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Mr. Walter S. Rogers  
Institute of Current World Affairs  
522 Fifth Avenue  
New York 18, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Rogers:

I have returned to Chungking after an extremely interesting study of conditions in rural areas near here. I did not follow my original plan exactly, but I believe my experience has been more worthwhile than if I had. Instead of settling down to absorb atmosphere in one spot, I moved around considerably and made a study of local government and politics, starting right from the bottom and working up to the Hsien and Administrative District in one specific region. In that region I got to know all of the major officials at the various levels of government as well as ordinary people in the places where I lived and worked. I also made a general sort of survey of one local farming region. I was fortunate, also, in meeting two young Chinese students who were studying various aspects of the region, and the material which they had collected was useful.

The language problem was disturbing at first. Although the Szechwan dialect is closely related to Northern Mandarin the difference between the two dialects is comparatively great. For one thing, some of the major tones are reversed, and in a language which is basically tonal that is confusing to say the least. I stumbled along, however, and was able to communicate with people even though it was sometimes difficult. A young instructor from the Mass Education Movement's College of Rural Reconstruction acted as my companion and interpreter part of the time. He did not know much English, but he did know Northern Mandarin fairly well, so occasionally we conversed with people by using a rather strange combination of Szechwan dialect, Peiping dialect, and English. Somehow or other it worked.

In this report I have included a considerable amount of detailed information which I have gathered (although I also have left out much that I would like to include). I hope that the report is more than a dull catalog of facts and that after you have read it the details will fit together into a composite picture of the local government in the region and the general economic, social, and political setting within which that government works.

I ended my project more abruptly than I had planned. While swimming in a warm springs pool with the District Officer of the Third Administrative District I received a gash on my forehead and had to return to Chungking to have it treated. With four stitches it is healing rapidly.

One of the American Vice-Consuls here is a Yale classmate of mine. Day after tomorrow he is leaving by jeep on a motor trip via Chengtu to Sikang Province. It is an unusual opportunity to see something of that little-known region, and I am going with him. It will take about two weeks, and I will write when I return.

Sincerely yours,  
Doak Barnett  
Doak Barnett

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Notes on Local Government in Szechuan

The Provincial Setting

The province of Szechuan lies in Southwest China, encircled by high mountain ranges which define it as a geographical region as well as a political unit. In area it is about the size of Sweden, but its population exceeds that of France.

No other province in China contains so many people. It is currently estimated that between 45 and 48 million people are crowded into Szechuan, most of them in the lush Red Basin. The regional title, Red Basin, was originally used many years ago by the geographer Von Richtofen, and it is appropriately descriptive of the dull red color of the fertile soil, a color caused by the layer of red sand-stone underlying most of the region. In a way the term basin is somewhat misleading, however. Except for the Chengtu Plain, the province is almost entirely covered by hills and mountains. The tops of the hills are normally about 3,000 to 4,000 feet high, and squeezed between them are innumerable valleys which twist and turn with the contours of the topography. The term basin is correct, nonetheless, for the outer boundaries are formed by barrier ranges which rise much higher and cut off Szechuan from the rest of China. Through these mountains a few passes lead from and into adjacent areas, but the traditional approach into the basin is through the awesome gorges which the Yangtze River carves on its eastward descent to the province of Hupeh.

Szechuan means "four rivers" in Chinese. The Yangtze, fifth longest river in the world, is the main artery of a river system which drains most of the province. It is fed by a complicated network of tributaries, the most important of which are the Min, Kialing, and Lu. These rivers are the principal means of long-distance transport in the province, and together with the streams which feed them they are important also in irrigation.

Land transportation in the province is primitive and undeveloped. Before 1927 there was not even a single wheeled vehicle in Chungking, the largest city in the province and its economic center. Today, largely as a result of wartime developments, there are 6289 kilometers of motor roads, but these are mostly constructed of simple crushed

rock, and they connect only the most important population centers. There are five short railways used to transport coal and iron, but the first projected passenger line, from Chungking to Chengtu, is not yet completed. Even animal transportation is not practical in much of the region, and transportation is still predominantly the function of strong human backs. Narrow, stone-paved paths are the highways of trade and commerce in areas not served by waterways. Steam navigation on the Yangtze and Kialing and modern airlines touching at Chungking and Chengtu have revolutionized transportation in and out of the province, but the effects of this revolution have been felt only by a few.

Although level land is scarce in Szechuan, the soil is rich and water is abundant. Rainfall varies from 35 inches in the North to 45 inches in the South, and the temperate, moist climate is excellent for agriculture. The province has a garden-like appearance. Trees are numerous, particularly on hilly ground, and the aspect of the landscape is everywhere predominantly green. Agriculture has been adapted remarkably to the nature of the terrain. Terraces cover much of the land and creep up steep hills, and only when slopes exceed 45 degrees are they completely devoid of cultivation. Much of the land is irrigated, and most of it is fertilized. Consequently in some areas there are two or three crops a year.

The most important crop, which more than anything else determines the characteristics of economic life in the region, is rice. This fact immediately identifies Szechuan as a sub-region in a large area covering Central and South China. Although Szechuan has many unique characteristics its rice culture is in all essentials similar to that in the whole of Southwest China and most of Central and South China.

Agriculturally, Szechuan is distinctive for the amazing variety of its products. "Everything which can be grown anywhere in the country can be grown here". It is self-sufficient in agricultural products except for cotton, which although grown in the northern part of the province has to be imported from neighboring provinces such as Hopeh and Shensi as well. Even a partial list of Szechuan's agricultural products is impressive: rice, wheat, corn, potatoes, apples, oranges, tangerines, pomeloes, cherries, peaches, pears, persimmons, grapes, ginger, tobacco,

kaoling, millet, buckwheat, beans, sugar cane, peanuts, mustard, opium, indigo, camphor, hemp, sesame, rape, vegetables, pigs, pig bristles, tea, silk, tung oil. The list could be extended. Some of the products are important exports also. Tung oil, pig bristles, and silk are particularly important because of the foreign demand for these products and China's urgent necessity for accumulating foreign exchange.

Mineral resources are abundant. Coal is widely distributed throughout the province, and Szechuan has four percent of the coal reserves in China Proper, a more significant figure than it might seem in view of the concentration of deposits in Shansi-Shensi. Some iron exists in scattered deposits. Salt is abundant and has been produced for hundreds of years in the famous Tzeliutsing wells. Other important resources include: antimony, mica, lead, asbestos, limestone, mercury, gypsum, graphite, copper, gold, cinnabar, copperas, zinc, silver, sulphur, saltpeter, and some natural gas and petroleum. Forests are dense in the southwest part of the province, and Szechuan's potentialities for hydroelectric development are excellent.

This richly endowed region, called by one enthusiastic writer the "Eden of the Flowery Republic", is overcrowded with people, however, and population density has just about reached its maximum limit under existing conditions. The people living in Szechuan are for the most part of the same Chinese stock predominant in most of South and Central China. They are short, energetic, and hardy. In the western part of the province, however, are aboriginal tribes which are non-Chinese racially. These tribes, some of which practice slavery and live by illicit cultivation and trade of opium and by periodic raids on nearby Chinese settlements, are largely isolated from the rest of the province. They include the Lolo, Miao, Hsifan, and Mantzu tribe. They are not significant numerically, however. The majority Chinese in Szechuan share with the rest of China the common cultural heritage, with its deep philosophical, historical, and linguistic roots, which has kept China together as a nation despite regional differentiation. In addition, however, they have a regional consciousness, developed through centuries of relative isolation, which distinguishes them as Szechuanese. They think of themselves as Szechuanese as well as Chinese.

Szechuan was not incorporated into the political structure of China Proper until the Ch'in Dynasty during the Third Century B. C. Prior to that time, it was distinct and apart and received strong cultural influences from India as well as from China. Once the states of Pa and Shu, in the area which is now Szechuan, were conquered by Ch'in Shih Huang Ti, however, they became an important source of raw materials and agricultural products which helped him unite the whole country. Since that time Szechuan has been one of the most important provinces in China.

Because of its remoteness and isolation, however, Szechuan has often enjoyed what in fact has amounted to local autonomy, and separatism has been a recurring theme in its history. It was a theme which recurred at the time of the Revolution of 1911. When the October revolt began in Wuchang and the weakened Manchu Empire quietly collapsed, revolt spread to Szechuan, and order and authority there disintegrated. For several years the province was split up into tiny private regions controlled by military leaders who collected their own taxes, maintained their own armies, and alternately fought and made shaky alliances among themselves. Taxes were collected decades in advance. Personal fortunes rose and fell. And a general state of near-chaos and anarchy existed.

Finally one of these military leaders named Liu Hsiang emerged as the strongest of the group and set up a sort of local state of his own. He firmly established his power and defeated, made deals with, or adopted the most important of his competitors. Although he was no reformer, his military rule did at least reduce the confusion and chaos.

Then came the Sino-Japanese War, and modern history began to catch up with Szechuan. The war gradually forced the Central Government back into China's interior. The first move was from Nanking to Hankow. Then when the Japanese caught up with it the Government packed up and moved almost as far as it could go - to Szechuan. Prior to this time the forces and ideas of the West which had been infiltrating China for many years had barely penetrated the mountain-surrounded remoteness of Szechuan. But when the capital was moved to Chungking, a horde of people came with the Government, including technicians, bureaucrats, businessmen, and intelligentsia. They were catalytic agents, and a process of fermentation and change began in Szechuan. Industries were set up. Mines were

bored into unexploited resources. Roads were constructed. Every effort was made to turn Szechuan into an arsenal and base to support the war against Japan. For seven long years the Government of China held out in its Szechuan stronghold. The mood began with high hope and deteriorated into cynical pessimism, but the Government held out nonetheless.

Important political changes took place in Szechuan during that period. Some years before, the central Government had recognized the legitimacy of Liu Hsiang's regime, because it could do little else at the time. Now, however, the old-time localism could not be tolerated, and about the time that the Central Government was formulating its plans to move westward Liu Hsiang died somewhat mysteriously. A new provincial regime, which was little more than a branch of the Central Government, was established. At first Chiang Kai-shek held the post of Governor concurrently with his numerous other positions, but Chang Chün did the work and eventually he was made Governor. During the following war years, Szechuan for the first time since the Revolution of 1911 was really integrated into the political and administrative structure of Nationalist China.

Then the end of the war came. The migration which had brought millions of Chinese from all over the country into the West was reversed. Most of them went home. The center of political and economic power shifted back again to the lower Yangtze valley. Industries packed up and left. Szechuan again became backwash; it again became the interior. People began to forget about the "tremendous potentialities of West China" and about the comparisons they had drawn between China's wartime migrations and the opening of the West in the United States. But the war had left a mark which could not be completely erased. Szechuan was now more definitely a part of China politically and administratively than it had been for many years. Also, some industries stayed on, particularly around Chungking, and formed a nucleus of arsenals, operating coal mines, flour mills, and cotton and wool factories which looked as if they might be permanent.

Despite the integration of Szechuan into the administrative fabric of Nationalist China as a whole, however, some of the old political forces began to reappear in the province. The old names cropped up again. Three generals who had ranked just below Liu Hsiang in local politics

were still going strong. Teng Shih-hou became Governor of Szechuan. Liu Wen-hui was Governor of neighboring Sikang. P'ian Wen-hwa was military commander of the important strategic area overlapping the border of Szechuan and Hupeh. These were all Central Government appointments, but they tended to restore the political status quo ante. In Chengtu, the provincial capital which is the second largest city in the province and is often called "Little Peking" because it is the cultural center of the Southwest, unsavory machinations began to take place and rumblings of trouble were heard. Madame Liu Hsiang cornered the rice market. Teng Hsi-hou began to show favoritism to his relatives and to the old gang. The Central Government wasn't getting the taxes which it expected. Student riots and rice riots took place and were mishandled.

As China's civil war dragged on, however, the Central Government began to remember Szechuan - it was still a major arsenal and an important source of food supplies. The Nanking authorities didn't like some of the things going on in Chengtu. In May, 1948, the Central Government suddenly appointed a new Governor of Szechuan, Wang Lin-chi. Wang also had been a Szechuan general in the Liu Hsiang period, but he was considered more reliable than Teng and more capable of stabilizing what was felt to be a deteriorating situation in Szechuan. His job was to calm what looked like the beginning of unrest and to keep the rice coming and the arsenals going. Teng Shih-hou retired temporarily to Shanghai "to rest", and Madame Liu decided to sell some of her rice.

Szechuan still remains in the background, however. In May 1948, a long Communist thrust from North Shensi almost touched the border of the province and frightened some people, but the Communists were defeated by the Nationalist troops of Hu Tsung-nan and Ma Hung-kwei. Captured Communist maps indicate party cells throughout the province, but although there are a few irregular units in the mountains which may be Communist there has been no Communist activity of real importance in Szechuan since the Long March swept through the province in the middle thirties. All in all, Szechuan is now one of the most quiet areas in China, in spite of a growing apprehension and fear that the civil war may eventually engulf the Southwest.

The government in Szechuan today conforms to the pattern established by Central Government laws and regulations. In structure, therefore, local government in the



province can be considered representative of local government throughout Nationalist China. As might be expected, however, the content of local politics, as distinguished from the formal framework of administration, is influenced by the local conditions and traditions. But this is true to some degree of local government everywhere in Nationalist China. The rules are laid down by the Central Government, but there are local variations in the way the game is played.

