

My name is Hing Yee. I was born in 1946 in China, Guangdong Province, in the City of Dongguan, Yuncheng. I grew up there, went to school and had my first job there. When I look back now, it was quite a pleasant place to live – the environment was scenic. We also have a swimming pool, a cinema, and a theatre for the Traditional Chinese operas.

Education in China

In those days, we were taught ‘I serve the People, and the People will serve me’. We were also taught not to be greedy. Because of these teaching, ~~Srod~~ primary to secondary schools, every one of us was very well behaved. During Cultural Revolution, there was a movement called Revolution Series; for instance, Guangdong in South China, the revolutionists would travel up North on foot or by train to join the other forces. I wasn’t political minded. There were Left- and Right-wingers but I think I’m a member of the Carefree Clan! The revolutionists would travel any where and reside there. Although there were lots of enthusiasm and happening during the Revolution, the aftermath is still to be considered.

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During our time, there were lots of restrictions in China; your future lied in your family background and criteria. Say if you were from a military or worker background, things would be much easier. However if you were not from the right background, say you

were a capitalist or a landowner, your future would be somewhat bleak – regardless of how brilliant you are academically or otherwise, your progress would be restricted. Everyone went through the same educational system, but upon graduation, it was up to the Central Government to allocate a job for you and planned your future. Even though you may want to continue further education, you may not get the chance to do so. That was the environment we had to endure. Since China has now opened up, things may have improved.

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Life in the UK

I got married to my husband who was living in Britain. I lived in Hong Kong. I have now been living here for 20 years and have also been back to Hong Kong to visit. In contrast, I find it very peaceful here and Hong Kong is very noisy and congested. Language was a barrier for the newly arrived. I wanted to learn English, but I had to give up because of health reasons. I could read the prices in supermarket so that’s not a problem, but I can’t communicate with the locals. I could go as far as sending a cordial greeting but not beyond, so this makes it very difficult especially when I need to see a doctor.

Fortunately I now have an interpreter, so it has become slightly easier, not ideal but it solved the problem.

Owning properties are less important to me; more importantly is whether one is happy.

I have been a housewife for 20 years. Should I want to find work, I would go to Chinese businesses. I will have a problem getting work here; it is not like in Hong Kong where there are many choices for me. I have noticed people either work in the catering trade if not clothing industry; and I’m not familiar with other types of businesses. I felt the choices are very limited.

I’m almost at the statutory retirement age now. However, when I’m physically stronger and mentally fitter, I will do some voluntary work.

Bringing up the next generation

I could not fulfill 100% of my children’s wishes, but in comparison with my experience during my time they are definitely more fortunate. When I was young, we didn’t have many toys, so we played games, and homemade playing cards; or five-stones (homemade games, invented games). Gradually there were more kinds of toys in the 60s and the 70s. I feel that today’s children have a lot of modern toys and are quite materialistic. They have all sorts of computer games, electronic gadgets and so on. Although we didn’t have all these during our time, we were happy then and feeling satisfied. We were less materialistic. Perhaps it is because we have different upbringing compared to them. We emphasized

more on moral education, and the way one conducts oneself.

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Relationship with children

I started going to church about 10 years ago. At that time I was merely attending for the sake of my son’s education. I felt that society is getting bad; as he was growing up he really needed good guidance. Hearsay schools run by churches are very good, so I asked a friend to recommend me to a church. I came across Chinese Christian Society at the end of 1999 and I started attending services conducting in Chinese. (I went to church because of my son’s education) Today’s world is full of challenges; illusions and one could easily be confused by the choices available; for example homosexuality.

Working while studying is actually a very good idea because you may appreciate what you learnt from school is being applied in a work environment; this way, you will put more effort into studies.

I took a liberal view in bringing up my son. I don’t encourage him to be money-craze, I emphasized on moral education. I showed him a positive outlook on life.

