

PERSONAL DATA

Age: 42

Sex: Female

Education: Technical school graduate

Total Years Relevant Experience: 23

Last Year of Relevant Experience: 1979

Year Left China: 1979

Initial Immigration Status: Legal

Native Place/Overseas Connections: Hong Kong native, returned 1954

Class Background/Political Designation: OS

OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY SUMMARY

Positions Held: 1) Yunnan Provincial Tin Company, Gejiu, 1957-79

- a) Shop technician, lumber plant, 1957-62
- b) Technician, Technical Department, lumber plant, 1963-64
- c) Staff technician, Company department, 1964-65
- d) Technician, Quality Inspection Department, Ore Dressing Plant, 1965 (few months)
- e) Technician, construction site, 1965 (few months)
- f) Staff technician, Company Production Office, 1966-69
- g) Worker, lumber plant, 1971-73
- h) Shop technician, lumber plant, 1973-78
- i) English interpreter and teacher, Company HQ, 1978
- j) Staff technician, Company Scientific and Technical Department, 1979

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

1) Province/(unknown)

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

labor tempering as carpenter after graduation, 1957-59;
farming in May 7 Cadre School, 1969-70;
shop worker, lumber plant, 1970-73

APPOINTMENTS: 7

TOTAL HOURS: 14.25

PAGES TEXT: 14

Occupational History (12/11/79, 1.5 hrs)

Informant was born in Hong Kong in 1937, and after graduation from middle school in 1954, she returned to China to help with her nation's construction. At first she went to Canton, staying there long enough to take an examination that placed her into the Wuchang Construction Industry School. She did the three year course (middle school level) there, and at age 20 she graduated, and was assigned to the Yunnan Provincial Tin Company. She worked within this company for the next 23 years, finally coming to Hong Kong legally in September 1979. During her first two years there, 1957-59, she was a 'practicing' technician, then became an assistant technician. At first, she worked in the Construction Department of the Company (Jianzhu Ke), where she did both designing and on-site inspection and supervision. But the Company was a large integrated one, and had many component enterprises and departments. She moved around several times to many different jobs, but always staying in the Company. The Company, for example, had tin mines, ore processing plants, smelting and refining plants, a construction company, mining machinery plants, and a lumber plant (lumber being used for shoring during the mining process). She did many stints in manual labor, in several different components of the company--in 1957-59 she was working at manual labor half time as part of her training period, and did stints of manual labor during 1960, 1962, and for 3 years during 1969-72. So she has a wide experience at different levels in the Company. In January 1979 they decided to try to make use of her English skills and made her a translator for delegations from foreign countries that were visiting the company with increasing regularity, and shortly thereafter she taught English in the company's school of foreign language. She finally left for Hong Kong in September of that year, against her unit's efforts to persuade her to stay.

Cooperative Problem-Solving ("triple combination") (12/15/79, 2 hrs.)

In her early years at the plant, she worked as an assistant technician in building construction, and had broad duties. First was to draw up designs, this taking place in the offices. Second she would go to the construction site to direct workers in following the designs. In the process she had many opportunities to engage in discussion with workers about production problems. They used the 'triple combination' (san jiehe) method when discussing plans--which meant workers, technicians, and leading cadres like plant directors, department heads, party secretaries. If they didn't talk the plans over with workers, the workers would not approve of the plans, and the leaders (about 99% of leading cadres are Party members, she says). Workers wasted much time in these meetings on unreasonable suggestions, she opines, but sometimes they also raised valuable ones. Workers had to be convinced that plans were good ones, because sometimes they resisted plans.

Meetings were held during work hours, and a few of the more experienced workers from the site would come to the technical department office for the meetings. These meetings took many hours, sometimes all day. They were convened when the leading cadres wanted them. There were more during campaigns, but they always had these cooperative meetings. Department heads, or chief engineers (usually Party members) would set up the meeting, then they would meet once for 1-2 hours to set up the agenda, later would have more meetings. The leading cadre would open up the meeting by giving a short talk, summarizing the problems, and the goals of the meetings. He would usually dwell on the working tasks for the given period, and the important political

significance of fulfilling plans for the state. Sometimes this opening speech dragged on, and they had to feign attention, but other leaders (the one's who weren't old guys) could finish this part of the meeting quickly and with very little ado. Then the floor was turned over to the engineers and technicians, who explained the why's and how's of the technical process involved. Usually they added a few political phrases to their talks, otherwise it would be frowned upon. Only small percentage of technicians (about 1%) were Party members, while about 99% of the leading cadres were Party members. Most technicians felt that those among them who were Party members 'weren't really technicians', they liked politics too much and wanted to be Party leading officials. There were no special powers for the Party member technicians, but they were promoted preferentially to department head and chief engineer much faster.

Most technicians didn't like meetings and just wanted to work. To get out of larger meetings was very easy. Just don't go and tell the department head you 'forgot' (this is for political meetings, mass meetings). Small group meetings are harder to dodge this way because it is easy to get discovered, so you must go more often. Don't ask for leave from meetings because the more you ask the more they refuse. If they refuse, you've called attention to yourself and have to come. So you just 'forget' once in a while.

