

Taizhou Area Explores Ways to Improve Local Governance

Joseph Fewsmith

Standing apart from the many recent reports on rural instability was one article that singled out the township of Zeguo, whose local party head had hired a Stanford University political scientist to poll residents on their preferences. The contrast between instances of rural instability, often violent, and this effort to govern at least in part in accordance with the opinion of local residents (if not with their consent) is so great as to demand explanation. Zeguo township is in Wenling municipality, which is located in Taizhou City along Zhejiang Province's southeastern coast, just north of Wenzhou. This is a highly prosperous area in which the private economy has been thriving. It has also been the locus of political reform efforts. In one district of Taizhou, the "party congress permanent representation system" has been in place since 1988, and it was recently extended throughout the city. In Wenling, Zeguo's municipality, a system of "democratic consultations" has grown up since 1999. These reforms reflect efforts by the party to institutionalize procedures within the party, to move away from the personalized leadership that has been the source of so much corruption and instability, and to stabilize the local social order. Although these reforms are very much intended to strengthen the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and enhance its "governing ability," they have also permitted a degree of popular participation in decision making and thereby improved local governance. These are the types of reforms the CCP has been adopting to counter social instability.

In recent weeks much of the local news from China has been bad. Peasants in Shengyou village, Hebei Province, were set upon by armed thugs when they refused to yield to demands to give up their land for what they considered excessively low prices (the good news was that the central government subsequently intervened and guaranteed the property rights of the peasants). A video taken by a local peasant showed the extreme violence of those beating and killing the peasants.ⁱ Shortly after this incident, a traffic accident escalated into a riot involving over 10,000 people in Chizhou City, Anhui Province.ⁱⁱ At the same time, 600 villagers in Jianxia village in eastern Zhejiang Province took over a battery factory that was polluting the environment and causing lead poisoning in children.ⁱⁱⁱ

Certainly the number and seriousness of incidents of rural violence have escalated in recent years. In 2001, the *China Investigation Report*, containing material prepared by

the Central Organization Department in preparation for the 16th Party Congress (held in 2002), spoke in terms of the “thousands and tens of thousands” who participated in outbursts of rural protest.^{iv} In 2004, *Liaowang* magazine reported that over 3 million peasants had participated in some 58,500 incidents of mass protest in 2003, up 14.4 percent from the year before.^v Scholars who study rural issues regard the issue of rural violence as a very serious one, and it should be noted that the central government has responded to these escalating tensions with such measures as the reduction of taxation.

Amidst these reports on social instability, an article by Howard French in the *New York Times* provided a striking contrast. It described how the township of Zeguo, in Zhejiang Province, had hired James S. Fiskin, a Stanford University political scientist, to conduct a random survey of 257 residents to assess their opinions of a number of possible capital construction projects.^{vi} In fact, the Zeguo innovation that French reported on is an outgrowth of a system known as “democratic consultation” (*minzhu kentan*) that has been going on in Wenling municipality, under whose jurisdiction Zeguo lies, for six years. Wenling municipality is part of Taizhou City, previously a prefecture in southern Zhejiang Province that was made into a city in 1994. The new city incorporated two county-level cities (including Wenling), three districts (including Jiaojiang, which is discussed below), and four counties. The total population is 5.58 million. In recent years, Taizhou’s GDP and revenue have been number five and number four, respectively, in Zhejiang Province, and it comes in 38th in China as a whole. Taizhou is located along the east coast of Zhejiang Province with the better-known cities of Wenzhou to the south and Ningbo to the north. Since the late 1980s and particularly since the late 1990s, Taizhou has pioneered modest but important reforms in its political system, including democratic consultations.

Like its southern neighbor Wenzhou, Taizhou’s economic development has been driven by the private economy. This was considered a “front line” area if hostilities ever broke out across the Taiwan Strait, so the central government never invested much here. As in Wenzhou, there is a large population given the amount of arable land, and there a long tradition of entrepreneurship and physical mobility. These characteristics have allowed Taizhou to take advantage of the reform era to rapidly improve the living standards of its residents.

