

PERSONAL DATA

Age: 21

Sex: Male

Education: lower middle school graduate

Total Years Relevant Experience: 5

Last Year of Relevant Experience: 1979

Year Left China: 1979

Initial Immigration Status: Legal

Native Place/Overseas Connections: Canton native/OS ties unknown

Class Background/Political Designation: unknown

OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY SUMMARY

Positions Held: 1) Coal Transport Team, Canton Municipal Transport Company
a) Transport worker, 1975-77
b) Messenger, Personnel Department, 1977-79

Administrative Level of Work Unit/(No. of employees):

1) Municipal/(240)

APPOINTMENTS: 1

TOTAL HOURS: 2

PAGES TEXT: 3

Occupational History (5/7/80, 2 hrs.)

He graduated from middle school in 1975 at the age of 16. He was then assigned to the Coal Transport Team of the Canton Municipal Transportation Company (yunshu gongsi). During the first two years he was a transport worker, and received apprentice wages. In 1977 he was transferred to work in the coal transport team's personnel department. He was a 'diaodong yuan', which meant that he was in the office and was at the disposal of the leaders in his unit to run to the company offices to get signatures on papers, to do errands, to help straighten out problems at sites. They didn't do much work normally, because there just wasn't much to do. Usually they played cards, chess, read books, listened to the radio. It was an easy job, and he hadn't worked at manual labor for 2 years, before he asked his friend to help him leave China. His friend's father was the head of another company in town. So he asked his friend if he could possibly help. His friend asked his father, who asked the personnel department people to dinner, etc., and it was finally arranged. This kind of thing was pretty common--'human relationships' (renqing), or a form of going through the back door (zou houmen).

This kind of practice influenced everything, including raises, bonuses, promotions. There is always a provision for 'ideological thinking', 'attitude', etc., for these kinds of considerations to slip in. There are two sayings for this in China: "human relationships are bigger than certificates" (renqing dayu zhengming), and "one home village is worth three chops" (yige laoxiang dengyu sange tuzhang). He says these sayings very accurate.

He did this kind of work for about 2 years, then came to Hong Kong legally in 1979.

Wages

When he first started, he was an apprentice and got 20¥, during the second year it was 34.5¥, because he became a grade 1 worker. Some lines of work have 3 year apprenticeships, his only had one. In 1977, he was raised to grade 2, 44¥. Part of the reason for being raised so quickly was guanxi, his friend's father. Also, he had worked just long enough to qualify, and hadn't gotten into any trouble, showed up for work regularly. He had these wages when he left.

Bonuses

There were no bonuses when he started working. After the Gang of 4, they had them. At the beginning, they had bonuses of 7, 5, and 3¥. But they cancelled them shortly thereafter, because they were too large. They have instituted in transport sections a bonus for groups which overfulfill their transport tonnage. Then within the groups they will assess each worker according to work contribution, attendance at political study, thought, etc., and then split into three grades. Every time they assessed for bonuses, there would be at least one or 2 workers who would begin to argue. This was natural.

Work Discipline and Punishments

No one was ever fired in his team, for any reason, during his four years there. But they did have punishments (chufen). They would mention someone's name at a large meeting, and proceed to criticize him. They could lower wages a bit. The units just didn't have the power to fire people or to take away their wages. But if someone got into political trouble or if they were sent away to labor reform, this was equivalent to being fired.

They had people who received this kind of punishment. It was fairly common to be punished for trying to sneak off to Hong Kong, for illicit sexual relations, and for stealing goods. But the latter was not too prevalent--who would want to steal coal? These weren't always things you could get fired for, but it was possible. Then a mark goes down on your file, and it is difficult to find a good job later--you become somebody who is not welcomed.

Work activism: workers would listen to orders all right, but they would take their time following them, and would not take the initiative to do things unless they received a direct order. For example, in his unit, there were goods that had to be kept out of the rain. But workers would not voluntarily begin to move things out of the rain unless you came and ordered them to.

The Coal Transport Team

His team under the transportation company was responsible for moving all wood and coal in Canton City. There were about 240 people working in the team. There were no real fixed internal divisions of labor--work assignments were arranged each day on a very flexible basis, and you didn't know what your assignment would be until you got to work.

He describes the leadership of the team as not really having much power. If they had any important matter or decision to approve, they had to just send it up to the higher levels. Their hands were tied, and they had to go through a series of approvals before things can go through. Much of his work in the office was of this nature--processing signatures-- so he is very aware of the complex of approvals necessary for ordering materials, getting repairs, etc.

The top leader was the team leader (duizhang), and there were also 2 assistant team leaders. These leaders were appointed from the company level, but were all from among the workers in the team. Otherwise, the workers would not listen to them. When they made work assignments each morning, each group of workers would have one of them appointed a 'temporary group leader', but they had no real power.

These team leaders were all party members. They gave assignments to workers directly. There were no other cadres. They do all the leadership work. The paperwork, calculations, etc., all go on at the company level, where there was also a revolutionary committee. At the company level, where he also worked, they had about 200 plus staff, equal to the size of a team. They were divided into departments like a factory headquarters is. There was no branch party committee in the team, but in the company. The team's party leadership was in a party small group (dang lingdao xiaozu), that oversaw production, and all the team leaders were members.

Factionalism

There were of course problems left over from before the CR, some left-over factionalism. Not out in the open, but hidden. People would not be very friendly to one another, or would basically ignore one another and just handle their jobs. For example, one leader struggles another, but after a few years the old cadre comes back and has an even higher office. They don't get along well, and sometimes will do lots of small hidden things to get back at one another.

There is another kind of factionalism. People who just look out for their own interests and ignore those of everyone else. This is very common.

Political Movements

The biggest one during his four years was right before he left: "grasp firmly rehabilitation work", and "seriously punish those who have committed crimes". They punished two types of people. Those who had committed crimes during the CR. Those who were counter-revolutionary--dissatisfied with socialism. This meant talking with foreigners, saying bad things about China. You would then be given a counter-revolutionary label. Otherwise, they pulled out the files on all the people in the unit, to see whether or not their cases had been disposed of properly.