### A Family

Lin Hsiu-ching is a Chinese farmer. He is a member of the First Chia of the Twentieth Pao of Hsieh Ma Hsiang which is a part of the Fourth Ch'u of Pa Hsien which belongs to the Third Administrative District of Szechuan Province. In short, he is the lowest common denominator in Chinese political life. There are millions like him throughout China. They are the "lao pai hsing", the "old hundred names", the common people. Collectively they form the base of China's agricultural society. Although the government authorities sometimes forget it, they are the base of China's government as well.

In the Chinese political hierarchy, Lin has a legal status distinct from his status as an individual. He is the head of his family which gives him a political title as Head of a Hu or household. Until recently the other members of his family were not expected, and in fact had no right, to participate in political activity as individuals. The family head spoke and acted for the whole family. With this position went duties and responsibilities as well. The head of a family was largely responsible for the actions of his wife and children. As modern Chinese legal and political thought has developed under the influence of Western theory and practice, this collective family responsibility for the social acts of its members has been discredited, but in practice it has not been eliminated, for the hold of tradition is strong.

The Western conception of the individual rather than the family as the basic political unit has already altered Lin's position somewhat in theory. In voting for representatives to the National Assembly and to the Legislative

Yuan, for example, all the adult members of his family can vote individually. The practical importance of this change is not great, however. For one thing, those two bodies are so remote that they are out of the realm of comprehension or understanding of Lin Himself, to say nothing of his wife and family. They have no knowledge of either the issues, or the personalities, involved at that level of government, and unless prodded from above they would prefer not to bother with the whole business. Even if this were not true, and if the members of Lin's family were intensely interested in casting their vote for the highest representative bodies in China, it is almost certain that the family vote would be a block vote, for in custom and tradition which are more real, more immediate, and more important to Lin and His family than legislation and laws passed in far-away Nanking, Lin is the unquestioned head of his family.

The position of the family as the basic political unit, furthermore, has not even been challenged in the organization of local government, and national laws recognize the family head as the representative of the family. The head of every household, including Lin, has the right and responsibility to elect the head of his Chia and to serve as a member of his Pao People's Assembly. The other members of his family do not participate even if they are adults.

Lin's direct participation in local government goes no further than the Pao People's Assembly, however. Each level of government above that is chosen by the level immediately below it and has no direct connection with the electorate.

As head of his household, however, Lin is an important member of another organization which may be just as important in his life as the Government. That organization is the family clan, an extended kinship group which includes all the families of the same name in the vicinity. The clan is more than a loose grouping of relatives, which it tends to be, if it exists at all, in Western countries. It meets for joint worship of the clan's ancestors. It maintains ancestral graves, temples, and shrines. Sometimes it owns joint clan land. It is both social security group and a credit and borrowing organization. In addition it maintains an

informal system of intra-family law and justice; the clan leaders solve disputes and use their prestige to keep members of the clan in line and to ensure their good behavior so that the family name will not be injured. The clan has no recognized status in the structure of organized government under national laws, but its influence upon clan members is considerable.

Perhaps Lin's most important role in Chinese society, though, is in the economic sphere. He is the head of one of the closely-knit, well-integrated, basic production units which go to make up China's agricultural economy. Division of labor and specialization of function have not progressed very far in China, but they exist to a certain extent within Lin's family. Each member of the family has his or her functions, and together they form a co-operative, self-supporting, production unit, with Lin as its director. They work as a definite unit, and the product of their labor goes to the head of the family and is distributed by him. Even if one of Lin's sons left the farm and went to work in the city, he probably would find it very difficult to break away completely from this concept of collective economic effort on the part of the family, and undoubtedly part of his income, if he received any surplus at all over and above subsistence requirements, would be remitted back to the family on the farm.

Lin's family has been in the Hsien Ma Hsiang region continuously since they moved to Szechuan from Central China about the end of the Ming Dynasty. They were part of a large migration which came to take over land which had been almost depopulated by a notorious Szechuan bandit named Chang Hsien-chung. Lin himself was born in the farmhouse where he now lives but which he has never owned. That was 57 years ago. Since that time he has had 12 children, seven of whom have died. Life has never been easy for him. He is a tenant farmer, and in fact has always been a tenant farmer. There has been very little change or improvement in his status during the past half century, and he has very little to show materially for his years of labor. However, he is quite proud of the fact that two of his children can read and write; he himself never had any education and is completely illiterate. He is also proud of the fact that one of his sons is a member of the Ko Lao Hui, the Brothers' Society, which is so influential locally.

The land which he farms consists of several tiny, scattered slices of land which are squeezed between the plots which his neighbors farm. Altogether he rents 26 tan of rice land. (It is extremely difficult to translate local measures into English terms. I will illustrate the complications one encounters. A tan is a measure for both grain and land. A tan of land is a variable measure expressed in terms of the output of the land. Sometimes, as in the case of farmer Lin, it represents the amount of land which theoretically will produce one "old tan" of unhusked rice. At other times, although less frequently, it is used to indicate an amount of land which theoretically will produce a quantity of unhusked rice which when divided according to the terms existing between landlord and tenant will give the landlord one "old tan" of rice. The "old tan", which is locally used, is three times a "new tan" or picul which is an official measure prescribed by national laws. Very roughly, however, the average tan of land is said to be about the same as a mow which is one-sixth of an acre.)

Although this land is supposed to be able to produce 26 tan of unhusked rice in a year, whether or not it produces that much depends on many factors in addition to Lin's own labor and skill. Rice pests are common, particularly when there has been no snow or heavy frost the winter before. Water is uncertain. Rainfall is abundant, but for rice cultivation it must come at the right time, or there can be disastrous results. There are no adequate irrigation canals in Lin's region, so he depends on the rain. His fields must be flooded by the time his rice seedlings are ready for transplantation from their small plot into the main fields in early May, yet if there is too much rain immediately after transplantation the rice crop may be injured. Depending as he does upon natural precipitation rather than controlled irrigation, Lin produces only one major crop a year. The reason for this is that he cannot take the risk of draining the water from his field, to use them for other crops during the winter, as farmers with an assured water supply can do. He must let his rice fields stand wet and idle all winter so that he will have a minimum of needed moisture in the Spring if the rains fail him.

Regardless of whether or not Lin's 26 tan of rice land actually produce 26 tan of unhusked rice, the terms of his tenancy require that he give about 15 tan of the output to his landlord as rent sometime during the eighth

month of the lunar calendar after the harvesting. His rent is fixed in kind at 60 percent of the theoretical produce of his rice land. All secondary crops other than rice which he grows on the rough ground adjacent to his rice fields are entirely his own, however. The rent which he gives on his rice production is just about average in his vicinity. Three standards for sharing the crop are prevalent: 70-30, 60-40, and 50-50. The most that any tenant farmers get is 50 percent of the crop, and in areas not far away some get as little as 20 percent.

In actual fact, Lin's land recently has produced about 24 tan of unhusked rice a year. This means that he has nine tan of unhusked rice, or four and one-half tan of edible rice, for himself and his family - in addition to all the secondary crops which he grows. This is inadequate. A single person with a good appetite eats almost one tan of rice during the course of a year. There are seven persons in Lin's household and only four and one-half tan of rice. As a consequence, although he is a rice producer he is also a rice buyer. Furthermore, since rice is the main cash crop as well as subsistence crop in the region, to be reasonably well off a farmer should have a rice surplus to sell for money income with which to buy supplementary supplies such as meat, salt, sugar, vegetable oils, tobacco, coal, fertilizers, and cloth, and to hire temporary labor during the busiest planting and harvesting periods (almost all farmers, including tenants, find it necessary to do this). A combination of too little land and too high rent places a heavy burden on Lin and his fellow tenants in the region. Livelihood is marginal, and the problem of getting enough to eat is real and immediate.

Because his basic crop, rice, is primarily a rent crop, Lin has to rely heavily on secondary crops grown on high ground adjacent to the rice fields, on the narrow ridges between the fields, and on any scraps of land which cannot be used for rice cultivation. These crops in his case, include small amounts of Kaoliang, corn, wheat, barley, soy beans, peppers, and miscellaneous vegetables.

All that he can produce of these crops is his own, and is consumed by his family.

The major source for the small amount of money income which trickles into the family coffers every year is straw hat weaving. This is done by Lin's wife and daughter, and

by the wives and daughters of virtually every other farmer in the region. These hats are woven laboriously by hand from carefully cut and prepared wheat stalks, and they are sold at the nearby market village from whence they go ultimately to markets all over the province. The hat weaving home industry is based on a local skill which covers only a relatively small region. Special handicrafts such as this are the main form of regional specialization differentiating the production of various rural districts within the broader region to which Hsieh Ma Hsiang belongs.

Money income is not sufficient to meet the minimum needs of the family, however, so Lin currently is in debt for CNY10,000,000. Even though he borrowed this money from members of his clan, the interest rate is 20 percent a month.

Farming is back-breaking work for Lin and his sons. As many observers of Chinese rice cultivation have remarked it is more like gardening than farming. There is an unexpressive but accurate term for it in economic phraseology; it is labor-intensive. Land is scarce, and capital goods are prohibitively expensive (as well as difficult to apply in the case of rice cultivation), while labor is relatively plentiful and cheap. As a result, although land productivity is reasonably good, labor productivity is low. In human terms, all this means that Lin and his sons have to work long and hard with very little mechanical help to extract a living from the soil. It means that they spend hours and days sloshing knee-deep through the mud, plowing their fields, that they carefully plant each rice stalk individually, that they tread endlessly upon wooden water wheels to distribute water between their terraced fields, and that they pick each weed and finally cut each stalk by hand. Their capital equipment is simple: a wooden grinding machine, a husking "wind cart", a plow, a few simple tools, and a buffalo. They are particularly fortunate to have a buffalo, because many tenants must rent theirs. In addition to his work the buffalo contributes his share to the family's supply of organic manure.

The family lives in a rambling house which belongs to their landlord and is located right next to his mansion. The Lin's house itself is quite a big place, but they share it with another tenant family. In the central part of the house is a courtyard, where most of the family works and

relaxes when the weather is fair, and a ceremonial hall containing a plaque dedicated to their ancestors. The animals (there are two pigs and several chickens as well as the buffalo) live under the same roof, in a barn-like annex adjacent to the kitchen. Except for the open court and half-open ceremonial hall the house is dark and gloomy. There are no exterior windows, for the house is completely self-enclosed for protection against robbers. Several dogs, well trained to make plenty of noise when any stranger approaches, act as the family's burglar alarm. The main walls of the house are made of thick mud bricks, and the others are simply bamboo lathe covered with mud plaster. The roof is tiled, for only the very poorest houses in the region have thatched roofs, and by local standards Lin's house is a good one. Although it is dark, dirty, and smelly, it is quite spacious and is well constructed.

Life for all of the members of the Lin family involves hard work, and there is little to relieve the monotony. There is almost no organized recreation, and there are few diversions. But the family gets its pleasure and enjoyment from little things. They enjoy the feathery bamboo trees clustered about their house and the mountains which surround their green valley. They enjoy their family. They enjoy going to the village on market days. Although they work hard, they are not morose, and there is an impressive dignity about people who live on and for the soil - even if they are tenant farmers.

The horizons of the Lin family, however, are limited, almost as limited as their topographical horizons which are cut off by the mountains surrounding their valley. "One world" doesn't include the Lin family as informed and participating members. Lin himself made a trip to Chungking once, but that was a long way to go. He has never heard of Truman or Stalin. Although he is vaguely aware of the fact that a civil war is in progress in China, he has no clear idea of what it is all about; it is still a long way away. He has never heard of Mao Tse-tung, and Chiang Kai-shek is just a name. He has heard of the Kuomintang, but has never had any sort of contact with it himself. His knowledge and his interests are confined to his immediate surroundings, to the people he knows, and to the problems he himself faces.

Although life is far from easy for him, he accepts it. There is a certain equilibrium between him and his

environment, both physical and social, which apparently is quite stable. He is not agitating against tenancy, although he would like to own a plot of land. He is not indignant against the high rent he has to pay, although he would like to pay less, because that's just the way things are. He is conservative and accepts things as they are.

There is very little collective life to be shared with his neighbours, less in fact than in North China, for in Lin's region farmers do not live in villages of the kind found in the North. Probably due in part at least to the nature of the terrain and the type of agriculture prevalent, farmers' households are scattered throughout the farming region rather than concentrated in villages. Usually, in the case of tenant farmers, two families live in one house, and occasionally half a dozen houses are clustered together in a group, but there are no real farming villages. The only villages are market villages, which serve as economic focal points for the scattered farmers.

Farmer Lin's house is one of a cluster of seven houses which are perched in a slow-curving arc around the base of a small, wooded hill. These seven houses together form the First Chia of the Twentieth Pao in Hsieh Ma Hsiang.

