LEARNING FR☆M SHENZHEN

China's Post-Mao Experiment from Special Zone to Model City

Edited by Mary Ann O'Donnell, Winnie Wong, *and* Jonathan Bach

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PART 3 **Extensions (2004–Present)**

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Heroes of the Special Zone: Modeling Reform and Its Limits

MARY ANN O'DONNELL

> He made vigorous efforts to turn the tide, urging boldness and decisiveness in action, and determination to carry out drastic rectification of the seriously chaotic situation caused by the Cultural Revolution. For the benefit of the party and the people, he gave no thought to his own interests or safety and, despite the risk of being overthrown again, waged a resolute struggle against the Gang of Four. This rectification drive was, in essence, an experiment for the reforms afterwards.
>
> President and general secretary Jiang Zemin in his eulogy for former president and general secretary Deng Xiaoping, 1997

Mao Zedong died on September 9, 1976, eight months after Zhou Enlai had passed. Over the next two years, Deng Xiaoping wrested power from Mao Zedong's appointed successor, Hua Guofeng, and the Gang of Four, emerging as post-Mao China's preeminent leader during the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, which convened in December 1978. Deng's political success notwithstanding, he faced a propaganda conundrum: how to partially discredit Mao Zedong while maintaining the legitimacy of the Communist Party. The politburo member Chen Yun famously declared that "the life or death, existence or extinction of the party" was at stake during this transition.[1] The appointed leaders of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone (SEZ) would play an important role in that transition by providing Deng and his reformist allies with living examples of new socialist models and nationalist goals that were still being defined. Thus Shenzhen not only provided an experimental space for the "reform" policies of the post-Mao era but also represented a political experiment—a venue where certain reformist leaders and cadres conducted bold political experiments. In the parlance of its actors, the political implications of reform were often glossed as "social" reform, downplaying the fundamental restructuring of the Chinese polity at stake in the transition. The stories of their rise and fall, from the founding of the Shenzhen SEZ to the era after the 1989 crackdown, defined for the nation the potential and the limits of both economic and political reforms by carefully circumscribing the limits to "society."

Party structure and internal loyalties facilitated the complicit—albeit highly improvisational—relationship between Beijing policymakers and Shenzhen leadership. The three most lionized Shenzhen leaders were (1) Shenzhen's first party secretary and mayor, Liang Xiang (1981–86);[2] (2) the first standing vice chairman of China Merchants Hong Kong and the director of China Merchants in Shekou, Yuan Geng (1979–93); and (3) the first president of Shenzhen University, Luo Zhengqi (1983–89). All three were Chinese Communist Party members who had demonstrated a personal commitment to national development. And they were all turned into model leaders in the same way—for being willing to take responsibility for actions they believed to be correct, even if those actions were unapproved outside or within Shenzhen's borders at the time. Given that their actions took place immediately after the Cultural Revolution, a time when leaders, individuals, and their families had been harassed, beaten, arrested, and sometimes killed or driven to suicide for not following the party line, the willingness of Shenzhen's first generation of leaders to engage in or overlook quasi-legal activities made them courageous new "heroes" for the reform era. In the new rhetoric, they "dared to take responsibility," which not-so-subtly implied that they were willing to protect others from political repercussions for unsanctioned actions. In fact, this kind of quasi-illicit activity and willingness to give official approval to previously "illegal" actions infused the Shenzhen "experiment" with its national significance, making it a powerful model for the political reorganization of post-Mao Chinese society.[3]

But this rhetoric of heroism had its limits. When these three heroes became political liabilities, that early tolerance for unsanctioned actions provided justifications for removing Liang and Luo from office, while sidelining Yuan from the political process. Vagueness and contradiction had been the hallmarks of Deng's pronouncements on the Reform and Opening policy, of which Shenzhen was the showpiece. But what particular reforms were in fact desirable, correct, appropriate? Which should be recognized and taken up elsewhere? And which should be regarded as dangerous or even counterrevolutionary? Shenzhen's first generation of leaders answered these questions with both their dramatic successes and their later downfall.

Political Appointments

In the first decade of Shenzhen's establishment, political leadership and heroism were defined by the ability of individuals—usually men—to thrive in an uncertain political environment that had been forged on World War II battlefields and through postwar purges.[4] During a 2012 interview in his

architectural firm, for example, former Shenzhen University president Luo Zhengqi explained that as an everyday practice, especially at higher levels of responsibility, reform meant "walking farther and farther" from proscribed limits until one had transformed society. He also joked that sometimes the borders snapped back like a rubber band and one was left unprotected and alone in unsanctioned fields.[5] In fact, his metaphorical reference to borders and rivers had an uncanny specificity in early Shenzhen because this rough-and-tumble frontier town was located just north of Hong Kong along the Shenzhen River, where Red Guards had once waved red books, yelled slogans, and promised to liberate their occupied compatriots on the other side. These geographic facts also meant that in Shenzhen, Deng's metaphor of "feeling rocks to cross the river" could be interpreted literally, describing how local residents deployed cross-border work permits to enter Hong Kong for proscribed jobs and then smuggle back consumer goods that were not yet available in the Mainland on their return. Nevertheless, Luo Zhengqi noted that during the early years, whatever happened in Shenzhen constituted "Reform" (*gaige*), and successful leaders quickly learned to act decisively instead of waiting for political recognition, which might (or might not, he implied) come after the fact. Importantly, Luo Zhengqi emphasized that Shenzhen heroes were men who had "dared to act and dared to assume responsibility."

Continuing with Mao-era practice, political appointments to Shenzhen were pragmatically based on revolutionary credentials and demonstrated loyalty to Deng or his reform lieutenants, Hu Yaobang (CCP general secretary, September 11, 1982–January 15, 1987) and Zhao Ziyang (premier, 1980–87; CCP general secretary, November 1, 1987–June 23, 1989).[6] The confluence of revolutionary credentials and personal loyalty shaped the service trajectories of party leaders because credentials made them eligible for promotion, while personal loyalty ensured that they could be trusted to make decisions that would help their benefactor no matter what the prevailing political climate. For example, Liang Xiang, who would become Shenzhen party secretary and mayor, joined the CCP in 1936 and immediately went to study at the Yan'an Central Party School, where he eventually held the position of general party branch secretary. During the war against Japan and the Civil War, he first held the position of party secretary of the Work Committee of Xi'an County, Jilin Province, and was subsequently appointed county head. With the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on October 1, 1949, the central government deployed him to Guangzhou, where he rose steadily in the Maoist ranks over the next thirty years—from department head of the Guangzhou Planning Commission to Guangzhou's vice mayor, party secretary of

the Guangzhou Department of the Secretary, second party secretary of Guangzhou, standing member of the Guangdong Provincial Politburo, and finally vice governor of Guangdong Province. His support in the party came through Xi Zhongjun (father of current General Secretary Xi Jinping) and Zhao Ziyang. In fact, even in the political upheavals in the immediate aftermath of Tiananmen, Liang Xiang demonstrated unwavering personal loyalty to Zhao Ziyang. When Zhao Ziyang's son, Zhao Erjun, escaped China under the assumed name "Chen Xueyang," Liang Xiang reputedly approved his departure through Hainan Island in the south, having his post and party membership stripped one month later.[7]