They had meetings of some sort almost every evening for most of her 23 years there. They were very troublesome. After 1976 there were fewer meetings, they met only twice a week. These meetings were usually political in nature, but once or twice a week they would also discuss production problems. In the political study sessions, they would read newspapers aloud, and discuss a current movement. They also had to give their opinions about speeches made at mass meetings.

Back to the subject--technical problem solving meetings. After the technicians give their speeches and reports, then the leading cadre gives a summing up speech, then explains in clear words the report, and asks for opinions of the older workers. Workers seldom criticize. They point out the 'shortcomings' (quedian) and the strong points of a presentation. They observe propriety.

For their part, technicians take notes on worker suggestions, as do the leaders (but the leaders take fewer notes). Technicians take more careful notes. Occasionally technicians would agree that a worker had made a good suggestion, and would revise their plan, nod their heads in assent, saying 'good idea'. Other times, the ideas were not so good or even very bad, but sometimes leaders would support workers with bad ideas, and technicians had to change their plans anyway. This is because leaders often didn't understand technology, because they are not technicians. Sometimes they were former technicians who had become administrators and had since lost touch with their specialty. For example, in her department, the Yunnan Tin Co. Construction and Installation Co., Science and Technology Department, the department head was originally an electrical worker, and he didn't much understand purely technical work. He supported the technicians. But once there was a kezhang in one of the departments she had worked in who was a beggar before liberation who had joined the Party and became a guerilla. In 1953 he was appointed out of the Army to become the director of a small factory. All he did was play ping pong all day. He was just terrible--he even kept his shoes in the filing cabinets.

Anyway, if worker suggestions were terrible, all the technicians would resist them. But if they were just bad, and not terrible, they often would just acquiesce. The reasons: 1) you can be punished for not agreeing, since there were times where they would 'stop your work' and have you think it over

if you couldn't bring yourself to agree with worker suggestions. 2) they can call a criticism of you if you don't exhibit the right attitude toward worker suggestions. If technicians don't agree, they can wait until after the meeting is over and talk it over with the leading cadre. If the leader reconsiders and agrees, he will call another meeting and explain to the workers why suggestions cannot be implemented. In I's opinion, the mass line is overemphasized. One of the reasons for China's slow development is because they have so many meetings, and no time for real work.

(12/22/79, 2.5 hrs.)

They convene these triple combination meetings when they have new plans, when there are quality problems, or when there are safety problems. These problems must be important ones. If there is a small problem, the technicians just go ahead and solve. If it is relatively serious, then they ask the permission of the department head to hold a triple combination meeting. This is for a problem that affects several shops. If there is a problem that affects only one shop, then they go to that shop's office for the meeting. This method of solving problems starting during the Great Leap Forward, and they used it thereafter with varying frequency. The informant feels that this is not a good method, since workers don't have technical knowledge, and it wastes a lot of time. When this mass line is being employed, then there is not enough time to do technical work. The more the mass line is emphasized, the more problems there were. During these times, you had to work late into the night in order to get all your work done, but most didn't do this, feeling the delays weren't their responsibility, so they just left their work for the next day.

They emphasized this mass line during the Great Leap and from 1960-62, then from 1963 to 1965 they had the policy of economic readjustment (readjust, consolidate, fill out, raise standards), and they used this triple combination method less. But from 1966 to 1976 they used the triple combination a lot, but it changed in form. They had workers and technicians exchanging places. A good worker who made good political speeches would be selected to work in a department on the staff, and he would learn from other technicians quickly, but never really master the skills. These people also felt uncomfortable in offices, often requested to be sent back to labor. Technicians were also sent for full-time labor in shops, full time, and about 20% were doing this at any given time. There were no contradictions between technicians and workers. They often laughed at this policy. Workers told technicians that they were uncomfortable about this anyway, and would rather be on the shop floor just doing their work.

How one gets declared a 'white expert' (baizhuan). First, you have to be one that does not like to stand up and give speeches about political theory at meetings. Second, you don't offer criticisms of others during meetings. Third, you are willing to make friends of anyone, regardless of whether or not they have been criticized for political and ideological mistakes.

Promotions and Politics

From 1964 to 1977, wages did not change according to work contribution. But it was different before 1964. Before then, workers had more opportunities to raise their pay or position. They could study and take part in a 2 part test that included a theoretical part taken on paper and a practical part given by ordering that a certain operation be performed. The practical experience test--they would give you a job to do within a certain period, like make a piece of furniture. Then they would inspect. This test was administered at set intervals by the examination committee (kaohe weiyuanhui). This committee was a subunit of the labor and wages department. They did this

about 2-3 times a year, then if you passed you would immediately be promoted to a higher grade, or sometimes to group leader or section leader. From 1966-77, there were no wage raises at all except small ones set by the central government, and no examinations. In 1966 cadres and some technicians could get a raise according to the leaderships decision (no tests); this was mostly if one had good political thought.

In the recent period, 1977-79, they have resumed tests and raises according to results, but in some places cadres are still doing things according to their old ways. She knew of cases in Yunnan in 1979 where a person getting a 20 on a test was raised, while a person getting 90 was not. Still some cadres keep old bad habits. Many workers as a result have no interest in exams because they are not fair about resulting promotions anyway. I says it is very hard to change the habits of the past.

