

## Maoping

"Living" VHS from *Heart of the Dragon*  
Video DS799.23 .H42 1985 Tape 7

*Please think about and prepare no more than one of notes to help with class discussion!*

Maoping is in the Fuchun River basin in Zhejiang Province 浙江省, to the immediate south of Shanghai. In 1981, the last date for which statistics were available (the film was shot in 1982), income was average for rural China. This was up from 1976, the year when Mao Zedong died and the Cultural Revolution came to an end. As we'll read about in *Village China*, a whole set of factors contributed to higher agricultural output and higher real incomes (greater access to industrial goods was equivalent to farmers receiving a higher real price for rice). But note half of cash income in Maoping came from forestry, not rice cultivation, and there was a local factory (TVE, town and village enterprise).

*Google shows two "Maoping" villages in the region, but neither are directly on a river; I suspect a large reservoir may have covered up the film's Maoping.*

茆坪村 <http://maps.google.com/maps?q=29.6500,119.7100>

茅屏村 is west of the big reservoir 29.461780, 118.576984

The Household Responsibility System 大包干 was implemented in Maoping in 1981, with the allocation of about 0.6 mu (亩) or about 0.4 acres of land per household member, with a combination of good, medium and bad land scattered across non-contiguous fields. Families with small children received land, but lacked laborers; cash income was still from the forests. Hence young families were the poorest, while those with older, unmarried children (and hence also a wife/mother who no longer had to care for young children) were the best off: not news given our readings! Village members paid a modest tax per head; all grain was consumed in the village, in part because poor transportation prevented getting it to markets where it might sell for more. In addition, from the end of the Cultural Revolution each family had a private plot for vegetables. As of the time of the film, all clothes were hand-sewn in the village, and it otherwise had only a modest level of interaction with regional markets.

Maoping was the brigade headquarters (4 villages, 332 families, 10 production teams, 1300 people); this remnant of the commune system disappeared by the late 1980s. One team in the village specialized on bamboo, the rest rice. The bakelite plant and the power station were managed at the brigade level, not by Maoping, and the brigade controlled the revenue and the jobs. However, some of that revenue flowed to the villages. For example, while the school was run by Maoping, the brigade paid teachers' salaries and it ran the health clinic.

Points to ponder – a non-exclusive list!

1. Does the village appear "efficient"? (How can we define "efficient"?)
2. What is cash income? How can we measure the standard of living in Maoping?
3. Given better transportation, what might change?
4. What role politics in the local economy? Does it appear constructive, as of the time of the video?

*Reference: Alasdair Claire, **Heart of the Dragon**, Houghton Mifflin, 1984. DC 779.23 .C55 1985.*