

THE ROLE OF RESIDENTIAL, NON-GOVERNMENTAL AND
MASS ORGANIZATIONS IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

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In the framework of China's state administration apart from the state administrative organs, there are also residential self-governing organizations, non-governmental organizations and various mass organizations that play an important role with their vigorous activities.

I. Non-Governmental Organizations

In line with China's political system and set-up of the administrative organs, the non-administrative residential (or villager-s') organizations and other mass organizations can be roughly divided into the following three categories:

1. The grass-roots mass self-governing organizations—the neighborhood committee and villagers' committee

Stipulated in the Constitution, the neighborhood committee and villagers' committee are the grass-roots mass self-governing organizations for urban dwellers and rural inhabitants respectively. Neither of these two committees is a kind of organization of political power at basic level. Their work and activities should be guided by the grass-roots people's government and they may, entrusted by the people's government, assist the people's governments in their daily routines, and air the opinions and requests of the masses.

Neighborhood committees are set up according to the layout of municipal streets and neighborhoods and the size of inhabitants. The size of neighborhoods varies, from a few hundred households to over a thousand. The large neighborhood is quite similar to the community in some western countries. The villagers' committees are set up according to the administrative villages with some exemptions to the

natural villages. Committee members are usually elected directly by the urban dwellers or villagers. Being not civil servants nor government staff, they are not entitled to enjoy the same treatment as the state personnel or employees in the state-owned enterprises and state-funded institutions are. Most of committee members are volunteers working for the neighborhood or villagers' committees. At present, many of the committee members are ex-state personnel, retired workers and staff of enterprises, and some are ordinary residents. They may get some kind of allowance if the neighborhood or villagers' committees are able to obtain some earnings or financial subsidies.

The neighborhood committee or villagers's committee is composed of a chairman, vice-chairman and several committee members. Under the committee, there are generally some staffed working bodies such as conciliation, public security and public health committees. Both committees accept instructions and guidance from the people's government at basic level—the subdistrict offices in cities and towns and the township governments in the countryside.

There are now in China 830,000 villagers' committees in the rural areas. In terms of urban areas, the setup of neighborhood committees depends on such factors like the size, category, inhabitant structure and distribution of the city. There are 109,527 neighborhood committees in the urban areas in the end of 1989 in China.

Baoji of Shaanxi Province has set up, in its urban area, 242 neighborhood committees which are subdivided into 1302 residential groups.

2. People's Conciliation Committee

The People's Conciliation Committee is a mass organization for civil mediation. Early as in February 1954, the then Government Administrative Council of the Central People's Government issued the Provisional General Organic Rules for the People's Conciliation. And this document was reissued after 1978, presenting powerful impetus to the swift restoration and development of the people's conciliation work. According to incomplete statistics, by 1980 in China, there were 5,750,000 mediating personnel working in over 810,000 conciliation organizations, among which 547,000 in rural areas, 40,000 in urban neighborhoods, 70,000 in industrial and mining enterprises, and 123,000 in other institutions. And 1980s saw a big increase in number of both conciliation organizations and personnel working for them in various places of China.

3. Mass organizations

Mass organization is a kind of self-governing organization for the masses of people, and an important form incarnating the broad masses of people being masters of their own. Mass organizations in China are more in number, complicated in variety and various in form. Mass organizations have been developed greatly since China adopted the policy of reform and being open to the outside world. Up to now, there are more than 1,100 nationwide mass organizations. Mass organizations can be classified in various ways. By its social functions they can be classified as political, economic and social organizations; by its nature, they can be classified as profit-making and non-profit-making organizations; by its aims and activities, be classified as organizations for one's immediate interests, for social welfare and for common interests.

At present, China's national and local mass organizations can be roughly divided into the following categories:

(1) People's mass organizations—the mass organizations engaged broadly in social activities of masses, such as trade unions, Communist Youth League, farmers' associations, women's federations, associations of industry and commerce, federation of democratic youth, students' federations, etc;

(2) Public welfare organizations—organizations working for the public welfare, such as China Welfare Institute, the Red Cross Society of China, etc;

(3) Artists' organizations—mass organizations for the people working in the fields of literature, fine art, drama, music and other arts, such as federation of literary and art circles, association of theatrical workers, association of fine art workers, association of musical workers, etc;

(4) Academic organizations—societies engaged in some specific academic researches, such as societies of natural and social sciences, research associations, etc;

