

PERSONAL DATA

Age: 40

Sex: Male

Education: Technical school graduate

Total Years Relevant Experience: 21

Last Year of Relevant Experience: 1979

Year Left China: 1979

Initial Immigration Status: Legal

Native Place/Overseas Connections: unknown

Class Background/Political Designation: unknown

OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY SUMMARY

Positions Held: 1) Technician, Sugar Plant, Henan, 1959-65

2) Staff technician and Department Head, Sugar and Paper
Factory, Guangxi, 1965-79

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

1) County/(300-500 fluctuated by season)

2) County/(500)

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

none mentioned

APPOINTMENTS: 1

TOTAL HOURS: 2

PAGES TEXT: 3

Occupational History (5/28/80, 2 hrs.)

The informant studied at a middle-school level technical school in Guangdong, and after graduation in 1959 was sent to a sugar factory which was being built in Xinyang, Henan. It had about 300-500 employees, and was still under construction. He was age 19 at the time. He was an assistant technician. He worked on the construction of this plant for 3 years until 1962 when they decided that they would no longer need the plant, at which time they abandoned it (xiama). So he was transferred to a wine factory of about 200 employees under the same county administration. While he was there for 3 years, he did work in the shops, just about any kind of technical work needed, from repairs to testing.

In 1965, he requested to be transferred back to Guangxi (along with his wife, who originally was from Guangxi and worked as an accountant in the same plant), because he and his wife could not stand the cold weather in Henan. In 1965 he was sent to the Sugar and Paper Factory in Laibin, Guangxi, a small county seat. The plant was under county administration and had around 500 workers, although the labor force fluctuated by season. He did office work in the Production and Technical Section (gu), being the department head for a period, until he left legally for Hong Kong, with his wife, in 1979.

Wages

His first year after graduation he was on practicum (jianxi) and made 29¥. After being made regular in the next year, he was promoted to assistant technician, 36¥. In 1963, after transferring to Guangxi, he was raised to grade 15 on the technical cadre scale, a raise of a few dollars. They had a readjustment for workers then, too, a small percentage. In 1972, there was a large readjustment of about 40%, this was completely according to pay level and years of service. They set up years lines. If you had worked since 1957 and were still grade 3, they raised you to four. If you entered before 1965, and were still a 2, they raised you to 3, and if you entered before 1970 and were still grade 1, you were raised to grade 2. He was given a raise in 1972.

In 1977-78 they had another wage readjustment, and he was raised to grade 13, 52¥. This was based in part on years of service. They had a series of meetings assessing workers work contribution, skill, attitude, which took place in small group meetings after work for over 2 months, 3 times a week.

People of course argued at these meetings--"how can you say I don't deserve it? How about you?!" This kind of stuff went on. The problem was that the masses hadn't been asked before to assess themselves for raises like this, so there were some arguments and dissatisfactions. Later they instituted a testing system for skills to eliminate some of the arguing, the endless haggling and discussion. That way you either made it or not, and there were no questions. Right as they were coming to Hong Kong, they had begun propaganda for the 1979 raises for another 40% of the work force. This time there would be no year lines, it was to be purely by merit.

Bonuses

Before 1965, they had bonuses. Monthly, quarterly, and year-end. About 80% of the workers got them, and they assessed in small group meetings and sent names up for winnowing through. They split monthly bonuses into 3 grades--6,4, and 3¥. They revived bonuses in 1975, before the Gang of Four fell, in order to increase worker enthusiasm. At first the bonuses

were split into 3 grades, and small like before. They were not really open about it. But after 1977 it became more open, and the amount increased up to 20¥ for the top monthly bonus, but varied according to the plant's income during the current period.

Before the CR they had monthly bonuses for a while in his unit, but they were spending too much time discussing and arguing about them, so they decided to do it only quarterly. So the highest was 21¥, the lowest about 10¥. The 'end of the year bonus' (nianzhong jiang) was simply the last quarterly bonus of the year--a name change.

After 1977, they had monthly assessments in small groups. They discussed work contribution, attendance, and attitude. If a plant had monthly bonuses, they didn't have quarterly bonuses. These are alternatives, not types that can coexist. The same with year-end bonuses. Now this is just the name for the bonus at the end of December. They just call it something different.

