

Tape 1 Side A

- 1 019 Q: Auntie, what is your name?
A: Lim Kim Yee.
- 021 Q: Where do you live?
A: At New Bedford, number 851.
Q: New Bedford ?
A: New Bedford.
- 022 Q: O.K. Auntie, what were your parents' names? What was your father's name?
A: My father's name was Lim Hak-wai.
- 024 Q: What kind of work did your father use to do?
A: My father went to Sydney.
- 026 Q: Sydney is Australia. How many years was he there?
A: Over ten years.
- 028 Q: Several decades?
A: Several decades.
- 029 Q: What kind of business did he do in Sydney?
A: Business?
- 030 Q: Business, that is running a laundromat house store. Did your mother go with your father?
A: No.
- 031 Q: Did your father go back home from time to time?
A: Yes.
- 032 Q: Which village were you in, Auntie?
A: I'm from Jik-kiu village, Toisan.
- 033 Q: Oh, Toisan. Did your father buy a lot of land in Toisan?
A: Very little.
- 035 Q: What did you have at home?
A: We had a house and land.
- 2 036 Q: A house and land. How many children did your mother have?
A: My mother had four, including myself.
- 038 Q: How many older brothers did you have?
A: Three older brothers/
- 039 Q: Three brothers, and you're the only daughter?
A: Mmm.
- 040 Q: Then your father was in Sydney, and your brothers and mother were back in the village?
A: Mmm.
- 041 Q: How did your mother get to know your father?
A: People at home introduced them.
- 042 Q: They got married back home?
A: Yes.
- 044 Q: Did you go to school when you were young?
A: I herded water buffaloes when I was young.
Q: What about when you were older?
A: When I was older I studied some.
Q: You studied Chinese?
A: I studied Chinese.
- 045 Q: You say you herded water buffaloes. What do you mean by that?
A: I let the buffalo graze in the hills and sat there watching over them.
- 047 Q: Then what happens if the buffalo runs away?
A: I pull it back.

- 049 Q: You pull it back, but what if the buffalo won't come back? What do you do?
- 050 A: If you pull it it'll come back.
- Q: Oh, if you pull it it'll come back. How many buffaloes did you have at home?
- A: Just one.
- Q: Just one buffalo. What did you use the buffalo for?
- A: We used it for farming.
- Q: What kind of land did you farm?
- A: Paddies. We planted rice.
- 052 Q: You planted rice. Did you plant all the land with rice? About how many mou of land did you have?
- A: Very little, 3-4 mou.
- 054 Q: 3-4 mou. So you herded the buffalo until you were older. Until what age did you herd buffalo?
- A: I herded cattle until I was 14 or 15.
- 056 Q: 14 or 15. What did you do after that?
- A: I studied.
- 058 Q: You studied. Did you ever work back in the village?
- A: There wasn't any work to do.
- 061 Q: No work to do? Did you have traditional Chinese friends back in the village?
- A: Yes.
- 062 Q: Did you originally feel you were Chinese, or foreign?
- A: I'm Chinese. Now I'm (laughter) I'm in the U.S.
- 066 Q: When you were back in the village and anyone at home got sick, did they take Western or Chinese medicines?
- A: Chinese medicines. There were no Western medicines.
- 068 Q: Back in the village, did you ever stew any foods with Chinese tonic herbs?
- A: Yes.
- Q: Turtle _____ with...
- A: There was danggui with chicken.
- Q: Stewed with chicken?
- A: We raised a few chickens at home.
- 071 Q: You used to raise a few chickens at home?
- A: Who knows how many we had?
- 073 Q: When you were young, what kinds of things did you like to play with in the village?
- A: (Laughter) When I was a child I used to play in the sand with pieces of tile (laughter). When I was a child I would take pieces of tile and...
- Q: How did you play with the tile pieces?
- A: I filled them with sand and pretended to cook. (Laughter)
- 077 Q: It seems that in the U.S. we say that girls play house a piece of tile, put some sand in it and pretend to cook.
- A: Yes. (Laughter)
- 078 Q: Besides that, how else did you play?
- A: Nothing else. When I was a child, whenever we played that's what we did.
- 081 Q: After coming to the U.S., did you ever write home to your relatives?
- A: I can't write.
- 083 Q: You can't write. What year did you get married, Auntie?
- A: I...

Q: How many years have you been married?
A: I was 24 () at that time, 30 or 40 years.

