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Interview by Lee Wing Wai Loretta

Wing Wai, Loretta LEE

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ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
HONG KONG CHILDHOOD

BY

LEE WING WAI, LORETTA (1090155)

Prepared for Dr. Rozanna Lilley

April 3, 2000

GEN 210 VALUING CHILDHOOD

Talking Tales Oral History Project-- Hong Kong Childhood

Interview Transcription

Name of interviewer: Lee Wing Wai, Loretta (1090155)

Name of interviewee: Lee Hon Yip

Symbol: Loretta –Lee Wing Wai

Father- Lee Hon Yip

Loretta: Hello! Today is April 3, 2000, I am doing an interview with my daddy about his childhood. Can you tell me your family background?

Father: I was born in a poor family in Hong Kong. My father was a stone mason and my mother was a housewife. Actually there were 6 members in my family, my parents, my little sister, little brother, elder sister and me. However, my elder sister was given to other because there was financial difficulties in my family on that time.

Loretta: Why was your elder sister given to other?

Father: My father was a gambler, he always owe people a lot of gambling debt, so my family has not enough money to foster one more children, consequently, my elder sister was given to other.

Loretta: Where did you live? And how about your living condition?

Father: I lived in a wooden hut on the fringe of a hill in Causeway Bay before I was seven. Then we moved to another wooden hut in Shi Wan Ho. It was a two-story wooden hut which was located at a village (it is called Holly Cross Path Village) in the middle of a hill.

Loretta: Can you explain that village for me?

Father: Yes, that village was so simple and crude. All of the huts were made by wood or stone. Most of them were one story and the highest one had only two stories.

Loretta: How long did you live in that village?

Father: It was about ten years. I lived in there when I was 7 until 17.

Loretta: Did you achieve any formal education, such as kindergarten, primary school and secondary school.

Father: The educational system in Hong Kong was not well provided in that period, Especially for the poor districts, there were no schools established. So I could only study in private kindergarten and primary school, which were established by some educated neighbors in that village.

Loretta: Oh! Private school...were there any formal school campuses?

Father: There were no any standard school campus. When I studied primary school, school campus was located at the top of the hill. It was only a two-story stone house and it had a little playground in front of the house. In addition, the kindergarten I studied which was established by an educated couple. Their hut was divided into two parts. The front part was used as a class room and they taught some basic knowledge to some kids. The back part of their hut was used as residence.

Loretta: Did you need to pay any tuition fee?

Father: Yes, we should pay only a few dollars for our teachers.

Loretta: Did you still study in the village after you graduated from your primary school?

Father: There was no secondary school in my village but only had kindergarten and primary school. So I had to find a secondary school in other district for my future study.

Loretta: Any events are still deep in your mind when you were studying in school?

Father: Not much, I Had studied in secondary school for only two more years, so I have not clear memory about my school life.

Loretta:Um... Do you have any unforgettable memory in your childhood?

Father: Yes, most of my unforgettable memories were happened in that village because

I lived in there for a long time.

Loretta: Oh good! Can you share some of them to me?

Father: Sure... I have two unforgettable things wanted to share with you. The first one is related to my home. My home was a two-story wooden hut. Everytime when the typhoon signal was hanged that may threaten me a lot. All my family numbers could not sleep over night because they were afraid of the wooden house will be destroyed by typhoon. So I could not sleep until the typhoon passed.

Loretta: How about the second thing?

Father: The second unforgettable thing was happened when I was 15 and my little brother was 13. In 1965, Hong Kong was rainless, The Hong Kong Government carried out the control of edible water. One that period, all the people who lived in the village should wake up at 3 a.m. and walk down the hill to get water every night. My little brother and me also prepared well some empty buckets and got down the hill at 3 a.m.

Loretta: Oh! Did you need to queue up for a long time?

Father: Yes, when we got down the hill, there were big crowds on the street. Thus, I had to use 3 to 4 hours to get a few buckets of water to home.

Loretta: What would you like to play when your were a child?

Father: In my generation, I would like to fly kites with my friends on the roof of my neighbor's hut.

Loretta: Anything else?

Father: Yes, we would like to climb up the trees and collect some little insects like "Agcko". Then we placed them in a paper box and let them fight to each other on every weekend.

Loretta: Oh... I nearly forget to ask you ... which year did you born in?

Father: I was born in 1950.

Loretta: The last question is, do your parents treat you serious?

Father: Not really! Every child likes playing, but I had to pick up all tasks of housework. If I play over time and cannot prepare well supper for my dad and mum before they arrived at home. I will be beat by them with hand or small stick.

Loretta: Thank you for your time. This is the end of the interview.

Father: You are welcome.