
PERSONAL DATA

Age: 35

Sex: Male

Education: Industrial College graduate

Total Years Relevant Experience: 12

Last Year of Relevant Experience: 1978

Year Left China: 1978

Initial Immigration Status: Legal

Native Place/Overseas Connections: Thailand OS, returned 1950

Class Background/Political Designation: OS

OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY SUMMARY

Positions Held: 1) Staff Technician, Metallurgy Institute (Aeronautics),
Xinjiang, 1967-68

2) Staff Technician, Electronics Research Institute,
small Guangdong city, 1968-71

3) Technician, Technical Department, Tractor Factory,
small Guangdong city, 1971-74

4) Staff member, Municipal Scientific Commission, small
Guangdong city, 1974-78

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

1) Ministry

2) Municipal/(400)

3) Municipal/(2000)

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

none mentioned

APPOINTMENTS: 2

TOTAL HOURS: 4.5

PAGES TEXT: 6

Occupational History (5/8/80, 2 hrs.)

The informant is a Thai-born overseas Chinese who returned to China around 1950, at age 5. He graduated in 1967 from South China Industrial College in Canton. He studied electronics and automatic machinery. Then he was assigned to a Metallurgy Institute in Xinjiang, which was attached to a large Steel enterprise which had over 10,000 employees, and which made steel beams and other large parts for use in manufacturing airplanes. His institute was located in Tulufan (Turfan). Actually, his enterprise was split up into many small branch factories, dispersed around this area of Xinjiang. This was in the 'third line' of production, a secret installation, making products for military use. The plant was directly under the Central Metallurgy Ministry. It was not run by the province but directly from Peking.

His job as a technician was to direct and teach people in installing, and maintaining automated equipment and production lines. He was also responsible for disassembling and analyzing automatic control machinery bought from Japan and West Germany which was relatively advanced, and drawing up plans for production so that China could copy the design and manufacture their own. He also travelled around to various areas for meetings involved with metallurgy ministry work, and attended meetings for exchanges of advanced experiences, and meetings for signing contracts for procurement of materials (dinghuo huiyi).

The 'goods ordering meetings' were very important because the ministry would never provide enough materials and equipment to meet targets, so they would go to these large meetings to find other plants who could supply them (more on this later). He worked in Xinjiang for 1½ years, then was transferred to Guangdong province, to a town on the peninsula north of Hainan island.

This new unit was an electronics research institute of about 400 people, under the city's machinery and electronics bureau (jidian ju). The institute was connected with a radio factory. They researched, designed, and found materials for the production of radio tubes. In the process they visited plants throughout the country who made these tubes, and found out what materials were needed, what equipment, etc. They would bring the products back, make up a prototype, and send them back to the department which originally put in the request. After they came up with a prototype, they still had another step to go through. They had to go to meetings in Peking, Shanghai, Nanjing, Jinan, or other places to make sure that the tube fit the specifications for both production and use so that it would be standardized for use throughout the country. If not, they would require them to make changes before they could send the prototypes and the drawings to the factories for large-scale production.

He worked here for over 2 years, and then in 1971 (near the end of the year), he was transferred to a tractor factory in the same town which had over 2000 employees. He worked in the technical department (jishu ke). Their job was largely designing, and he worked himself on the designing of the machine tools and equipment used in manufacturing tractor parts. This was also under the local city's machinery and electronics bureau, although the production plans came from the provincial level.

He worked here for over 2 years, and in July 1974 he was transferred to the municipality's Scientific Commission (kexue weiyuanhui). This committee was responsible for directing the work of all the research institutes and factory technical work in units run by the city. He worked here for four years until he came to Hong Kong legally in 1978. This committee had over 20

members, all were technical cadres. Their job was to study advanced foreign and national scientific and technical developments and write up a manual describing developments, classified by line of work. Then they distributed it to all the industrial production and research institutes. Then if a unit was interested in a certain technique, they would help them to enter into production or get more material.

