

PERSONAL DATA

Age: 45

Sex: Male

Education: Technical school graduate, Industrial college graduate (night school)

Total Years Relevant Experience: 25

Last Year of Relevant Experience: 1979

Year Left China: 1979

Initial Immigration Status: Legal

Native Place/Overseas Connections: Thailand OS/returned 1950

Class Background/Political Designation: OS

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OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY SUMMARY

Positions Held: 1) Harbin Tool Factory, 1955-59

a) Shop technician (work supervisor), 1955-57

b) Staff technician, Design Department, 1958-59

2) Technician, Canton Machine Tools Research Institute,  
1959-79

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

1) unknown/(2800)

2) Ministry until 1972, then Municipal/(1000)

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

none mentioned

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APPOINTMENTS: 3

TOTAL HOURS: 6

PAGES TEXT: 7

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Occupational History (4/1/80, 2.25 hrs.)

The informant is an overseas Chinese from Thailand, who returned to China in 1950. In 1955 he graduated from a middle-school level technical school in Changchun, Jilin Province. In 1955 he was assigned to the Harbin Tool Factory, where he worked as a shop technician until 1959. He worked during the day in the factory as a shop technician, later he did some designing work in the design department. While in the shop he was a project supervisor (shigong yuan, a loose translation), which was the person in the shop who was responsible for going around the shop to translate diagrams and industrial drawings into concrete production measures. He also was in charge of solving technical and safety problems which popped up. Later, around 1958-59, he was sent to the designing department (sheji ke) as a designer.

During this period he studied at night school at Harbin Industrial University, and transferred his credits to Canton when he was later transferred in 1959. He finally got his university degree in 1962. In 1959, he was transferred to the Canton Machine Research Institute. Their work at this time was to copy plans for soviet machines. Generally, their tasks was to improve on existing machine designs and to develop new kinds of machines. He was a group head, the leader of one of the many research groups into which the institute was divided. He led the group in investigations, innovation, investigation reports, and re-designing work. The actual prototypes would be given to either the workshop attached to the institute or to various machinery plants throughout the country. He did this work until he left legally in July 1979.

The research institute originally was under the #1 Machine Building Ministry (as was his Harbin factory). Thus they travelled to other machine plants throughout the country within the ministry's system. The unit was sent down to be run by Canton City around 1972 as part of the 'xiafang' to local government, and only in 1979 was it restored to the #1 Machine Building Ministry system. During the period when it was under the leadership of the city of Canton, the number of plants he visited inside Canton increased greatly. It was difficult to cross administrative system boundaries because you needed to arrange letters of introductions at higher levels.

Wages

When he was first sent to the plant, he was a practicing (jianxi) technician for one year at 36¥. The technical school graduates were separated into 3 grades after this: grade 16, 40.5¥, grade 15, 46¥, grade 14, 53¥. This depended on performance during the first year. They discussed the performance of the practicing technicians in the groups, but the final decision about their promotion was made by higher levels. Most were set at grade 15. These 3 grades were called assistant technicians. He was personally set at grade 14. Other grades for technicians: 10, 96¥, grade 11, 82.5¥, grade 12, 69¥, grade 13, 61 ¥. Grade 10 was the highest technician, and grade 13 the lowest. These were called 'technicians' and sometimes called grade 1, grade 2 technicians, etc, according to whether you were grade 10, 11, etc.

There were regional differentials. When he moved to Canton he kept the same grade but was given an immediate raise of 5¥. After completing university studies in 1962, he was raised to grade 11. In 1978 he was promoted to be an engineer, but without engineers pay. This was supposed to come later.

So his raise history went as follows: In 1955 he was given 36¥ as a practicing technician. In 1956 he was made assistant technician (zhuan zheng), at grade 14, or 53¥. In 1959 he was raised to be a grade 13 technician, 61¥, and in 1963 he was promoted up to grade 11, at 82.5 ¥. When he left in 1979, he was still making 82.5¥, where he was put in 1963. He says that if he stayed, he today would be paid a grade 9 engineers wage, over 100¥.