#### A Chia

The Pao-Chia system of governmental administration has a long history in China. It developed in local areas during the first millenium A.D., and in the Eleventh Century it was made a national system by the celebrated Chinese reformer, Wang An-shih. At that time, administrative units were made up of ten, fifty, and five hundred families. Changes were made from time to time, however, and during the Ch'ing or Manchu Dynasty the units were ten, one hundred, and one thousand families, called respectively P'ai, Chia, and Pao. The system does not have a continuous history, however. Under the Republic it lapsed at first, but in 1932 Chiang K'ai-shek and his Government revived it, principally it is said because they believed



it to be an efficient system for military purposes and for mobilizing the people. At that time, however, all officers down to and including the lowest levels were appointed from above. During the Sino-Japanese War, in 1939, steps were taken to convert it into a system of partial self-government. In that year innovations were introduced which made all local government up to and including the Hsiang elective and representative. It took several years to put these changes into operation, but they are now in effect, in Hsieh Ma Hsiang at least. The new Chinese constitution provides for extending self-government to the Hsien and Provincial Governments, but any practical steps toward that and undoubtedly will be slow and difficult.

Although the Chia, Pao, and Hsiang are now self-governing units in some respects, their form of organization, their functions, and their responsibilities are rigidly regulated by national statutes supplemented by provincial regulations. Local practice does not always conform in all details to these laws and regulations, but it does conform in important respects. (In this report I will describe the actual rather than the theoretical situation in the areas I discuss.)

The First Chia of the Twentieth Pao of Hsieh Ma Hsiang, to which farmer Lin belongs, contains a total of 14 Hu, or households, crowded into a small cluster of seven houses. Although it is more physically compact and concentrated than some other Chia in the region it is fairly typical.

Two of the 14 households are landlords; the other 12 are their tenants. It is, therefore, a microcosm of the landlord-tenant relationships typical of the whole region. There is a sharp distinction between landlords and tenants in their manner of living. The tenants are the producers. The landlords do not produce; they live on rent and consequently live a more leisurely and more sophisticated life. A few bare facts about the people in the First Chia will help to clarify the differences between the landlords and tenants, and the relationships between the two groups.

One of the landlords is a 70 year old gentleman who owns several hundred tan of land, some of it in the immediate vicinity of his house and some in other regions.

He lives with his family and servants in a tremendous, three-story brick mansion known by local people simply as the "foreign-house" because of its style of construction (some other landlords in the area have similar houses). The mansion is large but not comfortable, and he uses only a part of it. It reminds one of what one writer on economic theory has called "conspicuous consumption". This old gentleman rents all of his land to tenants, and he lives on the rice income from rent. Being a landowner he has to pay the land tax, which according to his figures amounts to a little over 20 percent of the rice which he receives. He inherited most of his land and has never been in debt or had financial trouble. When he was a boy he was tutored in a "family school" for 10 years and therefore is literate. He has travelled some, and although he has never been out of Szechuan Province he is considerably better informed in a general way than his tenants. His life is quiet. He reads, relaxes, and visits with his friends. He is a member of Brothers' Society but not of the Kuomintang. Unlike some of his landlord friends, he does not participate actively in politics.

The other landlord is a younger man of 55 who has less land and lives more modestly. He too, however, inherited his land and does no work himself. He is educated, also in a "family school", and has travelled a good deal in and out of Szechuan Province. He too belongs to the Brothers' Society but not to the Kuomintang. However, he is active in politics and at present is the Pao Representative of the Twentieth Pao in the Hsiang People's Representative Assembly.

The 12 tenants all rent their land from one of these two landlords. The amount of land which they rent varies considerably, however. The largest amount is 28 tan, and the smallest is less than one tan. Actually, of the 12 tenants, only six depend for their livelihood primarily on farming. The other six, although farmers, have so little land that they depend primarily on secondary occupations. One buys pig bristles, processes them, and resells them. One raises ducks. One makes kaoliang wine. One makes mosquito punk. The others depend primarily on wages for labor which they perform in nearby areas. All of the families rely quite heavily upon income from hat weaving.

The average household of these 12 tenants contains 5.5 persons, but they vary from three to 12. None of the tenants has ever owned, bought, or sold any land. All

but three of the 12 are in debt. Only four own their own buffalos. One measure of their struggle for existence is the fact that the 12 families altogether have lost 32 children who have died during childhood.

About half of the 12 family heads have had two or three years of schooling but could hardly be called literate. Three can really read and write. One is a middle school graduate, but he does almost no farming. His wife makes mosquito punk, and he works for wages; at one time he even tried his hand at managing a restaurant in the village. None of the tenants has ever been out of Szechuan.

Although both of their landlords are members of the Brothers' Society, only four of the 12 tenants are members, and none of the tenants have even held any political position above the level of the Pao. No one in the Chia belongs to or is interested in the Kuomintang.

These 14 families, landlords and tenants, together form a political unit, a Chia, and occasionally they sit together in informal sessions which are called Chia Affairs Meetings. They elect a Chia Chief every two years, and he serves without salary. At present the Chief is one of the tenant farmers who is literate and belongs to the Brothers' Society but who economically is one of the most hard-pressed men in the Chia. He is heavily in debt and it is only by making kaoliang wine in addition to farming that he can keep the 12 members of his household fed.

The functions of the Chia Chief and the Chia Affairs Meetings are simple. They are responsible for carrying out orders which come from above, from their Pao Chief. Whenever orders and instructions are passed down the line, the Chia Chief calls all of the family heads together and explains what must be done, or what he has been told. The Chia is organized to see that instructions reach the end of the line.

All 14 household heads are also members of the Pao People's Assembly.

#### A Pao

In the Twentieth Pao of Hsieh Ma Hsiang there are 10 Chia containing a population of 854 persons. Altogether

there are 31 Pao of approximately the same size in the Hsiang.

The Twentieth Pao is roughly one mile square. It is a picturesque country spot. The tiny valleys are a bright yellow-green by the end of May after the rice has been transplanted to the terraced fields, and low rolling hills break the landscape into an irregular pattern. There are clumps of trees and bamboos on the hillsides and along narrow streams which meander peacefully toward distant rivers. Narrow stone paths, just wide enough for a single person, wind through the paddy fields, connecting the scattered farmhouses and leading off to the market village not far away. By the side of these paths are small stone shrines containing carved figures of the earth gods which are painted in bright, almost livid, colors. Farmers in wide straw hats work in the fields, and there are a few slow, lumbering water buffalos. It is quiet and peaceful.

Altogether there are 149 households in the Pao. Two of these are small establishments which are the equivalent of an American general store, but the rest are the households of farmers or landlords. Most of the cultivable land is owned by landlords, 16 of whom live within the Pao and 19 of whom (not included in the 149 total) are absentee. Some of the latter undoubtedly live in nearby Chungking. The big landlords in Szechuan gravitate to two places, Chungking and Chengtu. In Chungking some of them enter business and trade. In Chengtu they exert a strong influence on the Provincial Government. They almost always keep on investing and reinvesting in land, not only because traditionally it is the most secure form of investment in China but also because other outlets for investment are limited. The constant depreciation of money discourages any accumulation of fluid savings or capital. Within the past few months this pattern has been shaken slightly but not basically changed. Apprehension about the Communists (i.e. fear of ultimate expropriation of land) has forced land values down considerably. It is reported that some landlords in the Chengtu region are selling their land, but this is not taking place yet in Hsieh Ma Hsiang.

Of the non-landlord households in the Twentieth Pao, 92 are tenants, 36 are owners who cultivate their own land, two are owner-cultivators who rent some land out, and one is part owner and part tenant.

In the whole Pao there are 1535 tan of rice land. 1137 tan, or roughly 75 percent, are farmed by full tenants

Only 398 tan are farmed by men who own all or part of their own land. The total agricultural produce of all the cultivable land in the Pao amounted in 1947 to 1163 tan of rice, 80 tan of other grains, and some sweet potatoes, beans, and other minor crops. The farmers in the Pao also raised 203 pigs and wove 10,000 straw hats.

This region, organized politically as a Pao, is not a community in the real sense of that word. Its members do not form an integrated group. Lin's family is a closely-knit organization; the first Chia already described is tied together by proximity and by the relations between the landlords and tenants living there (this is not true of all Chia, however); and Hsieh Ma Hsiang is a natural economic region centering on a market village. The Twentieth Pao, however, is merely an arbitrary administrative district demarcated on the basis of size and population. It is, however, a convenient intermediary between Hsiang and Chia which facilitates administration.

The characteristics of organized government begin to appear faintly at the Pao level. There is a Pao People's Assembly which is supposed to meet once every month, but sometimes the meetings are postponed during the busiest farming periods. Every household head is a voting member of the Assembly.

The most important function of the Assembly is the election of a Pao Chief and an Assistant Chief. These two officers serve for a two years term. The Chief gets a nominal salary (not enough to live on), but the Assistant Chief gets no remuneration.

The incumbent Chief of the Twentieth Pao is a relatively young man who formerly was a merchant but who now owns 20 tan of land in the Pao. He is a graduate of primary school and is, therefore, literate. Normally he farms his own land, but his duties as Pao Chief keep him so busy that he cannot farm himself and finds it necessary to hire laborers to do it for him. He is a very energetic young man, interested in his work and his responsibilities. He is a joiner. He belongs to both the Brothers' Society and the Red Gang, and he is one of the few members of the Kuomintang in Hsieh Ma Hsiang.

The Pao Office is the Chief's home, but the Chief himself spends a good deal of his time making the rounds

of the households in the Pao, going to and from the Hsiang Office, and chatting over a cup of tea in Hsieh Ma Ch'ang, the market village of Hsieh Ma Hsiang.

The Pao Chief's job is to see that orders and instructions from the Hsiang Office are carried out. Sometimes this involves nothing more than calling his Chia Chiefs together and passing the word along. Sometimes it involves more than that and decisions must be made on how orders from above are to be implemented. In these cases the problem is usually presented to the Pao People's Assembly where a democratic decision is made by voting.

Two other officers work under the Pao Chief. They are nominated by him and appointed by the Hsiang Chief. Both are full-time jobs, and both officers receive a small salary. One is the Population Officer. His job is to keep track of all births, deaths, arrivals; and departures, and to submit regular population reports to the Hsiang Office. The other is the Pao Troop Commander who is responsible for handling all orders and instructions on conscription and organizing self-defense units. In addition the Pao is supposed to have an Economic Officer whose job is to assist in tax collection, but this post is unfilled in the Twentieth Pao.

The Pao Troop Commander is in charge of a loosely organized squad of about ten men which he sometimes calls his Self-Defense Troops and sometimes his Volunteer Policemen. They are simply men within the Pao who possess their own guns. They receive no training and are inactive almost all the time, but theoretically they can provide local defense if it is required, and occasionally they are called together at the end of the year, when robbery increases due to the Chinese custom of paying off all debts at that time.

The financial expenses of the Pao are nominal. They consist only of the money necessary to buy paper, pens, ink, and incidental supplies necessary for the Pao officers to write reports and carry out their duties. The money required for these expenses is decided upon by the Pao Assembly and is collected from its members. The salaries of the Pao officers, however, come from the Hsiang Office.

Another duty of the Assembly is to assist the Troop Commander when a call for conscriptees arrives from higher authority. This comes in the form of an order which simply says that the Pao must provide so many men between certain age limits. An order of this sort originates from the Central Government, but it is passed on down the line, quotas being constantly redivided on the basis of the

population in lower administrative areas. When it reaches the Pao, however, it has reached rock bottom, and the men must be dug <sup>up</sup> somewhere. Theoretically, the Pao Troop Commander handles a drawing of lots with the names of all the eligible men in the Pao. In fact, however, this is seldom done. The people in the Pao, though the Assembly, collectively get together and "buy" a conscriptee. This means that they pay a man to go into the army to fill the Pao quota. Such men are usually "bought" in neighboring regions; the current price is CNC\$10,000,000. The soldiers who are procured in this manner are usually the flotsam of society who cannot make a living and go into the army out of desperation. This procedure is illegal (according to National laws which are not enforced), but locally it is the accepted system of filling conscription quotas. Occasionally, the Hsiang will "buy" enough conscriptees to fill the whole Hsiang quota, and thereby relieve its Pao of the responsibility, but whether it is done by the Hsiang or the Pao it gives a clue to the type of raw material which is often provided for the Chinese National Army.

Apart from its functions of deciding how conscription quotas will be filled, how the Pao Office's expenses should be met, and how various orders and instructions from the Hsiang Office will be carried out, the Pao People's Assembly does not do very much. Its members can, of course, discuss common problems and occasionally do, but the Assembly is not expected to formulate, effect, and enforce policies, and in fact has no authority to do so.

The Pao Assembly has one link connecting it with higher authority and giving it a voice in Hsiang affairs. It elects a Pao Representative to the Hsiang Representative Assembly. The Representative for the Twentieth Pao is one of the landlords in the First Chia.

#### A Hsiang

There are 71 Hsiang or Chen (one is a Special District but is no different from the others in essentials) in Pa Hsien. Each one is an integrated economic region the center of which is a market village. Occasionally a Hsiang or Chen contains two market villages, and in rare cases they have none, but these are merely exceptions which prove the rule. If the population of the market village itself is large enough to be organized into six or more Pao the region is called a Chen. If the market village is not that large the region is called a Hsiang.

There is also a distinction drawn between various Hsiang, and they are divided into three grades on the basis of size and population. None of these distinctions are very important, however. All Hsiang and Chen are essentially the same sort of region and have the same sort of government.

