
PERSONAL DATA

Age: 25

Sex: Male

Education: Middle school graduate, some college (english)

Total Years Relevant Experience: 7

Last Year of Relevant Experience: 1978

Year Left China: 1979

Initial Immigration Status: Legal

Native Place/Overseas Connections: China native/Parents OS Thailand (pre'49)

Class Background/Political Designation: OS/professional (zhiyuan)

OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY SUMMARY

Positions Held: 1) Balance repairman, Nanning Measurements Management
Institute, 1972-78

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

1) Municipal/(50)

APPOINTMENTS: 2

TOTAL HOURS: 3.5

PAGES TEXT: 5

Occupational History (5/29/80, 2 hrs.)

The informant graduated in 1972 from senior middle school in Nanning. He is currently 25 years old. After graduation he was assigned to a Measurements Management Institute (jiliang guanli suo), under the Scientific and Technical Bureau of Nanning City. The general job of the office was to inspect and repair, and adjust all measuring instruments, electricity and machine meters. The employees went around to all units and factories to make sure all temperature gauges, measuring tools, etc. are up to state-set standards for these instruments. They check and adjust these instruments to make sure that state products are all up to standard. When he first left school, he was an apprentice worker for 3 years, where he received on the job training. After this he became a "balance repairman" (tianping xiuli gong). At the end of 1975, he was made a grade 1 worker. In 1976, at the end of his first year as a grade 1 worker, he was raised to grade 2. In 1978 he stopped working, sat for the university exam, and tested into Nanning Normal University, where he studied in the English Department for one year. He had earlier studied English for one year at home before the CR with his parents, both of whom are university english teachers. So his english presently is very good.

Both his parents had been struggled against during the CR--repeatedly for about one year. His father was beaten badly on one occasion with rifle butts, by students at a struggle session. Both his parents were kept in a cell for one year, during which they could only visit their on-campus only occasionally. The informant was 12 at the time, and his younger sister 10. They had to take care of themselves, and stay at home. They saw little of their parents during that year. The students in the primary school also beat the informant up repeatedly, called him a "son of a dog", which had political connotations--it meant that your parents were bad, so you were bad. They would beat him up whenever they saw him. This went on for 2 years. They did this because they all followed their parents, who were members of factions. So factionalism reached down into the primary schools. The primary school was not attached to the university but to the city.

His father was originally from Taishan County, Guangdong, born in Burma, came back to China in the 1940s, got his degree in 1952 from Qinghua University Foreign Languages Institute in English.

The informant says that he was discriminated against in other ways. There were 3 backward elements in his school class that year, and he was one of them. They were not allowed to join the Red Guards. He remembers that another of the boy's fathers was accused of being a secret agent, and was killed during the CR. Also, when it came time for job assignments he was sent to be an apprentice worker because of his family background. He claimed bad health to avoid going to the countryside. He hated his upper middle school teacher who used to tell him that he had better prepare to go to the countryside after graduation because of his family background. He hated him, because he felt this man's opinion would send him to the countryside. The year 1972 was a good year for job assignments--it was the biggest year of labor recruitment in the early 1970s, better than either 1971 or 1973. So only a small percentage went to the countryside--those with bad family backgrounds. That is why he feels this was discrimination. Everyone was surprised when he got his urban job assignment and it turned out to be a good one. He figures they thought a weights and measurements office would be heavy manual labor--lifting heavy weights, but it wasn't.

The Chinese government gave his family permission to leave for

Australia in June, 1979, and the entire family came to Hong Kong then.

Wages

As a first-year apprentice, he made 19¥, plus a 2.5¥ grain subsidy. The second year he made 21¥, and the third, 23¥. After the third year, they all wrote summaries about their work experience over the past 3 years--in both politics and work skills. Did you work hard? Were you active in politics? What did you learn? What was your opinion toward your masters, did you respect them? The only apprentices who didn't get promoted had political problems. After being made a regular worker (zhuanzheng), he was grade 1 and got 32¥. After one year, he was promoted to grade 2, 37¥. The only people not raised automatically after one year were those with political problems. They got a 2.5¥ grain supplement. The cool drink supplement during the summer (June-Sept) was 1.5¥ per month. While an apprentice, they got 20¥ per year for clothing allowance. While a regular worker, they got new work clothes once every 3 years. He didn't get any more raises after that, but his friends have since written to tell him that they have gotten raises since the end of 1979.

When he left in 1978 to go to the university, he still drew his pay because there was a regulation then saying that if you had worked in a unit for 5 years you would get full pay if you attended a university.