Similarly, Yuan Geng, who would become a standing vice chairman of China Merchants Hong Kong and the director of China Merchants Shekou (a work unit whose status and definition will be closely examined later) joined the Party in 1939 and was deployed to the Huiyang Anti-Japanese Guerilla Forces in November of that year, where he would later teach military affairs. Beginning in 1940 and through the 1950s, Yuan Geng participated in military campaigns in Jinan and Huainan, saw combat in Huangtan, and ended his military career in 1950 as an advisor to Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam. In the postwar era, Yuan Geng served in foreign affairs under Zhou Enlai, being posted to Indonesia and participating in the Three Worlds Conference in Jakarta. In April 1968, as part of Kang Sheng's purge of senior party officials who opposed Mao, Yuan Geng was incarcerated in Beijing's maximum security Qincheng Prison until Zhou Enlai secured his release in September 1973. In October 1975, Yuan Geng returned to work in the Department of Transportation as the head of Overseas Affairs, Ministry of Transportation. In addition to his ties to Deng through their common sponsor, Zhou Enlai, Yuan Geng found national support in General Secretary Hu Yaobang, Vice General Secretary Li Xiannian, and Vice President Gu Mu.[8]

The youngest of the three special zone heroes by two decades, Luo Zhengqi would become the president of Shenzhen University in 1983. He was a Tsinghua University intellectual, where he had earned the respect and attention of Hu Yaobang in the early reform period. During the Cultural Revolution, as a young Qinghua University architecture teacher, Luo Zhengqi joined the "414 Faction" that supported Liu Shaoqi. During one of the Qinghua student battles, members of the radical Jinggangshan faction, which advocated demolishing the extant power structure, abducted Luo Zhengqi's younger brother, Luo Zhengfu, beat him, and locked him in a car trunk, where he died from asphyxiation. After the Cultural Revolution, Luo Zhengqi was appointed vice secretary of the Tsing-hua University Party. One of the Red Guards who had been convicted of his brother's death applied to Tsing-hua University. The

applicant had already served his sentence and Luo Zhengqi personally issued a directive that "historical grudges" were insufficient reason for blocking a candidate's admission to the university. Luo Zhengqi's fair-minded decision came to the attention of Hu Yaobang, who promoted him to the chair of China's Youth Federation. However, almost immediately after he rose to a national position, Luo Zhengqi offended Chen Yun when Chen's son took advantage of his father's position to obtain an opportunity to study abroad. Luo Zhengqi wrote the elder leader a letter asking Deng's stalwart supporter to have his son renounce his scholarship, arguing that such rewards should have been allocated according to merit rather than nepotism. Subsequently, as an implied punishment, Luo Zhengqi was reassigned to Shenzhen, where he was given the responsibility of building the university.[9]

Daring to Take Responsibility

One characteristic of post-Mao heroism was "daring to take responsibility," which meant to serve the interests of Deng and his reformer allies and reproduce and legitimize party hegemony in the transition from the Mao to the Deng eras. In other words, "daring to take responsibility" functioned politically with respect to individual careers and more generally at the level of party hegemony. Maoism conflated belief in Mao with the party's political legitimacy. In the post-Mao era, Deng and his allies acted to create a new political legitimacy that secured the CCP's monopoly on political power by implementing policies—free-market reforms and the privatization of state-owned enterprises, for example—that were not socialist. It is important to note that "daring to take responsibility" did not function as an abstract ideal but instead was actually embodied and performed by officials and then broadcast through reports of model reformers in the state-controlled media. The following analysis of how Liang Xiang became a hero (and model of the post-Mao cadre) highlights how Beijing policy makers used post facto attribution to both create a space for experimentation and maintain control over what constituted a "hero." Ultimately, these policy makers determined who could and could not represent reform and the extent of political reform.

When the first generation of inland cadres, corps of civil engineering members, and workers arrived in Shenzhen and Shekou in 1979, they encountered a relatively weak county administration that was being opportunistically dismantled by local communes and subordinate work brigades and teams. The contract responsibility system had already spread to Bao'an County's twenty-one communes, where local farmers were eager to sell their surplus produce in Guangdong and to Hong Kong people.[10] There were both permanent and

occasional markets throughout Bao'an County, which was threaded with dirt roads. The primary form of transportation was walking, although there were wider roads for truck transport. The Kowloon-Canton (Guangzhou) Railway (KCR) had a station at Luohu, and the neighboring commercial area was known as Dongmen. At the end of 1979, the population of the SEZ with household residence was 312,600, not including migrant workers and the reported 1,500 residents with temporary residence permits.[11]

The Special Zone's low population density, lack of infrastructure, and absence of bureaucratic mechanisms to oversee and regulate reform praxis also meant that politicized aphorisms describing uncertain pragmatism—"seek truth from facts" and "it doesn't matter if the cat is black or white as long as it catches mice"—circulated to describe the experience of simultaneously constructing and administering these new social entities. Indeed, the early aphorisms and even the appellation "Shenzhen Speed" all tended to conflate governance with the simultaneous construction of a government itself. In the first years of the SEZ, political success or failure was evaluated with respect to urbanization of the Dongmen/Luohu area of the SEZ and of Shekou, an independent industrial park at the tip of the Nantou Peninsula in western Shenzhen. Crudely speaking, the earliest task of Shenzhen's leaders was to replace the extant collectivist (rural) government with an urban socialist apparatus. Practically speaking, this meant that Special Zone cadres had to figure out how to electrify the area, lay water lines, and pave roads—all without a fully functioning government in place and no oversight from either the provincial government in Guangzhou or the central government in Beijing. This is a key point: because there was no functioning government in place, the first generation of Shenzhen leaders had leeway with respect to governmental institutions and procedures that they established, including higher levels of subordinate independence and decision-making authority than were institutionalized elsewhere in the country.

Prior to the establishment of an official government or official policies, cadres like Luo Jinxing operated on a case-by-case basis, usually with tacit approval from work unit leaders who emphasized results rather than extant Chinese law. In 1979, for example, the Guangdong Post and Telecommunications Bureau transferred Luo Jinxing to Shenzhen, where he was appointed vice director general of Shenzhen's Housing Authority. Luo Jinxing's directive was to construct housing for employees in Shenzhen work units, including government ministries and employees in city-owned companies. At the time, the central government had budgeted thirty million yuan for the construction of infrastructure, but Luo Jinxing estimated that one billion yuan would be necessary to develop a 4 km^2 area in Luohu. By 1980, it was evident that new

sources of funding were needed. Under the auspices of the Housing Authority, Luo Jinxing established and became the chief executive officer of China's first real estate company in the post-Mao era, Shenzhen Special Economic Zone Real Estate Company. The new state-owned company entered joint ventures to lease land, construct buildings, and manage its own investment fund. On January 1, 1980, Luo Jingxing and Liu Tianjiu, the first acknowledged Hong Kong investor in Shenzhen, signed an agreement to codevelop the PRC's first commercial residential estate, Donghu Liyuan.[12] The agreement stipulated that Shenzhen Municipality would receive 85 percent and Liu Tianjiu 15 percent of the profits. Phases one and two of the project earned five million yuan for the SEZ government.[13] In a nation where people had been beaten as "capitalists" for raising ducks and geese just five or six years earlier, this was a daring move—even under a vague pronouncement of "change." Thus the most revealing aspect of the Luo Jinxing deal with Liu Tianjiu was that it occurred months before a full Shenzhen government would convene or before the first party secretary and mayor for Shenzhen, Liang Xiang, was appointed.[14]

Liang Xiang would soon work to create a legal framework and government institutions that would retroactively protect these unconstitutional deals, including the rights and profits of foreign companies. Indeed, in November 1982, more than a year after the Donghu Liyuan project went through, the SEZ government released the *Shenzhen Special Economic Zone Outline Plan for Social Economic Development*, which permitted foreign direct investment and provided post facto legal protection for at least three years of development projects and plans. The outline plan also furnished a political justification for this very unorthodox move: Xiang called it "ant theory," which stated that only after a scout ant had discovered a patch of sweetness would other ants be attracted to the area.[15] In other words, liberal policies were the "sweetness" that attracted capitalist "ants," allowing Liang Xiang to redeploy CCP political control over production into capitalist advantage on Chinese territory. On its own terms, ant theory was successful. Between 1980 and 1985, with or without official approval, Shenzhen cobbled together almost six billion yuan in investment capital to construct basic urban infrastructure, including roads, water lines, and electrical networks, which in turn integrated more than twenty residential, commercial, industrial, and tourist parks and zones in the nascent city.[16] But in Beijing, hard-liners like Chen Yun and Bo Yibo worried that these changes could transform China's polity from "socialist" to "capitalist"—a transformation that challenged the Maoist economic system and, by extension, the party's legitimacy.

