

Background: (6/24/84, 2.5 hrs)

He is originally a resident of Shanghai who attended the Communications University in Xi'an, graduated in 1968, and was assigned a job in a small city in Xinjiang near the border with the Soviet Union (Aulati). He had a capitalist class chushen. From 1968 to 1975 he worked in the District government's construction company, which employed about 500 people. From 1968 to 1973 he worked as the head of the installation section, equivalent to a factory shop. They did all the plumbing, electricity, heating, etc. The section was divided into several groups by type of installation. In 1973 they implemented the party's policy on educated youth, and he was transferred to the office of the construction company to be a statistician. He worked in the Finance and accounting dept. They had cashiers, accountants, materials clerks, labor and wage statisticians, and project statisticians. He was the latter. They kept track of the different construction projects going on under the company. They had 3 different construction corps in the company, each involved in different projects. Each in turn was divided into construction teams. They sent up reports every day, and his job was to add all the material up. This comprised a progress report on a daily basis. If they fell behind, they could use this material to analyze the causes of delay.

From 1975-77 he was in the countryside to take part in a political campaign, to carry out the party's basic line. After he returned to the company, he worked in the construction company's school, run by the district. They mainly selected workers according to their biao xian to give them training in different specialties. A two year program, a technical high school. They taught auto repair, driving, cooking, electrical repair, and different construction specialties. The graduates went to the company or to construction teams in the county. He was the principle of the school. He came to Hong Kong in 1981.

The Unit and Benefits

It was a state owned unit. They had paid medicine, labor insurance, hospitalization with half pay for children and non-working spouses, and parents too if they are dependents and not under their own former units. They pay you for six months but after that you get less than full pay.

Every 1½ years they got free work clothing--a change of clothes, helmet, but no boots. They would let you borrow boots and gloves in some work sections but not give them to you. They gave you winter overcoats, one every three years. No goggles. No grain coupons, this was according to your residence. Different amounts of grain rations were given according to your work. The unit reports to the grain bureau of your place of residence the type of work and ration amount. There were no industrial coupons. They didn't really have them in his city. They were very rare, not very many around. People just got them according to who they had guanxi with in the stores (he's talking about the commodities, not the coupons).

They did have unit housing. It is different from Shanghai. In Shanghai few factories have their own dormitories. But in Xinjiang all the factories have them. They had both apartments and single dorms. Every year they would renovate the housing and sometimes tear it down and build new ones (the unit was 20 years old). Almost all of the employees lived in unit

housing. Housing is not bad there. The company was very good about building and renovating housing every year, since there's not much housing in town. And they were good about giving you larger quarters when your family got larger. The departments were pretty big in comparison with those elsewhere. There was plenty of space to build housing, only 20,000 population in town. Plenty of empty land.

The unit had a meal hall. Especially important for single people. They had breakfast, lunch, and dinner there. They had 2½ hours of rest in the summer, so they could eat lunch there too. The unit had a clinic, with two doctors and nurses. But no beds; they would refer you to the district or county hospital for a stay.

They had a cultural office with tables and books, newspapers and magazines, ping pong. They organized movies. The union ran this. The workers 50 cent monthly dues paid for these. The main job of the union is to handle benefits.

They also had welfare relief payments given to workers with big families and low average wages. This may not be so important now but then it was very widespread. It also applied to families that had sick members, funerals and other expensive things to pay for. They also, under certain conditions, would give temporary and part time work to the children and wives of employees; a kind of casual labor although they didn't call it that. They were called jiashu gong. Low wages, but its done in order to increase family income.

They also give funds for visiting relatives; towels; transportation fees.

#### Applications for Benefits

How do you get these benefits? For the subsidies, the section leaders have a meeting to decide whether the person really needs the subsidies, and what size they will be. They have a meeting and rank them. The request is sent to the work section leaders, and the above levels approve. They have flexibility in deciding how large the subsidy will be. They find out the situation of the applicants: mother sick, children hurt, funeral expenses, etc. Their supervisors give their opinions in the case as well. This is where the personal relations come in. Sometimes people help each other out, are paying back people for kindness in the past, etc. Sometimes people who don't need subsidies get it, sometimes those who need it badly don't get large enough ones. There are no fixed regulations, no fixed amounts. It works this way in wage raises too; guanxi works. The same thing for sick leave certificates and relations with doctors. This is renqing. Principles and renqing are often in contradiction. But renqing is very common among Chinese.