There was a wage readjustment in early 1978 for people who had worked for a long time, since 1971, and whose wages still were low. All these people got raises at once. They did not assess people's work contribution. "Contribution" is too abstract--it is hard to calculate. He and his friends didn't concern themselves with this, since they didn't expect a raise.

Bonuses

There were no bonuses at any time, because they were a management unit and not a production unit. There was no output, no production task, and work is very light. Sometimes they stayed there all day and had no work to do. Other times they were very busy with inspections. Each year there was a "universal inspection" of all the units in the city. This was the busiest time.

Discipline, Punishment

There were two apprentices who were very lazy, and often didn't bother to come to work. They were criticized repeatedly for this, but to no avail. Finally one was transferred to an electric motor factory. This was considered punishment. The leadership was not satisfied with them, because they talked back to the leaders when they were criticized by them. Of these two, one was a son of a high military cadre. The leader of their unit didn't dare transfer him, so they just transferred the other one.

There were no firings, they just took administrative disciplinary actions against people. There was a girl apprentice who didn't work very hard or observe strict discipline about coming to work. Once she stayed home for one month without asking for leave. When she came back she said she had been helping her family build a house. So what did they do? When it came time to be promoted to regular worker, she was delayed for three months. There is no firing in China except for those who commit criminal offenses.

Personal Relations and Factions in the Unit

He describes his unit as small but complex--many people are there and they are always in some kind of intrigue against one another. He uses the term "small pond, many turtles" (chiqian, wangba duo).

There were factions in the unit, but not like the CR. People were just playing games with one another in order to get ahead. They try to intimidate or trick the leadership into doing their bidding and also others are jealous and want to bad mouth you before the leaders. The competition was fierce--but not in work as is the case in Hong Kong. The competition is in the realm of personal politics, in leaving a favorable impression on the leaders. This is advantageous because then they can get to go to meetings, get favorable assignments outside, promotions. They tried to appear as 'red' as possible.

How does one appear 'red'? You make speeches at meetings, volunteer to write criticisms and theoretical articles. You inform on others behind their backs. For example, if in the dorms they say something expressing dissatisfaction with the leadership, somehow the leaders know about it only 2 days later. Someone was informing on them in the dorms--the leaders had their secret agents. Relations between people are very complex in China.

An example of the personal politics. There was a political worker (zheng gong yuan) in the plant who the leader did not like, he said the guy had too much ambition, and was trying to seize his power. So he accused the guy of trying to build up support among the workers and of trying to undermine his decisions.

Another example. The leader of the management office was a real bureaucrat, an old cadre, really despicable. He wanted to have all the power to himself. In 1974, the upper levels sent in a new party secretary and gave him his own section to handle political work. The unit leader saw this as a threat and resisted the party secretary. There was a fierce conflict between them for two years, but the new party secretary could never establish his authority in the unit. Later the unit leader sent requests to the top to move out the party secretary. He succeeded and he was removed, and later the leader had himself appointed party secretary.

Everybody in the unit feared this leader, and many hated him. He always criticized people in meetings if he was dissatisfied, or would look for ways to get revenge. He would transfer you out, or would make sure your housing allotment was not enough. Also, he thinks this guy was a little wierd. One of the workers had a little son who was about 1 year old. Whenever this old leader saw him he would grab him, pick him up and say "Oh come here, let me kiss your little bird!" This was really strange--he even did this in front of the women in the unit. Also, this man was obscene, dirty (xialiu), he always used dirty words in meetings. Some of the workers called him the "old hoodlum" (lao liumang). He even used bad language in front of women. He was an old cadre from the PLA and anti-Japanese war days.

The Measurements Institute (6/3/80, 1.5 hrs.)

The top leader was the institute head (suo zhang). He had no previous training, he had been an old cadre before liberation. He was paid the same as a vice-department head, or grade 18. He got over 80¥ a month. There was supposed to be 37 employees, according to the quota. But they had a few other workers borrowed on transfer from other units. For this reason some of his friends were worried that they would be transferred out because they did not have good relations with the leader. This institute head was also party secretary after a while.

They had the following staff offices. The directors' office, a finance office, and administrative office (yewu gu), which oversees the other 5 offices, and does coordinating work, The balancing office (informant's unit), the measurements (changdu) office, the temperatures (regong) office,

the electronics office, the physics and chemistry office, and the technical information office. All of the employees worked in one of these offices.

About 2/3 of the people in the institute were workers. There were also a number of technicians. Five people were administrative cadres. In all, there were 44-45 employees in the institute.

Political Study

Before the fall of the Gang of 4, they had political study two afternoons a week and once during the evening. In the evening, Monday, it was for two hours, from 7-9. Tuesday afternoon and Friday afternoon for four hours. They studied so much during work time because they were not a production unit.