This history suggests Liang Xiang's boldness was evidenced not only in creating or appropriating capitalist methods but also in his willingness to

bestow political legitimacy on those who were already engaging in illegal economic activity. The dangers of political patronage in the immediate post-Mao era made his and other Shenzhen leaders' actions especially daunting. Indeed, when Liang Xiang proposed the outline plan, no one knew how Beijing leaders would respond to the illegal and unregulated activities that had been taking place in the SEZ. On the contrary, everyone knew that there was deep disagreement about whether the country should adopt these kinds of capitalist measures in order to stimulate the Chinese economy. Furthermore, in the immediate aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, everyone was also viscerally aware that disagreement in Beijing could lead to personal tragedy. Even Deng had been punished multiple times in the 1960s and 1970s for his position on economic growth. However, at the time, the need to fund the actual construction of the city[17] and the proximity to Hong Kong investors meant that the most pragmatic methods and capital came by way of the colonial entrepôt—as indeed seemed the intention when Deng located the Shenzhen SEZ on the very border. Liang Xiang's willingness to trust the "capitalist" activities of his subordinates and to assume political responsibility for their actions epitomized the courageous and vexed politics of the Special Zone's early period, where subordinates "dared" to act outside the Constitution (and Cold War borders) because their leaders "took responsibility" for these actions. Here's the important point: when the results of these methods exceeded expectations, the state-controlled national media retrospectively credited Liang Xiang with heroic leadership skills. In fact, the height of Liang Xiang's model status came when Deng voiced his approval of these reforms during the 1984 Inspection Tour. At that moment, Deng performed at the national level the same kind of political patronage that Liang Xiang had given his subordinates in Shenzhen.

Pushing the Limits of Reform

In contrast to Liang Xiang's program in the SEZ, the reforms introduced by Director Yuan Geng in the newly designated Shekou Industrial Zone explicitly challenged Beijing's monopoly on making appointments and determining the form and content of public opinion, converging with popular demand for political as well as economic change. In Shekou, Yuan Geng promoted institutions that reproduced key features of Hong Kong society, including implementing contract labor practices and allowing for an independent press. The result was the clearest articulation of popular representation in the special zone. Importantly, these changes were glossed as "social" change despite their clear political importance. What's more, although "Shekou Spirit" (*Shekou*

jingshen) was distinguished from "Shenzhen Spirit" (*Shenzhen jingshen*) within the SEZ, it was Yuan Geng's popular representation and calls for "social change" that became identified with the reforms that made Shenzhen "special" in the larger national imaginary.[18]

Yuan Geng operated with even more de facto political independence than did Liang Xiang because the Shekou Industrial Zone's political designation was even vaguer than that of the SEZ. Although Shekou lay within the borders of the SEZ, it operated under the auspices of the national Ministry of Transportation, making the industrial zone politically independent of the Shenzhen administrative apparatus that Liang Xiang was building. Shekou's relative independence was an artifact of the Maoist system, which had divided from governance into administration by ministry and then administration by government. Roughly speaking, ministries organized and oversaw functions such as transportation while governments organized and oversaw territory such as the SEZ. Many of the conflicts that have characterized Shenzhen government arose as ministries and governments struggled (and continue to struggle) to control functions that must be placed in a territory.[19]

For Yuan Geng, reforming the socialist system meant challenging the complacency of cadres—another instance in which the transition from Maoism was coded as the creation of a new role model. Yuan Geng believed that the low quality of Chinese products could be directly attributed to the mentalities, or *suzhi*, produced by the Communist system, especially with respect to the training of cadres.[20] The difference between the Shenzhen and Shekou models was subtle but important for political change because, in Shekou, Yuan Geng focused on transforming not only the mentalities of migrant workers but also the mentalities of administrators and, by extension, government functionaries, arguably with an eye toward cultivating an active and social minded middle class. Consequently, Yuan Geng's strongest challenge to both local and national politics came at the level of identifying and promoting models at the level of both job appointments and media and the dissemination of information.

In 1980, for example, Vice Premier Gu Mu approved Yuan Geng's petition to directly recruit employees to the China Merchants Bureau rather than requiring him to apply for appointments through the Ministry of Transportation, which was the overseeing line supervisor of China Merchants Shekou. Under the Chinese system of *danwei*, or work unit appointments, the Ministry of Transportation was assigned workers that it then deployed to its bureaus. These employees were assigned jobs for political as well as professional reasons. Indeed, as a lingering effect of the Cultural Revolution, political inclinations were more important than skill sets when assigning jobs. In contrast, Yuan Geng

lobbied to hire employees with necessary skill sets and experience rather than accepting employees who had been selected for their political views—an articulation of a technocratic model of employment that many young Chinese intellectuals supported. Two years later in 1982, Yuan Geng extended these reforms to administrative systems, and employees were recruited through relatively open applications and interviews. Yuan Geng and upper level managers also visited university campuses to recruit workers for China Merchants Shekou. Importantly, the debates over Shekou's status and its political structure had clear implications for possible governmental restructuring throughout China. China Merchants Shekou assumed many governmental functions—such as urban planning, building schools and hospitals, and providing basic infrastructure—without concomitant political subordination to a territorial government simply because there was no territorial government in place. In turn, grassroots associations such as the Management Committee (see below) arose to resolve social problems that China Merchants Shekou as an economic entity was not prepared to or did not want to address institutionally.

Yuan Geng's challenge to political organization occurred in 1983, when the Management Committee of the Shekou Industrial Zone was formed. The Management Committee's directive was to administer Shekou society, including urban planning, education, information, social welfare, and so on. Members of the committee would not be appointed but be determined through elections. All China Merchants Shekou party cadres were eligible to be a candidate for the committee and to vote in Management Committee elections, which would be held every two years. Full-time employees of the Shekou Industrial Zone were not eligible to be a Management Committee candidate but were eligible to vote in elections. The criteria for being a candidate ostensibly remained being a vetted party member, coding the elections as an internal party reform. However, Yuan Geng had suspended cadre promotions based on political criteria and instead made cadre promotions based on expertise and contributions to China Merchants' success. This meant that full-time employees could be promoted to cadre and become eligible for election to the Management Committee based on their work in Shekou. This system of work unit internal management effectively democratized Shekou society because almost every worker in Shekou was considered a full-time employee of China Merchants, including factory workers. Yuan Geng had hoped to make elections for political positions universal in Shenzhen, thereby extending ministerial reforms to territorial structures, but Beijing reformers balked at this measure. Instead, in a fascinating and instructive compromise, China Merchants Shekou was incorporated as a limited-holding company wherein the state-controlled China Merchants Bureau selected four members of the new

board of directors while employees of China Merchants Shekou elected the remaining seven board members. Importantly, this compromise recoded more far-reaching political reform as an institutional reform within a private company, effectively reproducing the neoliberal business practices of colonial Hong Kong, where Great Britain appointed political leaders but locally owned businesses held board elections.

