

**The Resurrection of Lei Feng:
Rebuilding the Chinese Party-State's Infrastructure of Volunteer Mobilization**

David A. Palmer and Rundong Ning

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Abstract: The year 2008, marked by mass volunteer mobilization after the Sichuan Earthquake and during the Beijing Olympics, is hailed in official discourse as “Year One” of volunteering in China, when volunteering became integrated into mainstream Chinese culture and society and began to enjoy high-level official support and recognition. Since then, the Communist Party Youth League, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Office of Spiritual Civilization and other state agencies have rolled out several programmes at the local, regional and national levels to recruit and mobilize volunteers for a wide range of forms of social service. In fact, the irruption of volunteering into the public sphere in 2008 was not as sudden as it appeared. A Party-state organizational and propaganda infrastructure of popular mobilization, inherited from the Mao era, had continued to function, albeit in low gear, throughout the three decades following the Cultural Revolution, transforming its discourses and practices to adopt models of volunteerism introduced from Hong Kong and the West, featuring depoliticized, individualized and market service approaches. After 2008, the Party-State's volunteering infrastructure was ramped up, and it was re-politicised at two levels: at a symbolic level, the filiation with the Party's revolutionary heritage became increasingly explicit in volunteering propaganda, and at an organizational level, the purpose of volunteer mobilization became explicitly oriented to counter the rise of independent NGOs and civil society organizations, creating an infrastructure to enable the Party to channel and control popular energies to serve society within its own parameters. This article traces the evolution of state-sponsored volunteer practices, discourses and organizational forms from the Mao era until today, paying attention to the shifting representations of the revolutionary hero and model volunteer, Lei Feng. We conclude that state-led volunteering in contemporary China paradoxically redeploys discursive and organizational legacies of revolutionary mobilization to attain the

opposite goal of de-mobilization or de-politicization, channeling popular altruism and energies into forms of social service that reinforce market-driven governance and Party-led nation-building.

Introduction

Following the Sichuan earthquake of 12 May 2008, hundreds of thousands of volunteers spontaneously joined the relief effort – a loosely organized grassroots movement that caught both the Chinese government and international observers by surprise. A few months later, at the Beijing Olympic games, over a hundred thousand well-organized volunteers efficiently catered to the needs of visitors. With these two events, volunteerism became visible as a mass phenomenon in China. From then on, the state gave volunteering an increased level of support and legitimacy, in order to promote and channel volunteering as a form of social service. The Communist Party Youth League and the Ministry of Civil Affairs, with their networks reaching down to student cells in schools and residents' committees in the neighbourhoods, developed increasingly comprehensive and systematic programmes to recruit and deploy volunteers to care for the elderly, help out at major sporting and diplomatic events, give tutoring support for migrant children, engage in environmental cleanups, or travel as volunteer teachers to remote rural and ethnic minority regions. In 2012, the Politburo's Leading Group on Spiritual Civilization Building, following guidance from the 6th Plenum of the 17th Central Committee of the CCP, officially linked this mobilization with the “permanent implementation” of the campaign to learn from the revolutionary hero Lei Feng, which was ramped up to a level unseen since the years immediately following the crackdown on the Tiananmen student movement in 1989. Volunteer mobilization has thus become a vehicle for the revival, reconstruction and expansion of technologies of rule through an organizational and propaganda infrastructure dating from the revolutionary era.

These infrastructures have long been considered by many Chinese (as well as foreign observers) as anachronistic relics of a bygone era of mass political campaigns, increasingly irrelevant to peoples' lives as individualistic consumers in the market economy who are highly cynical about appeals to “Serve the People”.¹ Thus the puzzle posed by this phenomenon: could forms of voluntaristic mobilization derived from Maoist mass politics gain any traction in a depoliticized population with little inclination to invest itself in Party-led activities? How and why has this infrastructure been re-deployed, and what have been

the consequences? This chapter traces the evolution of state-sponsored volunteer practices, discourses and organizational forms from the Mao era until today. We pay special attention to the shifting representations of the revolutionary hero and model volunteer, Lei Feng, as well as the incorporation of Western-derived conceptions of volunteering and volunteer management into the institutions of the Party-state and its revolutionary rhetoric on altruistic service. We conclude that state-led volunteering in contemporary China paradoxically redeploys discursive and organizational legacies of revolutionary mobilization to attain the opposite goal of de-mobilization or de-politicization, channeling popular altruism and energies into forms of social service that reinforce market-driven governance and Party-led nation-building. In comparison with the cases presented in this volume, this mobilization can be called “pre-emptive” in that it aims to create a “state-mobilized civil society” that absorbs the altruistic energies of the youth and middle class, filling the space that might otherwise be taken by independent organisations and networks that could, eventually, turn into oppositional social movements.² To use the typology presented in the introduction to this volume, state-sponsored volunteering channels popular energies into an “infrastructural mobilization” in order to assist the Party-state in its project of society-building by means other than routine bureaucratic policy implementation and regulation. In contrast to many of the cases discussed in this volume, such as Hemment’s study of the Nashi movement in Russia or Chan and Juncker’s study of anti-Falun Gong protests in Hong Kong -- in which the state lacks its own direct means of mobilization and tries to indirectly and covertly form and fund popular groups to carry out its agenda, sometimes with unforeseen consequences -- here the role of the Party-state is fully open and transparent. Rather than dissimulating itself behind purportedly independent popular movements, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), in our case, attempts to openly and directly re-establish its organic connection to the grassroots, both symbolically and organizationally.

Volunteering in China, indeed, presents the co-existence of two realities of popular spontaneity and high levels of state mobilization. At one level, it can be seen as a poorly organized phenomenon, a movement in which individuals perform acts of service in a rather unstructured way. Many volunteers operate at an even more “grassroots” level than NGOs and civil society movements, since their actions are usually temporary, their connections are often loose networks that are rarely organize formally, and since the same individual often gets involved in several groups simultaneously or consecutively, their

volunteer trajectories might not be encapsulated within a single organization or institutional formation.

At another level, however, volunteering is highly organized and institutionalized. Notably, the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Communist Party Youth League, and, more recently, the Office of Spiritual Civilization, have been playing a significant role in mobilizing volunteers. Official discourse and policy reflect a strong will to organize and to institutionalize volunteers, to convert the Party-state's network of mass mobilization and surveillance of youth and neighbourhood residents, notably through the Youth League and neighbourhood committees, into the institutional framework of volunteering. The deployment of the institutional network aims to channel this engagement, in ways that show both continuities and ruptures with revolutionary-era campaigns, in order to contribute to Chinese nation-building and reinforce the presence of the Party-state at the grassroots.

As part of a broader research project on volunteering in contemporary China,³ this chapter specifically focuses on state-organised process of volunteer mobilisation, rather than other, more autonomous organisations and forms of volunteer social engagement. It is based primarily on official discourses, documents and press reports, and reflects primarily the top-down perspective of the state. The discourses and experiences of volunteers themselves, based on interviews and ethnographic participant observation among educational volunteers organised in a wide range of programmes and organisations, both within and outside the Party-state, are the subject of a series of forthcoming articles.⁴

In her work on volunteering in the United States, the sociologist Nina Eliasoph has highlighted the contrast between volunteering, which tends to be apolitical, and more politicized forms of activism.⁵ Volunteering has been actively promoted since the 1990s in the West and elsewhere as part of a neo-liberal restructuring of governance with the goal of drawing on the goodwill of grassroots volunteer efforts, in which individual and community "self-help" are seen as the solution to social problems, rather than state interventions. While volunteers often consciously avoid discussing and acting on the political dimensions of the problems that they are trying to alleviate through their altruistic efforts, volunteering can lead to a deeper awareness of the structural political roots of social issues, and draw volunteers into more activist and politicized forms of social action. Thus, while volunteering and contentious political activism are distinct categories, the boundaries between them can be fluid and ambiguous.

This is precisely the risk that has led the Party to pro-actively take the lead in

structuring the wave of volunteering. The genealogy and development of volunteerism in China are closely tied to the evolution and transformations of state-led mobilization from the revolutionary era until today. In the 1990s, the promotion of modern forms of volunteering represented an attempt to move away from the politicised flavor of revolutionary forms of mass mobilization widely perceived as ritualistic and ineffective, and thus was aligned with a global trend towards depoliticized volunteering and social engagement in the context of rising neo-liberalism. But “neo-liberalism” is a problematic concept in China, given that the apparent retreat of the state in the first two decades of “reforms and opening up” in the 1980s and 90s, was a tactical move serving the longer-term aim of consolidating the rule of the Party-state.⁶ By the early 21st century, indeed, and increasingly in the past few years, this “neo-socialist”⁷ programme has been promoted by a Party-state that is once again expanding its reach and increasingly drawing on and adapting the symbols, discourses and techniques of control and mobilization of the revolutionary era. In the case of volunteering, the goal is to activate and channel non-political forms of altruism and social service, while preventing such engagement from slipping into contentious forms of activism. What we then witness, then, is a ramping up of the revolutionary legacy of the propaganda and infrastructure of political mobilization, in order to attain the goal of a *depoliticizing* and *non-contentious* mobilization.