#### Wage Readjustments

In 1956 was the wage reform. In 1961 there was a small readjustment, about 20% of the employees. In 1963 there was another one like 1961, where raises were based on political performance and technical level, work performance. But the criteria were vague, and there was no testing. This was generally decided by the leader's impression toward you. Before deciding, though, they would put nominees names on a board and ask for the masses opinions. If there is no major problem, they would promote.

Then there were no readjustments until 1977, when they set fairly clear criteria based on wage level and years of service. They had not started the 1979 round of raises when he left in July. For a long time people were promoted but not given raises. Many people had been stuck at assistant technician level since 1963 and weren't raised until 1979.

The influence of this on workstyle and activism was naturally very large, especially among lower paid workers. The general influence was that people were not spurred voluntarily on their own initiative to undertake responsibilities. People would do things if you ordered them to and continually watched them work, but they lacked initiative. People gradually, over time, became less willing to participate in part-time night technical classes because there would be no reward for them.

#### Bonuses

They had piece work in the factory during 1955-59 while he was there. People were paid strictly according to output. They also tried this for a while in the designing department, but since it was hard to set time standards for this kind of work, they later changed to monthly bonuses separated into 3 grades. This piece rate system was also referred to as the 'bao gong zhi'. In the shops, the quota clerk (ding e yuan) set the time quotas for pieces, and the statistician (tongji yuan) kept strict records of individual output. These were used to calculate wages.

#### Temporary and Contract Labor

There were very few, if any employed in his plant in Harbin. There were many in Canton, mostly dependents of employees.

#### Firings, Discipline

There were no firings in the Harbin plant, but they did have punishments. One technician made mistakes in designing work, but he also had a 'historical problem'. They put him in jail for 1-2 years. When he returned to the plant he was given a lower wage and work position. They also had a vice-director who messed with women, and was discipline by the Party and transfered. If someone's work was poor, they would talk with him. If he didn't change after repeated problems, they still would not fire him, but just not give them promotions and wages.

#### The Gear-cutting Tool Shop, 1955-58 (4/2/80, 2.25 hrs.)

The Harbin Tools Plant had about 2800 workers. The shop he worked in as a technician produced tools for cutting gears (chi lun daoju), and had

about 300 workers. They had four sections in the shop, each for producing a different cutting tool. Each section had its own production line (liushui xian). They would take long steel rods, cut them into different length sections, then drill a hole through the center, then make different cuts for gears, etc. Each small group would perform different processes along the way, and would work with different machines. This organization contrasts with the technical shop and tools shop, which repaired and renovated machines, made tools, respectively. They did not have a production line organization.

Shop office: In the shop office was the director and one vice director. The director was responsible for overseeing the entire plant operation, and was usually a party member. The vice-director emphasized welfare, livelihood matters within the shop, and most of these people are also party members. There was a 'planner' (jihua yuan) who assisted the shop director and handled production planning. This person divided up the plans given by the plant and plans production. The statistician (tongji yuan) figures up production statistics after each day, and busies himself figuring up piece work of each worker. He works closely with the planner, and is also the shop director's assistant. There is also an office helper (banshi yuan), who does odd jobs and errands.

This was the administrative office of the shop. Below it there was another office, called the 'technical group' (jishi zu). This was headed by the group head, a materials quota man (cailiao ding e yuan), a time quota man (gongshi ding e yuan), and 3-4 production supervisors (shigong yuan). The materials person fixes consumption quotas for materials use for a certain amount of products, and acceptable rates for waste products. The time quota person sets time quotas for the amount of time to finish a specific operation. This was very important at that time because they used a piece rate system at that time. He figures in the time for the actual work, rest periods, etc, and tries to settle on an average standard. Then they had a number of production supervisors which corresponded to the number of products (sections) in the shop. Each one would be responsible for helping to solve technical problems with equipment or product standards encountered during production.