The Hsiang (or Chen) is the highest level of local self-government in China today. This means that it is the highest level which selects its own local executive officers. In Hsieh Ma Hsiang, as in all other Hsiang, the Hsiang Peoples's Representative Assembly, composed of representatives chosen by the Pao Assemblies, elect the Hsiang Chief and Assistant Chief. Calling the Hsiang a self-governing body, however, should not obscure the fact that it is not completely independent. Although the Hsiang Chief and the Assembly manage some local affairs, they also receive orders from the Hsien Government, over which the local people have almost no control, which must be carried out. The Hsiang is really both a self-governing unit and an administrative sub-division of the Hsien.

Hsieh Ma Hsiang is a Hsiang of the highest grade. This means that its market village, which contains slightly over 1200 people organized into two Pao, is not large enough to be classified as a Chen but nonetheless is considered to be one of the more important market regions in the region. The market village itself is called Hsieh Ma Ch'ang, which means "The Market where The Horse Was Rested". Local tradition, or perhaps myth, maintains that over 2000 years ago during the Three Kingdoms period a famous general of the Kingdom of Shu named Chang Fei rested his horse at the spot where the village temple now stands.

It might be justifiable to call Hsieh Ma Ch'ang a market town, but village seems more appropriate in view of its size and layout. It is really nothing more than one street five or six yards wide. A few side alleys branch off from it, and some buildings have mushroomed around it in a confused and irregular pattern, but the life of the village centers on the one thoroughfare. Local people, as a matter of fact, do not go "to the village" or "to market"; they go "to the Street".

This street stretches for a distance of about one-half to three-quarters of a mile. It is straight for the most part but follows the gentle undulation of the terrain.



The central part is covered over with a high roof which makes it a dark and gloomy sort of arcade. Open shops line both sides of the street in this section. Stretching out from the center in both directions are shops which line only one side of the street. The width narrows as one goes away from the middle, and the street, which is never wider than an alley at its best, tapers imperceptibly into country paths and disappears into the rice fields.

This street and its immediate environs form the economic heart of the surrounding agricultural region. The heart beats with a regular pulse. Each lunar month is divided into three ten day periods, and every first, fourth, and seventh day is a market day. Early in the morning on market days the network of transportation arteries in the Hsiang, the serpentine stone-paved pathways, are filled with farmers and their families threading their way toward the market. For a few hours the temperature in the village rises. The street is a milling mass of people jostling each other good-naturedly, passing on the latest gossip, catching up on the news, and buying and selling. Then in the afternoon they drift back to their homes and the street is "cold" until the next market day. On "cold" days shopkeepers and artisans work hard in preparation for the next market day, but the street itself is almost deserted. A few mangy dogs grub for scraps of food, scattered chickens and a pig or two wander aimlessly about, and the shopkeepers' wives nurse their babies on their doorsteps, but they do not disturb the dark, gloomy, dead atmosphere of the street.

The markets where farmers sell their produce are not actually on the main street itself but are located in its immediate vicinity. There is a separate market place for each product. Pigs are sold under a huge tree at one edge of the village. Rice and other grains are sold on a small hill near one end of the main street. Straw hats are sold on the bank of a stream at the other end of the village. There are market places for poultry, for sugar cane, and in fact for almost everything that the local farmers produce, and buyers come from near and far to purchase these products.

The street itself, however, is the place where farmers and their families buy. Many wandering salesmen come to the village to hawk their trinkets and gadgets. (market days in adjacent towns are held either on the second, fifth, and eighth or on the third, sixth, and ninth days of each cycle. This synchronization is for the benefit of itinerate peddlars, city buyers, and the like.) The main needs of the

farmers, however, are met by the village shops whose sole purpose is to serve the farmers in the surrounding agricultural countryside. There is really no internal market for goods in the village; the village is an inseparable part of the agricultural countryside.

The village is a market where farmers sell their surplus produce, a workshop where artisans make necessities required by the farmers, a place where merchants sell manufactured goods brought in from nearby cities, a gathering point for social intercourse, and the seat of local government.

There are a total of 181 shops in Hsieh Ma Ch'ang. There are shops which make or sell food, wine, stationary, vegetable oil, candles, Chinaware, herb medicines, salt, incense and other funeral supplies, coffins, pottery, metalware, and tools, sauces, shoes, clothing, candy, gift scrolls, name seals, cigarettes and tobacco, tin kettles, bamboo utensils, trunks and boxes, rope, and wooden tools. There are small inns, blacksmith shops, butcher shops, Chinese pharmacies, and general stores.

Except for the general stores, each shop specializes in one or two products. The degree of this specialization can be illustrated by the food and drink shops which, incidentally, are more numerous than any other type of establishment. There are 17 wine shops, 17 tea houses, 16 combined wine shop-restaurants, 15 wine makers, three noodle shops, two candy shops, two combined tea house-general stores, two combined restaurant-inns, one sweet drink shop, one wine-medicine shop, one combined restaurant-sweet drink shop, one combined tea house-soy sauce shop, one combined tea house-medicine shop, one combined tea shop-candle maker, and one combined wine-cigarette shop.

Hsieh Ma Hsiang is partially but not entirely self-sufficient in basic necessities. Many needed supplies which are not provided either by the farmers themselves or by the handicraft shops in the village come from the mountains nearby. Coal, some iron, bamboo, plaster, coarse paper, and other materials are produced by workmen and artisans in the mountains. Some necessities must be brought in from outside <sup>the</sup> Hsiang, however. Although a limited amount of cloth is made in farmers' houses, it

cannot really compete with machine-made cloth which is bought in Chungking and elsewhere. Some building materials such as wood and some foodstuffs such as tea, salt, sugar, and vegetable oils are imported from nearby regions. In addition, Chinaware, "foreign goods" and miscellaneous manufactured products are imported from places both in and out of the province. The "foreign goods" (which are foreign-style goods, not imports from abroad) may come from such far-away places as Shanghai and Tientsin. The source of most of these imports for Hsieh Ma Ch'ang is the nearby town of Pei'pei located on the Kialing River, but Pei'pei buys in Chungking which is the commercial and industrial center of the whole region. A road connects Hsieh Ma Ch'ang with Chungking, but not much trade travels this route. It is 40 miles by road to Chungking, and the water route, although longer and slower, is cheaper.

There are two establishments in Hsieh Ma Ch'ang which might be called factories. Both are shops producing tung oil. These small, dingy workshops have a strangely medieval atmosphere. Almost no light relieves the gloom within the shops. On one side of a large room the tung nuts are ground into a pulp by plodding, blind-folded oxen. On the other side the oil is pressed out in primitive presses which operate on the wedge principle. A huge, metal-tipped hammer, perhaps ten feet long, is suspended from the ceiling and is swung like a pendulum to batter metal wedges into the horizontal, box-like presses. Each blow of the hammer, which is accompanied by wierd, musical cries on the part of the operator, strikes a wedge a fraction of an inch into the press and forces a few precious drops of oil to trickle into a vat below.

Hsieh Ma Ch'ang also has a Post Office, and during the month of May, 1948, the first bank (a small one-room shop) in the village history was opened by several wealthy men in the Hsiang. Not far away from the village street is a Health Station run by the Hsien Government but partially supported by the Hsiang.

The village is a social center as well as an economic one. There is a Recreative Club which meets every day to sing and play ancient Chinese operatic tunes, taught by an old-time teacher hired from a nearby village. The club members meet in a tea shop and take turns clanging the cymbals, beating the drums, and singing in high, falsetto voices. This club, however, is limited to a few who have the leisure time and the money to participate. The principal recreation for the average farmer and his family takes place on market days. On these days jugglers, magicians, soothsayers, and fortune tellers stop at Hsieh Ma Ch'ang and perform for enraptured clusters of children

and adults. There is an open air opera stage, crumbling with age, in the center of the village, but it is idle most of the time. Once or twice a year, however, itinerate opera troupes perform there, and these are gala occasions.

The village of Hsieh Ma Ch'ang is within walking distance of all parts of the Hsiang. It is located approximately in the center of the Hsiang, and the distance to the farthest point in any direction is about 10 li, or between three and four miles. It serves a population of over 22,000 people. These 22,000 people belong to slightly over 4100 households, 1700 of which are tenant farmers, 200 are part tenants, 400 are laborers, over 800 are owner-cultivators, 400 are landlords, and 600 are merchants, artisans, professional people, public servants, and so on.

The seat of the local government for this region is in the market village. Located on a hill, which is the highest point in the village and overlooks the rice fields which stretch out in all directions, is the Hsiang Office. It is the most imposing building in the village and consists of an open central room containing a conference table, under the eye of the omnipresent portrait of Sun Yat-sen, and side rooms which serve as offices. There is also a guard house at the gateway of a small courtyard in front of the building. This is the official government house. Unofficially, however, much business is transacted in the tea houses on the village street. Two tea shops there, both run by the Brothers' Society, are the most important ones. There the leaders of the community spend endless hours discussing problems and chatting about everything in general and nothing in particular. The comfortable reclining chairs lining both walls of the tea houses are almost always filled. These tea houses are indispensable in the life of the Hsiang, and the "important people" can usually be found there, reclining in their bamboo chairs, tea cup in hand.

In the social setting within which the Hsieh Ma Hsiang Office, the organ of local government, functions there are two groups of men who are extremely important. One of these groups is the organization called the Brothers' Society. The other is a loose conglomeration of wealthy, prominent citizens, the "gentlemen" or gentry.

The Brothers' Society is a "secret society". There is nothing secret about it in Hsieh Ma Hsiang, however. Everybody who is anybody belongs to it, and it operates

quite openly. The fact that it is outlawed by the Central Government does not seem to bother anyone concerned, or, it might be added, deter anyone from becoming a member if he is invited. The origins of the society are rather obscure, but according to one theory it arose as an underground movement of anti-Manchu intellectuals about the beginning of the Ch'ing Dynasty, three hundred years ago. It is said to have originated in East China and spread Westward, but it is probably more extensive and stronger at present in Szechuan than in any other part of the country. It was outlawed by the Manchus because it was an underground opposition group and the Nationalist Government also declared it illegal. It is not an active opposition group now, but it is a powerful organization which, the Kuomintang fears, could become oppositional. Despite this fact, however, men can belong to both the Brothers' Society and the Kuomintang simultaneously.

Ostensibly the purpose of the society is to promote eight fundamental Confucian virtues: filial piety, love for ones brothers and sister, loyalty to ones superiors, faithfulness, courtesy, shame, probity, and righteous self-sacrifice. Actually, however, it almost inevitably is an organization of considerable political significance. In the Chengtu Plain, for example, it is said that the society constantly interferes in politics directly and is known more for its criminal activities than for its development of virtue. Bad elements have mixed with the good in many places and have given the society a reputation for gangsterism. The opium trade with the Lolos in west Szechuan, for example, is said to be a monopoly of the Brothers' Society.

In Hsieh Ma Hsiang the society does not operate directly in politics, and it is not labelled as an organization carrying out criminal activities, but it has great political power nonetheless. Almost all of the people of wealth and education in the Hsiang are members, and the society has considerable control over its membership. Membership in the Brothers' Society is in fact virtually the sine qua non of participation in local government. At present every officer in the Hsiang Office is a member, and probably the majority of Pao Chiefs are members as well. The few lone wolves in Hsiang politics who are not members of the society are exceptional, and even they must be on

good terms with the society. The membership in Hsieh Ma Hsiang includes some representatives of all economic classes, but it is heavily weighted in favor of upper class and educated groups.

There are four different branches of the Brothers' Society in Hsieh Ma Hsiang. Although they have different names they subscribe to the same principles and cooperate closely. They are differentiated mainly on the basis of the type of persons accepted for membership. One concentrates on educational and political leaders, another on merchants, and so on. The most important politically is the Jen, or Benevolence, Society to which the majority of politically-minded community leaders belong.

The territorial sphere of all of the society's branches is the Hsiang. They have no organizational connection with the innumerable branches in other parts of the province, but they are informally connected, and members from other regions are welcomed and taken care of if they come to Hsieh Ma Hsiang.

The Director of the Benevolence Society is a landlord who possesses 200 tan of land. He has been prominent in governmental affairs in the past but holds no official post at present. He and the other officers are chosen by the members of the society for an indefinite term. Although all members of the society are considered to be brothers there are various ranks or grades which are conferred by the Director at the society's annual meetings. There are two regular meetings every year which all members are expected to attend. One, which is the principal business meeting, takes place on the thirteenth day of the fifth moon. The other, which is a social gathering, takes place at Chinese New Year. Membership in the society theoretically is based only on the character of the applicant, but a person must be introduced by four members to be considered. The Benevolence Society in Hsieh Ma Hsiang is estimated to have about 1100 members.

In many respects societies of this sort function as extra-legal government. They try and discipline members. They provide mutual defense and social security. And they exert strong pressure on persons and groups outside of the society.

Although it is ostensibly a social rather than a political organization, the Brothers' Society is, therefore, in many respects as important as the recognized government of the Hsiang in its control and management of local affairs, and it exerts strong influences on the recognized government.

There are also branches of two other secret societies of a similar character in Hsieh Ma Hsiang: the Red Gang and the Green Gang. Although some members of the Hsiang Office belong to these organizations (a person may theoretically belong to the Brothers' Society, the Red Gang, and the Green Gang simultaneously, and a few persons do), they are comparatively small and relatively unimportant. The main strength of these societies is in the lower Yangtze valley region, not in Szechuan.

