

Comparative Culture

Oral History Project

by
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Prepared for Dr Rozanna Lilley

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SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW

Interviewer: I write this summary after listening to the tape, highlighting some of the more interesting aspects of the interview.

Mr Stanley Kwok is twenty-three years old and he is studying in the technical college. He has three elder sisters and one younger brother. He lives in Kwai Fong Estate with his household. His family moved once but they still lives in the same estate. His father lost his job in the year that Stanley was born due to the insurrection in that year and the unstable situation of Hong Kong. Although his father found another job in a few months later, the economic situation of his family is not good. He talks of the pictures that were taken when he did favor for his teachers in the kindergarten. He also talks with much feeling about his family home. His family was a traditional Chinese family. He father is the breadwinner. His mother is a housewife and she did all housework and took care his sisters, his brother and him. Now, his sister and his mother did the housework. He and his brother need not to do any housework because of the sexual discrimination. Moreover, he could eat chicken legs but his sisters could not. His parents loved him so much that they bought toys for him, although they didn't have much money. Besides, his father would punish his household when his father was angry. He fought with his father and he dislikes his father according this unfairness punishment. He talks of the differences between kindergarten and the primary school that he attended. Firstly, my school bag was much more heavier. Next, I had to study many subjects. Lastly, I should wear uniform when I studied in primary school. He also talks about his parent's advice for him to choose the college. The advice is useful for his future. His first memory is that he had barbecue with his family member and his uncle. He

memorizes that because this is the first time of tasting chicken wings. He likes to eat chicken wings from that time.

Name of interviewee: MR STANLEY KWOK

Name of interviewer: JULIANA LOK

Date of interview: 4th April, 1999

No of tapes recorded: 1

EVALUATION OF INTERVIEW

The recording was taped in the sitting room of Stanley's home. It is the 37th floor of the building. There will be no problems whatsoever with transcription. Stanley Kwok's father has a personal interest in taking photos. For this reason he has quite a good collection of photographs in his family album which are very interesting. Although the interview is English speaking, the interviewee is very nervous. He wants to practice his oral of English so we did the English interview. We have to record the interview several times. Besides, there is no pause button on my friend's recorder. I have to stop and revise the type when there were any mistakes. We used more than one hour to record the interview. It is harder than doing an interview without recording. Moreover, I do not have a cassette record, therefore, I had to borrow one before I started the interview. Although we did the interview in the living room of his home, there was some sound of the lifts in the building.

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J: Juliana Lok

S: Stanley Kwok

J: Good evening. I am Juliana Lok and I am so glad that my friend, Stanley Kwok has time to be my interviewee of my oral history project today. In this interview, I will ask him some questions about his childhood life. OK! Let us start.

Hi! Stanley, according to my memory, you were born in 1976, that is, you are 23 years old, right?

S: Yes.

J: How many family members do you have?

S: I have 7 family members — my parents, 3 elder sisters, 1 younger brother and I. We all lived together when I was a child. My grandparents didn't live with us.

J: May I ask you some questions about your parents?

S: Sure.

J: Who is the breadwinner in your family?

S: My father is the breadwinner and he also makes decisions of my family.

J: What is your father's occupation? Did he change his job and why?

S: Um... Yes, he changed his job once. Before the year when I was born, that is 1976, he was a worker in a clothes-manufacturing company. In 1976, he was unemployed due to the insurrection in that year and the unstable situation of Hong Kong. Many people lost their jobs at that period of time. He found another job in a few months later. He is a delivery worker.

J: How did it affect your family life?

S: My parents have 3 children already. Moreover, they would have 1 more child in that period. It's harder for them to afford all the expenses. As you know, in that period of time, many people lost their jobs. He was always unhappy and he always would express his angry on punishing my household. Sometimes, he punished my mother. I fought with him when it happened. Therefore, I don't like my father very much. Besides, my father lost his job before I was born; the economic situation of my family was not good. My parents spent a lot of money on the preparation. If I asked my parents to buy toys for me, they would consider whether it's worth or not. For example, I asked my parents to buy a robot for me when I was 8. They told me that it's too expensive and they bought a cheaper one for me. The price was important to them.

J: How about your mother? What was her occupation? Did she change her occupation after she married?

S: My mother was a worker in the same clothes manufacturing company as my father's. She worked in that company until she got marriage. She acted as a housewife after she married. She took care of me and my sisters and brother and she did all the housework, like cooking, washing dishes, etc.

J: Where did you live when you were a child?

S: Kwai Fong Estate.

J: Did you ever move?

S: Yes, my family moved once but we just moved to another building of the estate.

J: How large of the flat did you live in?

S: My family members and I lived in a 400 square foot flat with no separated rooms until I was 12 years old. We moved to a larger flat (around 600 square foot) which we live till present.

- J: What electronic equipment did your family have?
- S: Um... Television, refrigerator, cooker and water heater, etc.
- J: What games did you play and who did you play with when you were a child?
- S: I always played hide-and-seek with my neighbor children.
- J: Can you remember any stories you were told as a child?
- S: I heard about many popular stories like Cinderella and Snow White.
- J: Were boys and girls treated differently when you were growing up?
- S: Yes.
- J: Why?
- S: Because my brother and I needn't to do any housework. My mother and my sisters did all the housework.
- J: Do you think sexual discrimination existed at the time?
- S: Of course. Sexual discrimination existed at the time because my parents treated me better than my sisters. For example, I could eat chicken legs but my sisters couldn't. Sons were more Important than daughters in my family. In Hong Kong, parents want to have at least one son due to the conventional idea.
- J: Please look at this picture. You were riding a bicycle. Did your parents buy the bicycle for you?
- S: Yes, my parents bought it for me. Due to my cousin taught me to ride bicycle when I was six. I liked riding bicycle after it. And, I asked my parents to buy a bicycle for me. Although the economic situation of my family was not good, they bought one to me. I was so glad that I promised them that I would struggle in my study. But finally, I couldn't go to university. I am studying in the technical college.
- J: In Hong Kong, every child should go to school when they age in three. I think you are not excepted.

S: Yes.

J: That means you attended kindergarten when you were three, right? Do you remember any event happened when you were studying there?

S: Yes, I attended 3-year education in kindergarten. The most important event of my education in kindergarten is that my teachers asked me to give biscuits to my classmates during the tea time. I was so happy to do this job because my teachers would give one more biscuit as an award to me every time. I have a picture that was taken when I was giving biscuits to my classmates. And, here is another picture that was taken when I got the one more biscuit.

J: Thanks! You were very happy.

S: Yes.

J: Can you tell me something about the main differences between kindergarten and the primary school that you attended?

S: There were three differences between kindergarten and the primary school. Firstly, my school bag was much more heavier. Next, I had to study many subjects. Lastly, I should wear uniform when I studied in primary school.

J: You mentioned that you are studying in the technical college now. Why did you choose to study in the college?

S: My parents advised me to learn some technical skills that could help me to seek a job more easily. Therefore, I chose to study in the college.

J: Do you think what you have learned in the technical college can help you to seek a job more easily?

S: Yes, I think so. There are many training courses for me to study in the technical college. These courses are very useful.

J: What is your first memory?

S: I memorize that I had barbecue with my family members and my uncle on

Sunday when I was 4. I memorize that because it's the first time that I tasted chicken wings. I liked to eat chicken wings from that activity.

J: Do you think that your childhood life has affected your adult life?

S: Yes. I was treated better than my sisters that means I was more important than my sisters. I also think that boys are more important than girls. If I have children, I would treat my sons better.

J: That's the end of my interview. Once again, thanks for being my interviewee.

S: You are welcome.