Because of the high concentration of the private economy and a population that has, through travel, been exposed to broader trends in society, there has been a “democratic consciousness” in this area that has both forced and allowed the local leadership to explore various forms of limited political reform. These reforms encompass both “inner-party democracy” and greater involvement of the local citizens in decisions that affect their lives. In Taizhou, particularly the district of Jiaojiang, inner-party democracy has taken the form of implementing the party congress permanent representative system, while Wenling has pioneered the development of democratic consultations that involve the populace in discussion of public policy issues.

These reforms are intended to bolster the political legitimacy of the party and enhance the “governing ability” of the CCP, but they also appear to increase democratic participation and to improve local governance. The permanent representation and democratic consultation systems are described and analyzed below.

Taizhou’s System of Permanent Representation

Efforts to reform the functioning of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), to put more “democracy” into the Leninist principle of “democratic centralism” (the idea that decisions should be reached democratically but then implemented in centralized fashion), have been around a long time, predating the CCP’s rise to power and being implemented to a limited degree following the Eighth Party Congress in 1956. Following the disaster of the Cultural Revolution, there were renewed appeals to normalize the operation of the Party, including making delegates to the national party congress—nominally the highest authority of the party—permanent (in practice, their function ceases with the election of a new Central Committee and the end of the party congress). The 13th Party Congress of 1987 raised the issue of political reform, including the creation of institutions to replace the political movements that had dominated political life in the pre-Cultural Revolution era.

Accordingly, in 1988, the Central Organization Department authorized 11 municipalities, counties, and districts in five provinces to experiment with the party congress permanent representation system (*dang de daibiao dahui changrenzhi*). One of these experimental areas was Jiaojiang district, then under Taizhou Prefecture and now incorporated into Taizhou City. municipality. In 1993 the system was extended to all townships and street committees in Jiaojiang district. The system appears to have stagnated in the years following, but it was given another boost in 2002 when the 16th Party Congress declared, that it was necessary to “expand experiments with the party congress permanent representation system in municipalities and counties.” Several other districts and counties in Taizhou adopted the system in 2002, and 2003. In 2005, the system will be universalized throughout Taizhou when leadership terms change in townships and street committees that have not yet adopted the system.^{vii}

The Basic Model

Under the permanent representation system, delegates to the party congress retain their status throughout the five-year term between congresses. Representatives are divided into “representative groups” (*daibiaotuan*) based on locality or functional group (in Taizhou, each area has about 10 groups). Each representative group has a head and a deputy head. The function of the groups is to organize discussion, think about personnel selection, and to propose resolutions. The leadership of the representative groups link the representatives to the party leadership. In the case of Jiaojiang, the district established a permanent organ, called the Work Office of the Party Congress Permanent Representatives, to maintain contact between the leadership of the representative groups and the ordinary representatives. The office publishes a bulletin periodically (about once a month). Although party congresses continue to convene every five years, the representatives meet annually between congresses to listen to work reports by the local party leadership and discipline inspection committee.^{viii}

In most areas, party affairs are conducted by the “standing Committee” (*changwei*), which is elected by the whole party committee, which in turn is elected by the party congress. In Jiaojiang district, however, they have extended local governance reforms by abolishing the standing committee. There is a secretariat, composed of the party secretary, vice party secretaries, and others, but this is empowered only to make proposals and suggestions to the whole party committee, which is thus much more involved in the running of party affairs. The whole party committee has a number of

committees. The whole party committee must report to the party representative congress once a year.^{ix}

The Issues Raised

Under the old system still in place in most of the country, representatives to party congresses at various levels are selected by the party leadership at the same level based on their seniority or their contributions to the party in a particular unit. It is an honor bestowed by the party that carries some prestige but no power. Party representatives are not normally informed of the agenda to be discussed or personnel issues to be decided until the day before the congress is to meet. They are not privy to the information that would allow them to discuss issues intelligently or to the backgrounds of the personnel they are about to vote on. As the saying has it, “The party committee decides personnel selections, and party members draw their circles” (*dangwei ding renxuan, dangyuan hua chuan*).^x The status of representatives ends as soon as the party congress ends; new representatives are selected for the next party congress five years later.

