinese counties the top ten surnames constitute more than half of the total population, the top twenty surnames constitute three-quarters of the population, and the minority surnames only constitute less than one-fourth of population on average (see table 7). This oligarchical pattern, as reflected in the distribution of surnames, sheds light on the very nature of power in southern Chinese villages at the local level.

After 1949, many of the surface features of the traditional lineage were changed. The lineage had been replaced by new leadership of poor peasant backgrounds selected by outsiders, the cadres sent south from the north. The complete loss of lineage control over common property weakened lineage authority. Yet it did not end lineage identities or alter the intralineage order of seniority. Lineage remained viable, such as in norms, customs, and dialects. The continuity in basic lineage structures is apparent in the social lives of the southern peasants. Southern Chinese peasants still experienced lineage as an important feature of their social structure. Yet, this traditional deep structure was transformed by the new power framework.

The lineage core structure—a group of coresidents, related through the patrilineal line—was intact.<sup>34</sup> A collective usually was a single lineage village. Of the natural villages in Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong, almost all were single lineages or segments of single multi-village lineages; there were very few mixed surname villages.<sup>35</sup> When the communists collectivized the rural economy, redistributed common land, and organized peasants into the new three-level system of

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<sup>33</sup> Emily M. Ahern, *The Cult of the Dead in a Chinese Village* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1973), 251-57.

<sup>34</sup> Potter and Potter, *China's Peasants*, 256.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.



**Table 7**  
**Proportion of Lineage Population in South China**

|                     |         |                    |         |
|---------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
| Nanxiong/Guangdong  |         | Youxi/Fujian       |         |
| Top 3 surnames      | 21.50%  | Top 10 surnames    | NA      |
| Top 10 surnames     | 50.70%  | Top 20 surnames    | NA      |
| Top 20 surnames     | 71.56%  | All 128 surnames   | 100.00% |
| Other 112 surnames  | 28.44%  |                    |         |
| All 132 surnames    | 100.00% |                    |         |
| Yongchun/Fujian Top |         | Yiwu/Zhejiang      |         |
| Top 10 surnames     | 45.00%  | Top 10 surnames    | 55.72%  |
| Other 150 surnames  | 55.00%  | Top 20 surnames    | 75.42%  |
| All 160 surnames    | 100.00% | Other 330 surnames | 24.58%  |
|                     |         | All 350 surnames   | 100.00% |
| Kaihua/Zhejiang     |         | Pujiang/Zhejiang   |         |
| Top 10 surnames     | 53.88%  | Top 10 surnames    | 54.85%  |
| Top 20 surnames     | 71.91%  | Top 20 surnames    | 71.50%  |
| Other 310 surnames  | 28.19%  | Other 260 surnames | 28.50%  |
| All 330 surnames    | 100.00% | All 280 surnames   | 100.00% |
| Qingtian/Zhejiang   |         | Chun'an/Zhejiang   |         |
| Top 10 surnames     | 50.57%  | Top 10 surnames    | 53.60%  |
| Top 20 surnames     | 69.25%  | Top 20 surnames    | 77.01%  |
| Other 3-15 surnames | 30.75%  | Other 299 surnames | 22.99%  |
| All 335 surnames    | 100.00% | All 319 surnames   | 100.00% |
| Xiangshan/Zhejiang  |         | Xiaoshan/Zhejiang  |         |
| Top 10 surnames     | 36.46%  | Top 10 surnames    | 30.22%  |
| Top 20 surnames     | 47.30%  | Top 20 surnames    | 40.00%  |
| Other 381 surnames  | 52.70%  | Other 476 surnames | 60.00%  |
| All 401 surnames    | 100.00% | All 496 surnames   | 100.00% |
| Yongkang/Zhejiang   |         | Changshan/Zhejiang |         |
| Top 10 surnames     | 58.35%  | Top 10 surnames    | 36.90%  |
| Top 20 surnames     | 75.59%  | Top 20 surnames    | 51.83%  |
| Other 310 surnames  | 24.41%  | Other 269 surnames | 48.17%  |
| All 330 surnames    | 100.00% | All 289 surnames   | 100.00% |

**Sources:** *Nanxiong xianzhi* (1991), 139; *Yongchun xianzhi* (1990), 143-44; *Kaihua xianzhi* (1989), 98-100; *Qingtian xianzhi* (1990), 166-69; *Xiangshan xianzhi* (1988), 71-73; *Yongkang xianzhi* (1991), 73-79; *Yiwu xianzhi* (1987), 91-93; *Pujiang xianzhi* (1990), 103-5; *Chun'an xianzhi* (1990), 94-97; *Xiaoshan xianzhi* (1987), 963-67; *Changshan xianzhi* (1990), 593-94; and *Youxi xianzhi* (1989), 98.

communes, brigades, and teams, to the outsider each commune consisted of several brigades, each brigade consisted of several teams, and the whole represented a unified production unit. But internally, each commune, brigade, and team was crosshatched with lineages which competed with one another for limited resources and political leadership. This is a conclusion shared by all in-depth post-1949 village studies.

In the three-level commune system (commune, brigade, and team), the outlines of the newly-established brigades tended to replicate the outlines of former traditional lineages. Lineage villages still retained separate identities, even when merged into a single brigade with other lineage villages.

This traditional local power pattern based on strong and large surname populations still dominated local politics even after the communists came to power. Local communities were still arranged according to the surname hierarchy. Essentially, lineage was the fundamental local basis that the state-centered Chinese communists encountered. Lineage afforded an overall and moral reference of interpersonal relationship among local peasants. Chinese communists, therefore, had to come to grips with local peasant politics of complex, intertwined relationships—a traditional power structure that persisted and defended villagers against the irrational state center.