The new policy is to test both technicians and workers. But how to handle the cases of all the leadership and political cadres? They can't pay them according to work. Also there are too many of them, and they now have a policy of simplifying administration (qingjian jigou), and they are sending more cadres to the workshops to work as workers. This is hard, because so many cadres who have done political work at the basic level have done nothing but make speeches for years, and don't know any technical skills.

So at present many basic level political cadres are being transferred to production, and they are unhappy about this. They are waiting for an opportunity to return to their former positions. One example was a man who originally was a technician at Yunnan Tin, and during the cultural revolution he was promoted to department head because of good political performance. After Deng Xiaoping came back to office in 1977, he expressed his opposition by refusing to refer to Deng as 'comrade' in the political study group. He also said he did not believe everything that was written in the newspaper. After a while, they had a meeting to criticize him, and he refused to make a self-criticism, so was demoted. But he was too proud, felt no reason to justify this criticism. So he refused to do technical work. He became a regular worker. He kept his former wage, however. During the Gang of 4 period he did real well, and got fat. Now he has gotten thinner.

I says there are a lot of these kinds of incidents in her company, but there are also a lot of people around who would like to make use of Mao's status and his previous policies to return to their former leading positions. There are not so many demotions because many pretend to agree with current policies, make self-criticisms, keep job and wages, but they are still unhappy, mainly because they are not skilled in technical work. Others who have been demoted are unhappy, and want to return to their former status. They want to use Mao's status and image in order to profit personally from it.

Raises and Wage Readjustments (12/29/79, 1.75 hrs.)

Before 1963, it was not very hard to get a raise. After 1966 the promotion system stopped, and became more informal. No one at all was raised (in grade and pay) from 1966-71. Then it became a system of promotion where one was raised in position but not in salary (tizhi bu ti xin). One got promotions to leading positions because they could make speeches, inform on others political views, and cultivate good relations (guanxi) with leaders.

In 1971 there was finally a wage adjustment. Only those who began working before 1957 (inclusive) and whose wages were below 55¥ would be raised one grade. Everyone got a raise who fit these criteria. They were raised a grade and 7-9¥ per month. About half of the workers were affected. But if you were only a grade one worker, fit the above conditions and did good work, you could be raised two grades, to grade 3. This was the only way to get

a raise in 1971. In 1966 a small number of workers and technicians got raises. The reasons and procedures were not publicly announced, but the people who got the raises were personally notified. There were some meetings between workers and cadres, but they were not serious ones, just suibian. It seemed that those who were chosen were selected on the basis of political performance, not their ability. This was after the 4 cleans movement, the end of 1964 and the beginning of 1965. In 1964, they had stopped the regular examination system. Previously workers had been willing to study in their spare time and improve their skills and wages, but afterwards they had progressively less interest in this. So during 1966-71 they raised only positions, but not wages. The first criteria was political showing, the second skill.

In 1974-75 they had discussions and study of the 20 points on industry in their small groups. Within the 20 points was a suggestion for another wage readjustment. People thought it was Deng's and Li Xiannian's policy, but Zhou Enlai was sick. Zhang Chun-qiao and Yao Wenyuan's articles were also studied, but since she and her friends weren't interested in political study, and thought much of it was false, feigned participation, found excuses not to attend, she doesn't remember much, so can't comment. After the death of Zhou and the purge of Deng, the 20 points were criticized and wage raises shelved. So they criticized the 20 points as revisionist, a very serious criticism. But the majority in her group liked the 20 points, both for the wage proposals and also for suggestions about living conditions, learning from other advanced nations, management methods. But the wage issue was most important in their minds. So people criticized the 20 points passively, tried not to speak, or criticized in a very non-committal way.

In 1978 they had an across the board wage adjustment. There were two criteria. First, all workers who began in 1963 or before, and were still grade 1 or 2, were raised to grade 3 in one sweep, despite their performance. A very few, because they followed the Gang of 4 and did not make good self criticisms, delayed their raises, but finally were given them. Second, of the remaining number of workers, they raised 40%, and this was according to work performance, secondly to political performance. They had a series of meetings from the small group, to the middle levels, to the top levels to sift through nominees. Among these, very few already had high wages, unless their performance was exceptional.

The series of meetings: 1) The small group meetings. About 10 people participated. First, everyone who was eligible under this second category raises and speaks about themselves one by one. They talked about their abilities, skills; their strengths and weaknesses, and their political performance during the Cultural Revolution. This third one meant that they basically had to convince people that they didn't do anything bad during the CR or follow the Gang of 4. Sometimes if they had, others would bring it up, and then one of two things happened. First, an unjust cadre would then squelch the discussion, saying that 'the past is the past', 'we're all brothers here', etc. Or second, a 'just' cadre would pursue this issue and discuss it. Usually the person then made a quick self-criticism.

