
PERSONAL DATA

Age: 40

Sex: Male

Education: Technical college graduate (industrial chemistry)

Total Years Relevant Experience: 14

Last Year of Relevant Experience: 1976 Year Left China: 1976

Initial Immigration Status: Legal

Native Place/Overseas Connections: Thailand OS, returned 1950s

Class Background/Political Designation: OS

OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY SUMMARY

Positions Held: 1) Staff technician, Production Department, Cement Factory,
Fujian, 1963-66

2) Staff technician, Production Department, Candy Factory,
Fujian, 1968-70

3) Statistician, Production Office, Construction Company,
Fujian, 1970-76

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

- 1) County/(1000)
- 2) County/(300)
- 3) probably County/(1000)

Experience in Full-time Manual Labor (for non-worker occupations):

agricultural labor, 1967-68

APPOINTMENTS: 2

TOTAL HOURS: 5.5

PAGES TEXT: 6

Occupational History (6/26/80, 2.5 hrs.)

The informant was born in Thailand, an overseas Chinese with roots in Fujian. He returned to China in the 1950s. He graduated from a higher level technical school (dazhuan) after three years of post-middle school study, and was assigned to the production department in a Cement factory under county administration in southern Fujian in 1963. The plant had a little over 1000 employees. He worked there until 1966, when he was sent to a farm for two years. In 1968, he was sent to a production department in a candy factory, also under county administration, which had over 300 employees. He worked there for two years. From 1970-75 he worked as a statistician in the production office of a construction company, but was not a leading person, just ordinary staff. This company had around 1000+ employees. He came out legally in 1976.

He studied industrial chemistry in technical school, but they had closed many plants during the early 1960s so he was not assigned to a chemical plant. In the first two factories he was a vice department head, while in the third he was an ordinary staff member. This was because at that time they looked down on overseas Chinese and didn't want them to be in leadership positions.

Wages

After graduation from his local higher technical school, he had one year of practicum at 40+¥. After one year, he was made regular (zhuanzheng) and raised to 50+¥. At that time, depending on the work they assigned to you, you are given either a technical grade or administrative grade. This is a 15 or 16 grade scale for technical cadres and a 24 or 25 grade scale for administrative cadres. He was given an administrative grade and it did not change once until he left in 1976.

There were two wage readjustments while he was working in China. One was around 1964, the other around 1972. In 1964, you had to have good work and good political thought as displayed during campaigns and political study. They had a condition for technical proficiency at each grade level, but no tests, just appraisals in groups. They also assessed work activism and attendance, and activism in campaigns and study. They held a mass meeting first to announce the wage readjustment. Then they broke up into their small groups, discuss all the conditions and what they mean, and they then have nominations and discussions. Then a name list is prepared. They discuss each nominee's qualifications, and ask for objections. If there are objections, different opinions, they then discuss them. But they usually abide by the majority opinion. Finally a name list is drawn up according to a fixed percentage. Then the list moves up to the shop, then to the plant leadership for discussions about the names on the list. The lists are modified somewhat. Then the county administration gives final permission and they gave the raises. The process was democratic, but centralized.

In 1972, the conditions were different. It was entirely according to years of service and whether or not you still had low wages. Only those with low wages were raised to either grades 2 or 3, depending on your years of service.

Bonuses

Before the CR, there basically were no bonuses in his plants. But they did have comparison and assessment meetings for outstanding workers (pingbi). These were appraisals for advanced worker awards. They did this

each quarter, and the winners got material rewards--clothing, a small amount of money. After the cultural revolution they still had appraisals for advanced workers each quarter, but there were no material prizes. They just gave you a certificate, publicized you and told others to learn from you, and allowed you to give talks to other workers.

Skilled Workers

Skilled workers (jishu gongren) were the electricians, welders, repairmen, machine operators, etc. They do different jobs from ordinary workers. But ordinary workers can do any kind of work, while technical workers are specialized. For the same grade, technical workers get different wages, slightly higher than the ordinary worker. The skilled workers either go through apprenticeship periods or come from technical schools. The ordinary workers do not go through an apprenticeship period. The proportion of skilled workers in the workforce depends on the type of production in the factory.