His organization of the Shekou Ministry of Information most clearly manifest Yuan Geng's efforts to actively transform the employee-residents of Shekou into voting citizen-workers. The first head of the Shekou Information Office was Zhou Weimin, a popular hero of the 1976 Tiananmen movement that had commemorated the death of Zhou Enlai. Zhou Weimin also participated in the Democracy Wall Movement, which led to his incarceration as a political prisoner. After his release from prison in 1978, Zhou Weimin was rehabilitated but nevertheless remained outside the state apparatus without a job and unable to transfer his wife's *hukou* to Beijing, where he lived. Yuan Geng claimed to have based his decision to appoint Zhou Weimin on his skills and experience as a journalist, which were determined through an interview. Nevertheless, Yuan Geng needed to secure the approval of Hu Yaobang in order to finalize the transfer because the Shekou Ministry of Information remained directly under the supervision of the national ministry. Hu Yaobang's patronage of Yuan Geng's reforms importantly underscored the tensions inherent in the management and governance of Shekou.

The contradictions inherent in Shekou's nebulous status first came to a head in 1985, when the *Shekou Bulletin News* received and published an anonymous letter to the editor that criticized Yuan Geng's reforms. The letter targeted business practices in Shekou, including the increasing bureaucratization of establishing businesses, the "low quality" of the foreign companies in Shekou (most were polluting and/or labor intensive manufacturing firms), salaries that reflected neither efficiency nor contribution, and inadequate urban planning in the face of an exploding population. In this letter, the author reworded Yuan Geng's slogan, "Time is money, efficiency is life," to claim instead, "Efficiency is life, and efficiency comes from management (*guanli*). If industrial zone management continues to drag, then it will lose its vitality."[21] This letter directly criticized the leadership of both Yuan Geng and the board of directors by invoking the Management Committee model of democratic organization. The editorial board of the *Shekou Bulletin News* brought the letter to Yuan Geng three times in order to secure his approval to publish the letter. Yuan Geng not only approved the letter but indicated that in the future, any article that did not criticize the party or its political line could be published without being vetted by Shekou leaders, even if it criticized his own leadership.

This unexpected openness led to the bulletin's popular "News Salon," an open forum that met weekly to debate issues of democracy and of changing the legal system in Shekou, which was technically a division of a state-owned industry functioning as an independent society.

As we have seen, Beijing policy makers relied on post facto recognition and withheld it in order to check the actions of Special Zone heroes. By reorganizing the Ministry of Information, Yuan Geng initiated a series of reforms that gave this power to a (relatively) free press. Here then was the challenge that Shekou (and, by extension, Shenzhen and the rest of the Special Zone) posed to the national system of post facto recognition of models and national value: Was the Special Zone a site from which social and political reforms could not only be launched but also valorized locally? After all, from the perspective of the governed, this was precisely the question that the editorial board of the *Shekou Bulletin* had asked Yuan Geng—that is, would leaders continue to protect subordinates even when there was high-level political disagreement (in this case, between the de facto head of government and his minister of information)? And if so, could those disagreements be debated publicly? Even though the *Shekou Bulletin* was a low-level newspaper that explicitly (and technically only) served Shekou and its residents, by the end of the 1980s, it had become one of China's most important experiments in loosening restrictions on journalism, and many of its reports were syndicated in newspapers at every level of government.

The "Dear Deng" Letter

The ideological battle to determine who could engage in post facto recognition of "heroic" actions came in October 1986 when the *Shenzhen Youth Herald* published Shenzhen University professor Qian Chaoying's controversial opinion piece entitled "I Support Comrade Xiaoping's Decision to Retire," which was nicknamed the "Dear Deng" letter because although it was an opinion piece, it was rhetorically presented as a letter to Deng.

In the early years of reform, the *Shenzhen Youth Herald* was, along with Shanghai's *World Economic Herald*, one of the two most independent newspapers in China. Consequently, despite being a small newspaper, the *Youth Herald* had a national subscription base, providing intellectuals throughout the country with a platform for debating progressive ideas and evaluating ongoing experiments in reforming Chinese society. However, as the steps taken before publishing the critique of Yuan Geng in the *Shekou Bulletin* indicated, the *Youth Herald*'s decision to publish the "Dear Deng" letter was politically charged, no matter what steps the editorial board took to downplay political

implications through the rhetoric of "social" reform. In the manner of traditional intellectuals, for example, Qian Chaoying's writing style was sincere and humble, but the content was unmistakably radical. Moreover, the piece drew directly on Shenzhen's experience, asking, "Why must the people show our sincere and deep feelings for Deng by sacrificing further reform of the political system?" Qian's meaning was that Deng's voluntary and early retirement would allow China to reflect on and establish a more just political system, a system that was more in keeping with the needs of reform, rather than a return to cult politics, which had characterized the Cultural Revolution's glorification of Mao Zedong.

In April 2012, the youth editor who had published the "Dear Deng" letter, Cao Changqing, published exiled democracy activist and former head of the politics department at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Yan Jiaqi's recollections of how party elder Bo Yibo had responded to the letter. Apparently, Bo Yibo not only was furious about the "Dear Deng" letter but also had taken it as an attack on the power of older and already retired leaders because the letter implied that party elders had illegitimately ruled too long. During a closed meeting on political reform, Bo Yibo apparently overheard a conversation between Zhao Ziyang and Peng Chong about the "Dear Deng" letter. Upon overhearing the conversation, Bo Yibo became livid and is reported to have screamed at the younger leaders, "You are already fifty, sixty, and seventy years old. We won't die and you won't rise!" He was implying that the power structure would continue to be headed by the older generation, their retirements notwithstanding. Junior member of the Standing Committee Hu Qili was apparently so frightened that he immediately showed his support for the elders, wishing that the old leaders of the proletarian revolution would live to a healthy old age. Importantly, at that closed meeting, Bo Yibo also called for the party to investigate the situation in order to determine on whose behalf Qian Chaoying had written.[22] In the contentious world of Beijing political reforms, Bo Yibo assumed that neither Qian Chaoying nor the *Shenzhen Youth Herald* was acting as an independent voice, but rather were acting on behalf of one of the young reformers in Beijing seeking to undermine the elders' power, most likely Hu Yaobang.

The opinion piece was published at a critical time in Chinese politics. General Party Secretary Hu Yaobang and Premier Zhao Ziyang, Deng's "right and left hands," were pushing for further political liberalization. Less than two months after the letter was published, students organized public protests in more than a dozen cities to support political and economic liberalization. The famous Chinese astrophysicist Fang Lizhi led the protests, calling for the introduction of political reforms that would ultimately end the single-party

system and the continuing use of government as an instrument of party policy. Two other intellectuals, Wang Ruowang and Liu Binyan, also led protests. It was rumored that Deng disliked Fang, Wang, and Liu, and that he directed Hu to dismiss them from the party, but Hu refused. In the fallout, Hu was forced into retirement because it was said he had been too lenient with student protestors.

The *Shenzhen Youth Herald* was also one of the victims of the 1987 crackdown. The newspaper was closed and Cao Changqing was banned for life from working in journalism. At the same time, Hu Yaobang was forced into retirement. Cao Changqing's inability to protect either himself or Qian Chaoying reminds us that the central government could and did take action within the SEZ. It also suggests that in years following Hu's dismissal during the 1987 crackdown, the stakes of daring to take political responsibility in Shenzhen escalated. Politically appropriate ways of figuring the state were being codified and ranked even as at the grassroots-level calls for more extensive political reforms were growing.