087 Q: So you've been married for over 30 years, for almost 50 years. How old are you this year?
A: Exactly 70.

090 Q: Exactly 70. If you're exactly 70, what year were you born in?
A: I don't remember when. 19.....10.

094 Q: You were born in 1910, so you're 70 years old now. Where did you get to know Uncle Chiu?
A: People at home introduced us.

096 Q: At that time Uncle Chiu went back to China and was introduced to you. Then before that you didn't know him?
A: No, I didn't.

098 Q: So you were introduced...Had you ever met Uncle Chiu before you married him?
A: I had never seen him. (Laughter)

099 Q: You'd never seen him. Your friends and relatives said he was...
A: They said he was a good man. My mother...
Q: You knew your mother said he was good.
A: My mother said he was good.

102 Q: You got married in the village?
A: In the village.

103 Q: Was it a big occasion, getting married in the village?
A: Yes, it was.
Q: How was it a big occasion?
A: We cooked, we cooked a lot of food to eat. (Laughter)
Q: There was lots of food to eat?
A: There were cakes, very nice cakes.

106 Q: Cakes. How long were you in the village before coming to the U.S.?
A: I came here, I've been here for several decades.

107 Q: Did you live in the village for a long time after getting married?
A: Mmm.
Q: You lived in the village...
A: I lived in the village...

4 110 Q: How many years did you live in the village?
A: I lived there for 19 years.
Q: 19 years. And your husband returned to the U.S.?
A: Yes.

113 Q: Did you have any children during all those years you were living in the village?
A: We had a child when my husband

114 Q: You did, so you had a child soon after you got married?
A: Yes.

116 Q: What year did you come to the U.S.?
A: 19..60.

117 Q: You came to the U.S in 1960. Did you live in L.A. as soon as you got to the U.S.?
A: Yes.

120 Q: How many children do you have now in L.A.?
A: A son.

121 Q: A son. Any others?
A: I have a daughter.

123 Q: A daughter. Did you work after coming to L.A.?
A: There wasn't any work for me to do...I was old, and couldn't work!

- 126 Q: So you were at home taking care of the house, taking care of your two children?
- A: Yes.
- 128 Q: Do you have a lot of friends in Chinatown?
- A: Many.
- 130 Q: Many friends. Do you know if the Chinese in L.A. make a lot of money working here? What do they do with their money?
- A: They save their money and buy houses with it.
- 132 Q: They buy houses. Do they send any money back home?
- A: They send money back to the villages. If they have anyone there, they send money back.
- 135 Q: During your decades in L.A., have you ever seen any discrimination against Chinese by whites?
- A: No, I haven't.
- 138 Q: How come you haven't seen any?
- A: I've never been to those places.
- 139 Q: You seldom go out? Have you ever worked in places like garment factories?
- A: No, I haven't.
- 141 Q: Among your friends, you've heard of many people going back to China to get married. Why don't they get married here?
- A: The people there seldom get married over here. Mostly they get married in the village.
- 5 145 Q: Why? Do you know?
- A: They don't know any girls here, so they go back to the village.
- 148 Q: Were there any other reasons besides not knowing girls?
- A: They didn't know any girls, they were (laughter) few, so they...
- 150 Q: There used to be very few Chinese girls here. Do Chinese prefer to have sons?
- A: Most of them prefer to have sons.
- 153 Q: Why do they prefer sons?
- A: Chinese like to have sons. (Laughter) They're don't like daughters as much as people here. At home, Chinese prefer to have sons.
- 155 Q: You say that Chinese with traditional ideas prefer sons? Do you yourself prefer sons or daughters?
- A: I like sons and I like daughters.
- 159 Q: In L.A., you see many Chinese marrying non-Chinese. Do you think tha's a good thing?
- A: Yes.
- 161 Q: Yes. Do you have any non-Chinese friends, or friends who've married non-Chinese?
- A: Yes, there are some.
- 163 Q: Are they happy?
- A: They're happy. The ones I know are doing very well, marrying non-Chinese is fine!
- 165 Q: How long have the ones you know been married?
- A: Some have been married for over ten years.
- 167 Q: About how old are they now?
- A: Some of them are over 40.
- 169 Q: 40-odd, and they're very happy. When your children first came to the U.S., did they study Chinese?
- A: No. My son never went.
- 173 Q: Did they already study Chinese in China?
- A: Yes, they studied in China.