While skilled workers are specialized, they can be switched to other kinds of work according to needs. But this is not common. They usually switch other ordinary (putong) workers to fill vacancies in workshops. It is also possible for good, reliable ordinary workers to be pulled out for training as electricians along with a master electrician or other skilled master. But this is informal and not a real apprenticeship period. They just trained more skilled workers as they needed them.

Whether you became a skilled or regular worker is not defined by any clear regulations, often it just depends on opportunities that you come across for training once you enter a factory. Graduates of middle school level technical schools are not to become ordinary workers. They are mostly technicians, but some also become skilled workers.

Temporary and Contract Workers

There are differences between temporary and contract workers. Temporary workers are short term, just for special projects. Contract workers are for larger periods of over a year. They make up for the lack of permanent workers assigned in the state plan. Temporary workers come from towns and cities, and the residents committees arrange for workers based on their registration rolls. Contract workers usually come from the countryside, because there are too many people for the work to be done in the countryside. But there are also contract workers from the cities. When the contract is in effect, they cannot fire them unless their work is very bad. Normally they will just wait until the contract expires and not renew it if there is a problem.

During the cultural revolution they had contract workers in the plant for a long time because the upper levels stopped arranging labor assignments and they continued to need them. They always had temporary and contract workers, but in 1972 they gave all temporary and contract workers who had been in the plant from before the CR a change in status to permanent. But they continued to invite new temporary and contract workers in after the cultural revolution too.

These temporary and contract workers do all kinds of work--ordinary manual labor as well as skilled work. This depends on their skills and the needs of the plant. But generally they do ordinary work. They also tend to do harder kinds of labor because the permanent workers are a little older and they like to treat them better. Depending on the leader's assessment of a contract or temporary worker's skill level and performance, they can receive 1.3, 1.4, or 1.5 ¥ a day. They get sick leave with 50% pay. They get accident insurance, paid medicine, during periods when they are

working. Their treatment in these respects is slightly below that of permanent workers. Their dependents do not get medical expenses like the permanent workers do.

Discipline and Punishment (6/27/80, 3 hrs.)

If there is a problem with someone's work, or fighting, arguing, they will first try to solve the problem within the group, in meetings, and the group leader will mediate. They are to recognize their errors and write a self-criticism. At the same time the incident is reported to the shop leadership. If they can't solve the problem, it goes up to the shop leadership. If the shop can't solve it, then it might go up to the security department (this is for things like fighting).

For failing repeatedly to finish quotas, they will also try to solve the problem by educating in the meetings. If you can't solve it right away, then they have criticisms in the group. If it still doesn't work, they can have a larger criticism meeting, and the whole affair will be recorded in the person's file. He has to write a self-criticism. This is a fairly serious repudiation.

The most serious punishment depends on whether or not it is an enemy-people contradiction. Whether it is an enemy-people contradiction depends on political currents at the time. If this is the case, you can be declared a counter-revolutionary and expelled from the plant, and all this is handled by the security department, which will send people to labor reform. For 'internal' contradictions among the people, there are two types of warning--'oral' and 'written'. The written are more serious, and they are placed in one's file. After this, depending on the seriousness of the offense, you can lower a person's wage grade or can dock wages. You can also put a person under 'supervision' (jiandu), which means he must report all his movements at regular intervals to the security department, for a period that can range from 2 to six months. This also means he will be given difficult manual labor to do in the shops. The final thing for serious offenses is expulsion. All this is for things like arguing, causing accidents, poor work, illicit sexual behavior.

Criticism and education in small groups is fairly common. Criticism at mass meetings or manual labor under supervision is more rare. Most common is the education-criticism method in the small group. There were only a handful of expulsions in his years in the factories. The most common reason was for illicit sexual relations. Also some corruption, and there were some who were expelled because of work behavior. But this was not for bad work, but for cursing at leaders, fighting with coworkers, and not wanting to participate in mass campaigns. In all, less than 10 or so. After being expelled, people returned to wherever they came from--city neighborhood or village.