2) The group leader, and one or two representatives from the group (workers elected from the group), went to the middle-level meeting. They discussed names over and over. This is an important meeting, because representatives from other groups might disagree, and sometimes they would get angry and argue about certain individuals. This is because various representatives don't know these nominees. This also occurs because to show hands and select is very antidemocratic when these people are present. It is very embarrassing not to vote for somebody. But in this meeting they also use a show of hands, like they do at the small group one. The group in the end

culls out a few names. These middle-level meetings include representatives of about 6-7 small groups.

3) The 'big meeting' is the final one. Representatives of 20-30 small groups meet. The process is the same as for the previous one, they discuss names and cull a few out. Party secretaries lead these meetings at the middle and top level.

Also in 1978, they began a testing system for raises again. But the preparation for these exams was not very good, they were still in disorder, and not always carried out, and if carried out, the results of the tests were not always adhered to closely in actually giving people raises. This test was also half written, half practical. In practice, the practical half was not stressed very much and the exam in 1978 was hastily prepared, not really comprehensive. There were no exams in 1979 before she left, but a few did get raises. About 2% of all staff people were raised according to performance at work (this includes departmental personnel, including technical cadres). The Party Committee branch posted names on the wall and asked for opinions. They asked for anonymous comments on the performance of these people, or wallposters if they disagreed strongly against a certain individual. This was completely on the basis of performance, not politics.

An example: in her unit (about 300 staff--the construction company office) only 6 were on this posted list, and two were disqualified on the basis of anonymous suggestions. When she left China, she heard rumors that others would later get a chance at raises, and tests. There were plans afoot, according to her friends, that in 1980 there might be another round of tests and raises. About 20% of the staff would be raised this time, as much as 2 grades.

Raises, Politics, Intellectual Workers (1/6/80, 2 hrs.)

In 1957, after graduation, she was an assistant technician. Only the name is different here, she did the same work as a technician--the difference is in level of education. She had middle-school level education, while the technicians had university-level. There was a pay difference too. During the assistant technicians' break-in period of 2 years they made 35.5¥, and after the zhuanzheng they made 47¥ as assistant technicians. The university graduates made 45¥ during their break-in period of 1 year and got 67¥ after becoming full-fledged technicians.

There were major cohort differences in wages. After the anti-rightist campaign of 1957, the wages and prestige of intellectuals were lowered. Those who graduated and began work after 1957 had to work as assistants and work for lower wages than before. For example, a technician before 1957 got 45¥ during the first year, with no break-in period. After 1957 he would get 35.5¥ for the first year, and do a spell of manual labor at the beginning of his work experience. Another example: Her husband graduated in 1955. When he was assigned his job, his new unit sent a car to pick him up. I graduated in 1957. When she was assigned, she took a train to Yunnan and no one even met her at the station.

When she says intellectuals, she means technicians, administrative staff, and all the individuals who work in departments. Not all of the leading cadres in units are intellectuals, in fact very few are. Party members are favored in appointments to leadership positions. A department head or higher cadre is almost always a party member. Non-party intellectuals are the majority in regular technical and staff positions. People usually prefer it this way because a non-Party person in a leadership position is highly exposed to criticism as a leader. One engineer in her unit (thus an intellectual) was a department head from 1957 on, but during the 4 cleans movement in 1965 he was demoted to be a regular technician, without a change in

his title 'engineer' or in his pay grade. He just stopped doing leadership work as department head. He was criticized for being 'cowardly' (danxiao) and having a low technical level. He was afraid to make decisions, and always said 'go ask the other department head'--the one who was a party member. He was replaced with a Party member who was also an intellectual. But this Party member was himself criticized shortly thereafter during the Cultural Revolution.

There is another kind of treatment intellectuals receive, but more serious, if rarer. Another engineer she knew for years made 240¥ per month in the early 1950s. During the Korean War, he was commended for meritorious service, and thereafter his wages were increased from 100 to 240¥. He was a department head. But he was later criticized without reason, because he had joined the KMT earlier. But other than this there was no problem. During the four cleans he was criticized as a 'reactionary technical authority', and they reduced his salary to 40¥. He was replaced by a regular technician who was a party member and who became the new department head. After this he refused to go to work, and stayed home on sick leave, since they had assigned him to hard labor and was around 60 years old. Almost 10 years later, around 1973, his salary was restored, and he was given all of his back pay, and he became rich and retired. This was when Deng Xiaoping came back for the second time. During this decade many people refused even to speak with him. He worked together with the informant in a May 7 cadre school.

Timidity (danxiao)--this is the special characteristic of most intellectuals, including herself. Intellectuals are afraid because they don't know when they will next be criticized in a campaign. They are afraid because they have a bad occupational status (chengfen). For example, one intellectual, the Party-member engineer mentioned above who replaced the original engineer during the 4 cleans movement, was later removed during the Cultural Revolution. He got into trouble for something he said while he was in the army before liberation, albeit only jokingly. They found this out because it was entered onto his personal dossier. These dossier are checked over very closely in every political campaign. For intellectuals, these dossier include material on parentage, class background, education, performance during each campaign, etc, and also any mistakes one might have made. These files are thicker on intellectuals, but they were not so big and complete for assistant technicians like the informant. These dossier make sure that you can be criticized for the same mistake again and again.