They got their materials from scientific units in Peking and Canton, and some from Hong Kong. The scientific committee was under the local revolutionary committee. The leader of the committee was not a technician, but an administrative cadre, who was also a member of the revolutionary committee. The informant came to Hong Kong legally in 1978, after having applied to come out in 1971.

Wages

When he first graduated and was sent to Xinjiang, his wage was 78¥ per month. He says he was a grade 17 technical cadre, while grade 18 was the lowest (it is possible this is an assignment on the administrative cadre scale). After he went to Guangdong in 1969, his wages were not lowered, because he was moving from a high to low wage region and they don't normally lower your wages in that situation. But if you move from a low to high wage area, they do give you an increase. He was only given a 3¥ reduction which was some sort of regional differential. First year university graduates in his Guangdong unit got 58¥, so there was a big difference involved. Because he had such high wages, he was not given any raises or promotions until he left. He was still grade 17 cadre then.

There were two wage readjustments while he was working in China. One was in 1978, and one actually was right after he left. So in 1977 and 1979 they had them. There were no other wage readjustments to his recollection.

Transfers

He was transferred many times. The one from Xinjiang back to Guangdong was by request. He applied to the local organizational department, and also to the leader of his unit. He said his mother was alone in Guangdong, very old, etc., and said that they were an overseas family, and should get good treatment. After he got his approval, he still wasn't successful. He still had to write a letter himself to the organization department of the Guangdong area, asking if there was any unit needing someone with his specialty. All of this took him half a year. The other transfers within his town in Guangdong were all arranged by the bureau in charge of his units.

Bonuses

Not until he got to the tractor factory in 1971-74 did he run into bonuses or labor awards, but even then there was no money involved. But they did give towels and wash basins and pitchers to advanced workers. The factory did not have bonuses until after he left, but did have them in 1975-76, he is certain, right before Deng Xiaoping fell from power. They divided the bonuses into 3 grades after assessments: 12¥, 9¥, and 6¥. The bonuses in the light industry system in his locality were lower. There were limits set by the bureau about what percentage of workers could receive bonuses, etc.

Procurement Meetings (dinghuo huiyi) (5/9/80, 2.5 hrs.)

These meetings are the regular outlet for goods produced according to plan. The national plan comes down once a year, and they hold two national

contract-signing meetings per year. One is at the end and one at the beginning of the year. These are organized by the ministries in Peking, but they are held in different areas. The meetings are divided by province, and each province has meetings to reveal what kinds of products each enterprise is producing, getting buyers and seller together. Both sellers and buyers come to these meetings. This was the situation in the metallurgy ministry meetings. They had people from machinery and aircraft enterprises.

There were two types of people in attendance. First, sellers who have produced X amount of goods according to the plan (and maybe even overfulfilled by a little) and who now have no buyers. They notify the concerned ministry or bureau, who collects this kind of information together periodically and publishes a catalog to distribute to all enterprises.

Second, there are the buyers, who have plans to meet but the equipment and material supplied by the state is not enough. So they ask permission to buy extra materials, usually get it, and attend these meetings to sign contracts. In signing contracts, personal contacts are very important, since people tend to go to friends and previous acquaintances. If you don't have good connections, it is hard to be successful at this. These are not goods that are bad in quality. The bad quality materials are sent to 'daily use articles' (minyong) plants, which produce goods for consumers. If after a contract is fulfilled, the goods are defective, then the buyer notifies the seller, and the producing plant sends out inspectors. If it is truly bad stuff, then the producer will take back the bad products and replace them. If they don't agree, then they discuss things, and ask the ministry to mediate.

There are also other problems, especially on-time delivery. If a plant doesn't deliver on time, then the buyer will notify the ministry, which will criticize the named plant at the materials procurement meetings, and it will be embarrassing to the plant and maybe make it difficult to sign contracts. The money for these transactions are released upon delivery. Payment is made by notifying the bank, which transfers the sum to the seller's account.

If one is still unsuccessful after these organized meetings, then you notify the ministry, who is supposed to try to find a seller for you. After all, they told you to produce X amount, and now that there is X amount produced or almost finished, you don't have a buyer, and are left holding the goods. But the ministry or bureau doesn't always worry about you that much, so this is not guaranteed. So often one must go by the back door to make do. You use personal relationships to smooth out needs. He declares that this is the special characteristic of China's enterprise management. This is called 'relying on personal affection' (siren ganqing) to get needed materials.