Granting representatives to party congresses permanent status thus raises many difficult issues. If party representatives are indeed supposed to meet annually to consider the work reports of the local party and discipline-inspection committees, and consider plans for the upcoming year’s work (the purpose of making representation permanent), then the composition of the representatives needs to be considered more carefully. In the case of Jiaojiang district, the number of representatives has been cut by a third, from 300 to 200. At the same time, the number of electing units has been increased so that representatives are better known to their “constituents.” Efforts have been made to increase the number of nominations compared to representatives selected. This has generated better-educated representatives, according to statistics from Taizhou.^{xi}

Perhaps one of the most important issues raised by the permanent representative system is the relationship between “leading cadres” and representatives. Leading cadres at a given level normally make up a large percentage of the representatives selected to attend a party congress, often around 70 percent. Recommendations call for keeping this number down to around 60 percent. So the main impact of the permanent representative system appears to be an expansion of the number of people able to participate in party affairs—but not a large one. Although party representatives are supposed to maintain better contact with ordinary party members, thus boosting the morale of the ranks, it might be supposed that this aspect does not work as well as intended.

Another and more sensitive issue raised by the permanent representative system is the relationship between the party secretary and the party representatives. According to the party constitution, the party representative congress is the highest authority in the party. In practice, however, the party secretary and the standing committee have been the highest authority. So keeping the party congress in more or less permanent existence through the permanent representative system (even if they only meet annually) raises questions about who has the final authority. This is apparently the reason the system stagnated in Jiaojiang district. Time will tell if its expansion throughout Taizhou will provide a solution to this problem.

A Modest Reform

There appear to be four major reasons why the CCP would like to expand the

implementation of the permanent representation system. First, in accordance with the current emphasis on institutionalization of party and government affairs, the permanent representative system seeks to establish procedures and regulations for the management of party affairs. This is part of the effort to “strengthen the governing ability of the party,” as the Fourth Plenary Session of the 16th Central Committee (2004) put it. Second, the permanent representation system is clearly intended to constrain the role of the “number one” leader (*yibashou*) by exercising greater supervision. The nearly unconstrained power of the number one leader in various locales has been an important source of corruption and the close personal networks that support both power and the illicit use of that power. Finally, the permanent representation system is clearly an effort to reach out and include more party members in the system. When one thinks of the problems of governance in China, one usually thinks in terms of the gap between the party on the one hand and the public on the other. But it is clear that those considering party-building issues in China are also concerned about the distance between the party leadership and ordinary party members. There is a need to reach out not only to people and groups that have emerged outside the party but also to people within the party.

Wenling’s System of Democratic Consultation

Originally, observers in China felt that the implementation of the permanent representative system would be the most important innovation in Taizhou; after all, any change that touches on the way power is organized and exercised is extremely sensitive. But over the past few years, the system of “democratic consultation” (*minzhu kentan*) that has developed in Wenling municipality, which is under Taizhou City, has drawn greater interest because of its implementation of some democratic procedures. In essence, the democratic consultation system in Wenling consists of open meetings between cadres and ordinary citizens at the village or township level. In these meetings, the people are free to raise questions or express their opinions on important public issues—such as proposed capital construction projects—and the leaders try to respond to the questions raised. Sessions end with a recess during which the leadership discusses the proposals raised and then announces the results to the assembled group. Although democratic consultations do not challenge the leadership of the party, they do constrain the decision making of local leaders.

