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Interview by Wong Sau Lin Natalie

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Symbol: Natalie—Wong Sau Lin (interviewer)

Ling —; Cheung Ka Ling (interviewee)

Interview Transcript

Natalie: Thanks for your coming!

Ling : You are welcome.

Natalie: The purpose of this interview is want to know more about your childhood.

Ling : Yes, I know. You have talked on the phone.

Natalie: Ok, can you introduce yourself first.

Ling : My name is Cheung Ka Ling, you can call me “ling”. I was born on 1st October 1977 in Shenzhen.

Natalie: Why you were born in Shenzhen?

Ling : In fact, my father was born in Hong Kong, he came back China to marry with my mother.

Natalie: That means you had less time with your father when you were young?

Ling : I also had less time with my mother.

Natalie: Why?

Ling : My mother had immigrated to Hong Kong when I was two years old. Because of immigration of China government is too strict, it is difficult for me to go with my mother. Meanwhile, my mother was not willing leaving me in China.

Natalie: Who was responsible for looking after you?

Ling : My grandparent.

Natalie: Would you like to talk about the childhood in China.

Ling : I think my childhood is very happy! What I should talk? After or before

studying?

Natalie: Everything you can talk, as you like. For example, studying , daily life and so on.

Ling : When I was young, my parent didn't live with me, the feeling was not good. But my grandparent loves me so much. Of course, if I was naughty, they would punish and demanded me to correct it. Then I studied in pre-school. All my classmates no matter went or left the school with there parents. I felt so upset. Nevertheless, my grandparent explained to me that your parent was working in Hong Kong. In fact, they come back to visit me when they were holiday.

Natalie: I thought you expected that they could often visit you.

Ling : Not sure.

Natalie: Why?

Ling : Because I regarded my parent would set a lot of rules and regulations for me to obeyed. On the contrary, grandparent would give me more freedom. Also, I understood they couldn't visit me often, and I have two little brothers whom needed concern with my parents.

Natalie: You have two brothers. Am... What did you think about your living environment in China?

Ling : My house is too big! And also has a big playground in front of the house. Because there is many space available. Now the house I am living is much smaller compare with it.

Natalie: What would you do in your pastimes?

Ling : I would play everything around me, e.g. sand, mud, and playing toys which brought by my parents.

Natalie: When you immigrated to Hong Kong?

Ling : About nine years old.

Natalie: When you are informed to Hong Kong, were you happy?

Ling : I was so happy. Indeed, my grandparent informed me. On the other hand, I knew if I immigrated to Hong Kong, I couldn't live with my grandparent. I had complicated emotion at that time.

Natalie: What did you think about Hong Kong when you immigrated here?

Ling : Indeed, I had visited Hong Kong when I was young. I participated a tour for travelling Hong Kong. I thought there was a good place. My parent brought me visited famous place such as Ocean Park, and eating everywhere. I enjoyed this trip too much, not just only playing but also lived with my parent.

Natalie: How about your studying life?

Ling : I felt it was harsh experience. In China, I promoted to primary four, but in Hong Kong I studied from primary two. So I was much older than my classmates. Also, I couldn't catch the skills of English although I had worked hard. Indeed, it put pressure on me.

Natalie: Have you faced any discrimination from your classmates?

Ling : No, there were three to five new immigrants in my class. And I can talk Cantonese very well as I had learned Cantonese in Shenzhen.

Natalie: When you immigrated to Hong Kong, what sort of accommodation did you lived? Could you describe it?

Ling : I lived in Temporary Housing. It was made by wood and too small. The living environment was bad, such as no independent washroom and chicken room. Despite of this, I was glad because I could live with my family member.

Natalie: What was your parent's occupation?

Ling : My mother was a housewife. She needed to look after two litter brothers. My father was a factory worker. Thus, there had financial difficulties in my family.

Ling : Can you remember any events as a child?

Natalie: I remember in school parents day, all my schoolmates go to school with their parents, but I hadn't that I was unhappy. On the other hand, all my schoolmates envy me as I showed off my clothes, toys.... that brought from my parent in Hong Kong.