When we speak of a *depoliticizing* mobilization, we contrast contemporary voluntarism to the Communist Party’s heritage of revolutionary mobilization, which explicitly aimed to politicize the masses as full participants in the struggles of which the Party was the vanguard. Indeed, the Communist Party under Mao developed a broad, deep and multifaceted culture of voluntarism, in which the stirrings of popular protest at the root of revolutionary action were incorporated into the Party’s institutional mode of operation. The top-town, rational-bureaucratic *diktat* of a Leninist party is complemented by the free and enthusiastic rising up of the masses to fight the enemy, to engage in class struggle, to build the New China, to feed the nation, to develop industry, to advance modernization, and so on. In its revolutionary history, the Party gained experience in mobilizing striking coal miners against their capitalist bosses in the 1920s,⁸ peasants against landlords from the Jiangxi Soviet in the 1930s until the land reform movement of the 1950s,⁹ intellectuals in the movement to go “up the mountains and down to the countryside” 上山下乡 that took place in several waves from the Yan’an period in the 1930s until the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s,¹⁰ and military recruits against the American Imperialists in the Korean War.¹¹ These troupes were called the “Volunteer Army” *zhiyuan jun* 志愿军, in what

appears to be the first usage in the Peoples' Republic of China of the term that is now used to express the concept of the "volunteer." The Red Guard movement can be seen as the climax of politicized Mao-inspired voluntarism in the early years of the Cultural Revolution, in 1966-67. This movement led to the formation of highly politicized youth and popular groups that eventually turned against each other, leading the country to the verge of a civil war.¹² The ultimate outcome was a cynical de-mobilization of the masses and, among the reformist Party leadership under Deng Xiaoping, a visceral horror for any type of mass protest that, it was feared, could degenerate into another wave of fanaticism and chaos reminiscent of the Red Guards. This was one of the main fears that justified, for Deng, the ruthless suppression of the Tiananmen student movement of 1989.¹³ The challenge for the Party in the post-revolutionary era, then, was how to mobilize the masses without politicizing them with potentially uncontrollable consequences.

Official discourses on volunteering

The short book *Volunteers in Action*,¹⁴ published as part of the "Stories of National Conditions" series (国情故事), provides an excellent window into how volunteering is recounted within Party-state narratives of nation-building. The book begins with a chapter on "2008: Year One 元年 for volunteering in China," with portraits of volunteers conducting disaster relief at the site of the Sichuan earthquake, and at the Beijing Olympic games. In the state narrative of the post-quake volunteers, the Chinese nation comes into expression through mutual help and compassion. The diversity of backgrounds – students, businessmen, workers, peasants, freelancers, laid-off workers – all spontaneously arise to rescue their fellow Chinese. Young people of the post-Mao generation, previously seen as selfish individualists lacking a social conscience, reveal their altruism and their courage. Taxi drivers turn off their meters, droves of volunteers climb over landslides and mountains, risking their lives, reaching out to stranded victims, carrying food and supplies, offering first aid, sanitation, and psychological counselling. Crowds of volunteers flow into Chengdu from all over China, lining up to offer their services at the Red Cross, the Youth League, and at improvised coordination offices of a network of local and national NGOs. Altogether, the number of volunteers was estimated by the China Social Work Commission to amount to 100,000 persons who came to Sichuan from other parts of China; while one million volunteers assisted within Sichuan, and 10 million persons across China participated in publicity, fundraising, and contributing and transporting materials.

According to the China Youth Volunteer Association, 4.91 million persons volunteered nationally.¹⁵

The stories of volunteers emphasize the mutual care of Chinese people from different classes, regions and ethnic groups. For example, one group of 13 peasants from a village near Tangshan, Hebei, as soon as they heard news of the quake, embarked on buses and moto-taxis to Beijing, Zhengzhou, Xi'an, Chengdu and Beichuan to rescue victims isolated behind the mountains. Another group of 10 peasants from Shandong loaded 38 cases of bottled water and 50 cases of instant noodles onto a tractor and set off for Sichuan, driving across China for 4 days and 3 nights until they joined the ranks of the on-site volunteers. Meanwhile, a millionaire entrepreneur from Jiangsu donated 8 million yuan and organized for 60 bulldozers and 120 technicians to be sent from Jiangsu and Anhui to Dujiangyan, bringing along 2300 tents, 23000 radios, 1000 TV sets, and 8000 schoolbags, saving 128 lives. A 73-year-old hospital director and his wife drove down from Yizhou in Hebei, carrying 300 types of drugs and 60 items of medical equipment. A 23-year-old Tibetan from Aba descended to Deyang, organized other volunteers to carry the wounded, examine the victims, set up the tents, lay down the cots, and, with his own hands, carried stretchers holding the critically injured up and down the stairs of a hospital whose elevators had broken down. In these stories, rich and poor, peasants and millionaires, young and old, northerners and southerners, Han and Tibetans all come together in solidarity, saving lives, tending wounds, rescuing the body of the nation in a redemptive moment, a time when the Chinese could, in the midst of disaster, celebrate their moral goodness.

In her account of the Beijing Olympics, Zhang Chunxia emphasizes the patriotic enthusiasm of the youth, displaying Chinese goodwill and friendship to the world. Over one million applied to be volunteers when only 100,000 were required; 70% of these were from the post-Mao youth generation of only children.¹⁶ They were dispatched to the sports venues and to "volunteer stations" throughout the city to carry out support work for the athletic events, and to offer tourist information, translation, and first aid services. Praise for the Chinese volunteers by members of the IOC, and positive coverage by the overseas media, figures prominently. The participation of schoolchildren, the elderly, the handicapped and of scholars is highlighted, as is beautiful women: fashion models trained for the flag-raising ceremonies, and a comely young woman was caught on camera, bringing water and comfort to a handsome blond foreign boy who had fainted on a sidewalk in the summer heat -- she symbolises the humanistic spirit of the Olympics and

displays the inner spiritual beauty behind the beautiful appearance of the volunteer.¹⁷

Zhang Chunxia stresses that in 2008, volunteering acquired a level of public recognition that had never existed before. Since the events of 2008, she says, society has shown a greatly increased level of openness to and respect for volunteering, and more common people are now joining the ranks of volunteers. She states that, after over a decade of the development of volunteering in China, the trend is for greater regulation, organization, institutionalization of volunteering, in order to give it more “rational” guidance and norms. But volunteering still lags behind the developed world: Where about 40% of Westerners take part in volunteer activities, the number of urban Chinese volunteers only amounts to 3% of the urban population.¹⁸ Thus, how could China gain ever-increasing numbers of volunteers, without causing social chaos? How could volunteering be better guided, regulated, organized and institutionalised?

Tan Jianguang, a scholar in the Youth League’s university system, writes that with globalization, the rise of NGOs and the emergence of global civil society, volunteerism as a form of social service spread beyond the West to other parts of the world. Tan notes that voluntarism in this context is closely tied to NGOs rather than to the government or business sectors, since volunteers are the main workforce of NGOs and voluntarism cannot be forced on people by governmental fiat, nor can it be promoted by economic incentives. At the same time, he stresses that international NGOs often have political objectives and hope to promote “Western-style democracy” in China. But most international NGOs, he stresses, have no political objectives and are motivated by humanism and charity. While being alert to the potential political motives of foreign NGOs, China cannot stem a global tide and should absorb their positive elements, and develop a “volunteer service with Chinese characteristics,” spread the advantages of socialist spiritual civilization, and change the current unilateral radiation of volunteer service outward from Europe and America to a diversified trend of development.¹⁹

Tan Jianguang’s account reflects the ambiguities of China’s official approach to volunteering at the turn of the century. Western models of volunteering clearly presented an attractive solution to palliating for the shortcomings of the state in a market economy. Encouraging people to do good deeds was certainly something that should be encouraged – but how could it be done without undermining the political control of the Party? How could volunteering be developed without becoming a “fifth column” of Western democratization?

Returning to Lei Feng

Party and state organs discussed these questions over the next few years, and considered the experience of the previous three decades, in which, as described below, the Party-state had already built a large infrastructure for recruiting, managing and deploying volunteers. This infrastructure had adapted and built on mobilization techniques and methods inherited from the revolutionary era – notably, the campaigns for “Learning from Lei Feng,” an altruistic soldier who had been turned into a revolutionary saint in the 1960s, as described further below. The crystallization of this emerging official discourse on “volunteer service with Chinese characteristics” can be dated to 2012, when the Politburo’s Leading Group on Spiritual Civilization Building issued a document entitled “Notification about Promoting the Lei Feng Spirit and Energetically Launching Voluntary Service Activities”.²⁰ The document stressed that voluntary service was closely related with and very important for promoting the “Lei Feng spirit”, which was now to be promoted at an increasingly higher pitch.

At about the same time, the News Channel of China Central Television launched a series of reports named “I Learn from Lei Feng, I volunteer” (*Xue Lei Feng, wo zhiyuan*). This program showcases people who kindheartedly help others, such as jumping into a river to save someone who was drowning. In addition to such “ad hoc” actions of doing good deeds which are in line with the classic interpretation of the “Lei Feng spirit”, this series also highlights various kinds of more organized, systematic, and lasting actions and programs, and more importantly, these reports make explicit use of the rubric “volunteer.” For example, the episode broadcast on April 7th, 2012 was about college student volunteers acting as guides and helpers in a hospital.²¹ They all wore blue waistcoats showing their volunteer identity, and were recruited directly by the hospital. In the same year when the program was aired, the same or slightly modified slogans of “I learn from Lei Feng, I volunteer” served as the name of numerous governmental activities. Clearly, in this most recent wave of promotion of the “Lei Feng spirit,” volunteering has taken a central place. This campaign marked the intensification of a campaign to re-integrate discourses and propaganda on the revolutionary tradition of serving the masses with the discourses and practices of “volunteering,” which had, from the 1990s until then, been evolving in an ambiguous space between state-sponsored mobilization and informal actions at the grassroots.



Fig. 1. The iconic image of Lei Feng

Learning from Lei Feng in the revolutionary era

The “Learning from Lei Feng” slogans and activities hark directly back to the Maoist era, when, starting in the early 1960s, promoting selfless sacrifice was elevated to a national campaign at the center of which stands a heroic yet mysterious soldier who died at the age of 22. In this section, we focus on the historical shifts in the official discourse on helping others by “Learning from Lei Feng” (LLF).

Prominent as he is, Lei Feng has not been studied extensively. Most of the existing literature in Chinese aims at interpreting the figure of Lei Feng in different ways as an instrument of governance.²² Sociological research has focused on the ways in which the official and popular discourse of Lei Feng has changed with the social context.²³ These studies suggest that Lei Feng propaganda has become de-politicized since the 1980s and now places more emphasis on such personal virtues as diligence and helping others. However, they failed to notice how the Lei Feng movement was hybridized with the new social trend of volunteerism, and has thus smoothly acquired a new life. Here we will briefly introduce the rise of LLF and its marriage with volunteer service.

