CHINA
Polls in
A COUNTRY STUDY

Politics in

CHINA

Third Edition

James R. Townsend
University of Washington

Brantly Womack
Northern Illinois University

LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY
Preface to the Third Edition

In the mid-1980s the People’s Republic of China has moved beyond the revolutionary concerns of its founding generation. To be sure, there are still active leaders whose careers have spanned over half a century of China’s modern history. Deng Xiaoping, the most powerful Chinese leader of the post-Mao period, was a member of one of the earliest Chinese communist groups, worked closely with Mao Zedong before Mao gained control of the party in 1935, and made the legendary Long March. But the surviving older leaders, especially Deng Xiaoping, are preoccupied with increasing China’s prosperity within a stable domestic and international political environment. As a victim of the Cultural Revolution, Deng attaches special importance to strengthening institutions and ensuring a smooth transfer of power. He is using his remaining years and his personal authority to promote the rule of law, to protect state institutions from arbitrary party control, and to require the party to serve the needs of modernization. His commitment to a smooth transfer of power can be seen in the promotion of Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang to the top party and state positions and, more generally, in the encouragement of younger and better-trained cadres throughout the system.

Under the patronage of Deng Xiaoping, the new leadership has been increasingly bold in its efforts to reform the economic and political structure and thereby promote modernization. A general relaxation of central control can be seen. Private economic activity has revived after near extinction in the Cultural Revolu-
tion, enterprises have been given much more autonomy, and life on the streets of China is proof that earlier revolutionary puritanism has softened. Important exceptions to relaxation are population policy, internal party discipline, and criminal sanctions. Moreover, institutions and procedures have been reformed and revitalized. Chinese leadership is attempting to guarantee that current reforms will continue indefinitely. At the highest level this concern can be seen in the promotion of the 1982 Constitution and the development of the legal profession, but it also affects daily life in the form of long-term production contracts for households. Finally, the policy change most obvious to a foreign audience is the new commitment to international openness, which has brought hundreds of thousands of tourists and rapidly increasing amounts of foreign investment to China as well as thousands of Chinese students to Western countries.

Paradoxically, the very stability of post-Mao politics and the normalcy (by Western standards) of its policy concerns create difficulties for the understanding of PRC politics as a whole. What are the continuities between the post-Mao period and the Cultural Revolution? To what extent are current policies a return to the politics of socialist construction of the 1950s? Are current decollectivization policies in rural areas a fundamental and permanent rejection of rural policy since land reform in the early 1950s? The attempt to answer such questions requires a well-balanced understanding of past and current phases of Chinese politics.

It is easy to assume that the current phase of Chinese politics is politically self-contained and does not require a serious investigation of earlier phases. This assumption is encouraged by Chinese political rhetoric, which emphasizes the total rejection of the Cultural Revolution on the one hand and the arrival of a new era of modernization on the other. It should be remembered, however, that the Cultural Revolution also claimed to be a total rejection of the previous period and promised a new era of permanent revolution. In retrospect, interpretations of Chinese politics that simply accepted the rhetoric of the Cultural Revolution appeared dated and naïve. The basic inadequacy of only taking current politics into account is not that the phase may change and make one's analysis irrelevant, but that the starting point of any new phase is the experience, political behavior, and ideas of previous phases. The differences between the Cultural Revolution and the post-Mao era are undeniable, but the significance of these differences can be understood only in historical context. For Chinese political actors, this context is a matter of personal experience and requires little explicit analysis, but external observers must constantly ask themselves how the historical context structures and gives meaning to political action. Hence, the primary task of the third edition of Politics in China is to seek an overall understanding of Chinese politics that is sensitive to its historical continuities as well as to its post-1976 changes.