This system of democratic consultation began in June 1996 when one of the townships under Wenling’s jurisdiction, Songmen, held a meeting as part of a campaign to carry out “education on the modernization of agriculture and villages.” The people expressed no interest in yet another “you talk, we listen” campaign. Confronted with this apathy and resentment, local leaders decided to try something different. Instead of having the cadres on the stage speaking to peasants assembled below, they invited the peasants to take the stage and express their opinions. The meeting apparently became very lively and there was a direct interchange of views between the “masses” and the cadres.^{xii}

As in most areas of China, there were a variety of tensions and problems that this new form of “political and ideological work” (which is what this forum started out as) addressed. There were tensions between the townships and the villages, between the cadres and the people, between the party committee and the government at the village

level, and among cadres. What the leadership in Songmen township sensed very quickly was that by involving the people in discussions of public issues, different cadres and different interests were forced to communicate and compromise with each other. Moreover, real misunderstandings as well as a number of real but minor issues that affected relations between the people and the local leadership could be cleared up quickly and on the spot.

For such political innovation to occur in China there must be both social circumstances conducive to change and political entrepreneurship. In the case of Wenling, the population was quite prosperous: in the urban areas per capita income is 12,651 *yuan* per year; in the rural areas, 6,229 *yuan*.^{xiii} Moreover, it is a population with quite a lot of physical mobility; of the 1.16 million residents in Wenling, some 200,000 are away from the city on a long-term basis. Such people, and those who travel for shorter lengths of time, bring back a greater democratic consciousness. The rapid development of Wenling's economy and the exercise of village autonomy in recent years had similarly stimulated the growth of democratic consciousness. Such developments stood in contrast with the non-democratic ways of making decisions, increasing tensions with the local cadres and making decisions difficult to implement.

In the case of Songmen township and Wenling municipality, the political leadership was prepared to innovate. Immediately after the first forum in Songmen, the Wenling propaganda department sent someone to “squat” in Songmen for some time and study the issue.^{xiv} But only a month and a half later, the Wenling leadership started to promote this and similar systems in other townships. Linchuan township opened a “service desk for the convenience of the people,” their places held “discussions of people's feelings.”^{xv}

Evidently, such new forms were not universally welcomed by the local cadres. Some of the early meetings in particular were said to have resembled Cultural Revolution-style “struggle sessions” as people expressed long-pent-up resentments, and local cadres felt that such sessions, besides being uncomfortable, were an additional chore and would be useless. Wenling party secretary Wang Jinsheng felt differently. He packed off the whole group of leading cadres in Wenling to Zhejiang University, where they spent an entire day listening to professors talking about grassroots democracy. In the evening, the leading cadres spent hours discussing the advantages and disadvantages of democratic consultation, and by 2:00 am, when the meeting concluded, the leadership was convinced to go forward.^{xvi} The new system was promoted, and in August 2000 the leadership adopted the name “democratic consultation” to describe the innovation. In September 2004, Wenling issued regulations to govern the implementation of these democratic consultations.^{xvii}

Village and Township Democratic Consultations.

Democratic consultations operate somewhat differently at the village and township levels. At the village level, in 1998 peasant representative congresses (*nongmin daibiao dahui*) began to be formed. Each production team (*xiaozu*) would select one or more representatives, depending on the size of the production team, and members of the village party committee and the village committee (the government side of village administration) are de facto members. In 1999, this system took on the name of “village assembly” (*cunmin yishihui*). This system has now spread throughout Wenling; of the villages under Songmen township, most convene an average of two assembly meetings per month. This

system is regarded as an extension of the democratic consultation system.^{xviii}