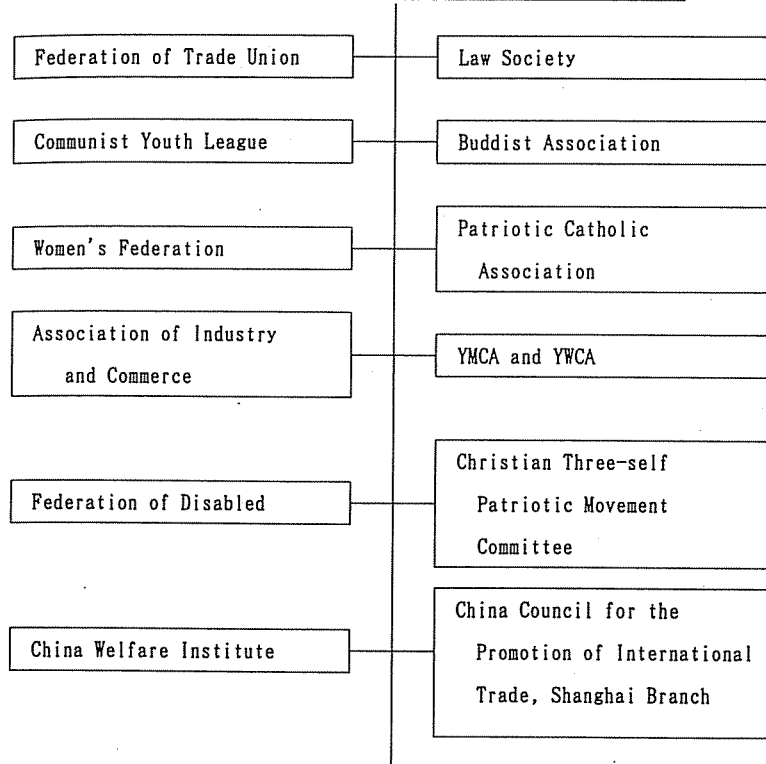
(5) Religious groups—social organizations engaged in religious activities, such as Chinese National Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee (self-government, self-support and self-propagation), Buddhist associations, etc;

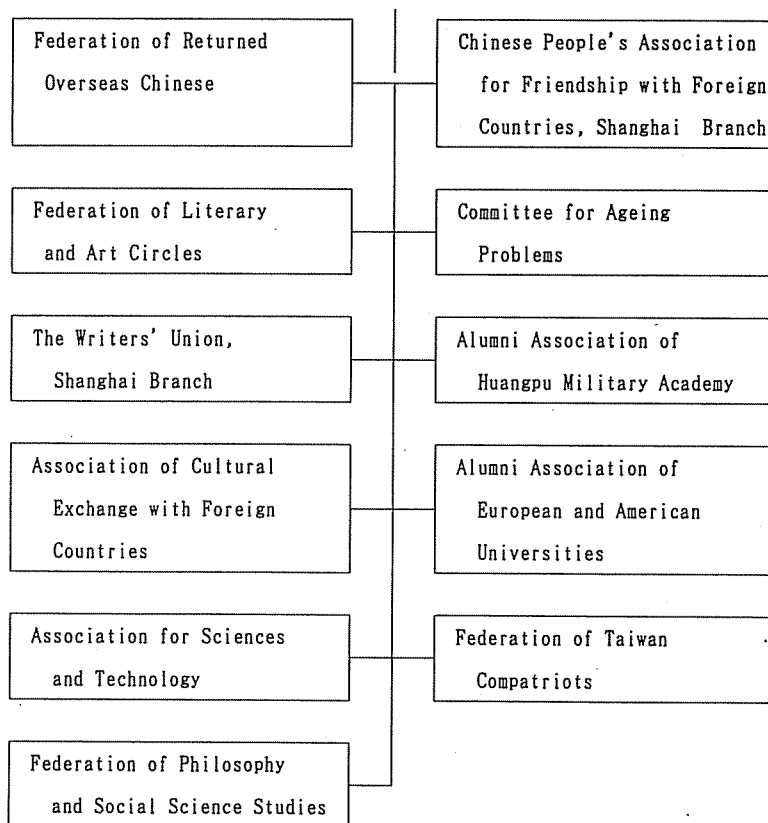
(6) Social economic organizations—various trade associations, professional associations, consumers' associations and others engaged in economic and technical consultancy and information service; and

(7) other mass organizations—organizations or groups set up for other special purposes and aims, such as Alumni Association of European and American Universities, Federation of Taiwan Compatriots, etc;

There are similar mass organizations in various provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities under the central jurisdiction. The chart below shows the structure of mass organizations in Shanghai.

Structure of Mass Organizations in Shanghai





Source: P.121 of the Outline of Organizational Framework of the Party. Political and Mass Organizations at the Level of Province, Autonomous Region and Municipality Under the Central Jurisdiction of the People's Republic of China. China's Personnel Affairs Press, 1989.

Some explanations are necessary to be made to the above chart:

(a) Some of the organizations are Shanghai branches of the nationwide organizations, like the trade union, women's federation, Communist Youth League, while some are pure local organizations with no subordinate relationship with any mass organizations at the national level;

(b) Most of the organizations mentioned in the chart are leading and coordinating bodies of basic mass organizations, linking a string of independent organizations with the similar nature. Federation of philosophy and Social Sciences Studies, for example, embraces societies or research associations of philosophy, economics, sociology and other disciplines in the fields of philosophy and social sciences;

(c) A few among the mass organizations, particularly among those leading and coordinating bodies of the mass organizations, have been listed as the administrative institutions, whose principal leaders are state personnel. Therefore, to be more exact, they are quasi-official, organizations;

In 1989 in Shanghai, there were some 2,250 municipal mass organizations, with over 1,830,000 individual members in addition to some 9,990 group members.