Lei Feng [雷锋], originally named Lei Zhengxing [雷正兴], was born on December 18, 1940. He was orphaned at the age of seven. He began his career in his township

government in 1956, at the age of 16. In 1960, when he was 20, he was enlisted in the Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA) and joined the CCP. During his service, he won numerous honorary titles and awards, including "Chairman Mao's good soldier". He reportedly died on August 15th, 1962, hit on the head by a wooden column that had been accidentally struck down in a collision by a military truck. Most of the propaganda about him was launched after his death.

Lei Feng had already been the subject of one major article in the *People's Daily* before his death,²⁴ in which he was described as a warm-hearted and diligent soldier who had endured a miserable childhood to become a hard-working and enthusiastic young "builder of socialism". The article relates that Lei Feng once insisted on donating 200 yuan to a people's commune. When the leader of the commune finally accepted his donation and asked his name, he simply replied, "I used to be an orphan, now I'm a soldier of the PLA." The article finished with two other short stories about him. One told about how he had accompanied an elderly woman who had lost her way back to her home; the other told of him stopping to help the workers at a construction site while on his way to the hospital. Lei Feng's remark and the two stories were constantly cited in subsequent LLF campaigns, until they became among the most widely known citations from the press in the revolutionary era.

While these acts of altruism are what Lei Feng is most remembered for today, the article also contained other stories about him, which cast him firmly into the revolutionary narratives of his time. For instance, he was the leader of a children's group in 1950. During a struggle session against a landlord of his village, who had slashed the hands of Lei with a knife when he had tried to stop the landlord's dog from eating his meager meal, an "intense hatred surged into the heart of this ten-year-old boy; he jumped onto the stage, stretched out his wounded hand, grabbed the neck of that landlord whose [exploitation] had caused the death of his mother; and condemned his crimes. With his own eyes, he watched as the Peoples' Government, in accordance with the law, shot dead that evil landlord, taking revenge for him and for countless class brothers."

Soon after his death, his deeds were publicized extensively in Liaoning province, where the army troop in which he served was stationed.²⁵ Then, on January 21st, 1963, around five months after his death, the Ministry of Defense approved naming Lei Feng's squad after him.²⁶ During the naming ceremony, General Du Ping [杜平], the head of the Department of Politics of Shenyang division of the PLA, called on all the youth in the squad to launch a movement to learn from Lei Feng. At the same time, an exhibition hall

about Lei Feng's life was inaugurated, which featured memorial inscriptions written by Luo Ruiqing [罗瑞卿], the Chief of Staff of the PLA, and Song Renqiong [宋任穷], the Secretary-General of the Northeastern Bureau of the Central Committee of the CCP.

Despite the fact that Lei Feng was still a regional hero at this time, these inscriptions showed recognition of Lei Feng from the highest leadership in China. In February, the movement became nationwide in scope. On the 7th, a front page article of the *Peoples' Daily* detailed how influential the publicity activities about Lei Feng had been in Liaoning province. An enriched article of the one published in 1961 and an editorial extolling him also appeared on the second page. Excerpts from his diary and a set of photos of him were published on page five. In the following two months, the *Peoples' Daily* published articles every week calling on the masses to learn from Lei Feng. One of the most frequently cited phrases from Lei Feng's diary was his resolution to become "a screw that never rusts" for the revolution. This phase of the campaign culminated on March 5, when the *Peoples' Daily* reported that Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and other party and state leaders had written inscriptions to promote "Learning from Lei Feng" on the frontline. From then on, March 5 was designated as Lei Feng Memorial Day, and various activities would be held across the country on this date every year.

The content, implications, and discourses of LLF today, however, are quite different from fifty years ago. Lei Feng was all too perfect. Then what exactly did the party want the masses to learn from him? The answers have varied dramatically with the times.²⁷

Initially, LLF was a highly politically charged campaign. In the 1963 announcement of the campaign in the PLA, the soldiers were exhorted to learn the following four points from Lei Feng: (1) to be firm in one's class position, loyal to the Party, to Chairman Mao, and to the revolutionary spirit of liberating humanity; (2) to put the interest of the party first, to base oneself on the needs of the revolution, to resolutely become a "screw that never rusts" and wholeheartedly serve the people; (3) to uphold the noble communist virtues of simplicity, hard work, self-abnegation and altruism; (4) to study the works of Chairman Mao with effort and enthusiastically accept the party's indoctrination, to be strict to oneself and adopt a spirit of learning and self-improvement.²⁸ The focus was almost entirely on loyalty and service to the Party and the people; warmhearted help to others that would, much later, become the focus of LLF campaigns was still marginal in the LLF movement.

During the Cultural Revolution, the political significance of Lei Feng was most salient, and he was used as a token in political struggles.²⁹ This was most clearly shown by

the fact that Lei Feng was invoked to justify two events instigated by opposing factions—the attack on former PRC President and senior party leader Liu Shaoqi in 1966, and the sacking of the “Gang of Four” in 1976. During the Cultural Revolution Lei Feng was presented not as a helping hand, but as a diligent builder of socialism who always followed the party line without question; the evocation of direct service to others was downplayed.

De-politicising Lei Feng, 1978-1981

After 1978 and the launch of the Opening-up policy, the LLF campaign was gradually de-politicized and turned into the promotion of moral deeds at a personal level. Admittedly, most of the LLF discourse at that time was still highly political, but new interpretation of LLF was emerging. A new slogan was attached to the campaign: “Establish a new atmosphere, do good deeds” (*Shu xinfeng, zuo haoshi*, “树新风, 做好事”).³⁰ This was originally the title of an activity for youth, proposed by the Ministry of Education and other state agencies, during the winter break and Spring Festival of 1978. The activity was aimed at pushing the Lei Feng campaign to a “new climax”, in order to further eliminate the “poisonous influence of the Gang of Four” and restore the lustre of the revolutionary tradition. The proposal contained three detailed components which were in stark contrast to the initial focus of the campaign in 1963: (1) during the spring festival holiday, each person, according to their personal circumstances, was encouraged to do one meaningful deed for his peoples’ commune, factory, school, work unit, or for the masses; (2) during the holiday, to visit and comfort relatives of revolutionary martyrs, PLA soldiers, teachers, and comrades who were still working during the festival; (3) Red Guard organizations in schools and in Party units,³¹ and teams of sent-down youth in the countryside, could organize reading meetings, singing gatherings, scientific experiments, or meet exemplars and heroes. The overtly ideological and political elements of the campaign, if not completely eliminated, became less obvious; modest acts of direct care to others were emphasized instead of revolutionary grandstanding. In fact, the third component of the plan seemed to liberate the “red guard” groups and the sent-down youth from purely political activities.

Indeed, the reports about LLF following the appearance of the new slogan were largely about outstanding, diligent, or warm-hearted people; they no longer mentioned whether they enthusiastically read Mao’s works or if they actively criticized class enemies. This signaled the gradual depoliticisation of the LLF campaign: the regime had decided to

abandon class struggle, to move away from the turmoil and conflicts of the Cultural Revolution, and to release the peoples' energies into the market economy.

Revolutionary ideology and mass political mobilization fit uncomfortably with the new orientation. At the same time, the increasingly self-interested and individualistic pursuit of private gain in the market economy were seen as having a corrosive effect on public morality and on the collectivist ethos. The Party thus outlined a complement to the construction of "material civilization" in a campaign to "construct "spiritual civilization," an ambiguous category that encompassed both ideological work as well as increasing the population's level of education, culture, manners, and civility.³² Under the category of spiritual civilization, the moral resources of the revolution would, during the next two decades, be converted into the depoliticized public virtues of a market economy and consumer culture – and this would include the transformation of Lei Feng from a loyal "nail" of the Party into a model of unreflexive help to others.

Since the 1980s, the LLF campaign increasingly emphasized acts of community service. On March 4th, 1980, one day before the Lei Feng Memorial Day of that year, some thirty thousand middle and primary school students in Beijing went out to clean streets, help the elderly, and publicize traffic rules – activities that would be called "voluntary service" today. The *Peoples' Daily* reported the event, and cited a remark from a passerby: "the Lei Feng spirit has come back to the youth,"³³ an expression that would reappear in *the Peoples' Daily* in the same period next year.³⁴ It was not until this point that the LLF campaign became less emphatic on being loyal to the Party and highlighted more, if not solely, the moral qualities related with doing good deeds.³⁵

Another step was made in the 1980s as well. Before this time, the LLF campaign referred more often to individual acts. In the 1960s, there were hardly any reports about people forming groups to help others, but they rather highlighted exemplary individuals. "LLF groups" began to appear in news reports from the mid-1970s on, and were extensively publicized in the 1980s. The first "LLF group" was reported in 1973. This group belonged to the Guangzhou People's Trolley Bus Company and consisted of 22 members who were primarily bus attendants. In the report they narrated how the deeds of Lei Feng inspired them to be more kind and helpful to bus passengers, to give them detailed directions, to return lost wallets, and so on.³⁶ And yet the report did not describe any systematic group work done by them, so coordinated volunteering was unlikely the primary mode of their service. Moreover, "LLF groups" were rarely mentioned in the *Peoples' Daily* before 1980. In 1980, an article reported that PLA troops in Xiamen

organized “LLF groups” to help with providing service to tourists. These groups also regularly helped to repair damaged buildings and to maintain parks. After this report came out, the phrase “LLF groups” showed up repeatedly in the *Peoples’ Daily*. Groups with other titles emerged as well. A “Youth Service Corps” (YSC, *qingniang junwu dui* 青年服务队), for example, was first reported in 1981.³⁷ According to this article, the first YSC arose from branches of the Youth League in a bicycle factory in Shanghai. The members of this YSC first helped fellow workers in the factory with daily chores such as repairing bikes, hair-cutting, washing clothes, and so on. Soon other factories organized their YSCs as well and they offered their service outside the factories. They helped in hospitals, schools, army barracks, and ports. In an article published three months later, it was reported that more than 6000 Youth Service Corps had emerged in Shanghai. These groups marked a new phase of LLF in which helping acts were carried out in groups, and this practice was recognized and vigorously publicized. This transition rendered the organizational structure of traditional LLF more powerful to mobilize and manage people to offer help, and would facilitate the shift towards the volunteer movement in 1990s.³⁸