Discipline, Firings

They had firings, they fired a person in 1978 for buying watches on the black market, doing trade in ration tickets, coming late and not showing up for work. So this guy was fired and later went to work in a county-run collective factory. They remember him very clearly. He was the only person they saw fired in 20 years. He was a really bad person, he always cursed at people. There were a number of steps they went through first but they didn't work. They gave him education, criticized in groups, gave warnings, but none of this worked. Now no other state-run factory in Guangxi will hire him.

Contract and Temporary Workers

Their factory's work (sugar and paper) was very seasonal, so they hired a lot of seasonal workers (jigong) in the plant. Their factory employed contract workers and seasonal workers both. The contract workers were long-term, usually worked for 2-5 years. Each contract was for 2 years, and they made about 40+¥ a month. While they are in the plant, their insurance and welfare are about the same as permanent workers. But they still got their grain rations from the communes, not from the work unit. And they had to pay part of their wages to their commune to get this grain.

The plant's busiest time was from October to March, when the sugar harvest comes in. They bring in seasonal workers from the surrounding communes for these months each year. They still go through the labor bureau for approval, and they get about the same wages as the contract workers (@40¥). While they are in the plant, insurance and welfare is about the same as regular workers. But they still get their grain from the commune.

Factory Work Experience, 1965-79

While in the Production and Technology Section (shengchan jishu gu), he did designing, repair and inspection of machinery. All year round they made paper from the leftover sugar cane stalks and grass from the communes. In the winter they made refined white sugar from the cane. They had a sugar refining shop, a machine repair shop, and an electrical generation shop.

Jobs in the production office were not very specialized. They did a little quality inspection, machinery maintenance inspection, and if there was a major problem that caused production to stop, they had to come and inspect before they could decide whether or not to authorize the machine shop to repair it.

He was the section head, and his job was to give directions to the other 10 people in the section. Other technicians in the section had different specialties--electronics, chemistry, wines, machinery. The section leader's job was to lead meetings with all his people and decide what production problems there were. Afterwards he would attend meetings with the leading cadres and with other section heads and shop directors to report.

Before the CR, they had a plant director's office, while after the CR, they had a revolutionary committee. The members of the RC were elected in 1969 by the masses, not re-elected afterwards. The elections were a show of hands, and they also used ballots. The upper levels had to approve of the outcome. The head of the RC was the party secretary, and was named by the above levels. Four members of the RC were shop directors or section heads, and there were also 2 mass representatives, workers. During the CR they did not change anything about the structure except the leading group, the RC. They did not change the sections or reduce their number.

Cultural Revolution

During the 3 years of the CR the leadership of the plant was paralyzed. During the CR, about 80% of the leading cadres stood aside, but in the end they all 'stood up' after it was over. Those on whom the masses opinions were very severe were simply transferred to another plant at the end of the CR.

They had two factions in the plant, and there were also two in all of Guangxi. Their plant was under the influence of the provincial capital, Nanning. All the units had factions in them. In 1967-68 the factions were armed and there was fighting on the streets--they had guns. There was no fighting inside the plant, but since the plant's factions were aligned with other organizations in the cities, they ran off to join the fighting in Liuzhou, Wuzhou, and Nanning. This was very severe, and production stopped completely for 6 months, and recovered only gradually thereafter.

The plant recovered from its factionalism only slowly. It took many years but gradually it went away bit by bit. The only way they could organize a 'great alliance' was to bring in PLA representatives and worker propaganda teams. They organized meetings and got the groups to settle their differences. Finally in 1969 they established a revolutionary committee, but began trying in 1968. It took a long time. All the PLA representatives had left by 1971, but they left gradually, one by one.

The workers on the propaganda team were workers from a big mining bureau nearby. They all came from units outside the plant. They had two goals--to investigate the leading cadres history, get workers to study and unite. If leaders had a bad history, they stood aside.

After the Gang of 4 fell, the biggest change was in wages and bonuses. There were no changes in the leading group. There were no elections. Leaders have always been named from above.