The structure of organizations in other provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities under the central jurisdiction is similar to that in Shanghai in general. Mass organizations equivalent to the provincial ones may not be found in all cities or counties under the provincial level. Such organizations can be set up in the city or county according to the needs and desire of the local people. However, the national mass organizations like trade union, Communist Youth League, women's federation and others have established their own complete and perfect system from the central to the local, further down to the grass-roots levels.

Mass organizations are independent organizationally, not subordinate to any administrative organs of the same-level government. But they often receive guidance and leadership from the same-level government or departments related. Only very few mass organizations have been set up within the equivalent government departments. For example, in some provinces, the Islamic Association, Patriotic Catholic Association and Patriotic Christian Association are placed under the jurisdiction of the commission for religion and nationality affairs at the provincial level.

Mass organizations may only be set up in China once they have satisfied the essential requirements like a clear aim, or sound constitution, a complete leading body, essential office facilities and a fund for their regular activities, and have been approved by the departments responsible for the specific work. At present in China, establishment of nationwide mass organizations must be approved by the Ministry of Civil Affairs while the local ones by the local civil affairs offices.

II. Contents and Forms of Activities

With different nature and organizational structure, the residential self-governing organizations, non-governmental organizations and other social organizations conduct activities with different content and in various forms.

1. Neighborhood Committee and Villagers' Committee.

The organic Rules of the Urban Neighborhood Committee was passed and issued at the Fourth Plenary Session of the Standing Committee of the First People's Congress of the People's Republic of China on 31th December 1954. And it was reissued on 19th January 1980, stipulating in detail the nature, task and organic structure of the urban neighborhood committee, and clearly defining contents and forms of their activities:

(1) To keep the general information on the inhabitants in the neighborhood

The size of neighborhood varies, so the number of households and inhabitants differs from each other. Some small neighborhoods embrace only dozens of households, but big ones embrace a few hundred, or even over a thousand. And inhabitants in a neighborhood may differ in many ways—sex, age, nationality, custom, belief, occupation as well as length of residence, interests and habits, health conditions, distance to workplace and economic status. Therefore one of the main tasks for a neighborhood committee is to master and be familiar with the general information of the inhabitants within the range the neighborhood covers. This general information serves as the basis for all works conducted by the neighborhood committee itself on the one hand, and to keep such information is an important link of the social administration practised by the grass-roots political power in cities or towns, and a means of public security departments in their census register management.

(2) To provide various services

Neighborhood committees provide inhabitants with services of various kinds, including living service and cultural service. In terms of living service, the neighborhood committee in its neighborhood may run small shops selling daily necessities, run service centres providing everyday life services, set up a dairy delivering fresh milk on order to the doorway, and run small creches looking after kids of working parents, etc; In terms of cultural service, the committee runs small cultural centres providing dwellers nearby with space and instruments for recreation and helps to subscribe and deliver newspapers, etc. The neighborhood committee may also provide specific services to the households with some special difficulties. For example, it helps the disabled by buying articles for everyday life or providing special cares.

(3) To improve living surroundings

The area that the neighborhood committee serves in fact is just like community. The surroundings, good or bad, have much to do with the work, life, study, recreation, rest and health of the people living in. The committee is the organizer and supervisor of the improvement of neighborhood surroundings. Every now and then, the committee would mobilize the dwellers in the neighborhood to have cleanups or keep the surroundings clean and tidy, formulate rules and measures for public health, supervise and examine the general sanitation, and educate the inhabitants to comply with the social morality and maintain a better neighborhood environment and a better social conduct.

(4) To mediate human relations and maintain the social order.

The neighborhood committee encourages its residents to correctly handle their household and neighborhood relationships, helps them to make their joint pledge and supervise its implementation whenever a contradiction or dispute occurs, the committee would come up and act as a mediator. On the major holidays, festivals or other special occasions, it also organizes street patrols to ensure security for the neighborhood residents.

The neighborhood committee is responsible to organize some mass sports and recreational activities within its neighborhood, as well as to hold some contests or competitions for "Family of Five Merits" or "Court or Building of Civilization", etc.

(5) To assist the government and schools in educating the youngsters.

The neighborhood committee helps to organize and arrange after-school activities for middle and primary school students, to resettle the youngsters waiting for employment, and educate the juvenile

delinquents. Education for youngsters has been an issue of vital importance in China's rural and urban areas, also one of the basic functions of the grass-roots government organs. The urban neighborhood committees take joint efforts with the local authority, schools and parents to conduct education in various forms, and run some lively activities to enrich holiday life such as study classes, short-term training courses, summer camps and so on for middle and elementary school students during their holidays. The committee mobilizes the social forces to carry out patient persuasion and education to the youngsters with misdeed, helping them to correct their mistakes and follow the right road of life.

(6) To air the opinions, requests and suggestions of the masses to the government.

The neighborhood committee is the organization of the neighborhood dwellers themselves, thus many opinions of the residents, especially those relating to their vital interests such as improvement of living conditions and life quality, cleanup of sewage ditches and reduction of noises, etc, are aired and negotiated by the neighborhood committee. And very often the results are desirable. Therefore, the neighborhood committee has become a bridge linking the government and residents. At the same time, many policies and measures of the government relating to the behavior and code of conduct of the residents such as family planning, being industrious and thrifty in household management, respecting the old and caring for the young, market-place beautification, public order maintenance, etc, are to be carried out mainly by the committee. Therefore, the neighborhood committee has been a right hand man of the government and departments concerned.