Building the Future at Shenzhen University

Both geographically and politically, the newly founded Shenzhen University was situated just between the foreign-investment-financed construction of the new city of Shenzhen and the social experiments going on in Shekou. Moreover, unlike Shenzhen and Shekou, Shenzhen University was explicitly a social institution, a designation that, in the political environment of Shenzhen in the 1980s, provided a protective umbrella for various social and political experimentations. Important also for the establishment of Shenzhen University as a social institution, Shenzhen University President Luo Zhengqi's political patron was General Secretary Hu Yaobang, who had explicitly called for a more liberal political environment. In his opening address for the 1987–88 academic year, for example, Shenzhen University President Luo Zhengqi provided a definition of the "Shenzhen Spirit" that glossed participation in the construction of buildings as the expression of self-sacrifice, patriotism, and the highest form of intellectual life: "Students, where have you come? This is a Special Zone . . . Now, you have come here as reinforcements for the brigade building the Special Zone, to supplement our Special Zone Construction team. From this day forward, you are the builders of the Special Zone."[23]

Moreover, the 1987 address clearly articulated the idea that there was more at stake in the construction of Shenzhen than simply economic adjustment. Instead, Luo Zhengqi went on to explain to those in the audience that the purpose of the special zone was to reinvigorate socialism by creating a new

kind of intellectual citizen: "Every year when new students arrive, the University offers each one of you four concepts, those concepts are: seek facts, become independent, tolerate diversity, and innovate . . . I just bumped into four students from the senior class of undergraduates and vocational students. They [told me] would rather go to a relatively poor work unit, in order to strive to work in a job that is truly challenging and risky. They'd rather go to a place with a low salary, instead of a high salary. I believe they have ideals. I feel that all Shenzhen University students should be like this."

The graduating students were starting their fifth year at Shenzhen University because there was no campus when they had been accepted to the university in 1983. Instead, there was a plot of land and a promise from Liang Xiang that Shenzhen City would finance the construction, pay staff salaries, and pay student tuitions for the new university—a total bill that, at the time, was more than Shenzhen's entire budget. An architect by training, Luo Zhengqi led a brigade of student workers to embark on a five-year course of study that included designing and building their own campus in addition to attending classes. Moreover, to promote new social-political values such as competition and responsibility, Luo Zhengqi organized students into work teams that developed plans for particular buildings and then presented their proposals to a jury made up of the university president and staff from the university's new school of architecture. The university body then worked together to realize the winning plan. In other words, the construction of Shenzhen University was a metaphor for rebuilding the Chinese nation through new values that would support a more technocratic and liberal government.

Deng endorsed the construction of Shenzhen University as a model for rebuilding the Chinese nation during his first Inspection Tour of Shenzhen. In 1984, when Deng's entourage passed the campus location (on the way from Shenzhen to Shekou), at first they did not believe that Shenzhen University had opened because, from the roadway, it was impossible to see the makeshift construction site, temporary housing, and plastic stools that constituted the classrooms within the lush lychee orchard. However, upon seeing the construction site campus, which had appeared over the course of one academic year, Deng reportedly remarked, "This is Shenzhen speed!" Indeed, upon graduation in June 1988, the students who entered the university in 1983 had actually designed and constructed a functioning campus complete with an office building, a classroom building, and a library. They had also designed and built staff housing, student dormitories, canteens, a student center, and a hotel, which was situated next to a lake and park area. Significantly, the campus layout reflected Luo Zhengqi's ideals. Unlike traditional Chinese campuses, Shenzhen University was not enclosed by a wall but open to everyone in

Shenzhen who could enter the campus without being checked in and, for example, use the library or enjoy a lakeside walk.

The construction of Shenzhen University by its own students, faculty, and president highlighted an important aspect of special zone heroism and new models for participating in national construction. The Shenzhen University model of intellectual citizens, like the Shenzhen and Shekou models of development, arose out of a symbiotic relationship between leader-heroes and their subordinates in the pursuit of practical goals—in this case, building a university. In turn, these goals were not only glossed in the political rhetoric of the Reform and Opening policy but also held up as evidence that the policy was successful. The case of the students who built their own university highlights two critical moments in the creation of special zone heroism: creative agency and post facto recognition by Beijing leaders. In other words, participation in the construction of the special zone was necessary but insufficient for the creation of heroes. It was also necessary that this participation received public commendation in the state-controlled media, which was (even as Luo Zhengqi spoke) being challenged by both the *Shenzhen Youth Herald* and the *Shekou Bulletin News*.

The experience of the students who built their own university also illuminates Shenzhen's symbolic place in ongoing political debates that were being waged in Beijing. Importantly, the students themselves—like construction company workers and, ultimately, Shenzhen leaders—did not determine the meaning and value of their work themselves. Instead, leaders in Beijing reserved the right to determine what did and did not constitute reform. And this is precisely why popular heroism could be defined as "daring to take responsibility"; it entailed making a grassroots reality politically viable.

David Graeber reminds us that society is an active project (or set of projects) in which "value is the way actions become meaningful to the actors by being placed in some larger social whole, real or imaginary."[24] In Shenzhen, the national Reform and Opening policy took the form of practical and measurable results, which ranged from productivity bonuses to campuses and rising GDP. These results became valuable (in Graeber's sense of the term) only to the extent that Beijing reformers ritually acknowledged them within the state-controlled media. In this system, one of the highest accolades was designation as a model—the goal to which all others would then strive to conform. "Reform" in Shenzhen depended upon post facto recognition by Beijing politicians, which made the actions of its leaders vulnerable to changing national political situations. Once-lauded "results," such as a building or accepting foreign investment, were always at risk of being turned around and

reinterpreted as "spiritual pollution" or "bourgeois liberalization," as they had been in the antireform campaigns of 1983 and 1987.

Unexpected Consequences

By 1987, the forced retirement of progressive reformer Hu Yaobang and the campaign against bourgeois liberalization indicated that national leaders disagreed to what extent Chinese society should be opened to Western ideas and, by extension, to what extent the party's rule could be challenged. Nevertheless, Shenzhen leaders continued to demonstrate their support for their subordinates' socially progressive actions. Until the 1989 crackdown, both progressives and conservatives used events in the special zone to make their cases for or against further kinds of political reform, respectively. Notably, in the aftermath of the 1989 crackdown, all three of the first-generation SEZ heroes tacitly sided with protestors in both Beijing and Shenzhen, where the university was a hub of prodemocracy activity. Consequently, their fall and subsequent punishments reiterated at a higher level the same process that had left Cao Changchun banned from Chinese journalism and Qian Chaoying a downplayed member of the Shenzhen University staff—their leader-patrons could not or refused to take responsibility for their actions.

Events leading to the 1989 democracy movement began in January 1988, when Li Yangjie, Qu Xiao, and Peng Qingyi of the National Youth Thought Education Research Center conducted an inspection tour of Shenzhen to understand the practical and ideological effects of the Reform and Opening policy on young people. As part of their tour of Shekou, the local branch of the Chinese Communist Party invited the three representatives to speak with a group of young workers. In most inspection tours at the time, exchanges between visiting dignitaries and local leaders and workers would have been tightly scripted and choreographed, with both leaders and workers giving rote answers to expected questions. Indeed, the event began with the leaders giving their opinions on "the party's correct decisions on the policy of Reform and Opening."