Worker Motivation: Generally workers broke down into three groups--advanced, middling, and backward. The backward ones were the lazy ones who didn't fulfill quotas, or who had ideological problems, and didn't listen to party leadership. This last group would be criticized anonymously in group meetings--a way of giving a warning. Of course, the definition of the three groups depended on how severe the leadership was. Some factories had leaders who didn't dare criticize workers because they didn't want to risk workers having a bad opinion of them. They didn't want to destroy their ganging, or feelings of good will, with them. Other leaders were more severe and criticized workers more actively.

Production Department in the Cement Factory

The general task is to handle the production of the plant. This includes planning, labor assignments, finance, technology, all together, because this was a fairly small plant. His plant only had administration, production, security, political, and supply and sales departments. So the functions were combined, especially in the production department.

His department had one department head and one vice-head. Also a finance officer, a cashier, 2 technicians, and one statistician. The informant was the vice-head. He handled oversight of the entire production process. He continually went to each shop to find out the situation, help solve problems. He tells the shop directors to use certain kinds of methods to solve problems. The most common problem was not meeting the monthly or weekly plans.

The department head handled all matters, but largely concentrated on political work, handling movements and political study. But there was no clear division of labor with the vice-head. This man was almost always a party member, and usually was a member of the plant party committee. In his plant, this man was an old pre-liberation CCP cadre, as were many other of the department heads.

Planning and Plan Fulfillment

After receiving the yearly plan responsibility, the production department first divides the plan into quarterly and monthly targets, and also divides them up into shops and group. At each step in the process, meetings are held at each level among the leadership and the allocation of targets to each subunit is discussed by the leaders concerned. This takes place at the beginning and end of every month. First of the month to allocate targets, at the end of the month to sum up completion. The production department divides targets up to the shop level. The shops divide down to the small group level. And the small groups divide right down to individual quotas.

Once these are set, they change from time to time during the year. If there are accidents, shortages, or other problems, and the targets for a month can't be completed, this is discussed and analyzed at the end of the month. They decide what problem prevented plan completion. Then they immediately turn to make plans for the next month. These were adjusted and increased if there was a shortfall the previous month.

So production is generally lax at the beginning of the year, and at the beginning of each month. At the end of each month, production is busier, and at the end of the year things are also very busy. This is because they are trying to finish the plan. The main method for having work speed up during these periods was to have leading cadres go down to the shops for manual labor and work alongside the workers. On the one hand, this was in order for the cadres to experience manual labor, but there was also an aspect of 'inspection' about it. Workers worked harder when the top leaders were right there in their shop. They were somewhat afraid of them because they had power, and might criticize them. But also, the workers wanted to be sure the leaders had a good impression of them. so that they would have a good chance during the next wage readjustment. The informant used this method every month, since he was the vice-director of the production department.

Reporting: The production department sends a monthly report to the county bureau. They also send summary reports at the quarter. If they didn't fulfill the plan, they would have to explain. If this went on for several months in a row, the bureau would send down a work team to

inspect and strengthen leadership. But generally speaking, it was the completion of the yearly plan that was the most important. And if you met that, the bureau usually would leave you alone. There is no particular punishment or criticism for failing to meet yearly plans. If you fail repeatedly, they might transfer you to another plant to try anew under new conditions. But if you fulfill the plan every year, then you might be transferred to a job higher up in the system, like in the bureau. This is why the plant directors want to finish the plan.

Their plant had trouble finishing their plans for the year. This was before the cultural revolution. The main problem was that raw materials were in short supply, and their equipment was not very good. So this meant that the upper levels had a bad impression of their leadership. There were other targets in addition to output. There were standards set for product assortment (this was simple in their plant since they produced only 2 types of cement), quality, output(in tons), costs (per ton), profit. These are the main standards.