2. People's Conciliation Committee

Stipulated in the Civil Procedure Act, Article 14, "the people's conciliation committee is a mass organization to mediate the disputes among the people under the guidance of the grass-roots people's government and court. "Hence it is not government organ, and its main functions are to mediate civil disputes, finding an equitable settlement.

The ways to carry out its functions are mainly as follows:

- a) Be active in publicizing the laws and regulations and do whatever according to them;
- b) To hear the detailed explanations from both parties concerned;
- c) To clarify the facts and distinguish the rights and wrongs through deep-going investigations; and

d) To make effective mediations, acceptable to both parties concerned, by the method of persuasion and education, and in accordance to government policies, law and moral concepts.

Mediation can only be made upon the acceptance of both parties concerned, never can be forced. Therefore, the agreement reached upon by both parties should be executed; A suit may be brought to the people's court if the litigant refuses any mediation or mediation fails. Absence or failure of mediation cannot be made as excuses to stop the litigant going to court.

Mediations normally are carried out under the guidance of the grass-roots government or the people's court, therefore any practice of the people's conciliation committee in their mediation running counter to the set policies and law may be put right.

3. People's Social Organizations

Activities and ways of performance of the people's social organizations are as follows:

(1) To mobilize and organize their members to carry out activities of various kinds provided and permitted by their specific constitutions, i.e. religious associations conducting various religious activities, academic societies doing their academic activities of natural sciences or social sciences, and literary and art associations making their activities relating to literary and artistic creations, etc.

(2) To organize various information exchanges within their own organizations, in order to strengthen the ties and links among their members. Hence people's social organizations have their own magazines, newsletters or other periodicals, exchanging various information at regular or irregular intervals;

(3) To hold various professional activities and conferences, i.e. annual meetings for some academic associations, and activities for selecting and appraising the achievements in scientific research in the hope of enlivening the academia;

(4) To air the opinions, requests and suggestions of the organizations and their members to the government or departments concerned, and to assist the government and departments responsible in actively publicizing and thoroughly implementing the policies, principles and regulations relating to the fields of their organizations, serving as a tie and bridge linking the government and professionals;

(5) To offer services of various kinds for their members, help them to solve their difficulties and meet their reasonable requests. For example, the federation of the disabled, by various means and media, tries to make known the problems of the disabled and to gain sympathy, care and support from the society. And at the same time it also does its utmost in offering various assistances to solve their difficulties. By so doing, it may lighten the state burdens on one hand, and help the disabled to realize their self-support.

III. Major Roles

The non-government organizations, existing widely and keeping growing, have been playing an important role in the grass-roots social life of Chinese people. Their major roles are as follows:

1. A self-organizer and administrator of grass-roots social life

Self-organization and self-management of the grass-roots social life are the main features and advantages of the non-government organizations. Generally speaking, the key organizer and administrator of the social life is the government, that's to say, it's the government that administrates the political, economic and cultural life and social order of the entire society. However, the social life is so numerous and complicated that the government administration is by no means omnipotent. In many areas of the grass-roots social life, the government has proved almost powerless. Here is an example in question. The check on the vicious population explosion in China is a grave issue that the Chinese government is confronted with. Whether or not this problem can be well solved may surely affect China's future development as well as world future patterns. Therefore Chinese government has put forward the policy of family planning that one couple has only one child. The implementation of such a policy proves extremely hard, and it can not be realized only by administrative means. On the contrary, the non-government organizations may give full play to their abilities. That's because these non-government organizations have their unique features in management of grass-roots social life:

- a) Their nature is self-governing and non-official;
 - b) Their management means is non-administrative, or non-mandatory;
- and

c) Their work method is painstaking, harmonious and persuasive. And fact proves that such method of work and its social effect can hardly be made by the government departments. The case of Panjiazhuang Village of Bulongji Township in Anxi County, Shaanxi Province may serve as a good example in question. Before the villagers' committee was formed, the policy of family planning was pushed ahead with by administrative means. As a result, not only the goal of proposed family planning scheme could not be realized, but also antagonist sentiments were aroused among the villagers. Since the villagers' committee was set up, a responsibility system of dividing up the work and assigning a part to each has been practised, with the committee members as the backbone. Fang Guilan, Director of the Women' Federation, has made frequent home calls to do meticulous investigations and painstaking ideological work. She knows her fellow villagers like the palm of her hand—who are the newlyweds, and who might give an extra birth. Due to her unremitting efforts, during the five years since the committee was formed there have been hardly any unplanned births given in her village, and the planned birth rate has jumped up to 91.97%. And such a role in the organization and management of social life is far beyond the reach of any government department.