The other important group in Hsieh Ma Hsiang is composed of the local "gentlemen". These men, the gentry, are not organized and do not form a completely cohesive group, but they are united by common interests and by friendship. Their prominence is due primarily to wealth; they are landlords. All of them are educated, most of them in old-style "family schools" but a few in modern middle schools and universities. They are all recognized leaders of the community.

One cannot define the group exactly because some men are on the fringes and may or may not be included, but there are at least 21 men who would indisputably be included by the local people. The land owned by these 21 men averages 135 tan per man; the largest holder in the group owns 500 tan and the smallest 30. These gentlemen are men of wealth, education, ability, culture, and leisure. Their opinions are consulted on all important problems. Apparently in the last analysis they are the ones who decide who will be elected to posts in the local government, but their influence seems to be exercised more on the basis of leadership and prestige than open pressure or power, even though they are the ones in whose hands economic power is concentrated. Their opinions carry sufficient weight so that if the word is passed around that they are in favor of this person or that action most people go along with them. Quite naturally they play leading roles in the various branches of the

Brothers' Society. Often they participate directly in the local government, and only one of the 21 has never held a political post. Eight of them at some time during the past have held the post of Hsiang Chief or Assistant Chief. Eleven of them are currently active in political positions. One is Hsiang Chief; another is Assistant Chief. One is Chairman of the Hsiang People's Representative Assembly, and three others are members of the Assembly. One is Hsiang Representative in the Hsien Council. One is Chairman of the Hsiang Mediation Committee, and three others are members of that Committee. In other words, either through direct participation or indirect influence this handful of men plays the leading roles in local government.

Trade and craft guilds which play such an important role in urban centers in China are almost completely absent in Hsieh Ma Hsiang. There is one guild, to which the local pig butchers belong, but it is politically inactive.

The only political party in the Hsiang is the Kuomintang. It might be going too far even to say that it is moribund, however, for it is doubtful if it ever had any life or influence in Hsieh Ma Hsiang. Although there are about 100 men in the Hsiang, including three who hold positions in the Hsiang Office, who have joined the party, the Hsieh Ma Hsiang Branch exists on paper only. There have been no meetings, no collection of dues, and in fact no activities of any sort on the part of the Kuomintang in recent months (perhaps years, although I am not sure), and the Secretary, who is titular head of the Hsiang Branch, is a merchant who spends only a fraction of his time in the Hsiang.

Hsieh Ma Hsiang, as previously mentioned, is considered to be a self-governing unit, and in some respects it is. Its representative body is called the Hsiang People's Representative Assembly, and it has a membership of 31 unsalaried representatives who serve a two-year term. These representatives are elected by the Pao People's Assemblies. Since the latter contain all the household heads in the Hsiang, one can say that the Hsiang Assembly is popularly elected. The Assembly meets in the Hsiang Office every three months, and it may hold extraordinary sessions.



The principal function of the Assembly is to elect the important Hsiang officers. They elect the Hsiang Chief and the Assistant Chief, the Hsiang Representative to the Hsien Council, the Hsiang Mediation Committee, and the Hsiang Property Custodian Committee. They can also recall these officers for corruption or incompetency. The Assembly also draws up the Hsiang budget (but it must be sent to the Hsien Government for approval before it goes into effect), hears reports from the officers it has elected, and may (although seldom does) make suggestions to them. If the Assembly formulates anything resembling a policy it must get the Hsien Government's approval. If a dispute between the Assembly and the Hsiang officers, whom it has elected, results in a deadlock, the Hsien Government is requested to solve it, but this is a rare occurrence. The Hsiang Chief does not have to follow the Assembly's recommendations if they are "impractical" but if differences of opinion cannot be resolved by compromise the Hsien is the ultimate arbitrator. In practice, the Assembly does very little other than elect the officers already mentioned.

The Mediation Committee is a five-man board (according to the regulations it should be seven) which is responsible for administering justice. There is no court of law in the Hsiang. All disputes are settled by this committee on the basis of equity. For example, if a man is accused of robbery, his neighbors escort him to the Mediation Committee which hears both sides of the case, decides whether or not the man is guilty, and then proposes some sort of settlement which is accepted by all concerned. Crime is not a serious local problem. In the rare cases where a serious crime is committed the man is sent to the Chungking Local Court for trial. Normally he would be sent to the Hsien Local Court, but Pa Hsien has no court of its own and uses the one nearby in Chungking. The Mediation Committee holds its sessions on market days. Every market day a minimum of three committee members meet to handle the cases brought before them (they average between two and six each market day), and decisions must have the concurrence of at least two committee members and the committee's Chairman. If the disputes are trivial and informal the meeting is held in a tea house. If they are more serious and a formal, written report is made, the session is held in the Hsiang Office. All of the committee members are old men who have the respect and command the deference of the whole community. (Four of

the five belong to the group of 21 gentlemen already mentioned. They receive no salaries.)

The cases brought before the Mediation Committee include petty and criminal cases such as stealing, commercial disputes, personal arguments, debt trouble, and landlord-tenant disputes. The disputes between landlords and tenants are particularly numerous and important. A local person who should know estimates that about 80 percent of these disputes are decided in favor of the landlords. This does not necessarily mean that there is gross discrimination against tenants; it may simply mean that the tenants are most often the ones who are forced by circumstances into a position where they cannot fulfill their contract obligations.

The Property Custodian Committee is a seven-man board (no salaries) which is responsible for supervising the finances of the Hsiang Office and protecting the Hsiang's resources of money and grain. Taxes collected by the Hsiang, money and rice subsidies given by the Hsien Government, and rice left for safekeeping by the Hsien Government are its responsibility. In short it handles a sort of Hsiang treasury. All the grain and money are kept in a special room in the Hsiang Office, and the Committee hires two special officers to guard it. No money or rice can be withdrawn without a special request form which bears the signature of the Chairman of the Property Custodian Committee as well as that of the Hsiang Chief. No withdrawals can be made, furthermore, unless they are in accordance with general authorizations already made by the Hsiang Assembly.

The actual administration of the Hsiang is carried out by the Hsiang Chief and by a number of administrative officers who are nominated by him and formally appointed by the Hsien Government. All of these men are salaried officers on an indefinite term. Excluding the Chief and his Assistant there are eight officers in the Hsiang office. There are Secretaries for Civil Affairs, Population, Economic Affairs, and Cultural Affairs, and there is a Hsiang Troop Commander. In addition there are: an Accountant, who keeps all financial records, a Buyer, who acts as a sort of purchasing agent and also as a secretary for incoming and outgoing reports, and an Assistant Secretary, who is a general handy man, clerk, recording Secretary, and assistant to the Chief. In Hsieh Ma Hsiang all

of these officers are graduates of middle school, or the equivalent, but none of them are college graduates. Some of them have made government service a profession, but others are landowners or merchants by profession.

The Civil Affairs Secretary's primary responsibility is that of carrying out national or provincial laws and regulations concerning administrative organization and procedures. For example, he must see that the Hsiang Office and the Pao and Chia under it are organized as prescribed and that personnel qualifications, salaries, and so on, are in accordance with the laws governing them. He handles elections and sees that they are carried out at the proper time and in the proper manner. He is also a general coordinator of all the work done by the various officers in the Hsiang Office. He is responsible, for example, for land administration - recording ownership of land, registering transfers, and so on - although the actual work is done by the Assistant Secretary. He is responsible for opium suppression (there is still some opium smoking in Hsieh Ma Hsiang, but it is very much less than there used to be, and it is secret and underground), although the Troop Commander carries out any suppressing which must be done. He is also responsible for administering "Voluntary Labor Service".

"Voluntary Labor Service" is the euphemistic name given to a national system of compulsory labor service. According to law (as explained to me by members of the Hsien Government) every able-bodied man must perform 20 days of "Voluntary", unpaid labor for the Government every year. Decisions on when and where such labor will be employed are usually made by the Hsien Government (but occasionally are made at a higher level). Then, as in the case of military conscription, quotas are assigned to each Hsiang and passed on down the line to the Pao and Chia. As in the case of conscription, also, substitute workers are hired by those who can afford to do so. The average farmer, however, cannot afford it, and since it is a period of limited service (usually during slack periods in the farming calendar) he is not too unwilling to do the work. The laborers collected under this system may be used anywhere in the Hsien, or in other Hsien, and they go on foot, carrying their own work tools, to the place where they have been instructed to go. They receive no pay. Theoretically they must provide their own food, but in Pa Hsien the food is provided for the workers, sometimes by the Hsien Government and sometimes by contributions on the part of the other members of the Chia or Pao from which the workers come. Not everyone is required, in actual practice, to do work or hire a substitute every year, even though everyone is theoretically

liable.

The Civil Affairs Secretary is considered to be the top-ranking appointed officer in the Hsiang Office. Early in 1948, in fact, the Szechuan Provincial Government ordered a reorganization of Hsiang Offices in which the other Secretaries are to be made clearly subordinate and responsible to the Civil Affairs Secretary (who is to have a new title - General Secretary), but the reorganization has not been carried out yet in Hsieh Ma Hsiang.

The responsibility of the Population Secretary is simply that of keeping complete statistics on the population of the Hsiang. He makes regular reports to the Hsien Government.

The Cultural Affairs Secretary is in charge of educational matters, and he must make regular reports to the Hsien Bureau of Education. His actual responsibility is limited by the fact that the principals of all Public Schools are appointed directly by the Bureau, and the principals themselves select their teachers. However, he controls a portion of their salaries (their money comes from the Hsiang and their rice ration from the Hsien). There are sixteen Public Schools in Hsieh Ma Hsiang, all of them primary schools. Thirteen are Pao People's Schools with a four year curriculum, and three are Central Schools with a six year curriculum. In theory there is supposed to be a Pao People's School in each Pao, but it will probably be many years before that goal is reached. Nonetheless, Hsieh Ma Hsiang is educationally better off than many nearby Hsiang because about 40 percent of the population is literate.

The Troop Commander is in charge of all military and police affairs, actual suppression of opium smoking and gambling, and maintenance of law and order. He must make a yearly survey of all able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 45 and make a report to the Hsien Government. He handles the details of conscription. He also distributes the rice ration given to families of soldiers on active duty. As police chief he has a force of 20 armed policemen who live in the guard house at the Hsiang Office. These may be supplemented by Voluntary Police from each Pao if it is necessary. If any serious criminal offense is committed in the Hsiang his policemen make the arrest and detain the criminal in the Hsiang Office until he can be sent to Chungking for trial. The Troop Commander is also in charge of the organization of

self-defense units in the Hsiang. According to law all Chia, Pao, and Hsiang are supposed to have well-organized and well-trained units with the Chia Chiefs, Pao Chiefs, and Hsiang Chiefs as titular heads and the Pao and Hsiang Troop Commanders as active commanders. To date no such self-defense organization has been set up in Hsieh Ma Hsiang but the Hsiang Troop Commander says that he received instructions from the Hsien in May, 1948, to do something about it, and he is proceeding with plans to organize self-defense units which will be trained by local men who have had military experience. He thinks the force will total about 2300 men.

The Economic Affairs Secretary handles taxation for the Hsiang Office and is administratively in charge of financial and budgetary matters. The Hsiang Office is far from being self-supporting financially, however, and the most important taxes are collected by agencies at the level of the Hsien Government. A few taxes, though, are collected by the Hsiang Office for its own use. There are weights and measures taxes; every article which is weighed or measured in the village market places is subject to a two percent tax. The sale of straw hats is likewise subject to a two percent tax. These taxes are collected on market days by representatives of the Hsiang Office who are on hand to observe all transactions and to collect from the buyers. There is a two percent tax on the purchase of any land. (The Hsien authorities collect a similar tax, but their tax rate is much higher.) There is a tax on feasts which is theoretically quite high but in practice rarely exceeds two percent if it is collected at all. There are a few other local taxes on the books which are not actually collected. The most important local tax, however, is the Self-Government Tax. This is a variable tax imposed on all the people in the Hsiang, and the rate depends on the amount of income required by the Hsiang Office. The Hsiang Assembly decides how much it will be, and then the total is divided up among the Pao according to the amount of cultivated land in each Pao and is collected from both landowners and tenants.

The total tax income of the Hsiang Office (including the Self-Government Tax) is a small sum, however, and the Hsien Government subsidizes the Hsiang Offices to keep them going. In 1947, the Pa Hsien subsidy to Hsieh Ma Hsiang was larger than the Hsiang's income from all of its taxes, and the total income of the Hsiang Office including the subsidy was still extremely small. As a con-

sequence the budget was allotted almost entirely for salaries and administrative purposes. The salaries of government officers and teachers accounted for over 70 percent of the total. Office and administrative expenses required the use of over 12 percent, while routine building repair accounted for about eight percent. Health, education (other than salaries), social welfare, and relief together amounted to roughly six percent of what was a very small budget to begin with.

The financial position of the Hsiang Office is one factor which makes it incapable of doing much beyond maintaining an office, keeping law and order, carrying out the routine of administration, providing conscriptees and workmen to the higher authorities, and carrying out various orders passed down to them. This sort of role is, as a matter of fact, the one which the officers of the Hsiang accept as their responsibility. They do not conceive of their role as being that of active leaders of local reform, economic development, or welfare improvement. In their own minds their primary responsibility is to keep things going and to carry out or pass along orders from above. For this reason the Hsiang Affairs Meetings, at which the Hsiang Chief meets with all of the Pao Chiefs, are in many respects more important than the Hsiang Assembly sessions, for it is through the Pao Chiefs that instructions from above are sent on their way toward their ultimate destination - Lin Hsiu-ching and his neighbors.