Instead of progressing as a ritualized performance of politically correct ideas, however, the exchange quickly escalated into a debate over the meaning of "prospectors" (*taojinzhe*), an explicit condemnation of people whose actions were motivated by the desire for individual self-interest rather than by patriotism or collective interests. The Shekou youths challenged the visitors' claim that an individual's desire for material goods was counterrevolutionary and would not help China modernize, making three interrelated

claims. First, they claimed that Shekou had not been built by patriots but by individuals who worked for wages. Second, the youths claimed that their experience had brought home the truth that the concrete and individualized practice of earning money was itself an expression of patriotism because their cumulative efforts improved society. Third, the youths also drew attention to the class inequalities that had already become apparent in Shekou. They emphasized that outside of monetary compensation, there was no reason to work in Shekou because living conditions in construction site shanties and factory dormitories were often lower than in work units in other cities.[25]

After the delegation returned to Beijing, one of the representatives, Guo Haiyan, wrote a document that analyzed the meeting in terms of "pedagogical norms," casting the Beijing representatives as teachers and the Shekou youth as disrespectful students. The *Shekou Bulletin* published a counteranalysis, arguing that pedagogical conversations between leaders and subordinates were outdated. To them, the country needed more debate between equals. Subsequently, this "Shekou Storm" became a national issue when an editor at *The People's Daily*, Zeng Xianbin, interviewed participants from the meeting. He published a transcript of those interviews that highlighted the diversity of opinions about the direction of reform. Importantly, the piece advocated the Shekou youths' second claim—that by working for wages and market incentives, individuals contributed to society in the aggregate.

Significantly, however, the article downplayed the emerging class issues that the Shekou youth had raised. This rhetorical move highlights the extent of and limits to reform in the SEZ. With respect to political reforms, Zeng Xianbin's emphasis on the political implications of the confrontation was consistent with Beijing's ongoing interpretation of events in Shenzhen as a manifestation of the Chinese polity. Moreover, events were interpreted as the effects of policy decisions. Nevertheless, Zeng Xianbin's article emphasized the kinds of social experimentation that had been taking place in Shekou, where the political field had been opened to include a wider public. In contrast to Beijing leaders' emphasis on obedience and order, Zeng Xianbin's article suggested that the rights, responsibilities, and limitations of leaders were at stake in the Shekou Storm—a controversial model of political reform. With respect to the limits of reform, however, by downplaying emergent forms of economic inequality, the article had removed capitalist exploitation from discussion within the political sphere; labor was represented as a choice, shifting responsibility for working conditions from the state or its representative work units to the individual. In this neoliberal model of work, individuals are exploited by their employers because they have chosen to take a job.

In his statement for the Zeng Xianbin article, China Merchants Shekou

Director Yuan Geng distanced himself from the other interviewees by ignoring the content of the meeting altogether. Instead, he addressed the structure of the meeting, a clear indication that he not only saw the political implications of the Shekou Storm but also understood his role as the one taking responsibility for the event and its fallout. First, Yuan Geng confirmed that in Shekou, where democratic discussion was becoming common, pedagogy as a model of public discourse had no truck with the youth. Second, he stressed that Shekou did not enforce "language crimes," further arguing that even if the youths had said incorrect things, the Chinese Constitution gave citizens the right to hold different opinions. As a leader in Shekou, he stated, it was his responsibility to provide such an environment rather than to enforce a correct line of thought. An editor at the *People's Daily* opined, "The so-called 'Shekou Storm' was not just an incident which happened on that tiny plot of land [Shekou]; it is actually related to or reflects an inevitable and nation-wide debate in the ideological sphere. This debate would have come about sooner or later anyway."[26]

The debate moved to Tiananmen Square in Beijing on April 5, 1989, when students gathered to mourn the passing of Hu Yaobang, who had supported all three Shenzhen heroes in their reforms of key areas of the Maoist system. Liang Xiang had worked to reform the Chinese state apparatus, Yuan Geng had challenged that system via its ministerial apparatus, and Luo Zhengqi had advocated a new model of intellectual citizen. Indeed, the youthful protagonists of the Shekou storm arguably embodied the new intellectual citizen that Luo Zhengqi saw as the product of a reformed pedagogy. Consequently, when Beijing students gathered in Tiananmen to mourn the passing of Hu Yaobang and stayed to protest corruption and call for democratic reforms, they did so against and within experimental political models that were being tested in Shenzhen. A month later, when Mikhail Gorbachev visited Beijing, the students were still protesting. The Soviet Union's leader increased the tension in the standoff between Beijing's leaders and students. Gorbachev's morning visit with Deng resulted in the announcement that relations between the Soviet Union and China were normal. His afternoon visit with Zhao Ziyang revealed the inner power structure in Beijing; although Zhao Ziyang was the general secretary of the CCP, Deng was still the head of state. Indeed, for his opposition to using the military to resolve the standoff between the students and central government, Zhao Ziyang was dismissed and placed under house arrest. On May 20, 1989, party authorities declared martial law and deployed more than 300,000 troops into Beijing.[27]

During the democracy protests and after the June Fourth crackdown, the three Special Zone heroes acted to protect their subordinates against the interests of their Beijing patrons. At the height of the democracy movement, for

example, Shenzhen University President Luo Zhengqi wrote a letter to Deng, calling on him to end the governmental impasse and to allow the politburo to exercise their constitutional power. He also demanded for an investigation of Premier Li Peng's abuses of power.[28] Liang Xiang had already transferred from Shenzhen to Hainan in 1986, and in the aftermath of the June fourth massacre, he allowed many of the protest leaders to leave the country by way of Hainan, including Zhao Ziyang's son, Zhao Erjun. Moreover, in Shekou, although Yuan Geng did not actively support the student movement, in the immediate postcrackdown years, China Merchants Shekou accepted the transfer of many intellectuals who—like Zhou Weimin a decade earlier—had been sent home to reflect on their mistakes and write self-criticisms. As a result of their actions, all three men were punished. Both Liang Xiang and Luo Zhengqi were expelled from the party and removed from their official positions. In Shekou, Yuan Geng's de facto position as the head of the Shekou government was revoked when the industrial zone was explicitly incorporated into the Shenzhen Municipality as a street office precinct of Nanshan District. Yuan Geng remained in his position as director and CEO of China Merchants Shekou but had no place in the newly established government apparatus.

Party Secretaries Instead of Heroes

In the years immediately following the 1989 crackdown, Shenzhen again provided Deng with a platform from which to secure his power base in Beijing. During his 1992 Inspection Tour, Deng visited Shenzhen's Guomao Building, which he declared had gone up in "Shenzhen Speed," with one story of the skyscraper built every three days. Moreover, in the revolving restaurant at the top of the building, he sat at a window that overlooked the booming city and reminded the country of the need to adhere to the line, principles, and policies instituted since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in December 1978.[29]

The key principle of the 1978 Plenary Session was "one center and two basic points," which referred to the central task of economic construction and the subordinate tasks of adhering to the Four Basic Principles and implementing the Reform and Opening policy.[30] The policies on economic growth reversed the Maoist position of "class struggle," advocating economic liberalization, a political move that had been presaged in the downplaying of class inequality during the Shekou Storm. The Four Basic Principles had given a clear indication that at stake in reform was not only making China rich and powerful but also doing so under the leadership of the CCP.[31] More important, post-1989

Shenzhen was no longer a special zone but rather a space of exceptional economic policies that were understood as permitted by the central government, specifically Deng himself. Thus, in the post-1989 era, the (sometimes) progressive laissez-faire governance of the three Special Zone "heroes" was coded in the state-controlled media as an explicit endorsement for economic development without concomitant political reform.

