

Tape 1 Side A

- 019 Q: Auntie, what is your name?
 A: My name is Tam Siu-seung
 Q: How do you spell your name? Is it T-O-M?
 A: I've never spelt it. My Chinese name is Tam Siu-seung.
 Q: Oh, Tam, Siu, is it "Sui Sim?"
 A: Sim.
- 023 Q: Where do you live?
 A: I, now, when I first came..
 Q: Now, where do you live now?
 A: I live in L.A. now.
 Q: What number?
 A: ~~Forty five Road (?) Avenue.~~ 435 Solano Ave.
- 027 Q: ~~Forty five Road Avenue?~~ In L.A. you lived in nine ???
 A: Nine-o-twelve ??? 90012
 Q: Twelve???
- 030 A: It's not Auntie Tam, it's Auntie Yee
 Q: Isn't your surname Tam?
 A: Yes, my own surname is Tam. that is, I'm Yee Tam Siu-seung.
- 032 Q: Auntie Yee, where did you come to the U.S. from?
 A: I came from Dikhoi, from the Samfow of the Yee clan.
 Q: In Szeyup, Toisan Szeyup?
- 034 Q: What did your father use to do in the village?
 A: In the village, my father used to weave vegetable baskets and things like that.
 Q: So he wove rattan, trays, baskets, etc.?
 A: I lost my father when I was very young.
- 2 037 Q: Then who raised you?
 A: My mother brought me up.
- 038 Q: How many brothers and sisters did you have?
 A: Two, two, only one younger brother.
- 040 Q: Did you go to school in the village?
 A: I studied very little, our family was poor.
- 042 Q: What year were you born, do you remember?
 A: I remember. I was born in the 5th year of the Republic, that is, 1916.
 Q: You were born in 1916, so this year you're sixty-odd years old?
 A: Sixty-four.
 Q: 64, oh, 64, you're 64 this year and you were born in the village?
 A: I'm a few months short of being 64.
- 046 Q: You studied for a few years. Besides studying, what else did you do in the village?
 A: Do? There was no work in the village, so I just took care of affairs at home. Over ten years old ???
- 049 Q: When your mother taught you to do housework at home, what did she teach you to do?
 A: Yes, she taught me to take care of the house.
 Q: Everything?
 A: To take care of the house.
- 051 Q: How large was the house in your village?
 A: There were two (bed)rooms, one living room, two corridors; all the houses back home were like that.
- 052 Q: Did you build this house yourselves?

- A: It was handed down by my grandfather. It was shared with my (older) uncle, each person had one side.
- 055 Q: Was there anything in front of your house?
A: There was a pond.
Q: A what?
A: A pond for raising fish.
Q: Oh, a fish pond.
A: Yes, a fish pond. There were trees planted in the back.
- 058 Q: Did you own this fish pond?
A: It wasn't ours, anyone could throw fish in there and raise them.
- 059 Q: Oh, did you have any chances to catch fish there for eating?
A: Yes.
- 060 Q: Did you have to pay?
A: Those who threw in fish didn't have to pay. If the pond ran dry and you caught the fish at the bottom of the pond you didn't have to pay. As for the rest, if the pond owners gathered in the fish, you had to pay to buy them.
- 063 Q: Did you often get fish from there to eat?
A: No, sometimes.
- 065 Q: Sometimes you would have to buy other foodstuffs. Where did you go to buy food?
A: Two pieces of farmland away from us was a small market town called Tong-miu hui (, Tang temple town). Everything was sold there. But we ourselves were interested in eating fish. We had our own fish pond.
Q: You had your own fish pond?
A: We had our own.
Q: Where was the fish pond?
A: In the field inside our doorway, ~~in the corner~~ in the corner of the field. There was a vegetable garden there, with all kinds of melons and vegetables growing in it. There were also fruits and wong see (laughter).
- 070 Q: Was this fish pond a very small one?
A: It was very small. If you put a crock into it and pulled it out, there'd be a fish in the crock.
Q: Oh!
A: When it got hot there was always fish for sale at our place.
- 074 Q: Then you say there were melons and vegetables growing in front of your house?
A: Nothing was planted in the front, there was a pond in front. There were all houses in the back. They were built like that all the way to the hillside, there were trees everywhere.
- 077 Q: What did you think of life in the village? Was it comfortable?
A: It was hard!
Q: Hard?
A: Hard.
Q: You lost your father when you were very young, so who gave you money for your expenses?
A: We didn't have money to spend, it was my mother who went out and made some.
- 081 Q: What did your mother do to make a living?
A: People might hire her to plant rice or whatever. She'd make a little money to take home, and also raise pigs. We raised two pigs a year, and only after selling them could we... It was very hard back home!