2. A tie linking the government and the masses.

According to legal provisions, the relationship between the government and non-government organizations is guiding rather than leading. But the argument on the difference between the two—guiding and leading—will remain a long-lasting debate in theory and practice. However, the fact shows China's non-government organizations have done a lot of work in mediation between the government and the masses, and become important channels for the government to carry out various policies and exercise the government administration. This role is not only represented by the neighborhood committee which has close relations with the grass-roots government, but also by various societies and other non-government organizations like Communist Youth League, trade union, women's federation, etc. The Communist Youth League, for an example, is the mass organization of youth existing in various offices, schools, factories and mines, and enterprises. Its program and principles are to carry out various policies of the Party and government, to strengthen the ties between the government and youth. It is the assignment for the Communist Youth League to propagate, explain and coordinate among the youth the policies and principles the government is to carry out.

The Communist Youth League has become an important instrument to implement the government policies among the masses of youth. This is also true to the other non-government organizations.

3. Promotion of the local economic development.

In China, non-government organizations may run some proper-scale economic activities within the limits permitted by law and become economic entities. The role of promoting grass-roots local economic development has been well represented in the activities of urban neighborhood committees and rural villagers' committees. Before the implementation of policies of reform and being open to the outside world, the urban neighborhood committee was not permitted to run any economic entity, and villagers' committee in the rural areas did not exist at all, in stead, there was a three-tier administrative system of the people's commune, production brigade and production team. In terms of urban neighborhood committee, before the implementation of policy of reform and being open to the outside world, with no revenue, its social activities in the urban neighborhood were maintained by a small amount of subsidy from the government. Staff members of the neighborhood committee had hardly any income, and the committee could hardly be able to help the poor households and support other social welfare activities. Since the reform began in China, the functions of the urban neighborhood committee and rural villagers' committee have been strengthened. The practice of allowing the urban neighborhood committee to run proper scale economic entity has opened up a broad horizon to the committee's activities. Xiangfang Neighborhood Committee of Chengxiang District in Zhangzhou, Fujian Province is a good example for this. The neighborhood committee looks after a neighborhood of 815 households with 2,660 inhabitants. Since the open policy and reform was implemented, Xiangfang Neighborhood Committee has run factories of leather shoes, metalwares and stores of foodstuffs, general merchandize, chemicals, building materials and household appliances, with assets of over a million yuan. In 1988, the neighborhood committee had a total output value up to 5.3 million yuan and handed over to the government 320,000 yuan as tax and profit, and earned over US \$ 450,000 in foreign currencies. With the revenue increases, the neighborhood committee has run a creche, kindergarden, library, home for youth, recreation centre for the aged and other welfare facilities, creating jobs for 174 youngsters waiting for employment, among whom 10 are disables and 116 are idle labourers. Besides, with self-raised funds it has dredged

9 drainage ditches, paved a cement road of 643 metres, and built up 26 flower terrances. The neighborhood committee has also supplied relief to the armyen's and martyrs' families with difficulties and helped them out of straitened circumstances. This is the outcome of developing small-scale local economic entities by the non-government organizations.

4. To develop social and welfare services and arrange activities to help the poor getting rich.

The grass-roots social life, to some extent, means the social life within the range of residential daily life. However, this range does not include the private life of individual inhabitants, but only include the activities of daily life related to others or entire society. These activities show that the individual inhabitants are closely linked with the society, and the social activities of inhabitants may also affect life of the others. Anyhow, proceeding from the Chinese reality, to develop social and welfare services should be one of the major obligations. Due to the limits of work style and economic capability, the improvement of social and welfare services has to rely on the broader social forces, which embrace the forces of the non-government organizations. That is one of the fundamental reasons for the existence of the non-government organizations in China. Take the rural villagers' committee for example. Since the communes were abolished in the rural areas, the villagers' committee has taken up the responsibility of developing social and welfare services, and shown its great potentials in practice. The Villagers' Committee of Zhaxi Village of Bailang County in Rikeze Prefecture of Tibet Autonomous Region is a good example in question. The village is located in a poor area. In it there are 73 households with 412 people, among them 197 are able-bodied, tilling some 1,062 mu (70.8 ha.) of farmland. Ever since its founding, all members of the villagers' committee have been working hard in leading the villagers to get rid of poverty and going on the road of prosperity. The committee enjoys supports of the villagers. They take the agriculture as the key, and are engaged in a diversified economy with sidelines, animal husbandry and forestry. In 1989, a new irrigation canal of 1,400 m was completed, the soil of 520 mu (34.7 ha.) of land was improved, some 830 kg of improved varieties was popularized and over 200 mu (13.3 ha.) of land was afforested. In that year, the village produced some 384 tons of grain, and the grain per capita increased by 16%. As a result, 6 out of the 10 impoverished households in the village had been off poverty.

Another example is Mudanjiang city of Heilongjiang Province. With the help of neighborhood committees, buildings with 148 rooms against the regulations have been dismantled, 78 fire prevention passages have been constructed, over 12,470 m of road have been repaired or rebuilt, and 22,426 ① of refuse have been cleared up. Within the two years from 1985, 66 wayside pavilions, 2,194 flower beds and 96 rockeries were constructed, 362 statues were erected, 130 new public conveniences were built and another 365 ones were renovated, 48.3 million flower plants were cultivated and over 5,290 m² of lawns were made. It's impossible, anyhow, to have all these social and welfare works done solely dependent on the government organs.