Many of these meetings revolve around public finance, one of the most contentious issues in rural China. In one village under Ruohuang township, these assemblies took on a much greater importance after the village head, who had been elected, used over 1 million *yuan* of public funds to gamble, which caused a strong reaction among the peasants. Previously they had trusted someone they had freely elected to manage finances honestly, but after this incident they didn't trust anyone and insisted that matters of public finance be handled openly by the village assemblies. In addition to public finances, there are many issues that directly affect the interests of villagers in an area like Ruohuang township: urbanization brings issues of land requisitions, paving roads, environmental preservation, and so forth, all of which are taken up by the village assemblies.^{xix}

At the township level, democratic consultations are really a system of open hearings on public policy. When the democratic consultation system began, discussions flowed from topic to topic, making resolution of any issue more difficult. After a while, it was decided that each democratic consultation should focus on a single issue. The topic for discussion is usually decided by the township party committee or government, though there are provisions that allow the public to petition to hold a meeting on a particular topic. The topic, time, and place of meeting are posted, and anyone is allowed to come, but no one (other than the leadership) is obliged to come. Democratic consultation meetings are generally held once a quarter.

At least some democratic consultations do have an impact on public policy and implementation at the township level. For instance, a democratic consultation meeting was held in Wenqiao township in July 2002 to discuss the leadership's plan to merge two school districts. The leadership believed that the merger would save funds and strengthen the academic level of the remaining school. But such a merger would affect residents in the district of the school being closed because it would increase transportation costs and living expenses for those who stayed in dormitories. Feelings ran very high. In the end, the leadership decided not to merge the two schools right away, but rather allow parents to choose which school to send their children to. Before long, the students enrolled in the weaker school began transferring to the better school, and the decision was effected without public outcry.^{xx}

Similarly, a meeting was held in Songmen township in January 2004 to discuss the creation of a specialized market for products used in the fishing industry. Vendors of these products were scattered and often crowded into the streets, causing traffic problems. Residents were asked to discuss such issues as whether to build such a market, where it should be built, and who should invest in it. Several hundred people attended the meeting, and the final decision incorporated public references for the location of the district and the way in which investment would be handled.^{xxi}

Relation to Local People Congresses

As the democratic consultation system evolved over the years, from its origins in political work to an expansion of democratic participation and involvement in decision making, it became evident that some effort needed to be made to bring it within the formal structure of the governing apparatus. After all, the democratic consultation system was informal and *tizhiwai* (outside the system). Songmen township again led the way, with a meeting in September 2004 at which the topic for discussion was the relocation of the various fish

meal plants in an industrial district to reduce the pollution that was offending residents. This, too, was a contentious issue because it meant creating a district (hence, requisitioning land) and imposing costs on small producers to move their plants. In this case, after reaching a resolution, the township leadership asked the local people's congress to ratify the decision, which it subsequently did.^{xxi}

This involvement of the local party congress thus began to introduce a formal procedure for reaching a decision with the force of law. Prior to this meeting, there had been something rather ad hoc about the party or government leadership simply making a decision on the spot after hearing the views of concerned citizens—who may or may not have reflected the views of their less participatory neighbors. This effort to bring the system of democratic consultation into line with the local people's congresses has since been extended to other townships.

There have also been efforts to bring the system into inner-party democracy. For instance, when a party representative congress convenes and there is an important matter raised for discussion, a democratic consultation is convened among party representatives and party members before a decision is made. This effort, still new, has brought democratic consultations together with the permanent representation system (*changrenzhi*).^{xxiii}

Breakthrough in Financial Supervision

The lack of transparency in finance has been one of the primary sources of corruption and popular discontent, both at the village and township level. Yet cadres have resisted making financial affairs open. In late July 2005, one township in Wenling made a breakthrough both in financial transparency and in combining the democratic consultation system with the people's congress system. On July 27 Xinhe township opened the fifth session of its people's congress. Prompted by Wenling's Department of Propaganda and Beijing's China and the World Institute, an NGO that has been very active in prompting local political reform, 90 of the 110 members of the local people's congress gathered with 193 other representatives who audited the proceedings. These representatives were composed primarily of cadres from the villages of Xinhe as well as some of the industry groups (*xiehui*) and enterprise heads in the township. Some villagers also attended.