- 083 Q: Then your mother was very capable?
A: She also wove cloth.
Q: Oh, she wove cloth.
A: During each market period, she would weave a piece of cloth and sell it! That's how we got by, and also supported my mother- and father-in-law, and my father-in-law is 70, 70 or 80, my mother-in-law is also 70 or 80, an old man!
- 087 Q: Don't you think that there were very few women in Chinese village who could go out and make so much money to bring home, to support several people?
A: Yes, because my mother was so capable, they said that after my mother died, they said that the village had lost its chairwoman, so.. she couldn't read, but she could do everything. She didn't completely understand those muk-yu.
- 094 Q: Muk-yu? When you say muk-yu do you mean those singers?
A: Those old ones who look like they're acting in a show.
Q: Those old-fashioned singers in villages back then? Like muk-yu singing?
A: That's right.
- 095 Q: How old was your mother when she passed away?
A: 46.
Q: She died so young?
A: Her daughter married when she was 36, that's 10 years!
- 098 Q: Were you back home when your mother died?
A: I was at home, with my younger brother's wife. My brother wasn't there. He had gone, to who knows what city?
Q: Gone? Your brother had gone away?
A: Yes, to Hong Kong.
- 102 Q: So when your mother died you were with...
A: My nephew, and her grandsons, the sons of my nephew.
- 103 Q: What language did you speak at home? Did you speak Chinese?
A: We spoke our Toisan dialect, Chinese.
- 105 Q: You spoke your Toisan village dialect. When you were in China, could you speak any Cantonese or English?
A: No.
- 108 Q: When you got married, who fixed you up with your husband? How did you get to know him?
A: A matchmaker, a matchmaker introduced us.
- 110 Q: What kind of work did he do?
A: My husband?
Q: Yes.
A: He went back from the U.S.
Q: Oh, he went back to get married?
A: He married when he went back.
- 112 Q: Then did you leave with him?
A: No, I only came later.
- 114 Q: How many years had you been married before your husband came back again?
A: In 1933 he came back to..
Q: In 1933 he came back to..
A: In 1948....
Q: So he came back in 1933 and 1948?
A: He came back in 1947, and he brought me over in 1948.

- 7
- Q: You got married in 1933. How long after your wedding did he return to the U.S.?
- A: He continued to 1933, in 1935 he went back, he went back to the U.S. in March, 1935.
- 123 Q: Then you were staying in the village. What year did you come to the U.S.?
- A: In 1948.
- 124 Q: Could your mother bear to let you come?
- A: By then she had already passed away. I'd lost my mother for many years, over ten years before I came.
- 128 Q: For the ten years-plus after your mother died, did you live with your husband's family back in the village?
- A: I lived with my husband's family.
- 129 Q: How was life in your husband's family?
- A: It was all right, it was very good! My husband sent money back home every month to support us. I supported her, I did everything to support my mother.
- 131 Q: To support your mother-in-law?
- A: To support my own mother, the mother who bore me.
- Q: Was she old by the time she was in her forties?
- A: I took care of her food, I prepared everything. When she was alive, she didn't have the money for a daughter-in-law. When I saw how old my younger brother was and how old my mother was, I felt badly and got together with my two older sisters. That way, I helped out, and wrote a letter to explain things to my husband. He sympathized and agreed to help out. In addition, my relatives also gave some money, and that's how my mother got a daughter-in-law.
- 142 Q: So your husband was a very considerate person!
- A: He brought me over (), and now it was I who got them all over by myself. The whole family has come over.
- 5 144 Q: Your brother's whole family? (A: Yes) Then I'll first ask about your brother. When you came to the U.S., did you bring any children with you?
- A: I did, I brought a son and a daughter.
- Q: A son and a daughter came with you. You got your brother over here, so where is your brother now?
- A: My brother passed away about four years after coming here.
- 152 Q: What about your brother's wife?
- A: She also lives here in (). Solano also.
- Q: Does she have any children now?
- A: She has children. Her daughters-in-law have several (of her) grandchildren now. She has two daughters-in-law, but her second son hasn't married yet.
- 156 Q: When you first came to the U.S., you say that was in 1948?
- A: Yes.
- 157 Q: So you came right after the war?
- A: Yes, after the war, in 1947, my husband brought me over.
- Q: How were things in your village during the war?
- A: I sold used clothing in the village, and I also farmed.
- Q: You sold old clothes and farmed.
- A: I got some land to farm.
- 162 Q: What kinds of problems did you have during the war?

A: I just went only that way selling old clothes to make money for a couple of meals. It wasn't much, sometimes one or two hundred silver coins, but I supported myself.

165 Q: So you scraped by with the money you made..

A: Some things I didn't have to buy -- I didn't have to buy fuel or water, right? That way all I needed to buy was a bit of oil, salt, vegetables and the like.