Anyway, this person had perverted a popular song of the PLA for fun. The lyrics of the song went something like this: "The sky in the liberated areas is bright and clear...the people in the liberated areas are happy". But one day while on the march, it was raining continuously, so he changed the lyrics of the song around for fun and sang it like this: "The sky in the liberated areas is black and dark...the people in the liberated areas are unhappy". This was done as a joke at the time, but it was reported by a political officer and entered onto his record. Later this man was put into prison during the Cultural Revolution because this indicated that he was a counter-revolutionary.

What was the concrete effect of all this on intellectuals' workstyle? For non-party administrators or technicians, whenever the time came to make a decision or take a new step, they had to think twice about making a decision, about taking a risk. They wanted to be assured of success. They will not take a decision unless they are 90-95% sure of success. They are afraid if they fail. It often happens that if they fail they will be accused of sabotage, of doing this on purpose, of being reactionary. So they refuse to take risks, and are very cautious.

One technician, for example, wrote a wallposter, and miswrote a few

characters which changed the meaning and inadvertently went against Mao's thoughts. He was immediately thrown into prison. Later during the Cultural Revolution (this took place early in the CR), the military representative came to check things over and found he had been wronged. Later after he was let out his personality had changed. He was heartbroken, had no energy, had no taste for either politics or work. He looked for chances to go out and have a good time. When politics came up in casual conversation, he would change the subject.

Intellectuals don't generally like to join the party because they do not respect the intellectual level of most cadres. They have bad characters, can only do political work and not skilled work. They feel that party members are just 'empty-headed politicians' (kongtou zhengzhijia). After the Cultural Revolution this became even more pronounced--these 'politicians' were able even more and more to get promoted, and get by. Lin Biao had said "Politics is the supreme commander, one good thing will bring about three", which means basically that if politics is handled well, they production and everything else would follow naturally. In general, intellectuals felt that politics was a waste of time.

Bonuses

Before the Cultural Revolution, they had different bonuses. They were broken into three grades, about 15¥, 10¥, and 8¥ a month, but she doesn't remember the amounts clearly. These bonuses were based on the output of the worker, on the output of the unit and whether they made a profit, had good safety records, etc. They were abolished during the Cultural Revolution. Then they were restored when Deng Xiaoping returned in 1973, and then taken away when Deng was purged in 1976, after the Tiananmen incident. Then in 1977, after the fall of the Gang of 4, things were in disorder, and they began the bonus system again. Each unit has a different way of handling bonuses.

According to the pre-CR method, everyone got a bonus. Only those who were extremely lazy or had bad politics, or who had too many absences, or bad safety records didn't get one. These bonuses were also linked with the overall performance of work groups, and the entire group's bonus was linked to its output. Both for technical staff departments and production groups, bonuses were figured as follows: First the group as a whole must meet certain targets, then if they qualify for bonus funds, the group as a whole must decide how to split up their funds and distribute them in three grades. It was like a pyramid, the higher the bonus, the fewer people who got that much. The main criteria was work output. They discussed in group meetings whether work contributions of each individual were good. Generally, it is easy to decide who gets the top grade bonus, these are the outstanding people. But it is more difficult to decide who gets grades 2 or 3, so they are more lax (suibian) about it as a result. So very often they rotated each month for who could get grades 2 and 3, so things were equalized.

Why did they try to equalize bonuses? This was because if they didn't do things this way it would often bring about bad feelings and arguments within the group. So some groups before the cultural revolution had already begun to divide up bonus funds completely equally. This was one step further than the strategy of rotating grades 2 and 3. After bonuses were restored in 1973, 74, and 75, when Deng came back the first time, they were usually handled not by this 3-grade method, but by this equal-sharing method within the group.

Then in 1977, after Deng came back the second time, they restored the bonuses again, and were supposed to use the graded 1,2,3 system, but there

was still a lot of use of the two 'equalizing' methods discussed above. But there has been a reform of the earlier method in the past year. They have set up rules for individual attendance, etc. which rationalized and shortened the discussion process for dividing bonuses. But she feels there still is not an adequate reflection in the bonus system of how hard or well you work. During the Cultural Revolution they abolished all bonuses, saying that they represented economism, and that people shouldn't get more money for more work, because that would lead to revisionism.

Shortly after the bonuses were abolished they began a system of supplementary wages which were given to all employees regardless of their work performance, beginning in late 1965 or early 1966 (dates here may be off). After the beginning of the CR, however, they did not give them to new workers, so they were only received by those who had worked in the enterprise earlier. So the wage packet had two parts, the basic wage (jiben gongzi) and the supplementary wage (fujia gongzi). Supplementary wages were divided into three grades. For those with a basic salary over 100¥, they would receive grade 3, or 4-6¥. For those with a salary over 59¥, the supplement would be grade 2, or 6-8¥. For those below 59¥, grade 1 would be 10-12¥. These were given automatically to everyone in the plant, despite their output.

Wage Supplements (1/13/80, 2 hrs.)