Natalie: Did you think the relationship with your grandparents was close than your parent?

Ling : Yes, they looked after of me, we could keep close relationship. However, I couldn't see my parents often, I missed them.

Natalie: Could you remember any events when you lived in temporary housing?

Ling : I was happy, I meet a lots of friends there, they as my private tutor. Also, we played together in the playground, such as playing badminton, basketball.

Natalie: How about your academic performance? Have your parent put pressure on you?

Ling : Yes, they put higher expectation on me and hoped me could get good academic result, as they were worried that I might be discriminated by schoolmates. As the helping of my friends, I made improvement on it.

Natalie: What was the relationship between you and your little brothers?

Ling : We loved each other, indeed, they often visited me with parent when I was in China.

Natalie: What activities have you participated in secondary school?

Ling : So many. Singing contest, joining club... Also, I was a voluntary worker belong to the YMCA that is a voluntary organization in temporary housing.

Their target audiences are the people who live in temporary housing.

Natalie: What have you learned?

Ling : When I came to Hong Kong, I was passive and quiet. After joining YMCA. I have learned too many things. For instance, leadership, presentation skills. These skills enhance my confidence.

Natalie: What activities were held?

Ling : Ah....one day tour, health exhibition...all these activities were designed by our team. Of course, guidelines would be given by social workers.

Natalie: Looking back, are there any events in your childhood which stick in your mind? Could you describe them?

Ling : In my memories, I had ever lived hospital for two weeks. It was a bitter experience. One summer holiday, I went to China visiting my grandparent, because I was greedy, eating too much, I got a stomach. So grandparent brought me to see a doctor, and then might be the nurse injected wrongly, when I came back to Hong Kong; it had a big tumour growth on hip. Doctor said the cells around the tumour were dead; the better option was to do surgery to cut it, then I sentenced to the hospital.

Natalie: When happened it?

Ling : It was about primary one, aged fourteen. When I was informed to go to hospital, I was scared. After surgery, I felt sick and painful. I was bored when I stayed at hospital. Fortunately, my parent visited me daily and brought food, stories book to me. I felt much of love, concern from them. But I missed my brothers, friends and classmates.

Natalie: Do you think your childhood life has affected your adult life? How?

Ling : Because of my childhood, I would treasure what I have own and try my best to keep good relationship with my parents and share the burden of them.

Also, I am not a materialistic person. I love stable life that don't want to sort short-cut road to earn money.

Natalie: Do you think the lifestyle of children in Hong Kong is different from your childhood?

Ling : No matter living environment, the level of living standard and economic condition in China is much worse than Hong Kong. Thus, I think the childhood of me is different from them. Hong Kong children have better lifestyle than me, their parents can satisfied all their material desires that receive much pocket money. That's why Hong Kong youngsters lack drive.

Natalie: What was your dream as a child?

Ling : I had too many dreams. In China, I wanted to be a teacher, because I had many good teachers who put efforts on me. Then I came to Hong Kong, I wanted to be flight attendant. Unfortunately, I couldn't fulfill the basic requirement of flight attendant as I am weak in English.

Natalie: What qualification did you leave school with?

Ling : I graduated in Form Five, then I try to find job. I have done different nature of jobs. Such as salesgirl, clerk.... salesgirl is much suitable for me. and I haven't further my studying. Indeed, I almost give half of my salary to my mother that hopes to improve the living condition.

Natalie: Do you have any plan for your future?

Ling : I spend money carefully and establish a systematic saving habit. Now I have saved amount of money, I have found a partner to open a boutique.

Natalie: The last question, looking back, who affects you too much?

Ling : May be my grandparent. They were farmers that they were busy all the day, such as farming, feeding chicken, deck, pig etc.... however, they enjoyed the their sample life and haven't made any grievances. It affect my view of life

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that optimistic and work hard.

Natalie: It's my pleasure to interview you, you are a good example for me. Finally, I

bless your business to be success. Thanks a lot.

Ling : Not at all.

The End

“This is the end of the interview with Cheung Ka Ling (Ling) on 12th March 2000.

The interviewer was Wong Sau Lin (Natalie).”