Three patterns of local political structure developed in communist-ruled South China. One pattern involved the persistence of lineage hierarchy. A second pattern involved intralineage realignment of the prior lineage power structure. A third pattern was based on inter-lineage conflicts. Two sets of county-level data will be used as the basis for empirical analysis. The first set of data is based on Yongchun county of Fujian, which reveals the first two patterns of lineage power structure. The second set of data is based on Chun'an county of Zhejiang, which reveals the third pattern of lineage power structure. It will be discussed in the next section.

Yongchun county is located in southeastern Fujian with 21 townships, 226 administrative villages, and 2,870 natural villages. Its administrative system began with 8 districts and 144 townships in 1950, and went to 12 districts and 141 townships in 1954, 8 communes and 148 brigades in 1958, 22 communes and 222 brigades in 1962, and 21 townships, 226 administrative villages, and 2,870 natural villages in 1987.<sup>36</sup> This represents a cycle of centralization and decentralization. The changes impacted on the traditional pattern of lineage structure in Yongchun.

Tables 8 and 9 provide basic demographic and political leadership data of the 21 townships of Yongchun county in the 1950-87

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<sup>36</sup> *Yongchun xianzhi* (Fuzhou: 1990), 88-89.

period. Table 8 illustrates the demographic data of the surname distribution of 21 townships. In Yongchun, 10 major surnames dominated 45 percent of the population. Table 9 explains the major vs. minor surname political leadership of 21 townships. Taking these two tables together, we find that only in three townships (Hengkou, Huyang, and Waishan) was the lineage leadership pattern incompatible with the major surname-dominated pattern as a result of reapportionment of administrative regions by the state. The major surname-dominated pattern guaranteed dominance over the minor surnames. Yet, when the state disrupted this hierarchy by reappropriating the administrative territory, the major lineage lost its leading political edge. But at village-level Chinese peasant politics, the lowest level of peasant society was still dominated by traditional social structures during the communist era. Powerful lineages were in conflict with the lowest level of the state hierarchy.

In South China, county-level dialects existed as the result of historical migration and prior redistribution of administrative territories. The distribution and development of subsystems of dialects is more extensive in counties with more neighboring counties. Overall, dialects in South China differ from northern counterparts, as southern Chinese developed totally separate from the northern Chinese system. The northern Chinese dialect belongs to one language system, whereas the southern Chinese originates in three different systems: the Wu language of Zhejiang, the Min language of Fujian, and the Yue language of Guangdong, along with the Hakka. And within each province there are large and mutually incompatible language forms. Overall, Fujian, Guangdong, and Zhejiang comprise a region with a most diversified dialect system.<sup>37</sup> Within each subsystem of a dialect region, effective oral communication is almost impossible. Islands of dialects also exist within each dialect subsystem, which further complicate communication among people. Southern dialect areas have core zones, where a dominant dialect-speaking population is most concentrated, and peripheries, where the boundaries of the dialects overlap with other neighboring counties. For example, in Zhejiang, most counties have more than one dialect (see table 10).

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<sup>37</sup> Fujian dialect is considered the most complicated system among these three southern provinces. See You Wenliang, "Dialects and Editing the Dialect Gazette of Fujian," in *Fujian shizhi* (Historical Gazette of Fujian), 1987, no. 6:9-12; and Li-Rulong, "Why Edit Dialect Gazettes?" *Fujian difangzhi tongxun* (Newsletter of Fujian Gazette), 1985, no. 6:27-28.

**Table 8**  
**Distribution of Surname Population in Yongchun of Fujian**

| Township   | Population | Major Surnames  |
|------------|------------|---|
| Taocheng   | 46,990     | Wang, Fang, Li, Qiu, Xu, Liu, Yang, Su, Zhang, Wu, Cheng, Yu, Zheng, Lin, Guo, Zhou     |
| Wulijie    | 25,881     | Wang, You, Fang, Sun, Ye, Li, Liu, Jiang, Xu, Zhong, Chen, Song, Su, Zhang, He, Wu      |
| Xiayang    | 18,821     | You, Ye, Jiang, Xu, Li, Liu, Zhang, Wu, Su, Xu, Tu, Huang, Kang                         |
| Yidu       | 14,599     | Wang, Fung, Li, Liu, Chen, Zhang, Su, Wang, Zheng, Kuang, Guo, Lin, Zhou, Tu, Xiao      |
| Hengkou    | 7,023      | Wang, Zhang, Wu, Lin, Huang   |
| Kengzikou  | 14,253     | Wang, You, Gang, Li, Zhang, Chen, Wu, Su, Lu, Zhou, Yang, Kuang, Zheng, Ke, Xu          |
| Yudou      | 16,024     | You, Hu, Li, Chen, Wu, He, Lin, Zheng, Zhao, Kang, Xiao, Yan, Pan                       |
| Guiyang    | 12,199     | Lu, Xu, Wu, Zhang, Chen, Lin, Zheng, Tu   |
| Jindou     | 13,881     | Wang, Fang, Ye, Li, Wu, Lu, Zhang, Chen, Su, Lin, Fang, Yao, Xu, Huang, Kang            |
| Chengxiang | 6,551      | Chen, Huang   |
| Sukeng     | 13,310     | Wang, Li, Zhang, Chen, Su, Lu, Lin, Gou, Fan, Ke, Huang                                 |
| Penghu     | 54,319     | You, Wang, Fang, Ye, Xu, Hua, Qiu, Li, Lu, Chen, Su, Wu, Yang, Zhang, Tu, Lin           |
| Dapu       | 59,372     | Wang, You, Ye, Li, Qiu, Zhu, Liu, Tang, Chen, Zheng, Wu, Yu, Zheng, Lin, Zuo, Luo       |
| Wufeng     | 16,761     | Deng, Zhang, Chen, Lu, He, Yang, Lin, Zheng, Shi, Zhong, Liang, Huang, Gu               |
| Jiefu      | 7,811      | Chen, Zheng, Lin  |
| Shigu      | 30,060     | Wang, Sun, Xu, Li, Chen, Zhang, Su, Lu, Du, Zheng, Lin, Guo, Fan, Yao, Hu, Hong, Huang  |
| Dongping   | 24,191     | Gan, Wang, Fang, Ye, Lu, Li, Qiu, Tang, Zhuang, Liu, Chen, Wu, Zhang, Meng, Lu          |
| Gushan     | 21,184     | Wang, Li, Qiu, Liu, Zhuang, Xu, Chen, Wu, Yang, Su, Lin, Guo, Zheng, Huang, Sheng       |
| Xianjia    | 12,961     | Liu, Chen, Su, Guo, Zheng, Lin, Fan, Zhan   |
| Huyang     | 37,546     | Fan, Wang, Deng, Ning, Bao, Liu, Li, Jiang, Zhuang, Chen, Wu, Zhang, Wu, He, Zheng, Lin |
| Waishan    | 5,379      | Wang, Deng, Su, Cheng, Lin, Hong  |