5. To uphold mass joint defence for public security and crime prevention.

Being a component of the society, one of the important functions of the non-government organizations in China is to help the government, with their own activities, prevent crime and protect social stability and good order. This function has been well represented in the work of neighborhood committees in many cities. In Mudanjiang, Heilongjiang Province, the neighborhood committees have set up 114 public security committees, 3,500 plus public security groups, 550 "joint defence teams", in order to strengthen the mass joint defence measures in the city. In the campaign of cracking down the criminal offences between 1983 and 1985, the neighborhood committees played an outstanding role. Through efforts of the committees, more than 1,300 criminal cases were exposed with their help, the public security organs cracked 500 criminal cases of various kinds with the persuasion and encouragement, 83 criminals voluntarily surrendered to court. The neighborhood committees also got the masses organized and caught 198 offenders. In fact, the neighborhood committee has become an important force in cracking offenders and maintaining social security. The Chengxiang Neighborhood Committee in Zhangzhou City, Fujian Province, divides its neighborhood into three parts for the sake of security work, and committee members have divided up the work and assigned a part to each. Relying on the "safe households" which make up the overwhelming majority, the committee carries out different work to some "disputing households", "psychologically complicated households" and those with people who have been reformed or educated through labour or punished for an offence. Within that neighborhood, there are 11 people released after being reformed or educated through labour, and 3 people punished by the law enforcement offices. The work has been done towards them by the committee includes:

(1) educating them to observe discipline and obey the law, asking them to draw lessons and thoroughly rectify their errors;

(2) mediating among the neighbors in order to reduce the spiritual pressure and loneliness of the released persons; and

(3) helping them to find a new means of livelihood so as to lighten the social burden.

Through sustained efforts, among the 14 released persons, 3 have been allowed to work in their original units, 2 have been employed by other units, 2 have been arranged in the neighborhood-run enterprises, and the rest have got their individual license with the help of the committee. As a result, those who have experienced their own twists and turns in life and returned to the real society, now enjoy the warmth from their neighborhood and live a peaceful life, reducing the crime rate. So the neighborhood committees have valuable contributions to the government as well as to the whole society.

6.To reconcile Civil Disputes

Disputes are commonplace among people in their frequent contacts. Better settlement of civil disputes may strengthen the unity of the masses, - beneficial to the social stability. But fact shows that sole resort to the administrative measures in settlement of the civil disputes may place the disputes in a hidden state for a while or make them further expended; and the judicial departments are only able to settle a small portion of the disputes. In this aspect, the conciliation committees among the basic self-governing organizations in rural and urban areas have been playing an important role. In dispute settlements, these committees have quick access to information, and flexible methods so that the civil disputes may be settled at the embryonic stage. In Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, a three-level mediation organizations have been set up so as to settle the disputes at an earlier stage when they are minor, not yet acute. The three levels are namely: a) the subdistrict office---agency of the local government, b) the neighborhood committee and c) residential group. These organizations have succeeded in settling a great deal of civil disputes. Anxi County of Gansu Province has set up 43 people's conciliation groups with people of high prestige and trust among the masses as the mediators. These groups mediated 219 disputes among people in 1988, and the rate of success was over 96%. Here is a case in point in Diling Village of Dezhou, Shangdong Province. Due to unequal division of the family property, Wu Yucai and his two brothers refused to support their aged parents

who could not make a living by themselves. The village conciliation committee members called on their families and found out the facts, time and again, explained patiently law and regulations. Thanks to their painstaking efforts, the family became reconciled, and the brothers vied each other in making their parents happy. The changes in Wu's were highly praised by the villagers and the family was honoured with the title of "Household of Material and Spiritual Civilization". The Chengxiang Neighborhood Committee members of Zhangzhou City, Fujian Province not only try their best to catch the symptom of a dispute and to mediate equitably with patient persuasion, but also have established a re-visit system in order to consolidate the achievements of mediation. Zhu Mei, a 70-year-old widow in the neighborhood, has been paralysed for long. At first, her children quarrelled endlessly over the issue of supporting their mother. The conciliation committee visited them many times and persuaded them with great patients. At last the children realized their wrongdoings and felt ashamed of themselves. Ever since the family have become reconciled and the children support their mother jointly.

Here is another example for this. Due to a dispute between two villages, villagers from both villages gathered with carrying poles and chains ready to fight. Upon hearing the news, the conciliation committee members rushed out to stop them. A bloodshed conflict was avoided through the efforts of the conciliation committee, but a tooth of one committee member was knocked out during mediation. At the end, the villagers' committees of the two villages sat together and successfully reconciled their disputes. Things like this are too many in China to mention individually.

7. To Build up Spiritual Civilization and Uphold a Good Social Mode.

China's non-government organizations play an important role not only in the construction of material civilization, but also in the construction of spiritual civilization which has repeatedly been called for by the government. The construction of spiritual civilization means two things in China: (a) to promote science, culture and education so as to enhance the scientific and cultural level of the entire nation; (b) to strengthen the education of ideal morality and discipline so as to raise the moral standard of the citizen. In fulfilment of these tasks, the government plays a leading role while the non-government organizations play a supplementary role. However, this supplementary role is really extraordinary. These organizations are a good helper for the government in both human and financial resources.