In the words of an early migrant to Shenzhen, the difference between the government during the 1980s and the government after Deng's 1992 Southern Tour could be described as the difference between "heroes" and party secretaries. On this long-term Shenzhen resident's reading, in contrast to the generation of Special Zone heroes who had taken political responsibility for the wellbeing of their subordinates and, by extension, worked for the wellbeing of the people, the new generation of party secretaries identified with their political patrons, taking responsibility for the political well-being of the party and their own bureaucratic careers. After Liang Xiang left Shenzhen, for example, Li Hao was appointed party secretary of Shenzhen, a position he held from May 1986 through April 1993. Li Hao's most pressing task was to create a more comprehensive municipal apparatus, including the integration of Shekou into the territorial administration of the Shenzhen municipal apparatus.[32] Li Hao laid the groundwork to transform the Shenzhen municipal apparatus from a two-tiered organization of weak links into a three-tiered system with a centralized municipal authority. His successor, Li Youwei, was responsible for further rationalizing the Shenzhen municipal apparatus based on this new structure, which included bringing rural organizations into the urban state. In turn, the state-controlled media began promoting the Shenzhen Municipality as the agent of economic reform, and the Shenzhen "Special Zone" no longer entered national discourse as a space and incubator of recognizable heroes who dared to work for political reform (through the rhetoric of social reform) but rather as an exemplar of successful party policy. Over the next decade, Shenzhen leaders acted to normalize party leadership of Shenzhen, strengthen a bureaucratic apparatus that could achieve this goal, and garner public legitimacy for Jiang Zemin, who had replaced Zhao Ziyang as the general secretary of the CCP.

In late 2012, more than twenty years after the "special decade" ended, Special Zone heroes and their accomplishments reappeared in national politics when the newly elected secretary general of the Chinese Communist Party, Xi Jinping, appropriated and redeployed Shenzhen Special Zone history to push forward anticorruption reforms. In his first speech as secretary general, Xi Jinping cited Yuan Geng, who had once said that "empty talk harms the nation, active work helps everyone." Subsequently, Xi Jinping's first trip as

secretary general was to Shenzhen, where his itinerary not only retraced key moments in Deng's historic 1984 and 1992 special zone inspection tours but also included visits to two key symbols of the new Shenzhen—the Qianhai Cooperative Zone and Tencent, the software and digital telecommunications company responsible for hugely successful Chinese social media platforms such as QQ and We Chat. Indeed, it is worth noting that although a Beijing leader had once again come to Shenzhen to promote the city as a national model, this time he recognized corporations and government ministries as "heroes" rather than actual cadres. One of the accomplishments of the early SEZ, for example, had been to redeploy the Cold War Sino-British border—the Bamboo Curtain—to allow for gradual integration of the Chinese national and the global capitalist economies. The new general secretary's tour of the Qianhai Cooperative Zone foregrounded the extent to which Shenzhen and Hong Kong had (at least at the level of social infrastructure) integrated their economies, creating a new form of southern Chinese society. Similarly, the tour of Tencent emphasized how special zone policies had flourished and transformed the economic landscape. Twenty years previously, Deng had celebrated compensatory trade practices. In explicit contrast, the visit to Tencent highlighted the emergence of entrepreneurial high-tech enterprises in Shenzhen. In fact, the visit to Tencent also reminded the country that although Shenzhen was home to many of China's largest privately held corporations, the central government still controlled technologies of social recognition and the production of national models.

During Xi Jinping's inspection tour of 2012, many of Shenzhen's residents privately remembered the other, earlier Shenzhen model. They remembered, for example, that during the 1984 tour, Deng had designated Shenzhen University and its discredited former president as the model of Shenzhen speed. This model emphasized the speedy construction of a new kind of society. In contrast, Deng's 1992 designation of Guomao as an exemplar of the effects of correct policy merely celebrated the rapid development of real estate. Xi Jinping's itinerary validated the 1992 Shenzhen model rather than its earlier form. Ironically (for some), by defying Beijing in the aftermath of the 1989 crackdown, Shenzhen's first generation of leaders transitioned from being state-sponsored heroes to popular local heroes—leaders who had embodied the potential of the state apparatus to truly represent the people. Thus, in Shenzhen, Xi Jinping's endorsement of the Shenzhen model prompted another flurry of calls for and speculation about the rehabilitation of both Liang Xiang and Luo Zhengqi in Shenzhen blogs and social media, as well as a concomitant return to the political values of the first Shenzhen model, when leaders dared to take responsibility and had the political clout to support

the independent decisions of their subordinates. Thus reconstituted in and against the current Shenzhen model, this latent, re-remembered Shenzhen model of early heroes and post-Mao heroism defined proper government in representative terms, emphasizing both economic opportunity and local self-determination.

Notes

1. This quotation is from Tang Tsou, "The Historic Change in Direction and Continuity with the Past," *China Quarterly* 98 (1984): 384. Chen Yun was one of the most influential leaders during the 1980s and 1990s. He contributed to the development of Deng's economic strategy and was more directly involved in its implementation than was Deng. For accounts of competing visions for post-Mao China, see David Bachman, "Differing Visions of China's Post-Mao Economy: The Ideas of Chen Yun, Deng, and Zhao Ziyang," *Asian Survey* 26, no. 3 (March 1986): 292–321. For an overview of Deng's role in the Reform and Opening policy, see especially Ezra Vogal, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011). For an account the Deng years by his successor, read the English version of "Jiang Zemin's Report at the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China," which has been reprinted online on the website of the Federation of American Scientists (http://www.fas.org/news/china/1997/970912-prc.htm).

2. In 1985, Liang Xiang resigned as Shenzhen mayor but he remained its party secretary until 1986.

3. My understanding of the "heroism" of the first generation of Shenzhen leaders is based on three sources of information: (1) my interview notes and research in Shenzhen, which has been ongoing since 1995; (2) published newspaper and online accounts of the history of early Shenzhen; and (3) recent biographies of Liang Xiang and Yuan Geng, which attribute the two leaders with foresight and daring. See especially Zhu Chongshan and Chen Rongguang, *Shenzhen Shizhang* [Shenzhen Mayor Liangxiang] (Guangzhou: Huacheng Publishers, 2011); and Tu Qiao, *Yuan Geng Zhua: Gaige Xianchang, 1978–1984* [The Yuan Geng Story: The Site of Reform, 1978–1984] (Beijing: Zuojia Publishers, 2008). In 2014, a group of civic-minded "old Shekou" residents established the Seminar on Yuan Geng's Ideals (Yuan Geng Lixiang Yanjiuhui). The group has organized several lectures and a birthday memorial for Yuan Geng. More importantly, it has served as an incubator for new social organizations in Shekou, including a community-funded trust that aims to promote community welfare and culture outside the direct purview of either a government or business.

4. See Mary Ann O'Donnell, "Path Breaking: Constructing Gendered Nationalism in the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone," *Positions: East Asian Culture(s) Critique* 7, no. 2 (Fall 1999): 343–75, for an account of the symbolic transformation of People's Liberation Army officers and foot soldiers into architects, engineers, and construction workers of reform. For an account of the gender of labor, see Ngai Pun, *Made in China: Women Factory Workers in a Global Workplace* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); and Ching Kwan Lee, *Gender and the South China Miracle: Two Worlds of Factory Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). For more on the gender of reform in this volume, see Wong, chapter 9; Florence, chapter 4; and Dong and Cheng, chapter 8.