The category of “labour by obligation” (*Yiwu laodong*)

Corresponding to this trend, the term “*yiwu laodong*”, once closely associated with LLF but separated from it during the Cultural Revolution, as discussed below, was resurrected in the 1980s. This phrase has an ambiguous meaning. Literally, it means “obligatory labor”. If the labor is obligatory, one has no choice but do it. However, the usage in the Chinese context by no means implied compulsion. Nearly all the reports related to *yiwu laodong* suggest that, despite the obligatory implication in the name, the work was done ad hoc and out of willingness. Thus *yiwu* or “obligatory” in this term does not mean a burden or a lack of choice. Rather, such labor was an “obligation” in the sense that material or financial reward to the laborers was neither necessary nor desirable. The word implies that, out of a deep sense of obligation to serve the party, the state, and the people, one voluntarily offers help. Compared to the earlier discourse on “doing good deeds”, “labor” in this phrase also carried a subtle change. While helping an elderly person cross the street or offering someone a seat in a bus could well count as good deeds, they are hardly “labor” in the formal sense of the term. Labor implies systematic work, and usually takes place in organized groups. Specifically, *yiwu laodong* includes such activities as working for construction projects, planting trees, and reaping for farmers. Therefore *yiwu laodong*

was a very sophisticated expression connoting patriotism, willingness, complexity of the work, and teamwork at the same time. It almost captured the entire essence of what would be called “volunteerism” today.

It should be noted that *yiwu laodong* came into public use much earlier than “learning from Lei Feng”. Reports about *yiwu laodong* can be found in the *Peoples’ Daily* going back to 1947. The term was also associated with the earliest reports on LLF: on March 16, 1963, when LLF was still in its first high tide, the term was first used in conjunction with LLF in the *Peoples’ Daily*. The original sentence went “...ten members of the Chinese Communist Youth League and young people spontaneously organized a *yiwu laodong* group and helped clean the workshops...”

However, for most of the time before the 1980s, especially during the Cultural Revolution, *yiwu laodong* referred to volunteerism in other countries in the Soviet Bloc. Starting from the 1980s, the term was used less for describing foreign activities and more for domestic ones. Indeed, *yiwu laodong* heralded the emergence of volunteerism in public discourse in the 1980s. The stress on intentional service is the first step of LLF on the road to incorporating volunteerism.

Emergence of the category of the “volunteer” in the 1990s

Although the 1980s had seen the emergence of a conception of organized unpaid service activity that prefigured the modern notion of volunteering, the Lei Feng and *yiwu laodong* campaigns still had the form and coloration of mass political campaigns and propaganda that were increasingly seen as meaningless formalism, and the exhortations to “serve the people” as being completely out of sync with people’s enthusiastic rush to make money by any means. Most Chinese today remember *yiwu laodong* as activities such as one that one of us attended in 1993 in Chengdu, where, on LLF day, teachers and students of a school were instructed to uproot plants from one part of the schoolyard and replant them in another location, in what seemed to be a futile exercise mostly enjoyed by students as an opportunity to get out of the classroom on a springtime Saturday morning.³⁹

In the late 1980s, however, residents of Shenzhen and Guangdong imported more individualistic discourses and practices of volunteering from Hong Kong.⁴⁰ In those territories, volunteering is called “yigong” 義工 – which also translates literally as “work by obligation” but, in the Hong Kong context, is the term used to convey the western category of “volunteering”, often carried out by religious groups and charities. Exchanges

with Hong Kong thus played a major role in facilitating the semantic and conceptual shift from the revolutionary obligation to sacrifice for the collective, to less politicized and more individualistic conceptions of volunteering. In one source, which focuses on Guangdong, the “first” volunteer service in China is identified as a group of Lei Feng enthusiasts who, in 1987, tired of the “political movement” flavour of Lei Feng activities, and after reading books about volunteer service overseas and consulting with Hong Kong volunteer groups, decided to set up a telephone hotline, the “hand-in-hand youth hotline service (“手拉手”青春热线电话服务) to provide psychological counselling to people in need, with the support of the Guangdong branch of the Youth League. In 1990, the first independent volunteer association, the Shenzhen Volunteer Social Service Federation, registered with the Shenzhen Civil Affairs Bureau.⁴¹ This association’s founders included lawyers who were familiar with foreign experiences of NGOs and who were in touch with Hong Kong volunteer associations.⁴² The association was, in its early years, lodged in the Municipal offices of the Youth League, and primarily offered a hot-line service. When the Municipal Party leader first met the group in 1994, he expressed strong support for the organization, which led to funds and office space being allocated, staff being hired, and the expansion of services into several new areas, including a volunteer teachers’ corps (义工讲师团), a volunteer artist troupe, and so on.⁴³

In the early 1990’s, several municipalities in Guangdong experimented with new ways to celebrate Lei Feng Memorial Day on March 5. In Jiangmen, groups from Hong Kong and Macau and overseas Chinese groups were invited to share the traditional culture and customs of overseas Chinese, under the theme of “caring for our overseas relatives,” and also to provide examples and models of volunteer service, leading to the establishment of first rural youth volunteer service centre, in the Xinhui district of Jiangmen. Similarly, Zhuhai invited volunteer groups from Hong Kong and Macau to establish pilot projects. Shantou used the visits of overseas Chinese to promote philanthropy and volunteer service.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, in north China, the term of *zhiyuan* started to acquire the connotations associated with the modern concept of “volunteering”, and would become the preferred term in official discourse to designate the practice. The first “volunteer organization” in China is traced in the official literature as having been formed in March 1989 by 13 members of the residents’ committee of a lane in Tianjin (天津市和平区新兴街朝阳里), who organized a group of 40-50 volunteers, the “‘serve the people’ volunteer group” (“为

民服务”志愿者小组) to help with lone and widowed elderly, the handicapped, and people with special needs in the neighbourhood. The earliest activities were helping the elderly to buy and deliver vegetables and coal (Zhang Chunxia 2009: 61; Tan Jianguang 2005: 10) ⁴⁵

In 1990, the Asian Games were held in Beijing. Of all the 17,000 staff of the organizing committee, most were actually volunteers. However, the official report used the phrase “*zhiyuan renyuán*” (志愿人员, voluntary personnel) instead of “volunteers” (*zhiyuanzhe* 志愿者).⁴⁶ The first *Peoples' Daily* article dedicated to “volunteers” per se (*zhiyuanzhe*) appeared in 1992. The report described volunteers who were active in helping residents in need in many neighborhoods in Hangzhou.⁴⁷ Citing an old member of the residents' committee, the journalist wrote “Here, ‘Learning from Lei Feng’ is no longer a seasonal song but a daily show!”

Indeed, this quote served as an overture for a national campaign starring millions of volunteers across the nation in the following decades. The emergence of youth volunteers is traced in the official literature to 19 December 1993, when, in preparation for the spring festival peak season, twenty thousand youth, holding flags with the words “youth volunteer” 青年志愿者, to provide help to travellers in 33 trains and 120 stations along the Beijing-Guangzhou line. ⁴⁸ Forty thousand secondary school and university students were subsequently deployed on all major lines and stations during the Spring Festival rush. Shortly thereafter, on Lei Feng memorial day of 1994, which inaugurated the two-day weekend in China, over ten million youth volunteers were mobilized to conduct labour in homes, farms and factories.⁴⁹

Institutionalising voluntarism

Volunteering was not only a category deployed in official discourses and large-scale event mobilisation; increasingly systematic efforts began to organise volunteers on a permanent basis. The establishment of the above-mentioned Tianjin volunteer group in 1989 was followed by the successive establishment of neighbourhood volunteer organizations throughout China until, in 2005, the Commission on Community Volunteers of the China Association of Social Work was formally established. According to figures compiled by the Ministry of Civil Affairs, by December 2007, over 270,000 volunteer organizations had been established, triple the number from the year before. The number of community volunteers was estimated at twenty million, including over 5.67 million “registered volunteers.” In December 2007, a system of registration and management of

volunteers began to be implemented nationally.⁵⁰ The growth in numbers, organizations and activities was an expression of the growing interest among China's middle classes for engaging in some form of helping activity – an interest that the Party-state was learning to structure and to channel through the deployment of its official volunteering infrastructures. The volunteer movement, however, was far from limited to state-sponsored initiatives; as we write elsewhere,⁵¹ it was also manifested through the upsurge in grassroots networks and NGOs. Thus, while the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake and Beijing Olympics made the phenomenon of both grassroots and state-organised volunteering an unprecedented public visibility and legitimacy, it reflected a trend that had been building up for the past two decades.