In what respects, then, are Hsieh Ma Hsiang and its 31 Pao and 321 Chia self-governing units? They do have representative bodies and they do elect their own executives. The election of these representative bodies and their meetings are thoroughly democratic in a procedural sense (even if they are not so democratic in social composition). That is about as far as self-government goes, however. These bodies and the executives whom they elect can be over-ruled on almost any question by higher authorities upon whom they are financially dependent, and practically speaking their main job is to carry out orders received from above. This does not mean, however, that no progress has been made toward self-government in recent years. On the contrary, the introduction of elections, representative assemblies, and other procedural aspects of democracy is a step of considerable importance, and local people say that there is now a good deal more self-government than there was before these things were started. One

must also remember that organized government does not intrude itself into all aspects of people's lives and that "higher authorities" are a long way off; practically speaking in a rural area such as Hsieh Ma Hsiang many local affairs are out of the realm of government and are regulated by tradition and by non-governmental groups such as families clans, and secret societies.

The seat of the Pa Hsien Government is about 50 miles away from Hsieh Ma Ch'ang, or the opposite side of the Yangtze River. It is fairly inaccessible, therefore, and not much intercourse, other than in written form, takes place between the Hsien and the Hsiang. Twice a year, however, the Hsiang Chief attends special administrative meetings which all Hsiang Chiefs must attend at the Hsien Magistrate's office. (This year the Hsiang Chief also attended a training class run by the Hsien Government.) four times a year the elected Hsiang Representative attends the regular sessions of the Hsien Council. And once or twice a year the Magistrate of Pa Hsien finds time to visit Hsieh Ma Hsiang. The most continuous link between the Hsien and the Hsiang, however, is provided by a special officer who is appointed by the Hsien Government (and confirmed by the Provincial Government). Pa Hsien is divided into ten districts. The Fourth District contains seven Hsiang including Hsieh Ma Hsiang. The Director of the Fourth District (he is a single officer without an office and without any assistants) visit Hsieh Ma Hsiang at least once a month to check on the general state of local affairs and to see whether or not orders and instructions from the Hsien Government are being carried out. He reports on these visits to the Hsien Government.

#### A Hsien

Most Hsien cities, or Hsien capitals, in China are walled towns which are not only political centers but in some respects are also economic centers of the agricultural regions surrounding them. Originally, although the precise location and lay-out of these towns was usually determined in accordance with the requirements of Chinese geomancy ("the wind and the water"), the general location was determined by the productivity of the agricultural land in the area, and the location of transportation facilities. These towns, consequently are normally

the center of transport, communications, and economic life in the Hsien district, and they depend on the agricultural surplus of their hinterland. The functions of these towns are varied. They serve as the seat of government and administration, a defense position for garrison troops, and a refuge for the agricultural population in time of danger. They are living places for the wealthier gentry who leave the countryside for a more urban and sophisticated life. They are focal points of transport, trade, and commerce, and centers of handicraft production which serve the market towns in their economic sphere of influence.

The capital of Pa Hsien does not fit this pattern, however; it is not typical. In fact, it is not really a town at all. It is a cluster of government buildings in a mixed rural-urban setting, and it serves only as a center of government and administration. It is a new and artificial creation. Before the Sino-Japanese War the capital of Pa Hsien was the great, sprawling, commercial metropolis of Chungking which is piled up in a confused jumble on the banks of Yangtze and Kialing Rivers. During the war, however, Chungking was made a Special Municipality governed directly by the Executive Yuan of the Central Government, and the government of Pa Hsien had to move out in 1941. It moved to a spot on the south bank of the Yangtze, about 12 miles upstream from Chungking, and began building its headquarters on a hill between two small villages and a factory district. Today it possesses the buildings necessary to carry out its administrative functions, but in all other respects it is merely an appendage of Chungking.

Pa Hsien is one of 142 Hsien in Szechuan Province (which also contains one Special District and two provisional units which will be made into Hsien), and one of approximately 2000 Hsien in all of China. It is, therefore, the bottom level in the chain of command which begins with the Central Government and passes through the Provincial Government. All levels of government in China down to and including the Hsien are part of a system of administrative centralism in which authority is concentrated at the top and is merely delegated to those below. It is a pyramidal structure of authority with the Central Governments at the peak, the Provincial Governments at the half-way mark, and the Hsien Governments at the base. As we have already seen the authority and influence of "higher authorities" in this system of centralized government admini-



nistration extends below the Hsien, but as far down as the Hsien the executive officers are all appointed from above.

In many respects, the Hsien is the most important level of government administration in China because although all important policy decisions are made at higher levels it is the Hsien which does most of the actual work of administration and government felt directly by the mass of the people. The Central Government and the Provincial Government are geographically and psychologically rather remote from the people and the facts of life in rural areas.

There are six different ranks of Hsien. Pa Hsien belongs to the highest rank because of its unusually large population (the average Hsien has a population of under 300,000). As a Hsien of the first grade its organization is slightly more complicated and larger than some of the others, but in essential respects the structure of government in all Hsien is the same.

The Chief executive of Pa Hsien, the Magistrate, is appointed by the Szechuan Government, but his appointment is provisional until confirmed by the Central Government. The present Magistrate is an able, efficient, well-educated (university graduate) native of Szechuan. He nominates all of his important subordinates, such as Departments Heads, and they are appointed by the Provincial Government. All minor officers and employees of the Hsien Government are appointed by the Magistrate alone and do not need the approval of higher authorities.

The division of responsibility and function at the Hsien level is confused in an administrative sense by the fact that the Hsien Government consists of several departments directly under the Magistrate and a galaxy of independent bureaux and offices which are supervised and coordinated by the Magistrate but strictly speaking are responsible directly to the Provincial Government. These independent bodies are in fact only semi-independent because the Magistrate has a certain amount of power over them, but they are located in separate buildings and operate on their own under normal circumstances. The setting up of these independent bodies makes it possible for higher authorities to have more direct control over

certain governmental functions, especially tax collecting, than would be the case if these functions were handled by departments within the Hsien Government itself.

Directly under the Magistrate in the Hsien Government are the Hsien Secretary, the Departments of Civil Affairs, Finance, Reconstruction, Social Affairs, and Military Affairs, the Offices of Accounting, Statistics, and Population, and the Land Administration Special Officer.

The Magistrate has final authority and final responsibility for all that goes on in the Hsien, and the officers under him are administrative officers who, in a sense, act as his local cabinet and do the detailed work for him and in his name. The Hsien Secretary is the Magistrate's principal administrative assistant and coordinates internal affairs within the Hsien Government. He deals with personnel problems, checks documents coming into and going out of the office, and acts as intermediary between the Magistrate and Department Heads. He is also a sort of Vice-Magistrate and takes over the executive responsibilities when the Magistrate is absent.

The Department of Civil Affairs is responsible for general administration, personnel, elections, and training in the Hsien as a whole. For example, the appointment of each Hsiang Secretary must receive his approval. According to law there are definite requirements or qualifications laid down for various political positions, even those which belong to the self-governing levels, and it is the responsibility of the Department of Civil Affairs to see that the laws are followed - although in practice the laws cannot be universally enforced. The main requirements are always educational. For example, a man is theoretically required to be a middle school graduate before he can be elected Chief of a Hsiang (in Pa Hsien the educational level of local leaders is unusually high; about one-third of the Hsiang Chiefs are college graduates) and at least a primary school graduate before he can be elected a Pao Chief. This is in keeping with the Chinese tradition of the scholar-official. The law also provides for training of all officials in executive positions right down through and including the Hsiang. Each Hsien is supposed to have

an Office for the Training of Local Administrative Officers, but in Pa Hsien the training of Hsiang Chiefs is carried out by the Magistrate with the assistance of the Department of civil Affairs. It is also the function of this Department to see that the elections and meetings of Pao and Hsiang Assemblies and the Hsien Council are carried out at the proper time in the proper way. In a vague sort of way this Department is also responsible for the maintenance of public order, but the practical duties involved are carried out by two independent bodies, the Police Bureau and the Self-Defense Organization.

The Department of Finance coordinates financial matters for the whole Hsien. The Hsien budget is drawn up by the Department and submitted to the Hsien Council which has the final say locally (it must be approved by the Provincial Government before it is finally accepted.) Accounts are kept by the Accounting Office which makes regular reports in duplicate to the Magistrate and to the Provincial Government. Custody of Hsien funds is vested in the Hsien Treasury which is part of the Hsien Bank (an institution owned partially - 60 percent - by private citizens and partially - 40 percent - by the Hsien Government). Collection of taxes is done by independent bureaux which I will describe later. It is the job of the Head of the Department of Finance to coordinate all of these various activities. He also keeps an eye on Hsiang finances, and every Hsiang budget goes to him for perusal and approval. In regard to Hsien funds, every withdrawal must receive his written approval as well as that of the Magistrate and the Head of the Accounting Office.

The Department of Reconstruction is in charge of all development and public works projects in the Hsien. It is a Department which should be extremely important, but for financial reasons its activities are limited.

There are many scholars and students of Chinese History who assert that one of the most important if not the most important factor in the historical rise and growth of the Chinese State was the successful mobilization by the State of collective effort for the construction of public works, particularly irrigation and other hydraulic projects so essential for the kind of agriculture which exists in China. The basis and justification for a highly centralized administration in a country with a decentralized agrarian economy

is not unrelated, even today, to the effectiveness with which the administration can mobilize collective effort and resources to accomplish tasks, especially the construction of public works, which are difficult to accomplish locally. This is particularly true in regard to the Central Government; but it is important even at the Hsien level. The agency in the Hsien Government for doing this sort of thing is the Department of Reconstruction.

The main projects now planned by the Pa Hsien Department of Reconstruction fall into four categories: development of the Hsien capital, irrigation, roads, and communications. Plans for developing the Hsien capital call for building a number of new office buildings, repairing local roads, installing running water, and encouraging the growth of a commercial area. To accomplish the latter objective a decree has been issued stating that all merchants owning land in a certain area must build commercial establishments on their land within a stated period or their land will be expropriated by the Hsien Government.

Plans for irrigation development include two types of projects, reservoir pools and canals. Proposals for building reservoir pools must originate from special committees formed for that purpose in local areas. These proposals are submitted to the Department of Reconstruction which assists the local committees in getting necessary loans from the Farmers' Bank of China which will provide low-interest loans amounting to 80 percent of the amount needed (the other 20 percent must come from local funds) if the project is approved. Construction of irrigation canals is done by the Hsien itself in cooperation with the Provincial Government. Canals are badly needed in Pa Hsien and if extensively constructed would raise the agricultural productivity of the region tremendously. One canal over 20 miles long is currently being dug, and a section 17 miles long will be completed by the end of 1948. The Department of Reconstruction has also drawn up plans recently for three new roads with a total mileage of about 40 miles. The budget was approved somewhat reluctantly by the Hsien Council, but the Council insisted upon stretching out the period of construction from two to four years. Roads are badly needed in the Hsien; at present a great many Hsiang have no motor road connection at all. Another project of the Department of Reconstruction is the extension of telephone service.

At present there are about 80 phones in 45 Hsiang (most of them are in Hsiang Offices). They are managed by the Telephone Management Office which is an independent body but is supervised by the Department of Reconstruction. The immediate objective of the Department is to have telephones installed in every Hsiang Office. Another independent body supervised by the Department of Reconstruction is the Agricultural Development Office. In an agrarian region one would expect a body such as this to be of major importance, but the only real project it is able to carry out at present is one involving the distribution of t'ung tree seedlings to farmers in various parts of the Hsien. It also sends regular reports on local agricultural conditions, the weather, crops, pests, and so on, to the Provincial Government, but lack of personnel and funds make it little more than shadow organization.

In constructing canals, roads, and so on, the Department of Reconstruction works closely with the Hsien Voluntary Labor Organization. This organization handles the system of compulsory labor already described. It assigns labor quotas to each Hsiang, assembles the laborers to work on projects for the Department of Reconstruction or the military authorities, and supervises labor management on such projects.

The Department of Reconstruction's projects and plans, described above, are indicative of some of the needs of the Hsien, but its accomplishments do not begin to meet the actual needs. In the categories of canals and roads alone it will be many years before the Government completes a fraction of what is needed. The main reason the Department cannot do more, however, is a financial one. As in the case of Hsieh Ma Hsiang, so much of the Pa Hsien budget is consumed by the expenses of keeping the machinery of government administration operating that not much is left over for public welfare or development projects. The Hsien in contrast to the Hsiang, is self-supporting, and it balances its budget, but only by restructuring its activities to a minimum other than routine administration.

In its 1947 budget Pa Hsien used between 80 and 90 percent of its currency income and almost all of its rice income for one purpose - salaries of administrative officers. Health, relief, social welfare, reconstruction, education, and development projects altogether accounted for only 6.39 percent of the budget. This situation is, of course, intimately related to the prevalent low level of productivity of

China's agrarian economy. There is not a large enough surplus to support much more in the way of Government than bare administrative machinery. This is not the whole explanation, however. In many cases, private accumulations of wealth are not heavily taxed, in spite of the fact that the sources from which the Government can obtain funds with which to carry out projects of general benefit are limited. Furthermore, the surplus currently available, i.e. that amount now collected in taxes, undoubtedly could be used more wisely. If a larger percentage was invested by the Government in policies and programs which gradually helped to raise the level of agricultural productivity, (such as irrigation canals), not only would the cost of Government be proportionately less of a burden on the populace than it is at present but the Government itself would find it possible to expand its field of operation.