**Sources:** *Yongchun xianzhi* (1990), 89-98, 143-44.

**Table 9**  
**Percentage of Major vs. Minor Surname County-Level Leadership**

| Township   | Major vs. Minor Surnames (%) |
|------------|------------------------------|
| Taocheng   | 87.50 vs. 12.50              |
| Wulijie    | 100.00 vs. 0                 |
| Xiayang    | 100.00 vs. 0                 |
| Yidu       | 77.77 vs. 22.23              |
| Hengkou*   | 20.00 vs. 80.00              |
| Kengzikou  | 100.00 vs. 0                 |
| Yudou      | 77.77 vs. 22.23              |
| Guiyang    | 66.66 vs. 33.34              |
| Jindou     | 77.77 vs. 22.23              |
| Chengxiang | 60.00 vs. 40.00              |
| Sukeng     | 100.00 vs. 0                 |
| Penghu     | 77.77 vs. 22.23              |
| Dapu       | 87.50 vs. 12.50              |
| Wufeng     | 60.00 vs. 40.00              |
| Jiefu      | 100.00 vs. 0                 |
| Shigu      | 77.77 vs. 22.23              |
| Dongping   | 100.00 vs. 0                 |
| Gushan     | 83.33 vs. 16.67              |
| Xianjia    | 77.77 vs. 22.23              |
| Huyang*    | 41.66 vs. 58.34              |
| Waishan*   | 50.00 vs. 50.00              |

**Sources:** See table 8.

\*It indicates a different pattern of power structure.

**Table 10**  
**Subsystem of Zhejiang Dialect at Selected County Level**

|                      |        |                      |        |
|----------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|
| Changshan            | %      | Qingtian             | %      |
| 1.Changshan/Zhejiang | 55.19% | 1.Qingtian/Zhejiang  | 77.80% |
| 2.Nanfeng/Jiangxi    | 34.56% | 2.Lishui/Zhejiang    | 7.40%  |
| 3.Fuzhou/Fujian      | 3.29%  | 3.Jiudu/Zhejiang     | 3.10%  |
| 4.Chun'an/Zhejiang   | 2.56%  | 4.Yongjia/Zhejiang   | 11.40% |
| 5.Jiangshan/Zhejiang | 2.37%  | 5.She nationality    | 0.29%  |
| Xiaoshan             |        | Kaihua               |        |
| 1.Xiaoshan/Zhejiang  |        | 1.Kaihua/ZheJiang    |        |
| 2.Haining/Zhejiang   |        | 2.Majin/Zhejiang     |        |
| 3.Shaoxing/Zhejiang  |        | 3.Huapu/Zhejiang     |        |
| 4.Fuyang/Zhejiang    |        | 4.Chun'an/Zhejiang   |        |
| 5.Hangzhou/Zhejiang  |        | 5.Fuzhou/Fujian      |        |
| Wuyi                 |        | Xiangshan            |        |
| 1.Wuyi/Zhejiang      |        | 1.Ningbo/Zhejiang    |        |
| 2.Xuanping/Zhejiang  |        | 2.Taizhou/Zhejiang   |        |
| 3.Yongkang/Zhejiang  |        | 3.Xizhou/Zhejiang    |        |
| 4.Chun'an/Zhejiang   |        |                      |        |
| 5.Fuzhou/Fujian      |        |                      |        |
| 6.Nanjing/Jiangsu    |        |                      |        |
| 7.She nationality    |        |                      |        |
| Shengxian            |        | Yongkang             |        |
| 1.Chengguan/Zhejiang |        | 1.Tangxian/Zhejiang  | 33.33% |
| 2.Chongren/Zhejiang  |        | 2.Chengguan/Zhejiang | 66.67% |
| 3.Changle/Zhejiang   |        |                      |        |
| 4.Beizhang/Zhejiang  |        |                      |        |
| 5.Sanje/Zhejiang     |        |                      |        |
| Pujiang              |        | Yuhang               |        |
| 1.Pujiang/Zhejiang   |        | 1.Jiaxing/Zhejiang   |        |
| 2.Zhuji/Zhejiang     |        | 2.Huzhou/Zhejiang    |        |

**Sources:** *Changshan xianzhi* (1990), 601-3; *Xiaoshan xianzhi* (1987), 987; *Wuyi xianzhi* (1990), 692-93, 722-23; *Shengxian xianzhi* (1989), 537; *Pujiang xianzhi* (1991), 587-89; *Qingtian xianzhi* (1990), 683; *Kaihua xianzhi* (1989), 531; *Xiangshan xianzhi* (1989), 238-39; *Yongkang xianzhi* (1990), 672; and *Yuhang xianzhi* (1990), 808.