Their plant lost money the entire time he was there. The state had to supplement with funds every year so they could continue to produce cement. The state was willing to do this with construction materials, but would not do this for other industries. Their plant was not a 'planned loss' enterprise. They had a small profit target, but they still lost money. There were several reasons for this. One was irrational labor arrangements. Workers were not producing what they were supposed to. They only got X amount of work when they should have gotten 2X. The other problem was wasteful expenditures. The leaders could spend money on anything they wanted, and the financial personnel had no power to stop him. He could invite other cadres to a lavish dinner (which he often did), and let the plant foot the bill. Even though this was often related to business, it was lavish and a waste. These banquets were often put on for local cadres from surrounding communes, and also for cadres who came down from above. All this was for the purpose of building up good guanxi because cooperation was always necessary to do a plant's business. But also this sometimes was for private, completely personal reasons.

There were other irrational expenditures. Cadres who didn't really understand technical requirements, but who bought equipment which turned out to be of no use. This is bureaucratism--the making of blind orders before making a proper investigation and coming to a careful decision. There was wasteful expenditure in this respect also.

Another problem was that they didn't implement technical innovation (gexin) in an active way. They didn't try hard to pull workers out of production and put them to work trying to come up with innovations that would save on materials consumption, reduce costs, or increase the productivity of equipment and labor. They had technical reform movements which were effective in accomplishing this, but their leadership was too conservative and didn't run these things seriously enough, and didn't implement the results when they did do this. These groups were good because technicians had theoretical knowledge and workers had practical experience. But the leaders in his plant didn't dare make full use of them. They didn't support them and weren't willing to allocate funds and implement new innovations. They ran the movements for technical reform and had these 'triple combination' groups, because the upper levels expected it. But they did not really support the groups fully. Another problem was labor productivity. Workers would put in 8 hours but only do 5 hours of real work. Lack of worker activism was another problem.

Supply Problems and their solutions: If there was material or equipment they needed but could not get through the state plan, the plant used

personal ganqing (siren ganqing), and traded cement for other materials or machinery. There was no other way to do things, otherwise they couldn't get production finished. They would go to other factories to get equipment, to forestry communes for wood. This was the way they got things done. This was called materials exchange (wuzi jiaohuan).

There were other ways to complete the plan while using outside-the-plan measures. One common way was to mobilize workers to work 12 instead of eight hours, or work on Sundays. There was no overtime pay and labor was thus not figured into costs. This was called "using labor in place of production".

The upper levels do not know about the use of these two methods in most cases. But sometimes they do know. In such cases they usually will just ignore the practice because the practice is necessary to complete the plan. They might criticize you for using illegal practices if it comes to their attention. Unless there is a large, obvious shipment of cement for a backdoor deal involved in an exchange, so large that the masses and everyone knows what is going on, the upper levels are usually kept in the dark.

Candy Factory, 1968-70

They had a revolutionary committee, and also combined a lot of staff departments into three big groups--production, political work, administration. But in reality there were still old department staff doing the work, so it was largely a change in name. In this plant there were few former cadres doing manual labor in the shops. All this was largely a change in name.

The head of the revolutionary committee was an old cadre, the previous plant director. The vice-heads were an old cadre and a leader of a rebel faction. The rest of the standing committee members were members of mass organizations or old cadres. Most of the members of the standing committee were party members, but a few mass representatives were not. The head of the RC was also the branch party secretary. When he was in this plant their Party organization was still intact. They had a PLA representative in the plant. He was not a member of the RC but he in fact held power. All decisions had to go through him. He did not leave until after the informant left the plant.

The work of the production leadership group was basically the same as that of the production department in his other plant. He was the sole vice-head of this group. The work was the same, but they had different names for positions.

Factionalism

Yes, there was factionalism left over from the CR. The people remembered who was in which faction during the CR, and did not get along with one another. This took place both within the leadership and also between the masses and leaders. It came out in whether or not you cooperated in work, whether or not you listened to suggestions. This gave rise to many differences of opinion on many matters. It also came out in whether workers would listen to orders from a certain leader. Finally, it came out in who you cooperated with, who was promoted to certain types of jobs. Generally, it reduced work efficiency and effectiveness of leadership.