Party Branch Office: There was a party branch office in each shop. They manage the party members and ideological education and thought of every person in the shop. They have a branch party secretary, separated from production, and also a vice-branch secretary, who is not separated from production. There is also a secretarial worker (mishu) who does paper work in the branch office. Normally, the party and administrative organs are separate and do different kinds of work. The party handles party members, and administration handles production. But since the shop director is almost always a party member, he is in actuality also under party leadership.

### Quality Inspection System

There was also an inspection station (jian cha zhan) in the shop, which had its own place or shed, on the shop floor--but no office. This station was not under shop leadership but directly under the leadership of the Quality Inspection Department (jiancha ke). Usually there were 5-6 people in it, technical workers. They are under the leadership of the department, so they work on department orders, and do inspection work and make reports. They had the power to accept and reject products according to their specifications.

There was an underlying contradiction and bargaining process between

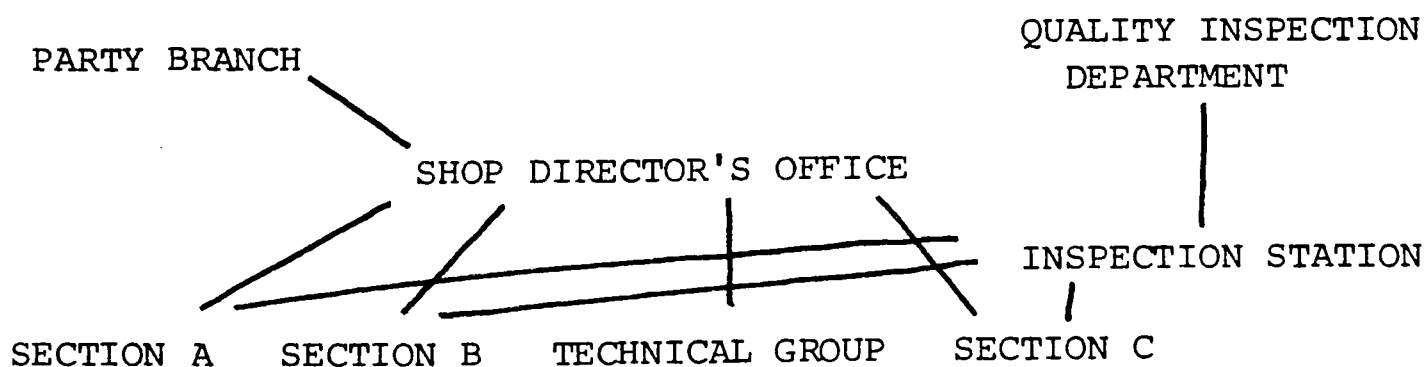
the shop director and the workers in the inspection system. The director claimed that the specifications were too stringent given the state of the equipment. The shop director would often argue about product standards being enforced too closely. But the workers in the inspection station were under the leadership of the department, so any disagreements would have to be taken to the department themselves.

There was also the same kind of contradiction between the inspection workers and the production workers. If a worker's work was judged to be sub-standard, this reduced the output for figuring the piece rate, and also increased the wastage rate (feipin lu), which, if too high, would adversely affect chances for bonuses, and also would adversely affect shop-level plan completion. So often low-level disagreements, and bargaining took place between inspectors and workers over a micrometer here and a micrometer there. If an inspector got along with a worker well (guanxi hao), then he might let him get away with borderline cases.

Inspection methods: One method is not to inspect every single piece, but to pull out every Xth one to give a close inspection. Another method is to spot check in production groups, inspecting things while still in the groups, and telling the worker involved that it is sub-standard. Sometimes this kind of inspection took place right as a piece comes off the lathe, and if the piece is not up to par they stop the worker and get him to change his work method.

During the Great Leap, the inspection stations were sent down (xiafang) to the shop director's leadership, and after that no contradiction or disagreements, arguments took place. The technical worker after this would just listen to the shop director's orders, would revise the standards slightly when the shop director wanted, or the shop director would simply overrule the inspection worker's judgments about up-to-standard products. This had a great influence on quality at that time. There were also a number of design personnel sent down to the shop during the Great Leap--more on this later.