In Guangdong, Cantonese is spoken in central, southern, and western Guangdong. Hakka is spoken in northern and northeastern Guangdong. The Chaozhou dialect is used in eastern and southwestern Guangdong (see table 11). Yet local reality is even more complicated in Nanxiong in northern Guangdong: four different dialects are spoken—Xiafang, Shangfang, Chengguan, and Beishan dialects. The individual dialect population was 48.8 percent, 24.4 percent, 19.5 percent, and 7.3 percent, respectively. Three of these four dialects—namely Shangfang, Xiafang, and Beishan—are similar to Hakka.

In Fujian, five major dialect regions may be identified (see table 12). A subsystem of local dialects also persists. For example, in Youxi county there are seven different subsystem local dialects (see table 13).

**Table 11**  
**Dialect System in Guangdong**

| County                               | Dialect  | County                 | Dialect  |
|--------------------------------------|----------|------------------------|----------|
| Kaiping, En ping, Xinhui, Taishan    | Taishan  | Chaoan, Shantou        | Chaozhou |
| Deqing, Guangning, Huaiji            | Sihui    | Xuwen, Suixi, Leidong  | Haikang  |
| Xinyi, Lianjiang, Yangchun, Huaxian  | Maoming  | Hepu, Pubei, Fangcheng | Beihai   |
| Haiko, Chengbian, Qiongdong, Ding'an | Wenchang | Meixian                | Hakka    |

**Source:** Chaozhouren xuexi putonghua shouce (A handbook for the Chaozhou people to learn the Mandarin) (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1958), 1-2.

**Table 12**  
**Major Dialects System in Fujian**

| Dialect          | County                                   |
|------------------|--|
| Xiamen (Minnan)  | Xiamen, Jinjiang, Longxi                 |
| Fuzhou (Mindong) | Fuzhou, Ningde, Putian                   |
| Puxian           | Putian, Xianyou                          |
| Jian'ou (Minbei) | Jianyang, Pucheng, Chong'an, Zhenghe     |
| Hakka (Minxi)    | Changding, Liancheng, Ninghua, Shanghang |

**Source:** *Fujianren zenyang xuexi putonghua* (How the Fujianese learn the Mandarin) (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue, 1979), 2.

**Table 13**  
**Subsystem of Local Dialect in Youxi of Fujian**

| Subsystem | Township ( <i>Xiang</i> )           | %      |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Chengguan | Chengguan, Meixian, Tuanjie, Lianhe | 54.14% |
| Chilian   | Guanqian, Baziqiao, Chilian         | 19.10% |
| Yangzhong | Yangzhong, Tangchuan, Youxikou      | 6.36%  |
| Xibin     | Xibin, Yangzhong                    | 7.96%  |
| Tangchuan | Tangchuan, Xiwei, Taixi             | 4.14%  |
| Zhongxian | Zhongxian                           | 6.36%  |
| .Herman   | Banmian                             | 1.91%  |

**Source:** *Youxi xianzhi* (1989), 684.

Thus, the southern peasant society provided no single, uniform social basis of communalistic solidarity. The presumed universality of an ideologically monolithic southern peasant society experiencing itself as one with northern rulers simply did not exist in either pre-or post-1949 South China. The southern Chinese peasants inherited social structures which acted as limits on state penetration and transformation. In opposition to outside leaders and unpopular and irrational economic policies, southern Chinese local dialects and lineages undermined the attempts of the state to alter the southern peasants' mind and action.<sup>38</sup>

The complexity of southern local dialects posed an enormous task for the state to establish effective communication networks. Even after forty years of communist rule in rural South China, 30 percent of the peasant population is still considered illiterate, and 60 percent of the peasant population still speaks local dialects only.<sup>39</sup> This high degree of illiteracy, as well as the dialect-speaking tendency, represents one of the most enduring social factors which not only imposed limits on the northern centralized state's anti-peasant ideology and political indoctrination, but also fostered defensive and popular

<sup>38</sup> See *Fujian ribao*, January 22, 1958, 2 and July 22, 1960, 3. During the land reform period, one typical problem that the southbound cadres faced was that they had to rely on Mandarin-speaking landlords as interpreters.

<sup>39</sup> According to the 1982 census, the illiterate rate in Zhejiang was 24.17 percent. See *Zhejiang shengqing gaiyao* (A general introduction to Zhejiang Province) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1986), 22. In Nanxiong, Guangdong, the illiterate rate was 26.3 percent in 1987. On the Chinese peasant illiterate problem, see also Martin King Whyte, *Small Groups and Political Rituals in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 165.



peasant localism. Moreover, the peasants' daily life was restricted within the boundaries of their villages by collectives and the state abolition of the market. A state-imposed peasant household registration system blockaded free flows of people, information, and resources between urban and rural areas. The local cultures had to grow in importance.

### **Patterns of Southern Peasant Resistance**

A typology of southern peasant resistance during the 1949-78 period under communist rule can be sketched. Groups were experienced in terms of dialect and lineage. Dam construction-related migration, forest property disputes, and secret societies reveal local dynamics.