As Elizabeth Perry has noted, “Chinese university students are at present devoting more energy to community service than to political mobilization. Hostile as the top leadership is towards the whole idea of civil society, the Communist Party-state’s survival has actually been prolonged by its emergence.”⁵² This has been largely thanks to the regime’s efforts to take the initiative to organise and control community service opportunities. At present, in spite of the large number of volunteer organizations with little or no background in the party or the government, state-driven volunteering programs are still among the most influential and most popular ones in China. The Chinese Communist Youth League (*gongqingtuan* 共青团, Youth League hereafter), the Ministry of Civil Affairs (*minzhengbu* 民政部, MCA hereafter), and the CPC Central Committee’s Central Commission for Guiding the Construction of Spiritual Civilization (official English name: Central Commission for Guiding Cultural and Ethical Progress) (*Zhongyang jingshen wenming jianshe zhidao weiyuanhui* 中央精神文明建设指导委员会 or 中央文明委, CCC hereafter) are the main state agencies promoting volunteerism. The first, an affiliate of the CCP, aims to govern, organize, and train the youth of China as future party members and cadres. The second is a branch of Chinese government, focusing on the management of social work, social welfare and social organizations. The third is a ministry-level organ of the Central Committee of the CCP, which, since its establishment in 1997, has been tasked with civilizing missions such as enhancing the civility of towns and cities, embellishing the rural and ethnic character of villages, promoting “civilized families”, “civilized work units” and “civilized campuses”, improving the civilized behavior of tourists, enhancing trust between people, and promoting volunteering.⁵³

There is also often a parallel infrastructure of agencies and programs at the provincial, municipal, county (*xian* 县), and even more local levels of government. Local

governments may have their own versions that follow the general ideas of the centrally promoted programs. Therefore, there is an effervescence of volunteer programs with different names, aims, and types of people under the same banner of a central program.

Volunteers are a major component in the organization of major events and sports meets. This practice began with the Beijing Womens' Summit in 1995, for which the Youth League recruited thousands of volunteers from schools, universities and work units in Beijing; this was the first time this approach was used to welcome foreign visitors and give a smiling image of China. Other major events include the Kunming World Horticulture Exhibition of 1999, the *Fortune* forum in Shanghai in 2001, the Beijing Olympics of 2008, and the Shanghai Expo of 2010.⁵⁴ Overseas volunteer service began in 2002 by the Youth League, with youth volunteers being sent to Laos. By 2009, three hundred volunteers had been sent to Myanmar, Ethiopia, Guyana and other developing countries, for periods of six months to one year, to serve in the areas of Chinese-language education, health, computer training, etc.⁵⁵ A widely known Chinese international agency, the Confucius Institute (CI), which aims at promoting Chinese language and culture in other countries, also recruits a large number of volunteers each year from China to teach Chinese in its overseas branches. The CI recruits its volunteers independently from the above-mentioned state institutions. Instead, it relies heavily on the educational agencies at provincial and lower levels for the recruitment. Universities also play an indispensable role in this process, for fresh graduates are the most important source of new volunteers for the CI, and it is the universities that directly arrange the selection and recruitment of new volunteers. Intriguingly, in the statements addressed to prospect volunteers, the CI does not mention Lei Feng. Instead, it is the personal growth and transformation of volunteers themselves, that is triggered by the experience of volunteering, are foregrounded.⁵⁶ This absence of Lei Feng discourse reflects the flexibility of the state organizations in recruiting new volunteers, which adds to its effectiveness in absorbing and channelling the force of fervent youth through volunteer programs.

Among the various state institutions with volunteer programs being among their routine tasks, the Youth League is arguably the most visible and among the most influential ones. It takes the responsibility to organise youth volunteers, especially in schools and universities. On 5 December 1994, the Youth League established the China Youth Volunteer Association – laying the foundation for an institutionalized system of youth volunteering which, by 2009, included 35 provincial Associations, local associations in two thirds of China's municipalities, districts and counties, two thousand institutions of higher

education, and 190,000 “volunteer service stations.”⁵⁷ In Guangdong, for example, the Provincial Youth Volunteer Association was established in 1995; by 2005, there were 180 local Youth Volunteer Associations and 5500 “youth volunteer service stations” 青年志愿服务站 and 64708 “Youth Volunteer Teams” 青年志愿服务队.⁵⁸ In this system, the provincial association is responsible for establishing the legal status of volunteers and providing broad guidance, while municipal-level associations and “service stations” at the county level or below have a coordinating role, to link volunteers with service recipients, gradually establishing a broad-based service network.⁵⁹ There are local variations in the system: the provincial association and the municipal associations of Guangzhou, Foshan, Zhuhai, Shantou and other areas have followed the national model with “Youth Volunteer Associations,” with an emphasis on combining large-scale campaigns with specific service activities, while Shenzhen, taking inspiration from Hong Kong, spearheaded another model, of the “Volunteer Federation” (义务工作者联合会), which tries to coordinate government and non-governmental initiatives. There has been some competition between the two models.⁶⁰ The Central Committee of the Youth League sent representatives several times to try to persuade Shenzhen to adopt the national nomenclature, but Shenzhen persisted in retaining its name; other cities such as Panyu, Nanhai, Shunde and Lianzhou even adopted the “Yigonglian” name, in order to match the language used in Hong Kong.⁶¹

The organization of youth volunteers was quickly followed by regulation. In August 1999, the Guangdong Peoples’ Congress passed the first set of “regulations for youth volunteer service” (青年志愿服务条例), an example which was followed at the provincial and municipal levels by Shandong, Nanjing, Fujian, Henan, and so on.⁶² The Guangdong regulations guarantee the right of citizens to participate in volunteer activities; that they enjoy normal rights during volunteer service and can sue for compensation in cases of abuse; that volunteers’ resources cannot be misappropriated or volunteers forced to do unreasonable work; that volunteers deserve social recognition; and prohibit volunteers from engaging in illegal activities or from harming the interests of the recipients of their services.⁶³ In 2000, the Youth League announced that Lei Feng Memorial Day would be designated as the “Chinese Youth Volunteer Service Day” (中国青年志愿者服务日). The following year, a system of youth volunteer registration was put into place by the Youth League Central Committee, in which youth aged 14 or above could acquire the status of a volunteer, provided that they did at least 48 hours of volunteer service per year. Thus, by 2007, 25.1 million youth were registered as volunteers.⁶⁴

Youth volunteer work is organized into a series of areas: poverty alleviation in rural

areas; urban community building; environmental protection; large events; emergency rescue and disaster relief; and public interest (shehui gongyi 社会公益). Organizational models include “one-to-one” 一助一 assistance (started in 1995), in which a long-term relationship is established between a volunteer individual or volunteer group with an individual or area, to provide service at regular intervals and places. The targets of this type of service include isolated and widowed elders; the handicapped; and retirees, laid-off workers and students with special difficulties. They also include relationships with old age homes, welfare homes, orphanages, health rehabilitation centres, etc. The youth provide company, medical care, culture and entertainment, repairs of electrical appliances, internet training, legal advice, etc.⁶⁵

According to Tan Jianguang, in the early stages of the development of volunteer organizations, the role of the Youth League in mobilizing resources was crucial. Most groups evolved from “a model of management by league cadres, assisted by League members, and the participation of youth, to a model of support by league cadres, management by volunteer activists (gugan 骨干), and participation in service by league members and youth.” Early efforts continued LLF activities of helping poor families, the handicapped, lonely and widowed elders with daily chores and moral support; as well as propaganda for public morality (obeying traffic regulations, hygiene, etc). Later, the Guangdong Youth League promoted youth volunteerism in new areas such as environmental action and technological literacy. The Youth League also acts as a bridge between the Party and government and youth volunteers, consulting with the Party and government to launch volunteer projects which dovetail with government policies, such as support for poor rural areas.⁶⁶

The Go West Programme

One of the most high-profile programmes sponsored by the Youth League involves sending university graduates to as volunteer teachers in rural regions of West Chin. Initial, small-scale experiments began in 1996; these were consolidated in 2003 under the name of the “Go West Plan” (*xibu jihu* 西部计划). In June of that year, the Youth League, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Personnel co-issued a document which announced the commencement of the program, which makes use of the category of volunteerism to mobilize fresh college graduates to serve in western China in the fields of education, medical care, and agricultural technology. The official document

was issued to relevant governmental branches on June 8, and little more than two months later in the late August, the groups of college students set out for their volunteer service. At an internal meeting about the Go West plan in 2003, Zhao Yong, the then standing secretary of the Secretariat of the Youth League, remarked: “This year we have fought a sudden fight; [we] finished a series of tasks including recruitment and dispatch within a very short time.”⁶⁷

While the reason for this hasty action is unclear, the urgency of this program may be related to the special situation of college graduates in 2003. In 1999, under the influence of the new policy of “expanding enrollment” (扩招), the number of the students admitted into college increased by 44% compared to the previous year, whereas the annual rate of increase had averaged at 3.3% in the period from 1993 to 1998.⁶⁸ This dramatic change in the scale of admission resulted in a huge wave of inexperienced new job-seekers in 2003. To make things worse, in 2003 China’s major cities were severely stricken by SARS, an acute and frequently fatal infectious disease. Both factors led to uncertain prospects in the job market for college graduates in that year. The Go West program, born in such unusual circumstances, might well be understood as a way to channel the surplus of college-level labor from the cities to the countryside and thus temper the urgent issue of youth employment. In fact, a 2003 governmental notification about the employment of college students issued by the State Council listed as the first point the encouragement of college students to work “at the grassroots” (基层) and in areas in hard conditions. Moreover, this notification explicitly expressed the governmental support of the Go West program and the career advantages the volunteers would enjoy after they finished their service.⁶⁹ The document about the implementation of the Go West program cited this notification and claimed that the aims of the program included “widening the channel of employment and entrepreneurship of college students.”⁷⁰ Apart from the pressing problem of employment, training of new talents with work experience at the “grassroots” was another basic aim of the Go West Plan. Therefore, Go West is a program as much for helping volunteers as it is for helping the western areas. Although promoting the development of western China is still a key component of the guiding aims, the channeling and training of volunteers carry equal, if not more importance.