In the morning session of the people's congress, township leaders gave reports on the work of the government, and in the afternoon leaders presented the "Draft Report on the Financial Budget for 2005." This report, however, was quite vague, presenting only 19 broad categories of expenses. But the representatives were also given an explanation of the budget figures that provided much detail lacking in the original report. For the next two hours, representatives raised questions about the budget. Those who were auditing the proceedings were supposed to pass their questions to the people's congress representatives, but in the excitement of the meeting, many expressed their views directly. At this meeting, a resolution was presented to establish a financial committee in the people's congress to oversee the implementation of the township's budget. This is the first such financial affairs committee established in a people's congress at the township level in China.

After the session ended at 5:00 pm, members of this committee gathered with township leaders to further discuss the budget. By the time the people's congress reconvened the next morning, the township leaders had prepared a more detailed explanation of township expenditures and made numerous adjustments to the budget in accordance with the demands of the people's congress representatives. For instance, the

township had originally budgeted 700,000 yuan to replace aging vehicles, but this line item was reduced to 500,000 yuan. Similarly, an extra 200,000 yuan was allocated to improve the running water system.

This is the first time a township people's congress has exercised such supervisory responsibility over the local budget. The process also furthered efforts to bring the democratic consultation system into the people's congress system. And the establishment of a financial committee within the people's congress was a major breakthrough in efforts to make local finance more transparent. Wenling leaders have vowed to expand this system in 2006.^{xxiv}

Implications and Limits

Wenling's democratic consultation system is clearly a step forward in local governance. Given that the political system will still not permit direct elections at the township level (although there have been exceptions), the democratic consultation system does permit greater public participation in decision making. It forces the decision-making process to be more open, and it provides a measure of public accountability. The development of this system suggests that the growing wealth of local society, the mobility of Wenling's population, and the importance of the private economy in Wenling all have worked to shift the balance of power toward society.^{xxv} But local cadres also gain in this readjustment of power: social stability is enhanced, the legitimacy of decisions is increased, the risk of erroneous decisions is diffused, the cost of implementing economic development plans is reduced, and political legitimacy is increased.

More important, higher levels of political authority also gain. To a certain extent, the development of Wenling's system of democratic consultation represents an alliance between central (and provincial) authorities, who have an interest in monitoring and controlling the behavior of local cadres, and the common people, who similarly have an interest in overseeing local cadres.^{xxvi} From this perspective, it appears that local cadres lose in this game, but it would be more accurate to say that the system modifies the behavior of local cadres—their behavior is better institutionalized, better cadres get promoted, and the local leadership can take credit for pioneering a system that has drawn national and international attention. The result is that local governance improves.

There are, however, real limitations on the democratic consultation system. First, it is clear that it does not challenge the rule of the CCP. In June 2001, as the democratic consultation system was developing, the Wenling party committee formulated four principles governing its practice, the first of which was upholding the leadership of the party.^{xxvii} In practice, it is the party committee that decides on topics for public discussion and oversees the conduct of the meeting. Party control does not mean that important topics are avoided—in fact, local regulations require the holding of democratic consultations for major issues such as capital construction projects—but it does mean that discussion will not stray into sensitive political areas. This suggests that democratic consultation will not lead to the democratic transformation of China—at least not any time soon—though it does suggest a growth of democratic consciousness and institutionalization of some democratic procedures.

Second, although there are indications that the system of democratic consultations have improved the quality of local cadres—the Organization Department is said to watch the performance of cadres at these meetings—there is no indication that democratic

consultations has had a direct effect on the selection and promotion of cadres. The personnel system might be affected by the expansion of inner-party democracy, including the adoption of the permanent representative system, but control over the selection and promotion of cadres is the prerogative guarded most jealously by the party and is likely to be the last feature of the party to be significantly affected.