These kinds of transactions take place by discussing what each person's enterprise needs, and exchanging the materials. But some of these people are more exacting, and will ask for sewing machines, bicycles, foodstuffs, clothing, types of vegetable oil, for their personal use to smooth the transaction. This is the great special characteristic of Chinese enterprise management. If you can't accomplish something through the plan, if you can't meet targets within the plan, then you can always use personal connections to accomplish targets. From the Dinghuo Huiyi to the personal, outside-the-plan exchanges, it all relies on guanxi. This is brought about by the fact of high targets, and scarcity of equipment and materials.

These direct exchanges between plants are not illegal. The ministries put emphasis on production and are willing to allow this kind of activity if it helps to complete plans. But the personal graft is not legal, and is

considered corruption. So if you are caught accepting a bicycle or foodstuffs for personal use, then this is considered corruption. They don't actually call this 'corruption' (tanwu), but making use of special privileges, but it is still frowned upon. When they discover these cases, if they are not severe, then they will just criticize those involved. If it is a serious case, they will transfer the person to another department. Also it is possible for repeated offenders, and very serious offenders to be put into jail.

Other Ministry System Meetings

They had other meetings within the metallurgy system led by the political department of the Ministry, twice a year. One was the 'Act in the spirit of central metallurgy ministry directives' (guanche zhongyang yejin bu de jing shen) meetings. This was about political issues, but they were related to production. They would stress the importance of fulfilling plans for the good of the country, and hear reports on each enterprises plan fulfilment, progress of their political movements, etc. If there is a problem, you also have to report and discuss it here. The results of these two different kinds of meetings were: 1) to let the ministry know the progress of plan completion for each enterprise, and the problems encountered; 2) to spread information to all enterprises in the ministry about each unit's capabilities, products, and production situation; 3) facilitate circulation of materials, supplies, and equipment within the ministry (and sometimes without); and 4) to assure completion of the ministry's plan.

Most of the people who participate in the goods ordering meetings are from within the ministry's system. But if a plant from, for example, the machine building ministry needs a certain kind of steel, and he can't get it through normal channels in his own ministry, then he must get the permission of the metallurgy ministry, make his case, then attend and try to sign a contract.

These meetings were primarily related to production plans. All during this period the profit target existed and a plant got to keep a certain percentage of profit for use in improving worker's welfare. But during the CR period this became smaller, because plants found it difficult to fulfill their plans.

Cultural Revolution

While at the institute in Xinjiang, they had workers organizations, criticisms of the intellectuals and office workers. They were especially hard on those with bad class backgrounds, and historical problems. He was sent to work in the shops of one of the branch plants, not allowed to go to goods procurement meetings in the ministry anymore, and give distasteful work to do. This was during the period of the cleaning of the class ranks campaign, during the second half of the first year he was there, in 1968.

When he first arrived in Turfan in mid-1967, things were still pretty quiet. It was not until 1968 that things started to turn into disorder. At the beginning of the movement, there were not 2 factions. Just "Red Guards" who were workers of good class backgrounds. They wrote wallposters attacking the leadership of the plant, their bureaucratic attitudes and workstyles, and especially went after those with bad class backgrounds. They accused them of being capitalist roaders, followers of Liu Shaoqi.

They did not have factionalism until later, when some of the intellectuals, people who had been criticized or had been fearful earlier, began to oppose the red guards and tried to protect themselves and leading cadres. This was also the period when production began to be affected. When a group

leader or shop director was criticized as a 'royalist', and accused of having close relations with the party secretary, they would investigate the person, see how often he got to go to goods procurement meetings and other outside functions, and then accuse him of being a 'running dog' or 'lackey' of the person in power. When this happened, workers stopped listening to his orders.