Another program, the “triple rustication (*san xiaxiang*” 三下乡), launched in 1997 and jointly sponsored by the Central Propaganda Department, the Ministry of Education and the Youth League Central Committee, involves sending hundreds of thousands of students at professional schools (大中專) down to the countryside during their summer

holidays, to conduct literacy, cultural, technological and health work, and to “promote applied agricultural technology and health, and civilized lifestyles”.⁷¹

The “Go West” and “Triple Rustication” programmes both evoke the movement to send urban youth to the countryside during the Cultural Revolution, from 1966 to 1976. The latter programme employs the same term of *xiaxiang* – “going down to the villages,” denoting an explicit and unambiguous link with the Mao-era campaign, while the slogan of the Go West programme employs a slogan that is almost identical to one associated with the Cultural Revolution. The following two images illustrate both the continuities and the changes in the presentation of these campaigns to send educated urban youth to “serve the people” in the countryside. The first image is a propaganda poster for sent-down youth in the Cultural Revolution, showing zealous young revolutionaries, holding Mao’s *Little Red Book*, departing on the train from Shanghai en route to their remote inland destination. On the red banner, educated youth are told of the necessity to be re-educated by the poor, lower and middle peasants. And the vertical slogan on the right of the poster states, “Go to the countryside, Go to the frontier areas, Go wherever the fatherland needs you most!”



(Fig. 2)

An almost identical slogan can be found on the banner for the Go West programme's website in 2015: "Go to the West, Go to the grassroots, Go wherever the fatherland needs you most!" But this time, the cheering youth portrayed beside the slogan are not heading off to be re-educated by the peasants, but to bring education to the peasants as volunteer teachers. And the militant aesthetics of the revolutionary poster are replaced by alluring images of grasslands and snow-capped mountains, as well as China's official logo for volunteering, showing a dove-shaped helping hand inside a heart, conveying a message of peace and love.⁷²



(fig. 3)

CONCLUSION

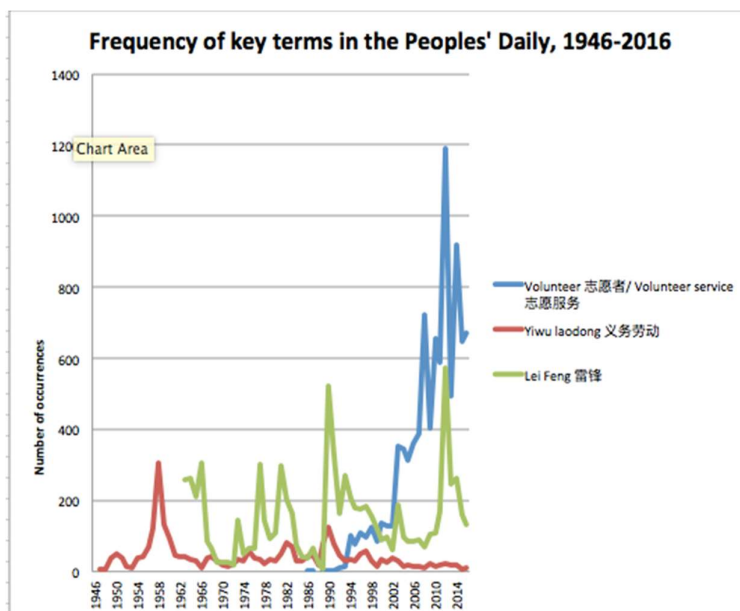


Table 1. Frequency of key terms in the *Peoples' Daily*.

BOX to accompany Table 1:

Table 1 compares the currency of the three key terms of “volunteer”, “*yiwu laodong*” and Lei Feng in official discourse in the history of the Peoples’ Republic of China, by counting the number of occurrences of the terms in the *Peoples’ Daily*. Peaks on the graph correspond to political campaigns. *Yiwu laodong* was most frequently used during the Great Leap Forward in 1958, and reached a second peak, together with Lei Feng, in 1990, in the year following the crackdown on the Tiananmen student movement, when the 6th Plenum of the 13th CCP Central Committee called for a renewal of the LLF campaign. The first peak for the term “volunteer” was in 2008, associated with the Olympics and the Sichuan earthquake, while the second peak, for both “volunteer” and Lei Feng, was in 2012, corresponding to the campaign by the Office of Spiritual Civilization to promote the Lei Feng spirit through volunteer service.

This chapter has provided an overview of the official discourse and institutionalization of volunteering in China from the Mao era until the present. It reveals a process of conversion of the Party’s network of mass mobilization of youth and neighbourhood residents, notably through the Community Party Youth League and neighbourhood committees, into the institutional framework of volunteering. With their growing affluence and sophistication, urban residents have a greater desire to contribute and participate in society through engagement as volunteers. The deployment of the institutional network aims to channel this engagement, in ways that show both continuities and ruptures with the campaigns of the revolutionary era. The aim is to contribute to Chinese nation-building, and to prevent the emergence of Western-style civil society by co-opting the altruistic impulses of the people into Party-led programmes.

In tracing the changes in the Party’s techniques of implementing its policies since the Maoist era, Elizabeth Perry describes a shift from “mass campaigns” to “managed campaigns.” For her, mass campaigns are more ideologically intensive and exclusive, stressing revolutionary moral virtues such as struggle against class enemies and sacrifice for the masses, and more frequently use coercive means in their implementation. While managed campaigns retain some of the characteristics of mass campaigns, they are more pragmatic and more inclusive of interpretive and practical diversity at the grass-roots. In this sense, the case of volunteerism described in this chapter illustrates the shift from a

mass campaign to a managed campaign, and the continuing importance of campaigns in the political life in contemporary China.⁷³ However, the two forms of campaign are not easily separated once and for all. As this case shows, the government is never willing to entirely divorce itself from the legacy of the Maoist era. The recurrent surges of the image and discourse of Lei Feng in the short history of volunteerism in China and the uncanny reminiscence between the Rustication and the Go West Program are both vivid proof of the proactive endeavors of the CCP to “recycle” its traditions in the Maoist era in innovative and accommodative ways.⁷⁴ As Perry has put it, managed campaigns originate from “an active and ongoing attempt to reconfigure elements of China’s revolutionary tradition in order to address new challenges under changed conditions.”⁷⁵

If the concept of “managed campaign” captures the changes in the means of the CCP’s campaigns, it raises questions about changes in the ends, or rather that of the formulation of the ends, of such campaigns. Mass campaigns in the Maoist era are usually characterized by their being formulated in terms of “anti-” (such as the “three anti- and five anti-”, 三反五反, to name only a few). Managed campaigns, in contrast, are marked by a notable decrease in the use of “anti-” in their names (the anti-corruption campaign being the most noticeable exception); instead, contemporary campaigns are formulated in much more affirmative and constructive terms.

How can we theorize this change and identify some of the nuances among campaigns that look very similar in their constructive and affirmative discourse? We would like to venture the following: If the “Constructing a new socialist countryside” campaign, an example analyzed by Perry, can be seen as an “inventive mobilization” in which the state is trying to engender something that goes against a social trend (in this case, the migration of the Chinese peasantry to the cities, leading to the dilapidation of the countryside), then, using the comparative framework of this volume, contemporary state-sponsored discourses and institutions of volunteering in China can be considered as a form of “preventive mobilisation”, which aims to actively organise and structure the existing and even vigorous impulse for social service and engagement in order to prevent and pre-empt mobilisation by other actors or for other causes. This complicates Juan Linz’s characterisation of forms of mobilisation and political regimes in his comparative study of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes.⁷⁶ Chinese state-sponsored volunteering does not reflect a totalitarian state’s efforts to mobilise citizens into pro-regime *political action*; nor can it be characterised as an authoritarian state’s efforts to actively *demobilise* citizens. Rather, what we find is an effort to actively *mobilise* citizens, but towards pro-regime *depoliticised*

action.⁷⁷ Perhaps it can be considered a form of “quasi-mobilisation” as defined by Hankiss 1988 in his study of post-socialist Hungary, in which the elite simultaneously fosters and curbs self-mobilisation among the population.⁷⁸

Institutionally and ideologically, contemporary Chinese volunteerism can trace its genealogy to the protest movements at the root of the Chinese revolution, which the CCP learned to organise, to nurture, and to channel to its purposes, both before and after Liberation, in campaigns ranging from labour strikes and peasant struggles to the intellectuals’ rustication movement, the volunteer army to the Korean War, Red Guard activism, and “Learning from Lei Feng.” In this rich repertoire of forms of Party- and state-led popular mobilization, it was the figure of Lei Feng that lent itself most readily to being recast from a paragon of class struggle into an embodiment of humble acts of kindness and virtue, allowing for the re-appropriation of revolutionary symbolism and discourses for the Party’s new strategies and technologies of rule in an individualised market economy. In this way, a tinge of the collectivism of the socialist era continues to be felt in the institutions of state-led volunteering. As Yan Hairong has argued, “the emerging hegemony of capitalism in China must deal with living socialist legacies, claims, and structures of feeling that surround the current relations of production and sociality.”⁷⁹ Similarly, the emerging volunteerism cannot be fully separated with LLF, and volunteers’ experience and practice are influenced by this socialist legacy.

At the same time, the new configuration does not fully resolve the ambiguous tensions between the collectivist discourses on Lei Feng and the more individualistic notions of volunteer service in a market economy. Tan Jianguang notes that while the LLF movement’s stress on “doing good deeds and helping others” (做好事, 帮助他人) is similar to the “volunteer service” stress on “serving society, serving others” (服务社会, 服务他人), they differ in that the Lei Feng movement was “political, movement-oriented and collective” (政治性、运动性、集体性), while volunteer service is “personalized, routinized and individualized” (人性化、日常化、个体化).⁸⁰ There was a conscious transition from the “selfless sacrifice” of revolutionary era to the “volunteer service” and “non-profit service” of the reform era. Organisers reflected that the Cultural Revolution had overly politicized serving others, and the “movement” style of the LLF campaigns of the 1980s involved sporadic actions that lacked continuity. In an essay written by a leading youth volunteer from Guangzhou, the author noted that many people speak of Lei Feng and of volunteers as if they were the same thing, but he stressed that while “Lei Feng was a volunteer (*yigong*), volunteers need not be Lei Fengs, volunteers need not have such noble

thoughts and spiritual awareness as Lei Feng.” “A volunteer is only an ordinary person who does ordinary things. But Lei Feng was the product of a specific age, who was fabricated as a model to imitate. He has a high level of enlightenment (觉悟), he has an attitude of sacrifice for the people, his heart is committed to the common good, he has unswerving perseverance. But a volunteer does not necessarily have these qualities and is not required to have them. The main thing that volunteers and Lei Feng have in common is all have a heart that takes joy in helping others.” This author criticized media reports on volunteers that exaggerate the sacrifices of volunteers, depicting them like heroic Lei Fengs, creating the negative effect of causing people to misunderstand the notion of volunteering and even to resist it.⁸¹

Such comments reflect the tensions between the revolutionary ethic of selfless sacrifice and the more individualized ethic of most contemporary volunteers, who do not recognise themselves in Lei Feng, deny any pretension to heroism, and, for the most part, seek self-discovery and self-expression through their volunteering.⁸² Thus, while the Party-state is able to re-deploy discourses, practices and institutions dating from the revolutionary era, the volunteers who are mobilised pursue their own dreams, fancies and desires.⁸³

¹ R. Ning and D. A. Palmer, ‘Ethics of the Heart: Moral Breakdown and the Aporia of Chinese Volunteers,’ forthcoming in *Current Anthropology*.