Renqing is also involved in the distribution of housing, larger or newer quarters. But its effect is limited in regard to housing. You can't give housing to someone completely unqualified for large quarters, while you don't give anything to people who badly need them. But renqing does have some effect.

This is not really corruption. It is just a way of friendship. You use your powers of office to help out friends; but using powers of office to enrich yourself is corruption. But you can build up connections by sending gifts; but this is still not corruption. It is a small problem, not really a big one.

The work section leaders give opinions about who should get what. In fact, this is very important because the head of the general affairs department and the party secretary and head manager don't know a person's qualifications, character and therefore have to rely on their supervisor's reports to decide who to give housing to.

If you have good relations with the party, the secretary will tell the head of the general affairs department to "think over" whether he should give housing to the persons he favors. Of course the head of the general affairs department has to think it over. He wants to maintain good relations with the party secretary. So all the party secretary has to do is say a few words and it will be done. If you have good relations with him things will be fine.

Ganqing and renqing are different. Renqing is related more to material exchange and advantage. Ganqing is related more to situation where two people who have known one another for a long time help each other out. Ganqing is often involved with guanxi we've talked about before. Renqing is more superficial. Yiqi is also slightly different. There are a couple of kinds. One is among close friends. There is yiqi among them. It has a certain basis in ganqing. Another kind is based on feelings of justice (zhengyi) or rightness. People feel certain things are right and admire someone who does things in the proper way. So they have yiqi because they truly believe in the principles. This is another way to have yiqi--a sense of right and wrong. It is also called gemen yiqi. Like that among youth who were in the same groups in the cultural revolution.

#### Meetings

When they sent down documents they had more meetings. There were more in the CR, even during work hours. After the CR they very rarely used work hours for meetings. Now they will have meetings if it rains or storms, otherwise will meet in meetings for study and politics. Small group study: after 1979, because there were few campaigns, there was little political study. The meetings they have are for production, solving problems, and preparing for new tasks. Now there is no fixed schedule for meetings as in the past. Basically there is no fixed system of political study anymore.

#### Work Section Leadership (6/26/84, 3 hrs)

He became a work section leader right after beginning work because there were few cadres in the border areas. They usually want education or long experience but he had neither related to the job, but because they were short they gave him a leadership job. They used the yi gong dai gan system (although he was a college graduate), until about 1978-9 when they started to give them cadres status and regularize the organization again. Before 1978 they didn't pay close attention in work assignments to placing people in their specialties. I didn't study construction or industry at all; I studied electric motors in Xian.

Work section heads are non-productive personnel, although in the CR we did have to participate in labor. Equal to shop directors in factories. They handled personnel, production scheduling and problems. He was the "head of the household". Everything was his responsibility. Not specialized work, but general in nature. He had an office, not his own, really, just a desk.

Relations with top: There were several aspects. First was administrative. The company manager and party leadership. They had meetings in

the company to give orders, distribute documents, specify their point of emphasis for the month, specify the new campaign. Almost all his orders were relayed orally in these meetings. At that time there was no fixed schedule of meetings. The leading group very flexibly hold meetings. They have meetings from top to bottom each time a new set of orders comes down.

Below the section were the production groups. Every group had a leader and they had their own meetings also. Group leaders were the link between workers and section leaders. Group leaders were responsible to us. I met with the group leaders every day. There were all kinds of meetings. Every MWF, for about 2 hours, they had political study in groups, every week had  $\frac{1}{2}$  day of study taken from production for group leaders and the section heads to study. Had this right down to 1975. They did not have fixed production meetings because at that time they didn't handle production so firmly. We didn't really need production meetings. These matters would be brought up informally in the groups. Reports were made to people orally, we had meetings only to introduce tasks. Section heads always went to work sites to see what was going on so they know the situation and talked with group leaders all the time. It is possible of course for workers to talk directly with section leaders but in practice most contact is with the group leaders.

#### Group Leaders

Group leaders are chosen by election among the group members. The above levels have to approve the results. Usually they try to accomodate workers wishes because they have to trust the leader and have to work with him. You can't really force a group leader on them that they hate. Group leaders have their own production work. They have power to assign tasks. Group leaders have the power to approve sick leave for one day, but for longer periods have to get section permission and doctor certificate.