#### Shop Technical and Inspection System



#### Great Leap Forward

Many administrative jobs were sent down to the shops. Most of the personnel from the departments were sent down to work in shop offices, under the leadership of the shop director--in addition to the inspection station which also goes to the shop. The reason for this was because these office people were out of touch with actual conditions, and only wanted to copy foreign experiences, and did not understand actual conditions in their own plants.

The result of all of this was bad. We have already discussed the problem with inspection. The same thing was true for designing work. The designers were sent to the shops and pressure was put on them to revise diagrams

and designs, lower standards for acceptable variation in size, measurements, smoothness of surfaces, etc. If the technicians sent down argued against this, the shop director or Party secretary would accuse them of being cut off from actual conditions, no understanding the actual process of production, setting unreasonably high standards, worshipping things foreign. This made technicians intimidated and they would usually comply. What could they answer back? To not comply would be asking for punishment and criticism.

Also there were the technical specialists (gongyi yuan) sent down from the technical department (gongyi ke). Influences on their work was not as great as for others mentioned, but there was some. These people would set processing methods of a particular product--the technique for producing products up to standards set by the designers. If a shop director wanted an easier, faster, or lower cost method of production to be used, he could prevail upon the technical personnel to approve and help devise ways despite his doubts that an up-to-standard product could be produced in this way.

Production Changes: They cancelled the piece rate system, and switched to time rates. There was a lot of overtime work, sometimes several nights without sleep, and there was overtime all the time with no extra pay. This was because they were to put politics in command. They never had piece rates again after the Great Leap. Of course, output increased, but quality decreased.

At that time, workers were exhausted, working several nights without sleep. They built an iron smelting furnace to melt down waste iron, but often they took pieces of iron that were not actually waste. But the iron they made was of no use. It was more like bean curd. But if anyone raised this criticism they could be labelled a rightist. A number of technicians were criticized for objecting to these methods. But they gave up this iron making after a little over a month.

The biggest changes in management system within the shop were the powers and personnel 'sent down' (xiafang) to the shops. Within the shops, there were no great changes that he recalls. There was no further xiafang to sections or small groups of the powers of personnel. This was later, during the cultural revolution.

In his own work there were no great changes during the Great Leap. Of course, he cooperated with section and group leaders, and had discussions with concerned workers on how to solve technical problems, but this was no different than what he had done before.

#### Research Institute in Canton, 1959-79 (4/4/80, 1.5 hrs.)

The research institute was one for research on the design of machinery. The research tasks were set by the ministry in Peking. They would visit plants to examine machines that have already been produced by the ministry's plants, and which have developed quality problems. The technicians would visit the factories to check out performance. Another job was for the institute to try to make improvements in design to bring machines up to world standards.

The institute had 1000 personnel, about 400 of whom were technicians, and also a number of leading cadres. They had party committee, secretaries, Union, Youth League, and administrative cadres who handled welfare, accounting, food, housing, etc. There were about 300 administrators in all. Then there were about 3-400 workers. They had their own small factory for casting parts, forging parts, processing them, tooling, turning, assembly, etc. They built prototypes (yangpin). Their products were outside the state plan. The factory was completely contained within the institute and did only research-related production.

The institute's work was divided into several groups (zu). Each group studied a different problem. Normally, the institute was funded by the ministry. But during the CR everything was in disarray, and nobody handled it, and very little work got done. Then in 1972 they sent the research institute down to City administration. After that, responsibility for supporting research went to the institute itself, so it began to use its workshops for turning out products for sale to earn money, and they turned the machines over to the ministry. Then after the Gang of 4 fell, they restored Ministry leadership, and the Ministry once again funded their research.

The biggest and most widespread kind of technical problem he found in his years of travelling around on inspections of different plants was that the parts of the machine tools would heat up when used, and then due to pressure would change shape. Later, parts turned out on these machine tools would be slightly bent, or not up to standard in other ways. Precision would be lost.