Right when things started to go into disorder, he transferred back to Guangdong. They had just gotten to the point of having the leadership step aside at that time. They saw the handwriting on the wall, so he asked the first party secretary to get him transferred back to Guangdong before he was knocked down. He had good relations with this secretary, and had gone to the goods procurement meetings with him before. He had real good ganging, and has kept up with the man, and seen him several times since. The man was soon thereafter knocked down, and sent to a May 7 cadre school for four years before his transfer to another unit in Qingdao, where he is now a bureau head, a position which carries the same grade rank as his Xinjiang post. Now he has a great deal of power, and has been a cadre for 36 years in the party. They had accused him of being a 'traitor' (pantu), but after years of investigation they finally cleared him, and found that the charges were unfounded.

When he got to Guangdong, this was right during the high tide of the movement. This new unit's production was very seriously affected. They only worked at half capacity, but never really stopped completely. The first Party secretary in the plant had not stood aside. The red guards couldn't knock him down because he was an old revolutionary cadre from the pre-1949 Red Army. He steered a middle course between factions, and did not express opinions on one or the other. He had a peasant background.

By this time, they had several cadres who had stood aside because they had bad class backgrounds. A vice-secretary, several department heads, (the vice-secretary was also the plant director). Shop directors and group leaders did not stand aside because they were usually of good class background. At this time the informant continued his technical work. Although he was an overseas Chinese, he was not as bad as a capitalist or landlord. He did not participate in manual labor again until the cleaning of the class ranks campaign, when he was sent to do manual labor. This was a fearful time of investigation for people of questionable class backgrounds in China. They investigated people and if they found a historical problem they would bring down the club.

In his own case, they found out his father had been a capitalist in Thailand, and accused him of exploiting foreign workers. So they went around looking for other Thai Chinese to ask them about his father. The informant had in the past wrote letters to his father, and had gotten letters back from him, along with letters from workers under his father, attesting to his good treatment of his employees. So he took these letters as evidence, and went to criticism meetings. He was struggled two or three times where they shouted at him, accused him of lying. They hung a very heavy steel plate around his neck. It was very painful, but they wouldn't let him lower his neck.

This whole thing was organized by the Mao Thought Worker Propaganda Team--which included both soldiers and workers. They tried to get him to admit his father's guilt, and repudiate his father and cut off relations with him, but he refused. He was sent to a May 7 cadre school for over half a year. This was in 1969-70. These 'schools' were actually labor reform camps for cadres. They grew sugar cane and peanuts. Finally in 1970 they started to implement the overseas Chinese policy, and finally released him.

His own case was helped by his father's letters to the foreign ministry, which subsequently ordered his locality to release him.

When he returned to his unit the propaganda team was still there, and was very polite to him this time, but he just ignored them. He returned in February 1971, and in September 1971 or so he was transferred to the Tractor Factory. When he got there, he got along well with the party secretary who headed the Revolutionary Committee and also the department head of the technical department. They also liked his technical abilities, so he was allowed to do his work, and return to his specialty.

Revolutionary Committee, 1971-74

Vice-head was also the party secretary, and had been transferred in after the close of the CR. One vice-head was the vice-party secretary, who was left over from before the CR, and was an old worker. He was actually the head of the revolutionary committee, while the party secretary was the highest authority in the plant. The other five members: the head of the security department, an incumbent from before the CR who originally had been a demobilized soldier, a union cadre who was the top union official, the vice-head of the union who was an old worker, the head of the women's committee, and the head of the finance department.

All of these people were members of the Party Committee. The 'mass representatives' were the women's representative, union heads--the heads of the mass organizations. This was all the members. The Mao-Thoughtpropaganda team was still there, and they did not leave until 1974. They still had departments (called gu), and they were not combined together or abolished. The propaganda team led political work, meetings, campaigns, but it was the party secretary who decided major problems.

Technical Education

They had a worker's university in the unit. They studied technology--math, drawing, etc. This was for a select group of workers with good political showing. They used several afternoons a week for study, it was not spare-time, but used production time. The informant participated as a teacher in these classes. But he says they graduated after four years regardless of their level of accomplishment, and their level was not always high. They didn't take the tests seriously.