

Week 4 Reading 2: Disbanding Collective Agriculture

Who divided the land: the States or the Farmers?

- there, said the news media, families were dividing up all the fields and farms equipment and each household was beginning to work its own allotment separately, almost as though the fields were private holdings.
- Independent family production (bao gan dao hu) [contracting management to the household] or, more commonly, dabaogan [big management contracting] was preferred eventually by the vast majority of China's peasantry.
- smaller labor grouping (bao chan dao zu), a team's lands were to be distributed among smaller labor squads, which were to hand in the yields at harvest's ends in exchange for payment from the production team.
- the evidence strongly suggests that it was only in these desperately poor districts that villages dared in the late 1970s to take the initiative in moving beyond labor squads.
- Under the **bao chan dao hu**, family was given the freedom to organize its own daily labor, but it could not decide for itself what to grow and it could not sell any of the crops on its own.
- Under the **dabaogan**, land ownership also remained with the team, but the individual households could use the land that was allotted to them to diversify into any crops they liked just so long as they used a portion of the land to help meet the team's crop quota deliveries to the state.
 - would leave little role for the collective teams
 - they could sell their remaining crops on their own, either to the state purchasing stations or on the free market.
- villagers were forced to "voluntarily" to practice dabaogan.
- There are pros and cons. In case of illness or a failed crop, families no longer would be able to count on the team's pooled collective land and resources as a safety net against personal disaster.
- In sum, the evidence suggests that a complex and unplanned interplay between the top and bottom levels of the bureaucratic structure, involving ambiguous directives from the top and competitive pressures among politically nervous lower level officials, had culminated in the countryside's near-total abandonment of the collectives.

The Push from Below to Readjust Landholdings

- in most villages, every five or six years much of the land has been reallocated between households as the size of some families has increase and others decreased. surveys have also shown that most farmers prefer this, and are apposed to establishing a system of purely private smallholdings in which their own individual property rights are secure.