Understanding a changing Chinese political system requires changes on the part of the analyst as well. A major change in this edition of Politics in China is the addition of Brantly Womack as co-author. We believe that our fresh look at the subject has improved this book in several ways. The first and most obvious area of innovation is the inclusion of new political material up to mid-1985. We have rethought issues in every chapter and have restructured some of them in the light of developments in the first decade of post-Mao politics. For example, the discussion of political organization not only takes into account the new party and state constitutions of 1982 but also gives greater attention, in Chapter Three and elsewhere, to the post-Mao emphasis on institutionalization, law, and socialist democracy. Secondly, a general book of this kind relies heavily on the quality of scholarship in the field, and we have incorporated in our analysis many important advances by our scholarly colleagues. A name index has been added to facilitate the reader's use of our references to the impressive body of scholarship available on various topics of interest. A third improvement results from much better data and opinion from China. There has been a significant quantitative and qualitative development of China's informational resources in recent years, which has greatly strengthened the data base of the third edition. This can be seen in the appendices, for example, and in the discussion in Chapter Five of the communications media.

This edition of Politics in China has benefited greatly from comments on the second edition by students and colleagues, and
we invite readers to continue to send their comments and suggestions for the improvement of future editions. We are especially grateful to Lowell Dittmer for his extensive comments on an earlier draft, and we acknowledge with thanks John Frankenstein's "Note on the Romanization of Chinese," which we have retained from the second edition. We are indebted to Cheryl Fuller for her very able word-processing. Finally, we extend our thanks to several other people whose support and assistance helped bring the manuscript to completion: Lucian Pye, the academic editor for this volume in the Series in Comparative Politics; John Covell and Barbara Breese of Little, Brown and Company; and Terri Gitler and Cathy Lockman of Publication Services. All errors and shortcomings, of course, are our own.

A Note on the Romanization of Chinese

There are several systems, all of them unsatisfactory in some way, for rendering Chinese words in the Roman alphabet. The two most widespread today are the pinyin system, used in the People's Republic of China, and the older Wade-Giles system, which until recently was almost universally used in English-language scholarly work on China. This book uses, except as noted, the official pinyin system; the more familiar Wade-Giles transcription follows the pinyin rendering in parentheses at the first occurrence.

There are, however, a number of cases where familiarity, custom, sheer recognizability, and ease of scholarly access argue for retention of older romanizations, especially in a textbook such as this. Thus, in this book, Peking [Beijing], Canton [Guangzhou], Yangzi [Changjiang], Manchuria [Dongbei], Tibet [Xizang], and Inner Mongolia [Nei Monggul] are given in their non-pinyin versions; brackets denote pinyin versions of older usages. The names of some individuals (Chiang Kai-shek, Sun Yat-sen) and organizations (the Kuomintang, referred to throughout this text by the standard initials KMT) are not changed.

Finally, we should note that we have retained that word of most uncertain origin, China. Otherwise, the name of this book would be Politics in Zhongguo.
Contents

Chapter I

The Study of Chinese Politics

1


Chapter II

The Origins of the Communist Political System

29

The Chinese political tradition. The revolutionary setting. Soviet Communism. CCP history. Conclusion.

Chapter III

The Political Framework: Institutions and the Evolution of Policy

82

A. Political Institutions.

# Contents

Chapter VIII

From Maoism to Modernization: Socialism with Chinese Characteristics


Appendix A: Provincial-Level Units

1. Area and Population
2. Selected Development Indicators, 1982

Appendix B: National Economic Indicators

1. General Indices and Rates of Growth
2. Selected Annual Economic Indices
3. Selected International Comparisons

Appendix C: Consumer and Welfare Indicators

1. General

Appendix D: Foreign Trade

1. Growth, Balance, and Composition of Trade
2. Selected Commodities
3. Trade with Selected Countries

Subject Index

Name Index

---

# Figures and Tables

**Figures**

3.1 CCP Structure: Center, Province and City, 1982 Party Constitution
3.2 CCP Organization: Local and Basic
3.3 State Structure of the PRC, 1982 Constitution

**Tables**

| III.1 | Development of Collectivized Agriculture |
| V.1 | Enrollments and Graduates by Level of School (in Thousands) |
| V.2 | Media Growth in China |
| V.3 | The Credibility of Chinese Media among the Beijing Audience |

| VI.1 | Growth of the Chinese Communist Party, 1921–1982 |
| VI.2 | Communist Youth League Membership, 1949–1959 |
| VI.3 | Continuity in the Chinese Communist Party of 1945 and 1965 |
| VI.4 | Changes in Composition of the CCP Central Committee |
| VI.5 | Continuity Between the Eleventh and Twelfth CCs |
| VI.6 | Affiliations of Politburo Members, 1989 |