They studied editorials and politics. Very dull. They talked nonsense. They sometimes had to give speeches because the leader would tell them to. This was the most tiresome thing of all. He and his friends would talk for 1-3 minutes, but the activists would go on and on. They also had to write articles and reports on criticizing Deng, the Gang of Four, and criticizing anarchism. When they had to write articles they would just copy the editorials word for word. When other people gave talks they just said exactly what the editorials said. They didn't dare say what was truly on their minds. They sat passively, just listening--but not really paying much attention. They didn't dare fall asleep, because they would be criticized.

People could get out of these sessions by asking for sick leave. Almost everybody used this method once in a while. They did not need a doctor's certificate because this was not a production unit. They would just tell the work mates they were ill and please tell the leader that they could not come. Then they would go home and have a good sleep. Especially in the summer because in Nanning it was so hot. The highs were 37-38 degrees and lows of 27, and there is no ocean breeze like Hong Kong.

They also had manual labor on Saturday mornings--they would have a general cleanup, pull weeds, etc. If they felt ill and wanted a good sleep, they just went home and asked a friend to tell the leader. Or they would call in after they got home. Usually this was for half a day or sometimes a whole day, but rarely more than one day. They also used this excuse when they wanted to go to the movies

Naturally, attendance rates were very low. The work day was from 8-12 am, 2:30-5:30pm. In the afternoon they would leave to go out to eat because they had no canteen. But sometimes they returned late. Also at 10 there was a break for breakfast, and they would stretch this out to half an hour to an hour. And if there was not much work to do, they would just knock off early and go home. Of course, things were much stricter in factories and you couldn't get away with all of this. Most people in his unit came late both in the mornings and afternoon. The dorms were next door, and sometimes people with families would go home during work hours, to cook for the family.

Where were the leaders during all of this? They were in the offices reading their newspapers and resting. After he applied to come to Hong Kong in 1976 or so, the leader of the factory put him under surveillance, meaning that they would come to the factory once or twice a day to see if he was at work. This made him mad because it meant he had to do work all the time. It also made his coworkers mad because they had to show up too, since the leader was always checking. So they decided to all go out on frequent 'inspections' to factories. And they would hang up a sign saying so on their office door. But they would really knock off 1-2 hours early on these inspections.

Their group leader was a real clever fellow. A university graduate who knew absolutely nothing about weights and balances. But he like to pretend he did and was always giving orders. He never asked the informant for advice, even though he was a master worker. So they didn't teach him anything because they didn't like him and figured the less he knew the less he could supervise their work.

Their leaders were always criticizing them for poor work discipline and laziness. This made them angry because it just wasn't true(?). It was hard to ride your bike in the sun 1-2 hours to a factory on inspection. So they would make excuses, say that it was not true, that they were sick. When they did manual labor on Saturdays, there were some cunning types who worked hard when they saw the leaders coming and they relaxed when they were gone. They were trying to endear themselves to the leader.

Campaigns

There was a series of campaigns in the 1970s, all study, no criticism or struggle of anyone in the institute. (This may be possible because this was a new unit, so there was no history. The unit was established in 1972). They just had study. There was the "one strike and three anti's" (yida sanfan), the "criticism of Lin Biao and Confucius"--confucius wanted to 'restore the rites', etc. There was the criticism of water margin--the leader of the peasant uprising wanted to surrender--a capitulationist. So Mao's instruction was to criticize this book, so they studied it. There was the "study the theory of the proletarian dictatorship" campaign. They learned that it was necessary to carry out a comprehensive dictatorship over the bourgeoisie. There was the "oppose the rightist restorationist wind"--the criticism of the '3 poisonous weeds', a document on scientific and technical work, and two others. They criticized these as espousing the 'theory of the productive forces'. After the Tienanmen incident they changed this to the criticism of Deng Xiaoping. Then there was the criticism of the Gang of Four. This was different. The central committee send down real documents and material in addition to editorials. Again, they copied the newspapers. This was the last political movement.

After this they didn't always meet two afternoons a week. They often just did their work. After 1976 the Monday night political study was cancelled. Technical study classes began to meet on wednesday afternoons after the gang of four fell.

Elections--they were discussing the possibility of electing group leaders when he left the institute in 1978. Actually these were private discussions among the workers, they were not organized by the leaders. They had read about this in the newspapers. Once when his group leader was giving him a hard time he said--"Don't be so proud, or you'll be out of a job when the elections come!" The group leader said "Well that's just fine!", but he didn't like it.