Study Questions
On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People
by Mao Zedong

Introduction
What kinds of contradictions does Mao address? With which kind is he mainly concerned here?

1). Two Different Types of Contradictions
 ¶1. What is the general state of China? What are the guarantees of the triumph of socialism? What two types of contradictions exist?
 ¶2 From what distinction do the two different types of contradictions arise? On what do the concepts of “the people” and “the enemy” depend? What examples does Mao give? How do the concepts of “the people” and “the enemy” depend on circumstances?
 ¶3 How do contradictions with the enemy differ from those among the people? What is the relation of the exploited to the exploiters? On what does the content of contradictions among the people depend? What are the general contradictions among the people? What is the relation of the government to the people? What are the contradictions between the government and the people? What underlies these contradictions?
 ¶4-5 What is the relation “by and large” to the national bourgeoisie? What are the dialectics and the development of this relation? What is the role of antagonism, and its different aspects? By what different methods, and having what different aspects, are the different types of contradictions resolved?
 Pp.6-7 What are the functions and aspects of the people’s deb Who is under dictatorship? Who exercises dictatorship? How are law-breakers distinguished from enemies? What applies among the people, and how? What aspects of the worker-peasant alliance does Mao discuss? How do socialist freedom and democracy differ from anarchy?
 ¶8 Why did something similar to the Hungarian events not happen in China? Why did the Hungarian events occur and what were the consequences? Why was there wavering in China? What is the objective character of parliamentary democracy? What is the condition of existence of freedom and democracy? What are their class dialectics? What error do people make who treat their freedom and democracy in the abstract? What do these things serve, in the final analysis? What are the dialectics of socialist democracy? How does this relate to the understanding of the people?
 ¶9 What is required for freedom and democracy under socialism? What is excluded? What kinds of questions cannot be settled by coercion? What methods
are needed in ideological matters? What is the role of orders of an obligatory nature? What is the administrative relation of persuasion and orders?

¶10 What formula was used in 1942 to resolve contradictions? What questions was it used to resolve, and against what incorrect method? What were the results? How did the formula, “unity, criticism, unity” originate? What was the scope of its use in 1942? How did its use in 1942 differ from its earlier use? What was its use after liberation?

¶11 How is it possible for antagonisms to arise? What is the usual scope? Why? Of what were the Hungarian events the product? What features does Mao mention?

¶12-14 Is the democratic method new? What are the different methods of resolving contradictions? What examples does Mao give? Why did some people think that the democratic method was new? How did confusion of the different methods arise in the past? How were mistakes kept within bounds?

¶15-16 What is the fundamental law of the universe? How wide is its scope? What makes things move and change? How do contradictions differ? How does the unity of opposites differ from the struggle of opposites? How does Mao present the difference between the acceptance and the application of this law? What is its role in socialism? How do contradictions in socialist society differ from those in capitalist society? How is their resolution different and why?

¶17-18 What are the basic contradictions of socialist society? How do they compare with those of the old societies? How does Mao argue for the superiority of socialism? How was the question of China’s path of development answered? What limitations did the system of socialism have? What problems remained to be resolved? What two sectors of the economy does Mao mention, and what problem? What relations of harmony and contradiction does Mao mention? What is the superstructure and what elements of it conflicted with the economic base? What particular new problem arises? What aspects of economic planning does Mao discuss? What is their process? What is a mistake? What is the scope of contradictions in socialism?

¶19 What changes had taken place in the class struggle? What question of class struggle remain, and why? How are these problems to be overcome? What conclusions does Mao draw?

II). Suppression of Counter-Revolutionaries

¶1-2 What is the character of contradictions with counter-revolutionaries? What is the right error on this question? What is the “left” error? How does Mao assess the suppression of counter-revolutionaries in China?

¶3 To what was the consolidation of the state primarily due? What factors strengthened the Chinese state? Were these sufficient? What strata of the people does Mao mention in his assessment?
4-6 Why were some counter-revolutionaries sentenced to death after liberation? What changes took place after 1956? Why? What error did some people make due to changes? What mistakes were made in the work of suppressing counter-revolutionaries? What was the line in this work? Why? What steps of correction and review did Mao propose? What attitude needed to be taken toward this work?

7 How many counter-revolutionaries remained? What error on this point does Mao criticize? What course does he propose instead? Where were the counter-revolutionaries coming from? What are Mao’s conclusions?

III). Agricultural Cooperation

1 What contradiction did agricultural cooperatives solve? What is the situation of the cooperatives? What main question arose and how does Mao address it? What are his conclusions?

2-4 What aspects of development does Mao mention about the co-ops? Who took what attitudes toward them? Why? What were the consequences? How long does Mao think it will take to settle the question of the co-ops, and how?

5 What contradictions remained to be resolved? What problems of production and planning does Mao mention? What problems arise on the side of distribution? How is accumulation to be governed?

6 In what sense did the peasants lead a “hard” life? In what sense is the term not true? Why? What are the effects on production and distribution? Why is the average income comparison of workers and peasants wrong? What problems does Mao point out?

IV. Industrialists and Merchants

1-2 What transformation occurred in 1956? Why did it go smoothly? Was the class struggle resolved? What incorrect opinions on the national bourgeoisie were heard? How does Mao treat the question of the remolding of the working class? What does the working class remold? How? By what example does Mao support his argument?

3-4 What two sides of China’s national bourgeoisie does Mao note? How do they differ from the working class? How long does Mao expect this condition to last? What task does the national bourgeoisie have? What do most of the merchants and industrialists want? By what means are they to be remolded? How is the remolding to proceed? What are some of the results?