### Cultural Revolution

They had even more political movements in the research institute than in the factories, because they didn't directly upset production. In 1964 a work team for the '4 cleans movement' was dispatched to the institute. It held meetings, got people to put up posters, and investigated others. They came in and investigated people with historical problems, corruption, ideological problems. But not that many people were criticized.

At the beginning of the cultural revolution, people began putting up wall posters and making criticisms. Later, 2 factions organized and began to argue among themselves. They split over whether or not to knock down the Institute director (suo zhang) or the Party secretary. One faction was a majority faction, mostly technicians and workers. Another faction was smaller, made up of administrative cadres, and party cadres.

Why did they split up this way? The technicians were intellectuals who had often gotten bad treatment, criticism during past political campaigns. Workers generally sympathized with the technicians because they also could be criticized. But workers also split into two groups--people who were leaders, group heads, etc.; and normal workers. The workers in leading position tended to side with the administrative and political cadres. The people in this faction had escaped criticism during the previous campaigns. They were the conservatives (dongfeng--east wind). They wanted to pull down the institute director, and support the party secretary, while the rebels were just the opposite.

Finally, both leading cadres were knocked down. The groups armed themselves and there was fighting in the streets. Nobody guarded the storehouses in the city government where rifles were stored, and groups broke in and took them. For one year from 1967 to early 1968, virtually no work was done. People rarely came to work.

Later, worker-army propaganda teams came to the research institute. In name, they were there to create a 'great alliance', but in reality those who came to his institute arrested the leaders of the radical 'red flag' faction and suppressed its organization. The membership dispersed. They were called counter-revolutionaries. After this, the masses were afraid to continue to rebel, and fell quietly into place. Then they could establish the revolutionary committee.

The PLA led the whole process. The people from the radical faction were imprisoned for half a year, and later it was discovered that they weren't counter-revolutionary, but a mass organization which had not made serious



mistakes. They came back, but not without resentments. They had been repressed, while the other faction had won and had become officials in the institute. So for the following period these old resentments were still strong, and influenced work within the institute.

#### Factionalism after the Cultural Revolution

So for the following period these old resentments were still strong, and influenced work in the institute. This exists right up to today. It is very difficult to counter this by central policies, and to thoroughly carry out the cadre policy in each locality. Factionalism blocks it.

How did this factionalism come out? First, in social relations. Leaders from one faction did not think highly of others, and didn't respect the others. Second, the youth from one faction were given preference in promotions, and many were promoted to leadership position. When older cadres came back, there were problems. Generally, these kinds of ties became a major vehicle, not ability, whereby you were promoted, got preferential job assignments, etc.

This lack of unity generally damaged cooperative relations necessary for handling work well. This problem still hasn't been completely solved today. There are still a lot of people who are not convinced about the new political trends, and who just said whatever they were told by the upper levels. They would criticize both the Gang and also Deng, regardless of what they really thought.

#### After the death of Mao

After the Gang of 4 fell they didn't have any demotions, or criticisms, because everyone jumped in to criticize the Gang of 4, and no one would acknowledge having supported them in the past. He feels that they are carrying out the process of rooting out these people at the top--on the Central Committee--and he points to Wu De, Wang Dongxing, and Hua Guofeng as examples. Later this will filter down to the bottom. But this is very difficult, and will take a long time.

A big problem in the industrial system at present, he volunteers, is that distribution according to labor is a principle that is hard to carry out in technical work. It is hard to stimulate work enthusiasm of technical cadres. Bonuses for 70% creates resentment by the other 30% who don't get them, especially since most people are at about the same level. They also have to split these 70% into grades. So while discussing and appraising for bonuses creates arguments, and strains on relations within the work group, it turns lax labor attitudes into active dissatisfactions. So distribution according to work is a difficult thing to carry out. If they used tests and set scores linked to bonuses, there would be no way to argue, but the face-to-face appraisal creates problems.