In addition to the Departments already described, the Hsien Government has a Department of Social Affairs and a Department of Military Affairs.

The Department of Social Affairs has various responsibilities. On the one hand it is responsible for social welfare which includes relief, care of the aged, the blind, the infirm, and so on. At present it does very little along this line -- again the reason is lack of funds. Another responsibility of the Department is the registration of all associations and organizations in the Hsien. All organizations must register their constitutions, their membership, and their officers, and must make regular reports on their activities. The Department of Social Welfare has the authority to suppress or dissolve any organization considered to be subversive. Subversive is a term which includes any activity connected with Communism or the Communist Party, but there is a tendency to stretch it to include any activity or group of actual or potential political significance other than long-established conservative groups.

Secret societies, such as the Brothers' Society, are officially ignored. Suppression of these secret societies is one of the duties of the Department of Social Affairs, but it follows the easiest and most practical course and that without exception every officer of the rank of Department or Bureau Head in the Hsien Government disclaims any connection with the Brothers' Society. In view of the influence of the society throughout the region it is difficult to believe that no important member of the Hsien

Government belongs to it. Some may actually belong, but if they do they feel it is wise to conceal their membership, or at least not to reveal it officially.

There are a number of organizations which are officially sponsored by the Department of Social Affairs in Pa Hsien as in other parts of the country. These include a Hsien Chamber of Commerce and a number of Labor Unions and Farmers' Unions. If Hsieh Ma Hsiang is typical (and I am told that it is), however, the Farmers' Unions exist on paper only. These unions theoretically are supposed to be cooperative welfare organizations through which farmers can improve their position. In Hsieh Ma Hsiang there is one man appointed to be leader of the organization, but there are no other members.

Probably the most active and important organizations which come under the surveillance of the Department of Social Affairs are the numerous trade and craft guilds. These guilds are restrictive, monopolistic, economic organizations which prescribe rules for the members of a trade or profession, and they wield considerable economic power. In Hsieh Ma Hsiang, as has been mentioned already, they are unimportant because it is an area almost completely agrarian in its character. Guilds are more important in urban or semi-urbanized areas where trade and handicraft and industrial production are more highly developed. Pa Hsien is basically a territorial unit composed of many Hsiang similar to Hsieh Ma Hsiang, but within the Hsien there are a few areas which are considerably more urban, commercial, and industrial (particularly in the immediate environs of Chungking). Guilds, therefore, are important in the economic life of Pa Hsien as a whole even though they are almost non-existent in Hsieh Ma Hsiang. There are approximately 50 guilds in Pa Hsien organized on a Hsien-wide basis. Many of them have tea-house headquarters near the Hsien Government. Because of their economic power they have a political significance and are a force which the Hsien Government must deal with, and must get along with.

In addition to registering all private organizations, the Department of Social Affairs is responsible for sponsoring certain public movements. These all originate as ideas passed down from the Central Government, but they seem to have lost all force and vitality by the time they reach the Hsien. The Department of Social Affairs apparently

has no desire to do very much about them. In Hsieh Ma Hsiang, as a consequence, most people do not have an inkling as to what they are all about, although occasionally a few publicity posters are hung in the village. These movements include the New Life Movement (which disapproves of, among other things, gambling, smoking, drinking, spitting, and the use of cosmetics) and the People's Health Movement (which approves of exercise). There are occasional athletic meets sponsored by the Government, however.

The Department of Military Affairs is responsible for keeping an up-to-date survey of all able-bodied men in the Hsien, for seeing that soldiers' families and retired soldiers receive their rice allowances, and for carrying out conscription orders. It coordinates the work of the Troop Commanders in the various Hsiang Offices. Conscription is its most important job. The Department receives orders from a Conscription Area Office (which handles several Hsien) and must produce the quotas of men requested. Between 1937 and 1947 Pa Hsien produced over 80,000 men as grist for the Chinese military machine, first for the war against Japan and then for the civil war campaigns. In spite of the prevalent system of buying substitutes, most of these men came from within the Hsien. Many of the 80,000 have never come back. As a consequence, the Hsien is suffering from a shortage of agricultural labor. The character of China's labor-intensive agrarian economy is such that one sometimes encounters an anomalous situation where an overpopulated region (in terms of the resources and volume of production which must support a given number of people) is suffering from a labor shortage (in terms of the number of able-bodied men required to keep up the level of production with existing, technologically-primitive methods of production).

The Department of Military Affairs is also responsible for the organization of National People's Soldiers. This title is a vague generic term which includes all able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 45. In theory all such men are organized into units in each Chia, Pao, and Hsiang and receive a certain basic training after which they are a reservoir not only for conscription but also for duty as Volunteer Policemen and so on. In Pa Hsien no real organization of this sort has been instituted.



Organization of self-defense is a separate matter. Self-Defense Troops are not under the Department of Military Affairs but are the responsibility of the newly-created People's Self-Defense Headquarters. This organization is seriously approaching the job of organizing and training effective local defense units on a rational and selective basis. Their work is just getting under way. They plan to organize small but well-trained defense units in every local area, but they still do not know where the necessary military equipment, mainly rifles and ammunition, is coming from. It doesn't seem to be forthcoming from higher authorities yet. (There are 9800 privately-owned rifles registered in the Hsien, but they are mostly of ancient vintage. They belong to farmers who find them effective in scaring off robbers, and in the old days bandits, but they wouldn't be good for much else.) It is rather amazing that no real self-defense units have been organized in this region previously in view of the constant talk about such units during the past decade and in view of the fact that the Central Government spent long years with its back against the wall in this region. The explanation of local leaders, who very much approve of local defense organizations and want to be prepared if the civil war spreads to Szechuan, is that although the Central Government authorities have talked about local self-defense they have not backed the idea in reality or done anything about promoting the idea - in Pa Hsien. (The Central Government has promoted the organization of effective self-defense units in a few areas, but they are undoubtedly the exception rather than rule.) Local leaders in Pa Hsien say that they believe the Central Government in the past has lacked confidence in decentralized militia and has feared arming the common people, but they hope and believe that the attitude of Central Government is changing now that the civil war situation has become desperate.

Overall military command of the region which includes Pa Hsien is in the hands of the Chungking Garrison Commander. He maintains a branch office adjacent to the Pa Hsien Government, just to keep an eye on things, but there are no regular troops in Pa Hsien, and the Garrison Commander doesn't interfere very much in Hsien affairs. Any criminal cases of a political nature, however (i.e. persons accused of Communist activity) are turned over by the Hsien to the Garrison Commander's military courts in Chungking. And if the civil war spreads to Szechuan the civil government of Pa Hsien will take a back seat. In times of crisis the Military takes over.

Until recently there was a sixth Department in the Hsien Government, the Department of Land Administration. In 1946, however, a Central Government order abolished the Department and replaced it with a Land Administration Officer who has one assistant. (The personnel of the Departments varies from four to ten.) One duty of this officer is the administration of China's land laws.

China's present basic Land Law on paper is an enlightened piece of legislation which deals with many fundamental problems including the problem of tenancy. It states that a Provincial Government "may....limit the acreage of private land owned by an individual or a body corporate." A Municipal or Hsien Government "may....decide on a minimum area unit, and prohibit the further subdivision of such a unit." A Provincial Government "may limit the highest liability incurrable by farm land owned by a self-cultivating farmer." However, none of these optional steps has been taken in Szechuan or, to my knowledge, in any other part of China. The law also states that, "A transfer of ownership of private agricultural land shall be made only to a transferee in a position to cultivate the land himself after the transfer." It states that tenants of landlords who are absentee or who do not cultivate land themselves, "after having tilled (a given piece of land) for eight years continuously may apply to the competent district or municipal government to buy it over on his behalf." It also states that, "Government of various grades requiring land for the purpose of creating self-cultivating farms, may....expropriate" for that purpose. It further stipulates that, "Rental shall not exceed eight percent of the value of the land." Full implementation of these clauses of the basic Land Law would involve a fundamental revolution in existing economic and social relationships in a region such as Pa Hsien where tenancy is so prevalent. (In North China tenancy is not so common and is not as important a problem.) It would be a slow and difficult process to implement the law even if the Government went about the job energetically. Yet the Central Government in 1946 eliminated the Department in the Hsien Government which is responsible for such matters and replaced it with a Special Officer who is virtually impotent to make even an attempt at implementation. (In the Administrative District to which Pa Hsien belongs there are some unusual men who are attempting to press a measure of land reform - which I will mention later - and the local government authorities are giving them moral support, but a full-scale,

direct governmental attack on the problem is not possible without administrative machinery for that purpose.) The local authorities and leaders in Pa Hsien who are sympathetic toward land reform felt that the abolition of the Department of Land Administration is tangible proof that many (but not all) men in the Central Government use land reform slogans merely as shibboleths and aren't really interested in implementation of the basic Land Law.

At the level of the Hsien Government there are many semi-independent Bureaus and Offices, a few of which I have already mentioned. The most important ones are larger than the Departments within the Hsien Government itself and are themselves broken down into three or four Departments. Their personnel is appointed by the Provincial Government, and they all are responsible to some organization within the Provincial Government even though they are supervised by the Hsien Magistrate. The most important ones are the Police Bureau, the Bureau of Education, the Tax Collection Bureau, and the Land Tax Bureau.

The Pa Hsien Police Bureau maintains one central police station at the Hsien capital and four branches in different parts of the Hsien. The central station has 154 officers and men with 111 pistols and rifles. Each of the branch stations has 40 officers and men with 30 pistols and rifles. The Hsien police force, therefore, totals slightly over 300 men, in addition to the aggregate of the small forces maintained at each Hsiang Office. This is not a very formidable group, but it seems to be adequate for maintaining normal law and order. The absence of any Hsien Local Court, however, is felt to be unfortunate by local leaders who believe such a court would be closer to local problems and would have a better understanding of local conditions than the courts in Chungking.

The Bureau of Education is a recent creation, established in 1947, to place more emphasis on education than was the case when it was handled by a Hsien Department. The job of the Bureau is not only that of maintaining existing educational institutions, but it is a job of development as well. Although compulsory primary school attendance is prescribed by law it cannot be enforced when there aren't sufficient schools (even thereafter there would be economic problems which I won't go into), and the Head of the Bureau of Education estimates that

at present in Pa Hsien only 30 percent of the children of school age attend school and only about 20 percent of the population is literate. There are 600 Pao People's Schools and 102 Central Schools in the Hsien with a total enrollment of approximately 50,000 children. The principals of the schools, who must be graduates of a normal school or the equivalent, are appointed and supervised by the Bureau of Education. Educational standards, textbooks, and curriculum are all prescribed by the Ministry of Education, and the Bureau must see that the standards are maintained and the regulations followed. In addition to supervising these primary schools the Bureau itself maintains three middle schools (the only public middle schools in the Hsien), a normal school, and an agricultural school. There is no tuition in these schools, but there are fees for books and supplies.

A new organization called the People's Education Organization, has recently been established under the Bureau of Education, but at present all significant work on adult education is actually being done by a private organization, the Mass Education Movement (I will have more to say about it later), which, however, has the backing of local governmental authorities.

The Tax Collection Bureau is a large organization responsible for collecting all taxes in the Hsien except for those assigned to the Hsiang Offices, the Land Tax, and national taxes collected by the Direct Tax Bureau and the Commodity Tax Bureau which are Central Government organizations. The most important tax which the Tax Collection Bureau handles directly is the Slaughtering Tax, a seven percent tax on all pigs killed. It is important because pork is the staple meat in the local diet, and all the income from this tax is kept by the Hsien Government. The next most important one is the Land Deed Tax imposed on all land purchases. The buyer must pay a tax amounting to 18 percent of the land's value. Six percent, or one-third, of the total income from this tax is turned over to the Provincial Government, and the rest is kept by the Hsien. There is also a Business Tax on profits or income from interest (three and six percent respectively) the income from which is divided evenly between the Province and the Hsien. The Bureau also collects rent on public land owned by the Hsien and rented to tenants.

In terms of value, however, by far the most important tax from the point of view of the Hsien Government is the Land Tax which is collected in kind by the Land Tax Bureau. Grain taxes of this sort have, in fact, been the main financial support of the Chinese Government for hundreds of years. For a number of years the Central Government abandoned traditional practice and levied the Land Tax in money instead of grain, but during the Sino-Japanese War (partially, as a result of the rapid depreciation of money) it switched back to the old system.

In Pa Hsien the Land Tax is collected by 23 Collection Offices from all landowners in the Hsien in September, after the rice harvest, and it must be paid in unhusked rice. Computation of the tax is extremely complicated, but since the tax plays such an important role in public finance in China it is worth describing how it works in Pa Hsien.

The basis for imposing the tax is land value. All land is classified as belonging to one of nine grades, depending on its quality. Each mow (one-sixth of an acre) of land is given a tax value depending on its grade. For example a mow of the first grade is given a tax value of \$0.20 and a mow of the lowest grade \$0.01. A landowner's holdings are totalled up on this basis, and the tax rate is expressed in terms of a definite amount of grain per \$1.00 of land.