Since the implementation of the policy of reform and being open to the outside world in China, reform of education is one of the important sectors of the entire reform. The former educational system in which the state takes on everything is not able to carry out all the work relating to popularization of scientific knowledge in the entire society and compulsory education. Therefore the mushrooming non-government organizations have filled many of the gaps. With their self-raised funds, they have set up grass-roots scientific research institutions spreading out agricultural science and technology. Financially weak in general though, these organizations have shown great concern to the grass-roots primary and secondary education and have invested much money in the improvement of elementary education. Since its establishment, the villagers' committee of Daluzhuang, Tianjin has given the priority to the improvement of facilities and conditions of the primary and secondary schools, on the basis of production development. With its self-raised fund of 140,000 yuan, the villagers' committee built up a teaching building for a primary school with 20 classrooms able to accommodate 210 students. At the same time, it also spent over 20,000 yuan on installation of a boiler and running water, leading to a great improvement of teaching condition in the village's school. In the education of spiritual civilization, non-government organizations in various places in China have upheld many activities one of which is the campaign to select the advanced villages. In Anxi county, Gansu Province, a campaign of selecting civilized villages has been carried out among the villages by the villagers' committees. The criteria for the civilized village are as follows:

- (1) To carry out the state policies and regulations conscientiously;
- (2) The village leaders are to adhere to the democratic style of work and be honest in performing their duties;
- (3) To practise democratic administration and abide by the organic regulations of the villagers' committee;
- (4) To guarantee the villagers from unlawful marriage and unplanned birth;
- (5) To advocate new-style of wedding ceremonies and plain funeral arrangements, and ban gambling and feudal superstitions activities;
- (6) To plan the villagers' house construction and keep the village clean and tidy;
- (7) To popularize the elementary education and do a good job in eliminating illiteracy; and
- (8) To achieve remarkable successes in public affairs and public welfare to the satisfaction of the masses.

In 1988, the country selected, through public appraisal, 22 "Civilized Villagers", 200 "Civilized Villagers' Groups", 11 advanced villagers' committees, and 9392 "Five-Merit Families".

For "examining the work of neighborhood committees, a series of public appraisal activities have been arranged in Mudanjiang, Heilongjiang Province. As a result, 184 "Civilized Courts", 173 "Civilized Buildings", 39716 "Five-Merit Families" and 17371 "Model Clean Households" have been chosen so far in the city in addition to 5471 "Good Fathers", 7254 "Good Mothers", 3566 "Good Wives", 4053 "Good Husbands", 3216 "Good Parents-in-laws" and 703 pairs of "Good Sisters-in-laws".

These activities have helped examining the achievements of the grass-roots mass self-governing organizations, improving the social mode and raising the ethical standards of the general public. This role, however, can hardly be replaced by the government with administrative means.

IV. Administration of the government over the non-government organizations and problems faced by the non-government organizations.

A host of non-government organizations existing in China are playing a great role in China's development and social stability. And how to deal with the emergence and development of these organizations is a grave subject arising after reform to the government. Fact shows that over-tight control over these organizations may suffocate their enthusiasm, unfavourable for China's social development; but too over-loose control may lead to an anarchy, no good for the social stability and economic development. Therefore, only adoption of an appropriate, reliable, positive and cautious policy may give full play to the role of non-government organizations, and help them make more contributions to the country's development and social stability. At present, the following three principles are taken as guidelines for the formation of policies towards these organizations:

(1) To exercise administration according to law.

Since the implementation of open policy and reform, a great many non-government organizations have sprung up and developed rapidly. Up to now, there are 1,100 mass organizations at the national level and over 100,000 at provincial and municipal level, and over a million of neighborhood and villagers' committees. These non-government

organizations can be found everywhere in the basic social life. Therefore, only to exercise administration according to law can protect and support the non-government organizations in practising their legal rights on one hand, and restricting some of their illegal activities and banning and stopping their criminal activities harmful to the society. But the basis for exercising administration according to law is the existence of such laws and regulations related. Therefore, the Constitution of 1982 clearly stipulated the practice of villagers' and neighborhood committee systems. Later in November 1987 the Organic Law of Villagers' Committee was issued, and in December 1989 the Organic Law of Urban Neighborhood Committee was issued. The Administrative Regulations for Registration of Mass Organizations issued by the State Council in October 1989 clearly stipulated the nature, organization, code of conduct, administration of registration and their legal rights and obligations. The issuance of these laws and regulations has provided legal basis for the government in their exercise of administration, and also legal rights to protect themselves for the various non-government organizations, hence laying down legal foundation for them to uphold independent activities positively.

(2) To respect the self-governing rights of the non-government organizations.

The fundamental feature of existence and activities of a non-government organization is that it is a "self-governing" organization. Without autonomy, they may lose the foundation for being a non-government organization. So they become either a component, or an appendage, of the government organ, entirely losing their social role. Therefore, in exercising administration over the non-government organizations, the government must adhere to the principle of "respecting the self-governing right" of the non-government organizations in its guiding ideology.