5. Luo Zhengqi, interview with the author, November 3, 2012.

6. See Susan L. Shirk, *China—Fragile Superpower: How China's Internal Politics Could Derail Its Peaceful Rise* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), for a nuanced discussion of the role that inter-party politics have played in official policy. See also Tang Tsou, *The Cultural Revolution and Post-Mao Reforms: A Historical Perspective* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), for his Cold War–inflected analysis of interparty politics as a winner-take-all situation.

7. Fang Yuan, "The 'Huangque Xingdong' zeng Yingjiu Zhao Ziyang zhi Zi Zhao Erjun yi Jia" [The "Operation Sparrow" Saved Zhao Zeyang's Son, Zhao Erjun and His Family], *Da Ji Yuan* [Epoch Times], posted June 5, 2009, accessed February 27, 2016, http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/9/6/6/n2549694.htm.

8. Chen Yushan and Chen Shaojing, *Yuan Geng zhi Mi* [The Riddle of Yuan Geng] (Guangzhou: Huacheng Publishers, 2005), chapter 4, 108–54.

9. Wan Runnan, "*Da Dao Qing Tian: Luo Zhengqi de liang feng xin* [The High Moral Road: Luo Zhengqi's Two Letters]," essay uploaded to the Shenzhen University intranet, written in honor of Luo Zhengqi's seventy-eighth birthday, March 20, 2012, accessed May, 2012.

10. Promulgated in 1979, the contract responsibility system reduced the role of the state in production decisions and increased the scope of free-market forces and self-management in rural areas. Under the system, peasants were contracted to produce and sell certain quantities of commodities at low official prices to the state. They were then free to sell anything over the contracted amount on the free market. For the history of rural reform in north China, see the articles in Edward Friedman, Paul Pickowicz, and Mark Seldon, *Revolution, Resistance, and Reform in Village China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005). To understand the story in Guangdong, see Helen Siu, *Agents and Victims in South China: Accomplices in Rural Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989); and Anita Chan, *Chen Village: Revolution to Globalization*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009 [1984]). In 1981, a campaign was launched to extend the contract responsibility system to medium and large industrial enterprises. For discussions of the contract responsibility system, see Andrew G. Walder, *Zouping in Transition: The Process of Reform in Rural North China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Derong Chen, *Chinese Firms between Hierarchy and Market: The Contract Management Responsibility System in China* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995); and Anthony Y. Koo, "The Contract Responsibility System: Transition from a Planned to a Market Economy," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 38, no. 4 (1990): 797–820.

11. All Shenzhen statistics are available through the Shenzhen Government online website, http://www.sz.gov.cn/tjj/tjj/. Annual reports at http://www.sz.gov.cn/cn/xxgk/.

12. Liu Tianjiu was the CEO of Millie's Holdings, a company that produced women's shoes. His first investment in Shenzhen was formalized on June 16, 1979, when he signed a contract with the Shenzhen Food and Beverages Commission to develop the Bamboo Garden Hotel, which catered Hong Kong visitors who came seeking investment opportunities and gustatory pleasure. Early special zone food streets specialized in dog hot pot and wild game dishes that were unavailable across the border.

13. Li Jing, "Auction Fires First Shot for Land Reform," *Shenzhen Daily*, August 11, 2008, accessed January 2013, http://szdaily.sznews.com/html/2008-08/11/content_294973.htm.

14. From January 23, 1979, through June 17, 1980, Zhang Xunpun served as Shenzhen's party secretary and Gu Hua as mayor. Then, from June 17, 1980, through March 6, 1981, Wu Nansheng was appointed both party secretary and mayor. Nevertheless, Liang Xiang was recognized as the leader who decisively shaped early Shenzhen development and ethos.

15. "Ant theory" was Liang Xiang's most famous metaphor for the new economy, and he

was affectionately called the "ant mayor." On April 4, 2012, for example, the Shenzhen newspaper *Jingbao* published "Shenzhen Qinghuai: Tamen Zou le dan xuehan he linghun hai liu zai zheli [Shenzhen Sentiment: They've Left, but Their Blood, Sweat, and Spirit Remain Here]" by Jia Wenfeng, an article that combined nostalgia for Liang Xiang and an account of ant theory. See http://news.sznews.com/content/2012-04/04/content_6625284.htm.

16. *The General Planning of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone*, Shenzhen Municipal Government, 1986, p. 1.

17. See Weiwen Huang, chapter 3 in this volume.

18. Xu Luo discusses the importance of the Shekou model to post-Mao China in "The 'Shekou Storm': Changes in the Mentality of Chinese Youth Prior to Tiananmen," *China Quarterly*, no. 142 (June 1995): 541–72.

19. See Mason, chapter 10 in this volume.

20. Yuan Geng, "Shekou de Gaige Changshi Tansuo [Reform Attempts and Explorations in Shekou]," in Chen Yushan and Chen Shaojing, *Yuan Geng zhi Mi* [The Riddle of Yuan Geng] (Guangzhou: Huacheng Publishers, 2005), 289–94.

21. Ju Tianxiang, *Zhiyi yu Qishi: Yuan Geng zai Shekou Jishi* [Righteousness and Enlightenment: Records of Yuan Geng in Shekou] (Beijing: Zhongguo Qingnian Publishers, 1998), 223–24.

22. Yan Jiaqi, "Bo Yibo Zhongnanhai Fabiao Qinli Ji [Personal Recollections of Bo Yibo's Violence in Zhongnanhai]," published on Cao Changqing's News Blog, April 4, 2012, http://caochangqing.com/gb/newsdisp.php?News_ID=2782.

23. Luo Zhengqi, "1987 Opening Ceremony Address to Incoming Class of Shenzhen University," transcript uploaded to Shenzhen University intranet on October 19, 2008, by kevinlee, http://mcs.szu.edu.cn/Forum/49742.

24. David Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 254.

25. Xu, " 'Shekou Storm,' " 543–44.

26. Xu, " 'Shekou Storm,' " 545.

27. The Tiananmen crackdown, or June Fourth incident, is considered one of the pivotal moments in post-Mao Chinese society. Roderick Macfarquhar provides lucid analyses in "The Road to Tiananmen: Chinese Politics in the 1980s," in *The Politics of China: Sixty Years of the People's Republic of China* (Oxford: Cambridge University Press, 2011) chapter 5, 337–467. Richard Gordon and Carma Hinton's movie *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* (1995) and associated website (http://www.tsquare.tv) provide more direct access to the youthful leaders of the 1989 democracy movement.

28. Wan Runnan, "*Da Dao Qing Tian: Luo Zhengqi de liang feng xin* [The High Moral Road: Luo Zhengqi's Two Letters]," essay uploaded to the Shenzhen University intranet, written in honor of Luo Zhengqi's seventy-eighth birthday, March 20, 2012, accessed May 2012.

29. This was the meeting in which Deng first took explicit control over the party and government apparatus, promoting the need for economic and social liberalization.

30. Shenzhen Central Ministry of Information, *Deng Xiaoping and Shenzhen: Spring 1992 (Deng Xiaoping yu Shenzhen: Yi jiu jiu er Chun)* (Shenzhen: Haitian Publishing House, 1992).

31. Fang Lizhi, "The Real Deng," *New York Review of Books*, November 10, 2011, accessed electronically January 2013.

32. The inclusion of Shekou in the Guangdong self-governing commercial zone at the end of 2014 has raised both new questions and speculation about the continuing role of China

Merchants in social and political reform. Through its inclusion in the self-governing commercial zone, Shekou has been politically elevated to a position at least equal to that of the Shenzhen Municipality. Moreover, with its Shekou and Qianhai holdings, China Merchants is now the largest property holder in the self-governing commercial zone. At the time of this writing, no one I have spoken with knows what any of this will mean with respect to the practical politics of social reform.