#### *Case Study One:*

#### *Dam Construction-Related Migration*

#### *in the Xin'an River Region of Zhejiang*

The first case involves the dam construction-related migration in the Xin'an River area of Zhejiang during the period 1956-70. On June 20, 1956, Beijing approved a plan to construct a Xin'an River power plant in Tongguan, Zhejiang. According to this plan, 2 major county capitals, 49 townships, 5 market places, and 1,377 villages totaling some 280,000 local residences needed to be relocated to other counties in Zhejiang as well as to counties in Jiangxi and Anhui provinces (see table 14).<sup>40</sup> The nature of the centralized system of outsiders, which was organized as defensive networks of political loyalty, guaranteed that local people would be unnecessarily hurt and outraged.

Starting from 1956, villages were evacuated and peasants were relocated. Most became dependent wards of the state. According to one survey of 11 communes, 61.5 percent were in poor economic conditions and 14.5 percent were in serious conditions.<sup>41</sup> Because collectivization institutionalizes leveling minimum and intensifies locals' identities against outsiders, local communities resisted massive migrations of outsiders into their communities. Confrontations became very serious between natives and newcomers. In response to this severe situation, some nine thousand peasants returned to their home communities, residing in temporary shantytowns on the banks of the

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<sup>40</sup> *Chun'an xianzhi* (1990), 109-58.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

**Table 14**  
**Allocation of the Xin'an River Dam**

| Type                       | Unplanned (16,180) |          |        |              |       |         |       |
|----------------------------|--------------------|----------|--------|--------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Planned (273,771) Province | Jiangxi            |          |        |              |       |         |       |
| Zhejiang                   | Jiangxi Population |          |        | Anhui 10,550 |       |         |       |
| Allocation Distribution    |                    |          |        |              |       |         |       |
| Tonglu                     | 27,088             | Yihuang  | 10,307 | Jingde       | 6,109 | Shexian | 2,030 |
| Fuyang                     | 11,733             | Chongren | 4,843  | Bovang       | 519   | Jixi    | 607   |
| Deqing                     | 472                | Jinxi    | 12,053 | Lcning       | 1,074 | Jinode  | 1,805 |
| Jinhua                     | 5,970              | Nanfeng  | 10,932 | Xuvuan       | 689   | Xiuning | 10    |
| Chanshan                   | 8,062              | Anfu     | 2,118  | Dexin        | 587   | Oimen   | 104   |
| Wuyi                       | 2,054              | Wan'an   | 320    | Lichuan      | 1,572 | Oinxian | 64    |
| Longquan                   | 5,818              | Ji'an    | 2,992  |              |       | Jinxian | 16    |
| Jiande                     | 26,447             | Xin'an   | 2,375  |              |       | Taining | 517   |
| Lin'an                     | 2,574              | Yongfeng | 2,332  |              |       | Tunxi   | 378   |
| Lanxi                      | 339                | Xiaian   | 1,808  |              |       |         |       |
| Kaihua                     | 34,062             | De'an    | 4,050  |              |       |         |       |
| Ouxian                     | 7,069              |          |        |              |       |         |       |
| Suichang                   | 2,884              |          |        |              |       |         |       |
| Yimhe                      | 1,412              |          |        |              |       |         |       |
| Chun'an                    | 82,544             |          |        |              |       |         |       |
| Total*                     | 289,951            |          |        |              |       |         |       |

**Source:** *Chun'an xianzhi* (1990), 114.

\*Total includes other provinces such as: Qinghai, Xinjiang, Ningxia, Shanxi, Fujian, Beijing, Jiangsu, Shanghai, Sichuan, and Heilongjiang, totaling 1,293.

new dam. Others searched elsewhere for suitable places by themselves in an economy that made physical mobility illegal. From 1965 to 1967, some 16,180 peasants nonetheless relocated themselves in communities of Jiangxi and Anhui provinces.<sup>42</sup>

The Zhejiang peasants' overt resistance to the state-imposed migration policy forced uprooted villagers to either return to their home county or search for new communities on their own. The conflicts were reflected in patterns of interlineage conflict and the general rule of lineage cohesion. When these Zhejiang peasants were rejected by Jiangxi communes designated by the state, the uprooted selected their new settlements on a basis of common language. Chun'an dialect belongs to the Hui dialect region, which overlaps with the northeastern Jiangxi and southern Anhui dialect region.<sup>43</sup> Common dialect connections provided a natural linkage for a local community's

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>43</sup> *Xiuning xianzhi* (Hefei: 1990), 527; and *Tunxi xianzhi* (Hefei: 1990), 401. Both Xiu-ning and Tunxi counties of Anhui Province are speaking the Hui dialect.

acceptance of Chun'an peasants' settlement. Thus communal boundaries were intensified, with outsiders experienced as immoral. The logic of the system piles up fiery angers that could one day explode.

*Case Study Two:*

*Forest Property Disputes in Fujian and Zhejiang*

The second case involves forest property disputes in Fujian and Zhejiang provinces. During the 1950s, an unprecedented level of political turmoil in South China was intensified by a shift in property rights that would have created a new definition for collective property formerly owned by corporate lineage in Fujian and Zhejiang. These changes exacerbated longstanding disputes over forest property issues such as intercounty and interprovincial boundaries and water rights, heightening tensions over issues long prevalent in Fujian and Guangdong such as forest property disputes. Local lineage efforts to forcefully assert or redefine their rights provided the potential for angry disputes, which sometimes became violent. The long arm of the state was weak and vulnerable in these peripheral islands of lineage, and its legitimacy was relatively slight in resolving these lineage disputes. Violence increased as forest property rights fluctuated from the 1950s to the 1970s in ways that slighted local customary law regarding forest protection.<sup>44</sup> Massive destruction of forests by the pillaging state further destabilized the customary laws, inducing more competition among local peasant groups that felt unjustly exploited and had to scrounge for ever-dwindling forest resources. In forest property rights dispute, lineage groups demonstrated their pertinacity and endurance even under communist rule.