Everyone in the company got a grain supplement of 2¥ a month. This began around 1974. Work clothes were provided for workers. One suit was given every 6, 12, 18 months depending on your job. Gloves, boots, rubber shoes, raincoats, and hard hats were included. They provided work clothes for the technicians and staff once every 2 or 3 years. The allotment was 16 ma per year of cloth. Transport fees are paid only for the staff. Workers all live near construction sites. Also, Gejiu is a small city. Once or twice a week, the company would send workers off in company trucks for free to see their families. Also, workers and staff got all expenses paid when travelling on company business. There were also different work-related supplements: a high temperature supplement, bad air or dust supplement, underground or underwater work supplement. For these, you get two extra meat tickets, increased meat rations from 1-3 catties a month, and also get a monetary supplement. The supplement for dangerous work is not small. An underground worker who gets 55¥ salary will get a supplement of 20¥. This was for mining workers--they did not send below grade 3 workers into the aluminum mines.

Work Performance

The way the wage system was set up, there were very few real activist producers. Only about 5% worked hard. But managers and department heads had to continually praise workers for their achievements nonetheless. People eventually began to take advantage of sick leave--after 8 years in the enterprise you get sick leave with full pay, and no limits in amount of leave, especially if you are on good terms with the clinic doctors who must sign a form releasing you from work. This is why doctors live well in China, because so many people ply them with small gifts (no money)--people just want to be on good terms with them. They also do housework, repairs, labor for them, and give them gifts of foodstuffs or clothing. Volunteering labor is important because in China you have to make your own furniture, carry coal, etc. So people are willing to do work like carpentry for the doctors. So doctors have all they could want, despite the fact that their wages are about the same as technicians.

This abuse of sick leave began in the middle of the CR, and continued up until very recently, when work attendance rates were tied to the new bonuses. Often attendance rates were as low as 70%. People used sick leave for their

personal business. Both workers and staff did this, but workers did it more, because staff have more freedom--nobody checks where they are or where they go during the day. So they can slip out for errands for 1-2 hours, unlike workers, to do their household errands. For example, if she said she was going to the construction site, who would know?

Management was well aware that all of this was going on, but did nothing about it until after the Gang of 4 fell, then had the movement to "Grasp the principle, build the nation" (zhua gang zhi guo). Then cadres moved against this problem by setting up new regulations. First people were called in to study the new orders, discuss them, have self and mutual criticism about their attendance. Later it was discovered that this small group meeting method was ineffective, almost useless. It worked only for a short time while people were afraid something might happen to them, but when they realized no punishments were forthcoming, they decided it was still no problem to leave when they felt like it.

Part of the reason for poor attendance is that shopping is difficult. With an 8 hour day and later political study, when do you have time to do the family shopping? This was especially bad for the informant, who had a family to take care of. There were no refrigerators, so you have to shop every day for vegetables and meat. It was very time-consuming. Stores unfortunately kept the same hours as the enterprises. So cadres later linked bonuses to attendance, after small group criticism failed to remedy the problem, and they also made efforts to get the stores to stay open longer. So people were always busy--there was no rest. They had a saying "There is no Sunday, just a seventh day to the week", (mei you xingqi tian, jiu you xingqi qi), meaning that they had no rest. This was a real drag on people, and affected their attendance and their work.

They discussed the 20 points on industry in their study groups before the fall of Deng, in 1975, and within the 20 points they talked about raises. Workers liked this. But after the fall of Deng in 1976, the 20 points were to be criticized, but people still liked them. She had heard of the Hangzhou strikes, and also of strikes in the railway system during this same period, and after Deng fell many people confided in her secretly that it was a pity. But there were no big problems like strikes in Yunnan, because Yunnan had special circumstances. During the cultural revolution Yunnan had been in great disorder. One provincial first Party secretary had committed suicide, and his replacement was killed by followers of the Gang of 4. Also, in 1976 there was a rebellion by the Moslem minorities in Yunnan. This was not far from Gejiu, in a county called Jijie. During the rebellion, many PLA soldiers died, and also a lot of Moslems were killed. The Party Secretary then died, partly because of all the stress this brought him. This rebellion was in 1976, and there was no problem thereafter that she knew of.

Discipline, Firing

If someone is especially lazy and fights a lot with others, and does not change after repeated warnings, then they could be fired. These are mostly the young new workers. But this happened very rarely. Less than 1% of the workers. This also happened to young girls who did not have 'good character' and led bad private lives. For example, if they are promiscuous or if they get pregnant. If they get fired, it is very hard to find another job. If you don't make any big mistakes, then you don't get fired. Even if you make small mistakes uninterruptedly, there is still no firing. This is what is called the iron rice bowl (tie fanwan). People don't often get fired for political mistakes because they learn from childhoods to be careful.

Personal Experience in Manual Labor, 1957-79

Throughout her career, she did repeated periods of manual labor. In 1957, she arrived at her unit right after the anti-rightist campaign, so she did manual labor for a period after graduation in the company. She worked as a carpenter for 2 years until 1959. Was an assistant technician but did carpentry work, no designing work. At the end of 1959 she asked to be allowed to do technical work. She was transferred to be a technician in a workshop, and did this for one year. Her job was to help workers to do their work, and tell them how to do certain things according to technical standards. This was in the company's lumber factory. In a sense, this was a leadership position, since she showed workers how to do things, and sometimes would work right alongside them if she felt the need. At the beginning of 1962 she asked for and got a transfer to the technical department of the lumber plant, where she managed technical problems for the entire factory. Sometimes she did designing, sometimes handled contracts with buyers for the lumber. There were only about 5 people altogether in this office.

