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China: Information on the likelihood or probability of someone getting a rural *hukou* if he/she has an urban *hukou* , or has an urban *hukou* but previously had a rural *hukou*

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

A 2000 paper entitled *Reform of the Hukou System and Rural-Urban Migration in China: The Challenges Ahead* , written by a professor at the Department of Geography and Resource Management, Chinese University of Hong Kong, while discussing the emergence of new types of urban *hukous* in China in the mid-1980s and early 1990s, stated that these new urban *hukous* were "provisional and non-transferable," and that those who were granted these "temporary" urban *hukous* were required to revert to their original *hukou* status upon moving out of their urban registration area (Zhang 2000, 11-12, 33). The same report mentioned that, prior to the reforms of the *hukou* system in the early 1980s, some cadres and intellectuals, along with their families, were stripped of their non-agricultural *hukou* status for political reasons (ibid., 33). The author added, however, that in the reform era, these people have had their non-agricultural *hukou* status restored (ibid.).

A 1999 paper entitled *The Hukou System and Rural-Urban Migration in China: Processes and Changes* , co-authored by a professor at the Department of Geography, University of Washington, stated that a person who committed a serious crime might be stripped of his or her non-agricultural *hukou* (Chan and Zhang 1999, 7).

In 8 December 2004 correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, a doctoral student at the Institute for International Studies, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia, whose research interests are in the areas of migration, citizenship, social policy and social change in China, stated that some Chinese families prefer to keep a rural registration in order to keep their land.

In 21 December 2004 correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, a professor of geography at the Hong Kong Baptist University provided the following information:

[M]y understanding is that it is much easier to convert from an urban *hukou* to a rural one than from a rural to an urban *hukou* . But in any case the conversion has to come with migration (such as during the "up the mountain and down the country" movement of the 1960s when tens of millions of educated youths were sent to the countryside for "re-education"), or with the

resumption of rural land by the given city government. Recently, many cities (and in fact the entire province) have done away [with] the distinction between urban and rural *hukou* in order to facilitate urban expansion and do away with the so-called villages-in-cities that scatter in the former rural-urban fringe.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection.

References

Chan, Kam Wing and Li Zhang. 1999. *The Hukou System and Rural-Urban Migration in China: Processes and Changes* .
<<http://csde.washington.edu/downloads/98-13.pdf>> [Accessed 21 Dec. 2004]

Doctoral student, Institute for International Studies, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia. 8 December 2004. Correspondence.

Professor of geography, Hong Kong Baptist University. 21 December 2004. Correspondence.

Zhang, Li. 2000. *Reform of the Hukou System and Rural-Urban Migration in China: The Challenges Ahead* .
<<http://mumford.albany.edu/chinanet/conferences/Zhang.doc>> [Accessed 20 Dec. 2004]

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