In pre-1949 South China, forests were owned by corporate lineages. Like common land in this region, forests were collective assets owned by various lineage groups.<sup>45</sup> During the land reform period, lineage-owned forests were confiscated by the Party-state and redistributed to individual peasants as private property. Peasants received both paddy fields as well as mountain forests as their shares of re-

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<sup>44</sup> In pre-1949 China, lineage leadership imposed heavy fine against the unlawful destruction of forest. See *Yongchun xianzhi* (1990), 259; *Yiwu xianzhi* (Hangzhou: 1987), 146-47; and *Kaihua xianzhi* (Hangzhou: 1989), 132.

<sup>45</sup> *Yongchun xianzhi* (1990), 247-48.

distributed land. Exchange values of one *mu* of paddy field equaled twenty *mu* of fir trees; fifty *mu* of young pine trees, etc.<sup>46</sup> In Suzhuang township of Kaihua county in Zhejiang, 12.4 percent of the forest was left undetermined in its proper ownership.<sup>47</sup> False reports and under-reporting of forest ownership were common practices. The state order left many groups feeling that the redistribution of land and forests was grossly unfair.

Tree-growing takes time, and has a long cycle for investment returns in contrast to grains or vegetables. When the co-op movement was under way, peasants were allowed to own trees adjacent to their house sites, and small pieces of mountain forest owned by individual peasants was still permitted. Fair and acceptable compensation values of fruit trees and long-cycle trees formerly owned by individual peasants became a complex task when collectivization was imposed in 1955. For example, former owners of trees and forests were compensated at 20 to 40 percent of the state-declared value, depending on the total investment by growers and the current growing quality of the trees. Once the value was determined, the state would compensate the growers by cash installments or by work points at the end of the annual evaluation. But the nontechnical local officials, backed by insufficient budgets, could not bring just expropriation. Many left issues pending. The injustices intensified in the Great Leap Forward under the spirit of *yi ping er diao* (both equity and extraction), under which all privately-owned and collective-owned forests became commune property with no compensation. During the three devastating years (1959-62), massive deforestation in search of firewood and cash destroyed most of the mountain-grown fruit trees and long-cycle plants. Famine, destruction, and injustice were followed by anarchy when the Cultural Revolution paralyzed local forestry management and the mediation mechanism of forest property disputes. Thus southern peasants who had once enjoyed much autonomy in raising trees as private property took advantage of the anarchical situation during the Cultural Revolution period.

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<sup>46</sup> *Kaihua xianzhi* (1989), 123.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

**Table 15**  
**Forest-Related Disputes in Zhejiang and Fujian**

| Type of Conflicts       | County    | Cases/Year               |
|-------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Intracounty disputes    | Changshan | 607 (1966-83) IP*3/IC*24 |
| Intracounty disputes    | Jiande    | 1,189 (IP*84)            |
| Intracounty disputes    | Chun'an   | 863 (1952-57)            |
| Armed forest denudation | Yiwu      | 8 (1967)                 |
| Unspecified             | Yuhang    | 702                      |
| Unspecified             | Kaihua    | 1,744 (1951-64)          |

Sources: *Changshan xianzhi* (1990), 146, 441; *Jiande xianzhi* (1990), 208; *Chun'an xianzhi* (1990), 530-31; *Yiwu xianzhi* (1987), 143; *Yongkang xianzhi* (1990), 474; *Yuhang xianzhi* (1990), 240-41; and *Kaihua xianzhi* (1989), 125.

•IP: Interprovincial; \*IC: Intercounty.

In pre-1949 South China, the property relations of the forests were subordinated to lineage, and this subordination took the form of common corporate property. Each of the localized lineages had a gift economy organized around their separate ancestral worship rites performed at the winter solstice (*dongzhi*). The focus of the gift economy was its annual calendar of village temple rites. When the communists abolished all the lineage rituals in post-1949 South China and distributed the corporate lineage property, the new political structure paid no attention to the prior benefits of corporated redistribution. Rights of possession, management rights, profit-sharing rights, rights of transferal, and the most important right of descendant succession<sup>48</sup> were taken away from lineages. When a state of chaos ensued in the Cultural Revolution, it allowed the property relations of the peasants to be reappropriated by their former lineage in feuds over the forest disputes. Table 15 is a list of forest-related disputes in Zhejiang and Fujian.

Armed confrontations took place in major forest property disputes. From April 1966 to February 1983, 13 large-scale armed feuds occurred in Changshan, Zhejiang in which some 3,800 peasants were involved. Large casualties were incurred.<sup>49</sup> Of the 607 forest-related disputes, 3 cases involved interprovincial disputes, 24 cases involved intercounty disputes, and the rest involved intracounty disputes. Of the 1,189 disputes in Jiande county, 84 cases involved interprovincial

<sup>48</sup> See *Nanyang xianzhi* (Kaifeng: 1990), 271.