During 1964-65 she worked in a higher level office within the Tin Company, still as a technician. She worked on the process of making pre-cast concrete pieces--this was economic work, where she figured the cost of buildings using this method. During these periods of office work, there were no fixed programs for participation in manual labor, although they often had contact with workers on the job. During this period, sometimes a leader asked them to work at manual labor on Saturday, but she usually didn't do this, except once in a while in order to escape criticism. For a half year in 1965 she was transferred from the Company offices back to the town of Gejiu, where she again worked at a factory, still within the same company, an ore dressing plant. She still did technical work, quality control. She went to the construction site where the addition to the plant was being made and inspected the quality of the construction.

In late 1965 she was transferred again to a construction site, and also did technical work there. There were no fixed periods for manual labor, just like before. In 1966 she was transferred to the production office of the construction company within the Provincial Tin Company. This office had been altered during the four cleans movement, and included a number of departments that were earlier separate--safety, designing, wages, production, etc. At the end of 1966, a directive came down saying that those people with overseas connections can't work in offices, but must work in production units. But she stayed in the office anyway until 1969. She avoided politics during this period, and still did all kinds of jobs. Then she communicated with workers through other technicians on the site. She didn't go personally to the work sites to talk with workers. During the cultural revolution, she did manual labor on Saturdays, but not very regularly.

In 1969 she was sent to a May 7 cadre school, right after the spring festival. She stayed until the end of 1970. They worked at farming. The cadre school was in Yunnan, but about 70 km away from Gejiu. Both she and her husband were sent there, but their daughter of 15 months could not go. They paid half of their salaries to another woman they knew in Gejiu to take care of her. Her department head had told her that they were there to do self criticism and nothing else, so the child could not go.

Early in 1971 she came back to her unit and participated in open-door rectification of Party members. They discussed this during work-time meetings, and talked about the qualifications of each Party member for remaining in the Party, but later the Party decided on its own who would stay. In 1971-73 she was transferred to do manual labor in the lumber factory. This was in a workshop in the lumber factory--the pre-cast concrete shop. There was no technical work for her. Because of the 'six black points' (hei liu tiao) regarding

overseas Chinese (the document mentioned earlier), they said people with overseas connections could do only manual labor. During this entire period her wages and grade stayed the same.

In 1973 she was able once again to work as a shop technician, since overseas Chinese still weren't permitted to work in department level offices. There was another technician of poorer professional qualifications, but no overseas connections, who got to work in higher offices. He was actually unwilling to do this because he got no pay raise, just increased responsibility. Later when in 1976 they tried to get him to trade places with the informant, he had changed his mind and wanted to stay. So she stayed in the workshop as a technician, sometimes designing, sometimes showing workers how to do certain operations, until 1978.

In 1978, after a short period as an interpreter and teacher of English, she was transferred back to the scientific and technical department (keji ke) where she did design work. This was once again called a department (ke) because they had since separated the different departments that had earlier been combined into the 'production office' during the four cleans. She didn't want to be an interpreter because she was afraid another campaign would come and she would be attacked for mingling with foreigners. Even after all these job changes, she kept the same salary and wage grade. All these transfers were within the Tin Company.

Great Leap Forward (1/19/80, 2.5 hrs.)

During the beginning of the Great Leap, the most striking change was the extension of working hours. They could ask you to work at any time. They were all sent to the first line of production to do manual labor. Lots of overtime--many times they went 2 days without any sleep. She remembers at one point being so tired that she couldn't see. She remembers one coworker, a carpenter, who chopped into his leg with an axe because he was so sleepy. Accidents increased generally, because people were too tired. They even worked at planting rice during the planting season at night. Sometimes they planted the stalks too close together, and they didn't grow.

In the plant, they pulled out window frames, and tore things apart to take away the iron for steel making. Every place had a small steel furnace in those days, and they ran around looking for fuel, using chairs and furniture. It was such a waste.

You can almost say that there were no positive results from the Great Leap. There was much false reporting, and the upper levels seemed to like it. For example, in her lumber plant at the time, the Party was reporting figures for timber utilization which meant that there was more cubic feet of finished lumber being produced than there were cubic feet of timber coming into the plant. If you brought this up, saying these figures were impossible, you would be attacked and criticized for opposing the line of the Great Leap.

For example, the director of her plant had doubts about all of this and didn't participate in the false reports actively, nor in the movement in general. He was criticized as a rightist in the midst of the Great Leap, saying that he was a rightist and was raising the white flag. He was shuttled aside, and did not work for 2 months, then transferred. He was transferred to agricultural labor--to agricultural land owned and cultivated by the Tin Company. He was there for years, they just forgot about him. After the Cultural Revolution he came back, but he had kept his original salary during the entire period.