The self-governing rights of the non-government organizations consist of three aspects:

(a) The right to manage their own internal affairs independently by law. Their internal affairs include the establishment, rectification and rescission of the organization; election, removal and re-election of the leading body; organizational setups; procedures, organic rules and activities, etc. Here one point should be made clear that "self-governing" concept in China is by no means the same as anarchy, but the concept of self-governing right provided for by law. This is of vital importance. For example, China's "Organic Law of Villagers'

Committee" clearly stipulates the principle of "self-government by villagers", but it also states that "the establishment, rescission, range adjustment of the villagers' committee, once passed through discussions at the villagers' conference, should be reported by the people's government of town, nationality town or township to the people's government for approval (Article 7). That's to say, the establishment, rescission and range adjustment of the villagers' committee has to be decided by the government at township and county levels, not merely by the committee itself alone.

(b) The right to carry out their activities within their own sphere independently. Here, the scope of activities related of the non-government organizations is very broad, and forms of activities are many. The right to arrange their own activities independently varies in contents and forms. Take the mass organizations as example. Their activities must be in line with the constitution reported by themselves at the time of establishment, but the neighborhood committee and villagers' committee do whatever according to the state laws, and they do have to their own constitution. Anyhow, they may enjoy the right to independent arrangement for their own activities within the limits of constitutions or laws related. The government does not interfere in these activities.

(c) The right to possess their own name, reputation and property independently. These rights are not really self-government of outstanding and universal significance though, as to a non-government organization, the mass organization in particular, without the right to name, reputation and property, it does not mean a complete self-government. Therefore, these rights are also an important component of the self-government.

All above-mentioned rights are provided for by law, in which the government should not interfere.

(3) To give positive support and correct guidance.

The relationship between the government organization and the non-government organization, in general, is not a kind of leadership organizationally. Anyhow, activities of the non-government organizations within the limits by law, generally speaking, are all for the interests of the nation, helpful for the government to exercise its administrative functions, and good for the social stability and development. It is only a tiny minority of non-government organizations that conduct illegal activities or even crimes. Therefore, the attitude adopted by the government towards the non-government organization cannot but be the

one of positive support and correct guidance. By positive support, it means, within limits of its power, the government should maintain an attitude of positive cooperation, coordination and assistance towards the activities by the non-government organizations. This includes provision of assistance in materials and spirit, and help in solving difficulties. The local grass-roots government is the direct beneficiary of the activities by the non-government organizations, without which many basic functions of the grass-roots government can hardly be realized. Therefore, the government has the obligations both legal and moral, to support and assist the non-government organizations. By correct guidance, it means that the grass-roots government should often provide consultancy and suggestions for the non-government organizations to their activities, and guide their activities towards the direction beneficial to the social development and stability, and at the same time eliminate the erosion of harmful tendencies in order to ensure a healthy development of the non-government organizations.

In China now, government administration over the emergence and activities of non-government organizations, observed by this author, is in the period of transition from the mode of restriction and lookout to that of support and guidance. But how to have this transition made as quick as possible, remains an important issue faced by various non-government organizations. Problems and difficulties still exist in exercising a better administration over the non-government organizations. Of course, all these problems and difficulties are related to the transition.

Problem 1, how to realize the transition of administration mode from the supervision-oriented to service-oriented. For long, the government is accustomed to exercise its administration over the non-government organizations in the capacity and concept of the "master of society" towards the "vagrant in the society". As a result, the basic rights of the non-government organizations cannot be ensured, and their initiative cannot be brought into full play. Since the government is "the authority like parents", then the non-government organizations always obey submissively like a "child". A bit carelessness would lead to reproach, punishment even ban. This problem is rather acute in some of the non-government organizations like mass organizations. That's to say, this problem remains to be well solved.

Problem 2, non-government organizations tend to become government organs. The fundamental indication and vitality of the non-government organization is that it is non-governmental, with no direct organic

connections with the government. Otherwise they are no more "the non-government organizations". But among the non-government organizations, there is still a tendency that many turn to be more governmental ones. This is represented, on one hand, in fact that their main source of funds is the government subsidies, or the allocation from the government budget; on the other hand, that the personnel matters are heavily restricted, influenced or controlled by the government. For example, selection of leaders of the urban neighborhood committee, rural villagers' committee and trade unions, Communist Youth League, Women's Federation and so on is highly influenced or controlled by the government organs. If things continue this way, self-governing right of the non-government organizations will be heavily affected.

Problem 3, Relationship between the non-government organizations and the broad masses. In original sense, source of life of the non-government organization lies in the masses. Without the masses, there is no foundation for the non-government organizations. Therefore, the non-government organizations have to maintain a relationship with the masses they contact like milk mingling with water. But in practice, to improve the relationship of the non-government organization with the masses still remains a problem needed urgent solution. Many non-government organizations pay much more attention to the relations with government rather than with the masses. This is a dangerous tendency.

To conclude, fact has proved that the existence of non-government organizations in China is a demand of social development. The future for their existence and development is bright. The existing problems will not stop their existence and development. And these problems can only be improved or solved in the course of continuous development.