<sup>49</sup> *Changshan xianzhi* (1990), 441.

disputes and 1,105 cases involved intracounty disputes. Major incidents occurred in October 1967 in Yiwu of Zhejiang. Some 2,000 peasants from Suxi, Lianhe, and Shangjing townships of Kaihua county in Zhejiang were involved in a massive armed feud.<sup>50</sup>

The frequent changes in forest property rights during the period 1950-78, along with unresolved issues, created a very explosive issue-area at the local level. The highly volatile atmosphere that prevailed during the first thirty years of communist rule gave birth to new, legitimate lineage influence in rural China. Lineage cohesion was aided by the relative anarchy during the Cultural Revolution at the local level, because the Cultural Revolution short-circuited routine state procedures and capacity in forestry management and dispute mediation. In the process, local lineage leadership utilized primordial affections as a vehicle for swift reversal of state settlements of forest disputes. In contrast to the conventional wisdom about a strong state presence, in fact, a well-developed lineage system coexisted with it and, as it grew stronger, seemed to be the last best hope for community justice in outstanding feuds.

### *Case Study Three:*

#### *Secret Societies and Southern Peasants*

Likewise, centuries-old secret societies, which in the south had a defensive and patriotic aura, survived as a source of institutional patronage throughout the communist era. Despite communist efforts to ban all secret societies, they managed to survive in a clandestine manner.

For example, landlords attempted to use secret societies to instigate peasant revolts against the land reform program. An overt opposition to land reform in South China suddenly became acute when the PRC allied with the Soviet Union in February 1950 and entered the Korean War in the fall of that year. Landlords and rich peasants aggressively opposed the land reform, threatening that confiscated, previously landlord-owned land would be reclaimed upon the return of the KMT troops.

Two sects were most extensively involved in a series of revolts, the Tongshanshe (All Mercy Sect) in Fujian and the Yiguandao (The Way of Fundamental Unity) in Zhejiang. Tongshanshe was found in 1918 by Zhang Shouha. By 1921, over twenty local sects were established throughout Fujian. Various names such as Zhongyitu (Diagram of Loyalty and Righteousness), Hongqianghui

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<sup>50</sup> *Yiwu xianzhi* (1987), 143.

(Red Gun Sect), Yixinhui (One Heart Sect), Huangdaihui (Yellow Ribbon Sect), and Baxianhui (Eight Fairies Sect) were used to attract peasant members.<sup>51</sup> Yiguandao originated in Shandong in 1937. In 1944, Yiguandao established local sects in Hangzhou, Zhejiang. During the Sino-Japanese War, followers of this sect collaborated with the KMT.<sup>52</sup> By November 1952, a number of secret societies were banned and mass arrests were made by the communists. Leaders and members were stigmatized as traitors and executed or sent to slave labor in large numbers (see table 16).

Yet, in post-land reform, post-suppression Zhejiang, some major secret societies, including Yiguandao, Tongshanshe, Changshengjiao (Sect of Longevity), and Wuweijiao (Sect of Inaction), persisted (see table 17). These sects appealed to the support of heavenly forces and invoked a composite pantheon in which historical heroes like Guanyu of the Three Kingdoms, Buddhist divinities such as Guanyin (the Goddess of Mercy), and Messiah Maitreya<sup>53</sup> were prominent. These secret societies were strongly influenced by Daoist inclinations of self-salvation. They offered spiritual and religious healing to relieve the growing distress among peasants as the result of all the violence and chaos brought from outside. They offered esoteric explanations and predictions, suggesting an imminent cosmic catastrophe was near, and that a new era was about to begin. Yiguandao predicted that the communists would have eighty-one catastrophes, and that an ultimate catastrophe for communist rule was near. On behalf of heaven, Yiguandao would help poor peasants who join to survive these catastrophes.<sup>54</sup>

The sect leaders of Tongshanshe in Yiwu, Zhejiang proclaimed that the present world was in a period of *Baiyangjie* (Disaster of Baiyang), and the authentic realm in heaven (*zhenming tianzi*) would arrive soon. In order to obtain protection from *zhenming tianzi*, local poor peasants were urged to purchase *Fanlongpiao* (Atonement of Fanlong).<sup>55</sup> In a similar vein, another sect of Changshengdao (Sect of Longevity) in Yiwu, Zhejiang proclaimed that the destiny of the Hongyanghui (Sect of Red Sun, the Communist Party) was near its end. As the world turned, it was the time for the Baiyanghui (Sect

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<sup>51</sup> See *Fujian ribao*, January 14, 1951, 2; April 4, 1951, 2; April 5, 1951, I; April 10, 1951, 2; April 29, 1951,3; June 6, 1951,1; July 21, 1951, 2; July 23, 1951, 1; October 5, 1951, 2; December 31, 1951, 1; and February 8, 1953, 1.

<sup>52</sup> *Yiwu xianzhi* (1987), 419.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 419-22.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 419.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 420.