² See E. Perry, ‘Citizen contention and campus calm: The paradox of Chinese civil society’, *Current History*, 113 (2014), 211-7; Bin Xu, *The Politics of Compassion: The Sichuan Earthquake and Civic Engagement in China* (Stanford University Press, 2017).

³ This article is an output of the project ‘Volunteerism in China: Moral discourse and social spaces’ funded by the General Research Fund of the Hong Kong University Grants Council, and the Contemporary China Strategic Research Theme of the University of Hong Kong. We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of these two grants for the research and writing of this project.

⁴ See for example Ning and Palmer, ‘Ethics of the Heart.’

⁵ N. Eliasoph, *Making Volunteers: Civic Life after Welfare’s End*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); *The Politics of Volunteering*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).

⁶ See F. Winiger and D. A. Palmer, ‘Neo-socialist governmentality: Managing freedom in China’, forthcoming; S. Breslin, ‘Serving the market or serving the Party: Neo-liberalism in China’ in R. Robison (ed.), *The Neo-liberal Revolution: Forging the Market State* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 114-34; D. M. Nonini, ‘Is China Becoming Neoliberal?’ *Critique of Anthropology*, 28 (2008), 145–76; Y. Zhao, ‘Neoliberal strategies, socialist legacies: Communication and state transformation in China’ in P. Chakravartty and Y. Zhao (eds.),

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⁷ Frank N. Pieke, *The good communist: elite training and state building in today's China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 9-10.

⁸ E. Perry, *Anyuan: Mining China's Revolutionary Tradition*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012).

⁹ See, for example, S. C. Averill, *Revolution in the Highlands: China's Jinggangshan Base Area*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006); Lin Y. (林蕴晖), *Xiang shehuizhuyi guodu: Zhongguo jingji yu shehui de zhuanxing (1953-1955)* (向社会主义过渡——中国经济与社会的转型 (1953-1955)) (Moving toward Socialism: The transformation of China's economy and society (1953-1955)), (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2009).

¹⁰ M. Bonnin, *The Lost Generation: The Rustication of China's Educated Youth (1968-1980)*, (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2013).

¹¹ Junshi kexueyuan junshi lishi yanjiubu (军事科学院军事历史研究部) (Military History Department of the Academy of Military Sciences), *Kangmeiyuanchao zhanzheng shi* (抗美援朝战争史) (The History of the War of Supporting Korea against America), (Beijing: Junshi Kexue Chubanshe, 2000).

¹² On the Red Guards, see J. Andreas, "The structure of charismatic mobilization: A case study of rebellion during the Chinese Cultural Revolution," *American Sociological Review*, 72 (2007), 434-58; A. Walder, *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

¹³ E. F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011).

¹⁴ Zhang C. (张春霞), *Zhiyuanzhe zai xingdong* (志愿者在行动) (English title given as *Volunteer campaigns in China*). (Beijing: Xin Shijie Chubanshe, 2009).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-9. On volunteers at the Beijing Olympics, see G. P. L. Chong, "[Volunteers as the 'new' model citizens: Governing citizens through soft power](#)", *China Information* 25 (2011), 33-59.

¹⁸ Zhang, *Zhiyuanzhe zai xingdong*, pp. 110-1.

¹⁹ Tan, *Zhongguo Guangdong*, pp. 4-5.

²⁰ Zhongyang Wenming Ban (中央文明办), Guanyu hongyang Lei Feng jingshen dali kaizhan zhiyuanfuwu huodong de tongzhi (关于弘扬雷锋精神 大力开展志愿服务活动的通知) (Notification on promoting the spirit of Lei Feng and energetically carrying out volunteer service), 2012 No.2.

²¹ The video is available at <https://goo.gl/NwbMMJ>, retrieved Sept. 29, 2017.

²² See, for example, Chen X. (陈曦), 'Lun Lei Feng fengxian jingshen' (论雷锋奉献精神) (On the Lei Feng spirit of devotion), unpublished PhD thesis, Zhonggong zhongyang dangxiao (中共中央党校) (Party School of the Central Committee of the CCP) 2010; Hua Q. (华琪), *Lun Lei Feng jingshen* (论雷锋精神) (On the Lei Feng Spirit), (Beijing: Jiefangjun Chubanshe, 1990). For a more detailed literature review, see Liu J. (刘佳), 'Xue Lei Feng: Yige guojia yundong shijiao de yanjiu' (学雷锋：一个国家运动视角的研究) (Learning from Lei Feng: A study from the perspective of national movement), unpublished Master's thesis, Lanzhou University (2013).

²³ Examples include Lu Y. (逯延津), 'Lei Feng: ni cong nali lai' (雷锋：你从哪里来) (Lei Feng: Where are you from?), unpublished Master's thesis, Shandong University (2013); Chen Y. (陈阳), 'Qingnian dianxing renwu de jiangou yu shanbian: Renmin Ribao suzao de

Lei Feng xingxiang' (青年典型人物的建构与嬗变——《人民日报》塑造的雷锋形象) (The construction and evolution of model youth: A study on Lei Feng's image construction in *People's Daily*), *Guoji Xinwenjie* (国际新闻界) (Journal of International Communication), 3 (2008), 18-22.

²⁴ *Renmin Ribao* (人民日报) (People's Daily), 'Kuhaizi chengzhang wei youxiu renmin zhanshi' (苦孩子成长为优秀人民战士) (A poor child grows into an outstanding peoples' soldier)(May 5, 1961): 4. Please note that *Renmin Ribao* will be abbreviated as *RMRB* hereafter.

²⁵ *RMRB*, 'Aizeng fenming lichang jianding haobu liji zhuanmen liren: Xiang Lei Feng nayang zhongyu geming shiye' (爱憎分明立场坚定 毫不利己专门利人: 像雷锋那样忠于革命事业) (Clearly distinguish between love and hatred; show no self-interest, and focus on benefiting others: Be loyal to the revolutionary cause like Lei Feng) (February 7, 1963): 1.

²⁶ *RMRB*, 'Guofangbu pizhun shouyu Shenyang budui gongchengbing moubu siban guangrong chenghao "Lei Feng Ban"' (国防部批准授予沈阳部队工程兵某部四班光荣称号“雷锋班”) (The Ministry of Defense approved to award the Squad 4 of a certain division of the engineer army of Shenyang Troop the glorious title "Lei Feng Squad"), (January 25, 1963): 2

²⁷ For a more detailed description and analysis of this change, please see Chen, 'Qingnian dianxing renwu' and Liu, 'Xue Lei Feng'.

²⁸ *RMRB*, 'Jiefangjun zongzhengzhibu he tuanzhongyang fenbie fachu tongzhi: Guangfan kaizhan "xuexi Lei Feng" de jiaoyu huodong' (解放军总政治部和团中央分别发出通知: 广泛开展“学习雷锋”的教育活动) (The General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army and the Central Committee of the Youth League respectively issued the following notification: Widely carry out the educational activity "Learning from Lei Feng"), (February 16, 1963): 1.

²⁹ See Liu, 'Xue Lei Feng'.

³⁰ *RMRB*, 'Ba "Xiang Lei Feng tongzhi xuexi" de yundong tuixiang xin gaochao' (把“向雷锋同志学习”的运动推向新高潮: 春节和寒假开展“树新风、做好事”活动) (Push the campaign of 'Learning from Comrade Lei Feng' to a new climax: Carry out 'establishing a new atmosphere, doing good deeds' in the Spring Festival and the winter break), (January 27, 1978): 1.

³¹ This is a literal translation of the original news report in the *RMRB*. The Red Guards had been largely demobilized as early as 1968, and the wording here might be referring to the remnants of Red Guard groups.

³² Winiger and Palmer, 'Neo-socialist governmentality'.

³³ *RMRB*, 'Gongqingtuan Beijing shiwei zuzhi kaizhan "Xue Lei Feng huodongri" huodong: shoudu sanwan zhongxiao xuesheng shangjie gao weisheng' (共青团北京市委组织开展“学雷锋活动日”活动: 首都三万中小学生学习上街搞卫生) (The Beijing Municipal Committee of the Youth League organizes 'Learning from Lei Feng Day': Thirty thousand middle school and primary school students go to the streets to do cleaning in the capital), (March 5, 1980): 4.

³⁴ *RMRB*, 'Dao chezhan, matou, dajixiaoxiang wei qunzhong zuohaoshi: Nanjing qingshaonian juxing xue Lei Feng huodong zhou' (到车站、码头、大街小巷为群众做好事: 南京青少年举行学雷锋活动周) (Do good deeds for the masses at train and bus stations, ports, and streets: The youth in Nanjing hold Learning from Lei Feng Week), (March 3, 1981): 4.

³⁵ The public speeches given by political and military leaders continued to attach various virtues to Lei Feng, such as studying hard and being faithful to Marxism, but most reports

of “Lei Feng cases” in this period were now about helping others.