To get housing its not much use to request from the group leader or section head. They don't have any housing to give out. You really have to go to the housing office. But our opinion was important even though we don't distribute the apartments ourselves. We have to attest to their need and so forth, verify his reasons for requesting more space.

To get sick leave the section leader gives approval. For subsidies the company office approves. But again the section and group leaders give opinions on the workers needs to make sure they meet the conditions. So the group leaders and section heads don't have power to approve these matters, but they must give thier opinions. But this does have its effect on the decision. All the group leader or section head has to do is say a few words and that greatly helps.

#### Political Organization

They had so few party members in the section that they didn't have a branch. In border areas very few party members. I myself wasn't a party member, yet I was a section head. This is very much different in larger units and in larger cities.

Political study was handled very simply. We just read the material in people's daily and red flag to the workers, for them to listen to. Then we explained to them it the terms meant, what the general point was, and answered their questions if they had any. Workers generally were very much uninterested in this. Very abstract, difficult to understand. Rarely

anyone speaks up. Often they have trouble staying awake. Workers can talk about concrete things related to production and can stay interested in that, but not this political study.

Back then political biao xian was number one. But that was just an empty concept, how much you talked in meetings. Not any more. Most important now is whether you work hard or not. Those false and empty words don't get you very far anymore.

Activists: there are two types. Activists in studying Mao's thought and talking in meetings. This kind of activism is empty, I know because I took part in all of this. I was an activist myself. But I can tell you its all empty talk. Some workers want to become group leaders or section heads, or enter the party. But another aspect is that you let your activism come out concretely in your work, in your sense of responsibility and willingness to work hard. This is another aspect of activism. But working hard along is not enough, you also have to have the biao xian to get into the party and elevated. But some workers not at all interested in politics, didn't understand or weren't interested, but worked very hard. Back then they couldn't get promoted, but they had close relations with other workers, had a real mass basis. In 1978-9 they elected group leaders over again and many of these people were elected. Things now have changed with regard to promotions and leadership. These hardworking workers of course listen to orders and work hard, but they are not political activists like the old days.

They did have a youth league branch in their shop. Not all could join. You had to be over 18 and under 30 or so. It was the party's vanguard organization among the working class, made up of advanced proletarian elements. Considered the helpful assistant of the party. It had its own organizational life. During the CR it was pretty much disrupted, but afterward it was gradually restored. The league is more regularized now than it was before. Since 1977 or so this has been so. They had swimming, recreation activities, visited parks, theatres, etc. The branch in the section had five members. Above that the general branch of the CYL and above that the party committee.

The youth league members have no special privileges or powers. The only thing they have is that the party secretary has a better opinion of them and is more likely to permit them to enter the party later. As a section head I didn't have to listen to the youth league secretary, only to the party secretary.

### Factions

The local factions were very severe there. Shandong, Henan, Jiangsu all had strong local factions. They had their conflicts, and also their ties. Normally you wouldn't know it on the surface. But it comes out in important matters or conflicts. For example, there was a Henan guy who had a big argument with two Shandong guys. Their provincial brothers came to support each side and eventually they came to blows. When they assess people for wage raises the Shandong and Henan guys assess each other well. But if there are more Shandong than Henan people there, they will get the raise. Same thing happens when electing group leaders.

The same thing occurred during the CR. The Henan faction was a rebel faction, the Shandong faction was royalist. The main issue in joining was where you came from. If you're in a minority faction, generally speaking its difficult for you in everything--political campaigns, bonuses, raises, etc.

They also had local Xinjiang minorities. They had their own faction too, but the barriers are much stronger. They considered all Chinese to be in the opposite faction no matter what province they were from. Generally they got along well with the Chinese. We only had one minority person in our section, a Mongol. Actually he was mixed blood, very few minorities were employed by us. The local people had opinions about Hans because in the past meat and food was plentiful and they could buy food anywhere freely. But after many Han came food became scarce and they instituted rationing. So some resentment was because of material interests. Also most cadres of any importance are Han. Then there is the problem of Han chauvanism: the Han consider these people uncultured, backward, dirty. This contributes to the bad feelings.