V). Intellectuals

1-3 Where do contradictions with the intellectuals fit in? How did they receive Marxism and socialism? How many intellectuals does China need? What attitude does Mao recommend and to what end? What shortcomings does he note?
¶ 4 What is the condition of the intellectuals? What are their tasks? What is the nature of the change they have to make and where are they with it? What approaches does Mao mention? What made it possible for the intellectuals to change? What criteria does Mao recommend?

¶ 5 What was the status of ideological work among students and intellectuals? What are the trends? How should the problems be met? In what areas should students and intellectuals study? Why? How does Mao assess past efforts at ideological remolding? What is the goal of educational policy? What educational goals are mentioned? To what end? What unrealistic thinking does Mao criticize?

VI). Minority Nationalities

What is the key to good relations between the Han people and the minority nationalities? What other problems are there? Describe the situation as related by Mao. What results of the people’s efforts were to be seen? What is the status of Tibet? What is the content of the 17-point agreement? What was the outlook?

Note 5: How did the democratic reforms come about?

VII). What is Meant by Overall Planning?

“Why do we make a point of this?” What is the “small circle” mentality? What is wrong with it? On what basis is it to be overcome? What contradiction arises? By what guiding principle is this problem to be overcome? What problems does Mao mention in which this principle holds sway? How are these problems to be approached? What approach is ruled out? How are problems to be approached outside the scope of government? What is the role of the Party?

VIII). On “Let a Hundred Flowers Blossom” . . .

¶ 1 What two slogans does Mao mention? How were they put forward? On what basis? Why should “one hundred flowers blossom and one hundred schools of thought contend”? What errors should be avoided? How should questions in the arts and sciences be settled? What does history show? What is superior in this respect in socialist society? What problems arise nonetheless?

¶ 2 How has Marxism developed? What is the state of affairs in different parts of the world? How does Mao summarize the conditions in China? What is the state of the class struggle? What is the outlook? What are the conditions for the development of Marxism and what is the basis? What is the law of development of the truth?

¶ 3 Why does Mao say that it will take a fairly long time to decide the ideological struggle in China? What consequences would follow from misunderstanding this? How does ideological struggle differ? Why is socialism in an advantageous position? What is the status of the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals?
4-5 Can Marxism be criticized? Who criticizes it? Why? How should Marxists take criticism? What is the value of fighting wrong ideas? What will be a result of carrying out the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom? Does this policy apply to counter-revolutionaries? Will the same methods suffice among the people? Why not? How must correct ideas really be fostered?

6-7 What is to be expected of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie ideologically? How should the Party respond? What hypothetical errors does Mao criticize? What methods must be used? What distinctions must be made? Among whom? What error is more dangerous than dogmatism? How do revisionists attack dogmatism? What are the aims of the revisionists? With what aims and with what forces do the revisionists unite?

8 How does Mao treat the class content of the two slogans? What point of view is to be taken up? In what context? On what basis? What are his six criteria?

9-10 What are the most important of Mao’s six criteria? Why are they put forth? How is discussion to be conducted? What is the nature of the criteria? Are they all-inclusive?

11-13 How did the slogan of “long-term coexistence and mutual supervision” come about? Why should the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois democratic parties be allowed to exist side by side with the party of the working class over a long period of time? How does Mao treat the political basis for long-term coexistence? What are the conditions for the long-term existence of the non-proletarian parties? How is this reflected in mutual supervision? Why should the democratic parties be allowed to exercise supervision over the Communist Party? From where does the main supervision of the Communist Party come? When does the exchange of advice and criticism play a positive role?

IX). On the Question of Disturbances Created by Small Numbers of People

1-2 What were the various causes of the Chinese disturbances of 1956? What were the main causes? What problems among the masses must be addressed, and how?

3-4 Why does the Party disapprove of disturbances? Does this mean that there will be no disturbances? How must the causes of disturbances be rooted out? What responses should be made in those cases where disturbances occur? What positive use can be made of disturbances? What should be done in cases of those who willfully break the laws? What is the mass line in these cases?

X) Can Bad Things Be Turned into Good Things?

1-2 How does Mao speak of turning bad things into good things in the cases of disturbances? How did this apply to Hungary?

3-5 To what “world-wide campaign against communism and the people” does
Mao refer? What positive aspects emerged? How does Mao sum his observations up? Was he the first to think along these lines? What historical episode does he cite? What is the attitude of the Communists toward a third world war? How does Mao look at World War I and World War II? What will happen if the imperialists launch a third world war?

¶6 What is essential when one aspect of a contradiction transforms itself into its opposite? How does this apply to the class struggle? To international relations? What is decisive in these struggles?

XI) On Practicing Economy
What contradiction does Mao mention in connection with practicing economy? What is one way to resolve it? What earlier efforts at practicing economy does he cite? What was the earlier condition overall and what proposal does Mao put forth? What is needed as the mainstay of the economy, and why? What else must be done? How must the current campaign be conducted and by what means? Who must strive for economy? Why is this of prime importance politically? What is one way that Mao proposes to overcome the bad tendency? What very great contradiction must be borne in mind, and by whom? How is this contradiction to be resolved?

XII) China's Path to Industrialization
¶1-2 With what is Mao principally concerned here? What basic relation does he state? What are the relations between industry and agriculture? How do light and heavy industry compare in this respect? What will make the relation between heavy industry and agriculture clearer? What are the aims of the Second and Third Five Year Plans? How does all of this reflect on the pace of industrialization? What targets does Mao set?

¶3-5 How does Mao compare economic construction with revolutionary struggle? What must the Communists demand of themselves now? What contradiction must therefore be resolved and how? What contradiction among the people does this reflect? What is the task here of Communists? What must China learn from the Soviet Union? What has the Soviet Union done for China? Who else helped China? From whom must China learn? What is the main thing? What are the two different attitudes toward learning from others and how does Mao assess them? With whom must China strengthen solidarity? Why? What sides are there to relations with imperialist countries?