Results: They wasted materials. They filled out false reports about the use of materials, and their ratio to output. They were reporting

raw timber utilization rates (the ratio of raw timber entering the plant to cubic footage finished lumber leaving) of 105%. This was a figure where 70% was considered very good, and where 100% was impossible but the highest mathematically possible. So since they were 'figuring wildly' anyway, people stopped planning the cutting process carefully, and actually wasted more raw timber than before, and were in fact below previous levels of about 75%. The result was that they lost money. Even after the shortcomings became apparent, it was still impossible to draw attention to it and criticize it.

This whole thing got started when the Party Secretary called a meeting at the beginning and said, "Guangxi produced X, we should produce even more!" So off they went, they started holding meetings continuously. The Party secretary would bring inflated plans to the directors, the department staff, and ask how long it would take to complete them. Then he would order them to complete the plans in half the estimated time, and would accept no excuses. Also, remember that the Party Secretary's personal performance was evaluated based on the output of his unit, so he pushed things along to further his own chances for favorable evaluation and later promotion.

Cultural Revolution

There were two factions in her plant, even families were split. One faction was more conservative, one was more revolutionary (baoshou; zaofan). The conservative faction had relatively more older cadres. The rebel faction had more youth, more students. At this time she was working in the scientific and technical department. Work continued, but more slowly since there often was nobody around to check on their work. Many people had a dunce cap placed on their heads, were criticized, pushed around the streets, forced to bend over for long periods of time with their arms spread out, extended behind them--this was called 'doing the airplane' (zuo feiji). While being struggled in this way, they were routinely beaten. Generally speaking, the ordinary administrative and technical staff workers escaped being criticized in this fashion. It was leading cadres--especially department heads, party secretaries, and plant directors--who received this treatment. These people had to step aside, sometimes doing heavy manual labor.

Many people left the unit and went back to their native villages, or just stayed away from work because it was too dangerous. Many just stayed at home. Often they had to stop work because there were too few people. This is when population problems started. People had nothing to do so they went home and made babies. Production was disrupted from 1967 to the end of 1968. They started attempts to establish the Revolutionary Committee in late 1968. Military representatives came to supervise the seizure of power. This was in 1967. They took over the role of the Party Committee, and began discussing all the problems of the plant. They made the decisions on all major matters. They rehabilitated some people who had been wrongly criticized earlier.

The PLA did propaganda work for the establishment of the revolutionary committee. They chose other members--old cadres who were acceptable and faction representatives--and of course they chose themselves. After the RC was established, they had another period where people were criticized and removed from their posts. This was the 'cleaning of the class ranks' campaign. This meant that people who had been members of the conservative faction--the ones that lost--were attacked. Were the ones that were violent earlier on attacked at this time, too? No!! They gained high positions and were in power! Her department head was removed this way during 1969. He lost his position for a long period, and did labor in a May 7 cadre school along

with the informant. He did a very good self-criticism, and since they needed him on the job, they liberated him in mid-1970. He was a Party member. The new department head was also a Party member, he was the previous vice-head of the department. This new department head was a former worker, and while the old head had technical training, this fellow did not.

The PLA representatives stayed in the company until 1974 or so. They formed revolutionary committees in every single plant in the company. They wore their uniforms at work. She thinks they all returned to the army about the time the Gang of 4 fell. The PLA representatives were not liked. They could bring their wives from the countryside and move them to the city. And they could get their wives good jobs despite their lack of qualifications. These army people didn't understand production and gave blind orders. They wanted the workers to act like soldiers and used the same type of leadership methods as in the army. They didn't work hard. They made jiaozi with electric ovens during work hours. They got their children through the back door into preferred industrial jobs.

After the Gang of 4

The first thing that happened after the Gang of 4 was put in jail was that many people who had been wrongly punished since 1949 were rehabilitated. This was the job of a specially formed 'rehabilitation group' (pingfan xiaozu). Different groups were formed especially to rehabilitate people from different periods. They divided labor by era--1949-55, 1956-66, 1967-76. They rehabilitated the most recent periods first, and worked backward in time. This process began in 1977, and ended near the end of 1978.

They also formed a 'study group' (xuexi ban). This was established to root out people who did bad things during the CR, former radical leaders. People who had beaten others during struggle sessions or in the niupeng (cowsheds), or who had interrogated people physically during the CR, and who were at that time some of the leading figures in the company. They made them study, write self-criticisms, and then read their self-criticisms to the masses at a mass meeting (dahui)

These people kept their wages, but they were often removed from leading position and demoted to ordinary staff or labor work. She feels that compared to the bitter experience she had in the May 7 school and the bad treatment given so many during the cultural revolution, this was really nothing. These people weren't forced to walk long distances on their knees to ask forgiveness at the graves of revolutionary martyrs, as victims of the cultural revolution were. Anyway, punishment here depended on the severity of the person's previous mistakes. Many could get away only with self-criticisms. If it was a good self-criticism, demotion might be avoided. When she left, some of these people still were doing manual labor, had not yet been transferred to new job assignments. They were still in the study groups. After a period of manual labor, if their political behavior is acceptable, then they can be transferred to a new job.