《Summary》
Rural Migrant Workers and their Lives in the Cities in Pearl River Delta, Guandong, China

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Anyone can easily recognize “ghettos” surrounded by high-rise buildings in Guangzhou from the sky (or Google Earth). They are called “Inner-city villages”. They are mostly occupied by migrant workers from the countryside. They moved from rural villages to “urban villages”. Those rural migrants are foreigners in their own country because they don’t have urban “hukou”, or “residential registration”, of the host city.

China created the rural-urban dual hukou system in 1958. It reflected Chinese socio-economic situation. In 1978, the European style industrialization started with the market reform. The hallmark of the new era is the breaking down of the rural-urban barrier to allow the free movement of labor. Even though the cities now rely on the massive number of migrant workers to function, the migrants have been denied access to some of the most prized public services and benefits, such as public schools, public medical insurance, and subsidized housing, etc.

There is a serious inequality in access to educational resources between children. The urban kids and the migrant kids in the same city
would grow up in two very different worlds by the two-tiered school system.

In a rural township in Guandong province, there was an interesting banner made by the local government which said “Come on, let’s go back home to work”. That suggests for rural migrants that they are homeless in both communities.

The speaker also made some suggestions on those issues above.