- 5
- 175 Q: What about your grandchildren? Would you like them to study Chinese?
A: I'd like him to study Chinese, and also to study English, always both...otherwise, when people back home send letters he won't be able to read them. The people at home don't know English, so they should take some Chinese, teach him some Chinese, that's why.
- 180 Q: Can your grandchildren read letters now?
A: Not yet.
- 182 Q: He's still studying Chinese. Then does he like to study Chinese?
A: He likes it. He says that sometimes, at night, he can read some Chinese characters. He doesn't know how to write letters, but he can understand some simple ones.
- 186 Q: That's nice. Do you know many friends who've gone back to China to retire in their old age?
A: Yes.
Q: Now?
A: Now there are very few.
- 6 188 Q: Now there are few. What about before?
A: Before there used to be many.
- 190 Q: There were many before. Would you like to retire in China yourself?
A: I'm the same anywhere now, now I don't want to go back, now I like the U.S.
- 193 Q: Why do you like being in the U.S. now?
A: There's a lot to eat here, so I'm here now.
- 195 Q: What else do you like about here?
A: Here, housing is good, and there are no mosquitoes. (Laughter)
- 196 Q: There are no what?
A: Mosquitoes. There are a lot of mosquitoes back home. That's why I prefer to be here.
- 199 Q: Are there any other reasons why you prefer to be here?
A: Food, there's food here and there's housing.
- 205 Q: Have you ever seen those movies with Chinese acting in them, Western movies, with one or two Chinese in them. They portray Chinese badly, have you ever seen these movies?
A: I've never seen them.
- 206 Q: You've never seen these? Do you seldom see movies?
A: I seldom watch movies.
- 208 Q: You seldom watch movies, so what do you like to do for fun?
A: I like to play mahjong.
- 209 Q: You like to play mahjong, anything else? Do you like to watch T.V.?
A: I like to.
- 210 Q: You watch T.V., what else?
A: That's it, there's nothing else.
- 212 Q: How many times a week do you play mahjong?
A: Once.
- 213 Q: Just once. How many hours do you play each time?
A: Sometimes 5 or 6 hours.
- 215 Q: 5-6 hours, you sit there for 5-6 hours?
A: Yes.
- 217 Q: Besides playing mahjong do you have any other forms of recreation?
A: No, unless it's going to cut grass.
- 218 Q: Oh, sometimes you cut the grass. What else?
A: There isn't much else to do.
Q: Not much else to do?

A: What else can old people do? They can't do anything! (Laughter)
223 Q: Auntie, do you still keep in touch with many Chinese?

A: Yes.

225 Q: Do you have many relatives here?

A: Yes.

227 Q: Are you very close to your children and family?

A: Yes.

228 Q: Do they often come here to visit you?

A: Yes.

7

230 Q: You were in China for decades. Do you feel that you're still very Chinese? Or do you feel westernized?

A: No matter what, I'm still Chinese, because I don't understand English. I don't understand it, and when whites talk to me I can't understand, I don't understand.

236 Q: What would you like your grandchildren to be when they grow up?

A: That's up to the children.

239 Q: How many grandchildren do you have?

A: one.

Q: One. Just this one boy?

A: Yes.

240 Q: Would you like him to be a doctor when he grows up?

A: Yes, it's up to him, whatever he wants.

244 Q: Have you joined and associations or whatever in Chinatown?

A: No.

246 Q: You didn't join any associations. What about your family association?

A: I didn't join that, either.

248 Q: You didn't. Would you like to go back to China someday for pleasure?

A: Oh, yes. I'd like to see my relatives.

251 Q: Why would you like to go back to China to visit?

A: I have some nephews back home, I'd like to go back and see them. Also some sister-in-law, I still have some sisters-in-law at home.

254 Q: Do you still write to them?

A: Yes, we write.

255 Q: Are they doing all right at home?

A: Oh, so-so. Now there's food to eat and jobs to work at back home.

258 Q: Would you now like to go back to China to live?

A: No, I wouldn't.

259 Q: Why wouldn't you like to?

A: Because back home now...there are lots of mosquitoes, so I'm not willing.

Q: Why aren't you willing?

A: Because there are so many mosquitoes.

Q: Oh, lots of mosquitoes!

A: Mmm, so I'm not willing.

263 Q: Is there any other reason why you're not willing?

A: There's...nothing to eat.

266 Q: Nothing to eat. Then you'd be willing to go back to visit?

A: Yes, to visit, to see my relatives.

268 Q: When do you plan to go back? How much longer before you go?

A: Oh, I don't have the money. Without money, I can't say.

272 Q: Auntie, is there anything else you'd like to tell me?

A: There isn't much else to say.

273 Q: Not much else to say? Then thank you for taking the time for me to make this tape. Thank you very much.

(End)