The present Land Tax in Pa Hsien is really a combination of four taxes and a forced loan. The basic tax is computed on the basis of Central Government orders. The Central Government, depending on its needs, sets a figure which is divided up among the Provinces on the basis of cultivable land, and this in turn is divided up among the Hsien. This figure, when it reaches the Hsien, is 30 percent of the basic tax. The total basic tax collected is an amount which is finally divided so as to give the Hsien Government 50 percent of the total, the Provincial Government 20 percent, and the Central Government the required 30 percent. Once the total figure for this basic tax is computed, the tax rate is determined by the total value (as already described) of cultivable land on which it can be collected. A second tax is added by the Provincial Government, and is divided among its Hsien, and all of the receipts from this tax go to the Province.

The other two taxes are added by the Hsien Government, one to meet its current needs and the other to accumulate a grain reserve as insurance against years of bad harvest. The forced loan is a Central Government levy. Every land-owner with over \$1.00 worth of land must loan a definite amount of rice per mow of land. The loan is supposed to be paid back by the Central Government, through the various Land Tax Bureau, in yearly installments over a five-year period with interest which is less than one percent. The repayments are made not in rice but in money on the basis of current rice prices at the time of repayment. All of these five elements, the four taxes and the forced loan, are lumped together and collected at the same time.

The Head of the Pa Hsien Land Tax Bureau says that these taxes together amount to between 15 and 20 percent of the value of rice production at the present time. That figure is difficult to check, but it seems to be roughly correct.

The Land Tax is probably the most important single tax in China because Central, Provincial, and Hsien Government all rely heavily upon it. The Central Government has other important sources of income including the Customs, Salt, Commodity, Income, and Inheritance Taxes, but these taxes miss rural China for the most part, or at least they miss Pa Hsien. The Commodity Tax Bureau has representatives in the major modern factories in the Hsien, can collect a certain amount, but it is not large enough even to warrant establishment of a branch office in the Hsien. The Direct Tax Bureau does have an office in the Hsien capital, but its receipts are almost nothing. In fact, although the wealthier citizens in the Hsien are certainly covered by the Income Tax laws, the Head of the Direct Tax Bureau somewhat sheepishly admits that not a single person paid an Income Tax in 1947. They weren't willing to pay it, and evidently he couldn't do very much about it.

In addition to the organizations already described there are a few other semi-independent bodies connected with the Hsien Government. The most important one not mentioned previously is the Health Office which maintains 10 Branches and 24 Health Stations in the Hsien. Within the limits of its abilities it is doing a much-needed job of providing medical service. It is badly handicapped, however, by lack of funds, personnel, and equipment, and modern medical service is available to only a fraction of the population of Pa Hsien.

All of the Hsien bodies described so far are administrative bodies, and all of their personnel is appointed. What sort of men fill these posts? They vary, of course. There are good and bad, competent and incompetent. They are all fairly well educated, and many are college or university graduates. Most of them have made a profession of civil service and many have worked in several Hsien Governments over a period of years. There is not much chance of promotion above the Hsien level for most of them (according to the ones I have talked with), and even within the Hsien Government a Department Head has only a small chance of becoming a Magistrate. Apparently a man becomes a professional Department Head or a professional Magistrate and may be shifted around between Departments or may be transferred from Hsien to Hsien, but has only a slight chance of being promoted to a post of higher rank with greater responsibility. Almost all of these men have some source of outside income (many own land) because present salaries (even though they form such a high percentage of Hsien's expenses) are not really enough to live on.

One thing all of these men have in common. All of the executive officers and all Department, Bureau, and Office Heads, without exception, are members of the Kuomintang. While membership in the Kuomintang is not important in the Hsieh Ma Hsiang Office, it appears to be a prerequisite for appointment to a Hsien position. In many respects, membership in the Kuomintang seems to be in the nature of a union card and not much more than that. There are men of all types who carry the cards. Some are dead weight in the Hsien Government, but many are capable and forward-looking men who are doing their best to provide good government for Pa Hsien. One has to distinguish between the Party organization and the Party membership, because the membership is all-inclusive and contains all kinds of people.

The Party itself in Pa Hsien, however, is an uninspired, listless, rootless organization which apparently is not interested in doing much of anything except maintain its monopoly position in politics and government service. The Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Hsien Party Headquarters claims that there are 34 Area Party Headquarters and 236 Party Branches in Pa Hsien with a total membership of about 6000. (This includes regular party members and KMT Youth Corps members, the

latter having been merged with the Party recently.) These figures, although they do not agree exactly with statistics published by the Hsien Government, are probably substantially correct. The figure for total membership is small, however, for an area with a population of over 800,000, and if Hsieh Ma Hsiang is typical many of those who hold party cards are inactive and only nominal members. The Kuomintang has never had any real competition from any other organized political Party in this region since it was first organized prior to the 1911 Revolution, and this fact may help to explain its loss of vitality and its degeneration into a political organization which has almost no roots, no mass following, and no program or activities, but which nonetheless maintains a monopoly of higher political posts.

Theoretically, there is a Hsien-wide Party Representative Assembly, elected every two years, which selects the thirteen-member Executive Committee which runs Party affairs (its head, the Party Secretary, is appointed by the Provincial Party Headquarters), and the eight-member Examination Committee which checks on the Executive Committee. Actually, however, the last time there was even a nominal meeting of such an assembly was in 1944, and there are no plans for any meetings in the near future. The Party receives its mandate and instructions from the hierarchy above rather than the membership below.

Financially, the Kuomintang in the past had depended upon subsidies from the Government. Party and Government were not clearly separated but rather were joined in a legally-defined form of political matrimony during what was called the "period of political tutelage". This year, with the beginning of Constitutional Government, the two were to have been divorced. This was to involve, among other things, the end of Government subsidies to the Party. It is interesting to note, however, that in Pa Hsien the Party Headquarters, which is located in one wing of the Hsien Government building, is still subsidized by the Hsien Treasury. The amount of this subsidy is not large, but it maintains an official link between the Party and the Government. The Party Secretary denies that this subsidy continues, but his principal assistant and the Hsien Accountant both are more frank in revealing the facts. The subsidy may be discontinued in the near future, but at present it remains as one more example of the lag between promulgation and implementation of law in China.



Fortunately, the character of the Party in Pa Hsien does not determine the basic character of the Hsien Government. The Hsien Government contains a number of able and liberal officials who are attempting to improve conditions and are cooperating in a program of reform which is being pushed in the whole Third Administrative District of Szechuan to which Pa Hsien belongs.

The one elective and representative body in Pa Hsien is the Hsien Council. This Council, which meets every three months, has 101 (unsalaried) members, 71 of whom are elected by the Hsiang Assemblies and 30 by various professional organization and occupational groups. It concerns itself almost exclusively with financial and budgetary matters presented to it by the Hsien Government. Procedurally it is thoroughly democratic. Questions referred to it by the Hsien Government are debated openly in sessions which are notable for rhetoric as well as for serious discussion. All of its decisions must be approved by the Provincial Government before they become final, but the Council has some real power based on its share in controlling the purse strings. The Hsien Government must get the Council's approval for its budget and for all expenditures. The Council, therefore, in a negative way helps to determine policy through its veto in financial matters. The complexity of the problem of change and progress in China is illustrated by the fact that this element of democracy in the Hsien Government is not an unqualified blessing in Pa Hsien. The present impulse toward and stimulus for change and reform in the region come neither from the masses, who remain politically passive for the most part, nor from the landowning gentlemen represented in the Hsien Council, but from a key group of idealistic men in the Administrative District Office and the Hsien Government and in the Mass Education Movement. The Hsien Council tends to be an obstacle to, rather than an instrument of, change. The reasons for this should be obvious in view of what has already been said about social organization in the region. As one high-ranking member of the Hsien Government expressed it, "There isn't a single tenant in the whole Council. Many of the Council members are able men, but they are all men of wealth, education, and leisure. They are conservative and aren't interested in changing the status quo. The status quo is not bad at all from their own personal point of view, which is the only point of view most of them have."

### An Administrative District

Pa Hsien is one of 11 units (10 Hsien and one Special District with the rank of a Hsien) in the Third Administrative District of Szechuan. The whole Province is broken down into 16 Districts of this sort. The Third Administrative District has a population of about five millions. In other words, it contains more people than Switzerland or Denmark.

An Administrative District is really nothing more or less than a branch office of the Provincial Government. Chinese provinces are so large that some link is necessary between the Provincial and Hsien Governments. The function of the Administrative District Offices is to supervise the Hsien Governments and to see that orders from above are carried out. A Chuan Yuan, or District Officer (sometimes translated as Inspector-General or Prefect) has considerable authority, however, and can ask the Provincial Government to remove Hsien Magistrates or Department Heads if he sees fit.

The Third Administrative District Office is located in a building adjacent to the Pa Hsien Government. Its chief executive, who is concurrently District Officer and Peace Preservation Commander of the District, is appointed by the Provincial Government with Central Government confirmation. He has working for him 32 civil and 6 military officials. There are three main Departments, one dealing with civil affairs, conscription and health, a second with taxation, finance, and land administration, and a third with education, reconstruction, and social affairs. The job of these Departments is to keep in close touch with all that is going on, in their respective fields, in each Hsien.

Although the responsibility of a District Office is primarily a supervisory one under normal circumstances, it can exert an important influence on the whole District by providing leadership and making suggestions to the Magistrates. The District Officer normally has no real authority to initiate policies on his own, but if he is a man of ability, imagination, and force he can in fact introduce ideas, get the Hsien Magistrates to agree, and then obtain approval for them as policies from the Provincial Government.

## Rural Reconstruction and Reform

The picture which I have presented so far is not complete. I have deliberately omitted certain influences and forces which are beginning to make themselves felt in the pattern of economic and political life. I have done this because I wanted primarily to describe the more normal and typical aspects of the region. A full description of these new elements would require another report as long as this one, so I will just mention them briefly as a postscript. (Perhaps I can say more about them in later reports.)

The whole Third Administrative District is typical in the sense that a little over a year ago it was designated by the Provincial Government as an experimental area for the Mass Education Movement. In this area over-all policies of rural reconstruction and reform are being introduced and tried out by the Mass Education Movement with the co-operation and backing of the District Office.

The leadership in this experiment is in the hands of two men. One is Dr. James Yen who is head of the privately-financed, independent Mass Education Movement. The other is Mr. Sun Lien-ch'uan, District Officer of the Third Administrative District who was appointed to his present post by the Provincial Government in 1947 at Dr. Yen's Request. These two men have worked together on rural reconstruction projects in other parts of China. Both are men of unusual ability, imagination, and vision who believe that progress and reform can be accomplished by peaceful, evolutionary means in China and are trying to prove it by putting their theories into practice.

The Mass Education Movement was started in 1922, and at various times has carried out projects in Hopeh, Hunan, and Kwangsi. When it began it was simply a literacy movement, but it gradually developed into a program for attacking the whole problem of rural development by co-ordinated policies, related to literacy, health, agricultural improvement, and citizenship education.

The approach of the Mass Education Movement is designed to stimulate a desire for self-improvement on the part of the common people, help them organize, give them advice on what they can do, and assist them in doing it. The starting point is an attempt to raise the standard of literacy. Mass Education Directors are trained to give

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In some cases, also, the cooperatives organize local handicrafts on a rational basis and attempt to standardize production as well as to buy needed raw materials and sell the finished products on a cooperative basis.

The ultimate objective is to have cooperatives throughout the whole region (perhaps one in each Pao) which will include all the working farmers in the region. Each cooperative will be an integrated unit working, with the aid of specialists in the Mass Education Movement, for the welfare and improvement of all of its members.

Most of the actual work involved in carrying out this program is done by members of the Mass Education Movement, and to develop qualified leaders a College of Rural Reconstruction has been established in the area. The Government gives the movement support and backing in many ways, however. For example, all Hsiang Offices are instructed to designate one teacher in each school as a Mass Education Director; these teachers are the ones whom the Mass Education Movement trains first to get the program started. The Government backs up the cooperatives in their efforts to get loans. Also the District Office is solidly behind the idea of the cooperatives buying up all land offered for sale; this aspect of the program will definitely need Government support if it is to be carried out extensively, because there is opposition to it on the part of the landed interests. The District Office is also trying to press the development of irrigation projects in the region.

This program has not been going on very long in its present experimental area. In some regions significant progress has been made. In others, such as Hsieh Ma Hsiang (where the College of Rural Reconstruction is located, incidentally) literacy classes and cooperatives have made a good start but have not yet altered significantly the traditional pattern of economic, social, and political life. However, the program promises to make real progress toward meeting some of the fundamental needs of the farmers in the region.

As it develops it will inevitably have political implications. If the farmers are aroused and made aware of means by which they can improve their position, if

they are organized and learn the potentialities of collective action, they may take a more active interest in government and politics. For this to peacefully bring about important changes, however, it probably requires not only the acquiescence but the active backing and assistance of Government authorities. Fortunately, this exists at present in the local area. It would facilitate matters, however, if it received more support from the Central Government. Particularly in regard to the organizational features of local government, there is a need for certain changes which can only be made by the Central Government in view of the way administration is centralized in China. I will not attempt to offer my opinion on what changes should be made, but perhaps some are suggested by the facts I have already described.

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