Finally, as interesting as the development of the democratic consultation system is, it is clearly something “outside the system” (*tizhiwai*) and needs to be either brought into the system or marginalized. The most likely area for integrating the democratic consultations into the political structure, as indicated above, is through the people’s congresses. But this simply raises another question: Why not democratize the people’s congress system? One obvious reason for the development of democratic consultations in Wenling is that the party has not been willing to relax its control over the local people’s congress, allowing it to become a channel for the expression of democratic opinion. This suggests that although the party has been willing to accept the growth of an informal institution that constrains its behavior to a certain extent, it is not yet willing to contemplate creating an institutionalized balance of power through the reinvigoration of people’s congresses.

Conclusion

Taizhou’s relative wealth, the physical mobility of its residents, and the dominance of the private economy suggest that the types of local reform being adopted there may not be applicable to most areas of China, although many locations along China’s east coast enjoy similar conditions. The fact that such reforms as the public hearing system are being implemented at the township level at a time when Beijing has opposed the spread of direct elections is nonetheless encouraging. Although these reforms are not part of a democratic transition and indeed are intended to strengthen the rule of the CCP, they do suggest that the growth of “social capital” at the local level is bringing about greater public participation in policymaking, improving local governance, and perhaps even changing to a limited degree the way the CCP operates at the local level. As this reform moves forward, it will be important to watch the interaction between inner-party democracy, such as the party congress permanent representation system, and the environment in which it exists. There is at present no evidence to suggest that the development of the private economy or of a democratic consciousness prompted leaders in Jiaojiang district to adopt the permanent representation system, but now that it and the rest of Taizhou has adopted this system and the process of democratic consultation has developed, it is apparent that *tizhinei* (internal) and *tizhiwai* (external) reforms cannot be kept separate from each other. Local society is having an impact on the way in which political power is organized and exercised.

NOTES

ⁱ “The Dingzhou Incident: A Story of Brutal Killing,” translated by Nicholas B. Hawkins, available at www.chinaelections.org/en/readnews.asp?newsid={7242B32A-C05A-4D95-9040-0A3E63930CB4}&class name=News%20Highlights. Fortunately, higher levels of government subsequently sided with the peasants. See Irene Wang, “City Chiefs Sacked over Deadly Attacks on Farmers,” *South China Morning Post*, June 15, 2005. ⁱⁱ Shi Ting, “Police Hunt for Rioters After Attack on Station,” *South China Morning Post*, June 29, 2005. ⁱⁱⁱ Bill Savadove in Shanghai: “Villagers Seize Plant Accused of Poisoning,” *South China Morning Post*, July

1, 2005. ^{iv} Zhonggong zhongyang zuzhibu ketizu, ed., *Zhongguo diaocha baogao* (China investigation report), Beijing: Zhongyang bianyi chubanshe, 2001.

“Economic Reform Causing Social Unrest and Crime in China: Report,” Agence France-Presse (AFP), June 9, 2004. ^v Howard W. French, “China’s New Frontiers: Tests of Democracy and Dissent,” *New York Times*, June 19, 2005, p. 6. ^{vi} “Jianli he wanshan xian (shi, qu) dang de daibiaohui changrenzhi gongzuo de diaocha yu sikao” (An investigation and thoughts on establishing and perfecting the party congress permanent representation system in counties (municipalities and districts), in *Xin shiqi dang jianshe gongzuo redian nandian wenti diaocha baogao* (A survey report on hot topics and difficult questions in party building work in the new period), pp. 232–235.

^{viii} Ibid., p. 235.

^{ix} Ibid., p. 243.

^x Ibid., pp. 235–236.

^{xi} Ibid., pp. 237–239.