**Table 16**  
**Suppression of Secret Societies in Zhejiang**

| County    | Secret Society  | No. of <i>Tan</i> | No. of Followers |
|-----------|---|-------------------|------------------|
| Xiangshan | Yiguandao, Tongshanshe<br>Wuweishi, Bailianjiao<br>Zhongjiao daovihui   |                   |                  |
| Xianju    | Yiguandao   | 219               | 1,596            |
|           | Tongshanshe   | 7                 | 140              |
|           | Huanjiidao  | 21                | 1,012            |
|           | Wuweijiao   | 7                 | 292              |
| Xiaoshan  | Yiguandao   | 171               | 11,883           |
|           | Jingongdao  |                   | 1,240            |
|           | Tongshanshe   | 88                | 10,665           |
| Changshan | Yiguandao, Tongshanshe<br>Lishan Baomujiao  |                   |                  |
|           | Dadaohui  | 92                |                  |
| Qingtian  | Qixingjiao  |                   | 4,692            |
|           | Yiguandao   | 14                | 1,400            |
|           | Tongshanshe   | 6                 | 177              |
|           | Wugonghui   | 3                 | 140              |
| Chun'an   | • Yiguandao, Genoshenhui<br>Dadaohui, Wuweijiao<br>Xiaodaohui   | 33                | 1,300            |
| Jiande    | Yiguandao   | 221               | 3,204            |
|           | Tongshanshe   | 30                | 453              |
|           | Wuweijiao   |                   |                  |
| Wuyi      | Yiguandao   | 96                | 479              |
|           | Tongshanshe   | 31                | 753              |
| Pujiang   | Yiguandao, Huanjiidao<br>Tongshanshe, Wuweidao<br>Changshanjiao, Daodashe<br>Suibiandao, Wugonghui<br>Genoshenhui |                   | 4,695            |
| Linhai    | Yiguandao   | 400               | 6,000            |
|           | Huanjiidao  | 30                | 1,500            |
|           | Tongshanshe   | 3                 | 300              |
|           | Ligongtan   |                   |                  |
| Kaihua    | Yiguandao, Tongshanshe  |                   |                  |
| Yiwu      | Yiguandao   |                   | 3,471            |
|           | Qinghe  |                   |                  |
|           | Tongshanshe   |                   | 3,102            |
|           | Yiniezhihui   | 300               |                  |
| Yuhang    | Yiguandao   | 107               | 3,000            |
|           | Jingongdao  | 17                | 2,061            |
|           | Tongshanshe   | 82                | 5,078            |
|           | Wuweijiao   |                   | 39,655           |
| Yongkang  | Tongshanshe   | 52                | 3,615            |
|           | Yiguandao   | 219               | 680              |
| Lanxi     | Yiguandao, Tongshanshe<br>Dudu, Wuweijiao<br>Changshandao   |                   | 9,741            |

**Sources:** *Xiangshan xianzhi* (1988), 450; *Xianju xianzhi* (1986), 467-68; *Xiaoshan xianzhi* (1987), 691-92; *Changshan xianzhi* (1990), 437-38; *Qingtian xianzhi* (1990), 482-83, 540; *Chun'an xianzhi* (1990), 518-19, 525; *Jiande xianzhi* (1990), 637-40; *Wuyi xianzhi* (1990), 539; *Pujiang xianzhi* (1990), 446-47; *Linhai xianzhi* (1989), 230; *Kaihua xianzhi* (1989), 430; *Yiwu xianzhi* (1987), 419-22; *Yuhang xianzhi* (1990), 597-98; *Yongkang xianzhi* (1991), 464; and *Lanxi xianzhi* (1988), 501



**Table 17**  
**Secret Societies in Post-1949 Zhejiang**

| County   | Sect                                   | Year       |
|----------|--|------------|
| Yuhang   | Bailianjiao, Zhutianhui, Yuanshuaihui, | 1958       |
|          | Tudihui, Dongvuehui                    | 1958       |
|          | Yiguandao                              | 1960       |
|          | Changshandao                           | 1963       |
|          | Tongshanshe                            | 1970       |
|          | Yiguandao                              | 1984       |
| Xiaoshan | Qiugongdao                             | 1958, 1963 |
| Pujiang  | (Unknown)                              | 1983       |
| Yongkang | Yiguandao                              | 1954       |
| Qingtian | Qixingjiao                             | 1952, 1961 |
|          |  | 1967, 1976 |
| Xianjn   | Huangjijiao                            | 1957, 1963 |
|          | Wuweijiao                              |            |

**Sources:** *Yuhang xianzhi* (1990), 597; *Xiaoshan xianzhi* (1987), 691; *Pujiang xianzhi* (1991), 446; *Yongkang xianzhi* (1990), 464; *Qingtian xianzhi* (1990), 540; and *Xianju xianzhi* (1989), 467.

of White Sun).<sup>56</sup> These deep-rooted identities served as ways to comprehend the communist-induced catastrophe for suffering southern peasants. The conventional wisdom that assumes villagers suddenly abandon persistent and satisfying world views and instead begin to see the world singularly in Marxist-Leninist categories lacks any evidentiary support.

The continuing existence of secret societies in South China under communist rule suggests the spiritual and religious needs of the southern peasants were not met by the Communist Party's dogmas. In this sense, continuity represents a defensive gesture through which the southern peasants were in defiance of the state's imposed authority.

### Conclusion

When the communists took over South China, they looked upon the southern peasants with a dislike that reflected the northerners' contempt for all things southern, from green tea instead of black to mourning rituals that included a reburial of bones. The Communist Party's central demand, collective ownership, and the large-scale use of

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 422.

the means of production all commanded by outsiders flouted historical values, practices, and claims of the southern peasantry. Moreover, the Communist Party's stigmatizing of South China's civilization as a feudalism to be annihilated and its insistence on universalizing the language of the capital in the north was in confrontation with the resistance of the shared tongues of the southern peasants.

In short, the agenda of the Party-state headquartered in Beijing felt like a war against the southern peasantry and its culture, thereby unwittingly reshaped southern political outlooks. An ideological and political war which culminated in the liquidation of the peasant economy and peasant culture could not but be resisted as immoral.

A strong segmentary lineage ideology was given a new lease on life. Despite the virtual disappearance of public organs of power, southern peasants have preserved and cherished even more the deep structure of their lineage society right. Under the superficial and complicitous hypocrisy of survival, which entailed bowing to the north's coercive power, it was the real and moral society which persisted until the communists embarked on their rural reform program in 1978. At that point, the hidden become the manifested and, as in other Leninist and post-Leninist states, people wrongly saw tradition reemerging, not realizing that what would come to the fore was experienced as the last best hope for a just society. These cultural forms protected and defended southern peasant victims against a state which treated what peasants most valued as something to be forgotten and annihilated.