³⁶ RMRB, ‘Renmin de qinwuyuan: ji Guangzhoushi Renmin Dianche Gongsi “Xue Lei Feng xiaozu” de shiji’ (人民的勤务员——记广州市人民电车公司“学雷锋小组”的事迹) (A note on the deeds of the “Learning from Lei Feng Group” in the Guangzhou People’s Trolleybus Company), (March 3, 1973): 3.

³⁷ RMRB, ‘Tamen zijue de wei qunzhong zuohaoshi: ji Shanghai qingong xitong qingnian fuwudui’ (他们自觉地为群众做好事——记上海轻工系统青年服务队) (They spontaneously do good deeds for the masses: A note on the youth service team of Shanghai’s light industry system) (February 27, 1981): 3.

³⁸ On the LLF campaigns of the early 1990s, see Li K. and Geng Y., ‘On the upsurges in the emulate Lei Feng movement and some sober reflections’, *Chinese Education & Society* 26 (1993), 23-47. On the ironic appropriations of Lei Feng in Chinese pop culture, see E. Jeffreys and Su X., ‘Governing through Lei Feng: A Mao-era role model in Reform-era China’ in D. Bray and E. Jeffreys (eds.), *New Mentalities of Government in China*, (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 30-55.

³⁹ The work and school week was still six days long at that time.

⁴⁰ United Nations Volunteers, *Zhiyuan jingshen zai Zhongguo*, (志愿精神在中国) (The spirit of volunteerism in China), 1999. This unpublished report contains a detailed description of volunteerism in China in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

⁴¹ The name in Chinese was 深圳市青少年义务社会工作者联合会. It changed in 1995 to 深圳市义务工作者联合会 and again in 2005 to 深圳市义工联合会.

⁴² Tan, *Zhongguo Guangdong*, pp. 10-11.

⁴³ Ding Y. (丁元竹) and Jiang X. (江汛清), *Zhiyuan huodong yanjiu: leixing, pingjia yu guanli* (志愿活动研究：类型、评价与管理) (Research on volunteer activities: types, evaluation and management). (Tianjin: Tianjin Renmin Chubanshe, 2001), pp. 146-9.

⁴⁴ Tan, *Zhongguo Guangdong*, p. 52.

⁴⁵ By the early 2000s, this “volunteer’s association” (志愿者协会) worked to help residents find jobs, and provided them with health training. Every year the association conducted a survey of the residents’ needs; and at the entrance to each building, a list of resident volunteers and contact information was posted.

⁴⁶ RMRB, ‘Yayunhui gexiang choubei gongzuo jiu xu’ (亚运会各项筹备工作就绪) (All preparatory work for the Asian Games is ready), (August 16, 1990): 4.

⁴⁷ RMRB, ‘Hangzhou “zhiyuanzhe huodong” pengbo xingqi’ (杭州“志愿者活动”蓬勃兴起) (Vigorous rise of ‘volunteer activities’ in Hangzhou), (June 6, 1992): 4.

⁴⁸ RMRB, ‘Rexin xian shehui zhenqing nuan renxin: Qingnian zhiyuanzhe huodong lakai weimu’ (热心献社会 真情暖人心：青年志愿者活动拉开帷幕) (Devote a warm heart to society, warm others’ hearts through true affection: The youth volunteer activity opens up), (December 20, 1993): 4.

⁴⁹ Zhang, *Zhiyuanzhe zai xindong*, p. 64.

⁵⁰ Zhang, *Zhiyuanzhe zai xindong*, p. 58; Ding and Jiang, *Zhiyuan Huodong Yanjiu*, p. 126; see also Tan J. (谭建光) and Zhou H. (周宏峰) (eds.), *Shehui zhiyuan fuwu tixi: Zhongguo zhiyuan fuwu de ‘Guangdong jingyan’* (社会志愿服务体系：中国志愿服务的“广东经验”) (The system of social volunteer service: The ‘Guangdong experience’ of volunteer service in China), (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Chubanshe, 2008), pp. 18-23.

⁵¹ C. L. Hsu, *Social Entrepreneurship and Citizenship in China: The Rise of NGOs in the PRC*, (London: Routledge, 2017).

⁵² Perry, ‘Citizen contention and campus calm’, 217.

⁵³ Zhongguo Wenming Wang (中国文明网), ‘Zhongyang wenming ban queding jinnian

10 xiang zhongdian gongzuo' (中央文明办确定今年 10 项重点工作) (The Office of Spiritual Civilization Building of the Central Committee determined ten key projects for this year), (January 15, 2016), 2016, http://www.wenming.cn/specials/zxdj/2016wmbzrh/yw_wmbzrh/201601/t20160115_3089937.shtml, accessed 26 Dec. 2016.

⁵⁴ Zhang, *Zhiyuanzhe zai xingdong*, pp. 75-6; Ding and Jiang, *Zhiyuan huodong yanjiu*, pp. 149-54.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 78

⁵⁶ For more discussion on volunteers in the CI, please see R. Ning, 'Understanding others through volunteering and its dilemmas: Interpreting the experiences of Confucius Institute volunteers in an African country', paper presented at the conference "Emerging trends in Africa-China relations" in the 2017 Beijing Forum, Beijing, November 4, 2017.

⁵⁷ Zhang, *Zhiyuanzhe zai xingdong*, p. 65.

⁵⁸ Tan, *Zhongguo Guangdong*, p. 3.

⁵⁹ Tan and Zhou, *Shehui zhiyuan funu tixi*, pp. 31-8.

⁶⁰ Tan, *Zhongguo Guangdong*, p. 53.

⁶¹ Tan and Zhou, *Shehui zhiyuan funu tixi*, p. 58.

⁶² Zhang, *Zhiyuanzhe zai xingdong*, p. 65.

⁶³ Tan, *Zhongguo Guangdong*, p. 11.

⁶⁴ Zhang, *Zhiyuanzhe zai xingdong* p. 67.

⁶⁵ Ding and Jiang, *Zhiyuan huodong yanjiu*, p. 114-5; Zhang, *Zhiyuanzhe zai xingdong*, p. 71.

⁶⁶ Tan, *Zhongguo Guangdong*, p. 21-2.

⁶⁷ Tuanzhongyang qingnian zhiyuanzhe gongzuobu (团中央青年志愿者工作部) (Youth Volunteers Work Office of the Central Committee of the Youth League), *Xibu jihua wanli caifeng zhiyuan xingdong cankao ziliao* (西部计划万里采风志愿行动参考资料) (Reference Materials on the Volunteer Action of the Go West Program), 2006, p. 72.

⁶⁸ Calculated from the data in the website of the National Bureau of Statistics of China, <http://goo.gl/v8VKgS>, retrieved on Feb. 24, 2015.

⁶⁹ Guowuyuan Bangongting (国务院办公厅) (The Office of the State Council), 'Guowuyuan Bangongting guanyu zuohao 2003 nian putong gaodeng xuexiao biyesheng jiuye gongzuo de tongzhi' (国务院办公厅关于做好 2003 年普通高等学校毕业生就业工作的通知) (Notification about effectively working on the employment of graduates of regular universities and colleges in 2003 by the Office of the State Council), 2003, No. 49.

⁷⁰ Gongqingtuan Zhongyang, Jiaoyubu, Caizhengbu Renshibu (共青团中央, 教育部, 财政部人事部) (The Central Committee of the Youth League, Ministry of Education, and Department of Personnel of the Ministry of Finance), 'Guanyu shishi daxuesheng zhiyuan fuwu xibu jihua de tongzhi' (关于实施大学生志愿服务西部计划的通知) (Notification on implementing the Program of Volunteer Service in the Western Area for College Students), 2003, No. 26.

⁷¹ Zhang, *Zhiyuanzhe zai xingdong*, p. 72; Ding and Jiang, *Zhiyuan Huodong Yanjiu*, pp. 116-9.

⁷² For a more in-depth study of Chinese volunteers on the Go West programmes, see R. Ning and D. A. Palmer, 'Urban Volunteers in Rural China: Imagining the Nation, Encountering the Other, Transforming the Self,' in preparation.

⁷³ E. Perry, 'From mass campaigns to managed campaigns: "Constructing a new socialist countryside"' in S. Heilmann and E. Perry (eds.), *Mao's Invisible Hand: The political foundations of adaptive governance in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), pp. 30-61.

⁷⁴ H. F. Siu, 'Recycling tradition: Culture, history, and political economy in the chrysanthemum festivals of south China', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 32

(1990), 765-94.

⁷⁵ Perry, 'From mass campaigns to managed campaigns', p. 51.

⁷⁶ J. J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000).

⁷⁷ For more detailed discussion on the relations between the state and grassroots actors providing social services, please see Hsu, *Social Entrepreneurship and Citizenship in China*, especially chapter 5.

⁷⁸ E. Hankiss, 'The second society: Is there an alternative social model emerging in contemporary Hungary?', *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, 55 (1988): 13-42

⁷⁹ Yan H., *New Masters, New Servants: Migration, Development, and Women Workers in China* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), p.13.

⁸⁰ Tan, *Zhongguo Guangdong*, p. 6.

⁸¹ Wutuobang, 'Jintian women zenme zuo yigong' (今天我们怎么样做义工) (How do we do volunteer work today) in Tan J. (谭建光), Li S. (李森) and Zhu L. (朱莉玲) (eds.), *Yu zhiyuanzhe tongxing: Zhongguo Guangdong zhiyuan fuwu diaocha jishi* (与志愿者同行——中国广东志愿服务调查纪实) (Hand-in-hand with volunteers: An investigation of volunteer service in Guangdong, China) (Guangzhou: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe, 2006), pp. 151-5.

⁸² Bannister, Tom, "Heirs of Lei Feng or Re-organised Independence? A Study of Individualization in Chinese Civil Society Volunteers." PhD diss., University of Sheffield, 2013.

⁸³ See our other forthcoming articles for a development of this theme.