^{xii} Jia Xijin and Zhang Yun, “Zhongguo canyushi minzhu de xin fazhan” (A new development in China’s participatory democracy), in Mu Yifei and Chen Yimin, eds., *Minzhu kentan: Wenlingren de chuanguang* (Democratic consultation: A creation of the people of Wenling) (Beijing: Central Compilation and Translation Press, 2005), pp. 80–93

^{xiii} Dong Xuebing and Shi Jinchuan, “Zhidu, boyi yu quanli chonggou” (System, game, and the restructuring of power), in Mu Yifei and Chen Yimin, ed., *Minzhu kentan*, p. 107.

^{xiv} Hu Zhen, Chen Jiwei, Li Xiaopeng, Hong Wei, and Zhang Min, “Jiceng minzhu jianshe de yizhong haoxingshi” (A good form for building grassroots democracy), in Mu Yifei and Chen Yimin, *Minzhu kentan*, p. 158.

^{xv} Jia and Zhang, “Zhongguo canyushi minzhu de xin fazhan,” p. 82.

^{xvi} Wang Junbo, “‘Caogen minzhu’: zai zhiduhua de yangguangxia” (‘Grassroots democracy’: Under the light of institutionalization), in Mu Yifei and Chen Yimin, eds., *Minzhu kentan*, p. 190.

ⁱⁱ “Zhonggong Wenling shiwei guanyu ‘minzhu kentan’ de ruogan guiding (shixing)” (Some regulations governing the ‘democratic consultations’ by the CCP Wenling Party Committee (for trial implementation), pp. 220–226.

^{xviii} Xiao Qing, “Wenling cunyihui: Nituli dansheng Zhongguo xin xingtai minzhu zhengzhi” (Wenling’s village assemblies: A new form of democratic politics born from China’s soil), in Mu Yifei and Chen Yimin, eds., *Minzhu kentan*, pp. 179–180.

^{xix} Wang Junbo, “Qiaoran bianhua de ‘xiangcun zhengzhi’” (The silent change of ‘village politics’), in Mu Yifei and Chen Yimin, eds., *Minzhu kentan*, p. 193.

^{xx} Xie Qingkui, “Jiceng minzhu zhengzhi jianshe de tuozhan” (The development of grassroots democratic politics) in Mu Yifei and Chen Yimin, eds., *Minzhu kentan*, p. 24; see the minutes of this meeting on pp. 263–276.

^{xxi} Guo Yukuan, “Difang zhenggai chuanxin: Jujiao Zhejiang Wenling ‘minzhu kentan hui’” (Innovation in the political reform of localities: Looking at Wenling’s “democratic consultation meetings” in Zhejiang), in Mu Yifei and Chen Yimin, eds., *Minzhu kentan*, pp. 169–170; see the minutes of this meeting on pp.

252–262.

^{xxii} Wang Junbo, “‘Caogen minzhu:’ zai zhiduhua de yangguangxia,” pp. 189–192.

^{xxiii} *Ibid.*, p. 197.

^{xxiv} Zhang Fang, “Wenling shi Xinhe zhen dishisi jie renmin daibiao dahui diwuci huiyi zhengfu yusuan minzhu kentanhui shilu” (A record of the democratic consultation meeting on government finance held by the fifth meeting of the fourth people’s congress of Xinhe township, Wenling municipality), in *Beijing yu fenxi*, no. 87 (August 1, 2005); and Cao Haili, “Xinhe zhen yusuan shencha gaige mengya” (The birth of the finance inspection reform in Hexin township), in *Caijing*, no. 139 (August 8, 2005).

^{xxv} Dong and Shi, “Zhidu, boyi yu quanli chonggou,” pp. 94–118.

^{xxvi} *Ibid.*, p. 107.

^{xxvii} Hu Zhen, Chen Jiwei, Li Xiaopeng, Hong Wei, and Zhang Min, “Jiceng minzhu jianshe de yizhong haoxingshi” (A good form for building grassroots democracy), in Mu Yifei and Chen Yimin, eds., *Minzhu kentan*, p. 158.