168 Q: About how many years did you do that? During the war?

A: More than four years, several years, eight years!

171 Q: Eight years, and the communists came after the war ended..

A: Hoping for it I didn't see how the communists were good, liberation wasn't until 1949!

172 Q: So at that time you had a son and a daughter down in the village, and they helped you out? Then didn't your children go to school?

A: They did.

175 Q: They did go to school. Then you are also a very capable person, you could...

A: I'm not capable! These..

Q: And your husband wasn't there, then you could...

A: I held onto the money he sent back, but it wasn't enough, so I took some to help out the family. In the future when I need it and I have money, I'll buy it back. When I came here everything was taken away by the communists, and given to my daughter, but my daughter didn't come with me!

182 Q: So you came to the U.S. in 1948. What did you do in the U.S. when you first came here?

A: There was nothing to do, so I took care of the kids and took care of the home. When I came there was only one (laughter).

Q: How many children do you have altogether now?

A: There were five altogether.

Q: One son and four daughters?

A: One son and four daughters.

6 187 Q: Is everyone married now?

A: Everyone is married now, and they all have children. Only my son hasn't..

Q: Oh, your son isn't married?

A: No, he's married, but has no children yet, they still have to have children.

190 Q: What did your husband do in the U.S.?

A: He had always operated a warehouse together with his brothers. Later on he worked for others, selling meat and whatnot everywhere.

194 Q: In 1948, where did you live when you first came to the U.S.?

A: In Silver City.

Q: Silver City?

A: Silver City.

Q: And you lived there?

A: I lived there until 1955, when I moved out to L.A.

198 Q: And what kind of work did your husband do in L.A.?

A: He was also a butcher.

Q: Oh, a butcher. When did he pass away?

A: In 1969.

Q: Oh, in 1969.

A: It's been 11 years, a full 11 years.

- 6
- 205 Q: Then before your husband passed away, he made a lot of money, and became very rich!
- A: These riches came by working with his own two hands.
- 208 Q: That was still very rich! At the time your husband passed away, had all your children gotten married yet?
- A: No, only one was married, and it was all arranged by me. These four were all arranged by me.
- Q: How old was your husband when he passed away? Sixty-?
- A: Fifty-eight.
- Q: Fifty-eight?
- A: He was still very young.
- Q: Yes! Fifty-eight is still very young. You've been gone for so long now, do you still miss your village?
- A: I don't like my village, I like the U.S.
- 217 Q: You like it here very much, and you're staying on here?
- A: I'm staying on here.
- 219 Q: Would you be willing to go back to China to live now?
- A: I don't want to go back to live, I don't even want to go back to visit for pleasure. I'm happy here, I come and go as I please, and everything is very convenient, just steps away.
- 224 Q: Living in L.A., do you associate mainly with Chinese?
- A: I associate with Chinese. As for whites, when I work I have contact mainly with whites.
- 226 Q: Yes, when did you start working?
- A: I started in 1955, as soon as I came here.
- 228 Q: Oh, in 1955 you came to the U.S., no, to L.A....
- A: Soon after getting here I went to work.
- 230 Q: What kind of work did you do?
- A: Garment sewing.
- 231 Q: So you've been sewing for several decades now.
- A: Until...I stopped a year and a half ago.
- Q: So you've done it for several decades?
- A: Last year, I worked until August, 1978.
- Q: Then you worked for over ten years?
- A: For over ten years.
- Q: Then you almost..
- A: For over twenty years, right? 1955, 56, 57, I worked for 23 years.
- Q: You worked for 23 years.
- A: I don't know where the money has gone!
- 241 Q: So you took the money you made by working and used it to take care of the kids and to support the family, to educate and to raise them?
- A: Yes.
- 243 Q: What kind of experiences did you have sewing garments? Did you know how to sew clothes at first?
- A: You take it apart and put it together again. They have patterns for you to look at.
- 246 Q: Then at first you didn't know how, and you learned to do it?
- A: I learned, and they taught. There was someone there to teach.
- Q: There was someone to teach you how to do it?
- A: Yes, you have to find someone to teach you, where to start, where to proceed, to explain it to you. Then you keep on doing it like that afterwards.
- 250 Q: What were the wages then? Twenty-odd?
- A: When I was working it was 75¢ an hour.

- Q: 75¢ an hour.
A: Yes, but I always made more than that, I always did more. However much you do, they pay you for that much.
- 255 Q: The 75¢ an hour then was in 1955, right?
A: Yes, yes.
- 257 Q: Then you gradually, gradually rose up. By the time you stopped working, how much an hour were you making?
A: I never did that much for him, I always worked on my own, so much money for so much work, and he paid me accordingly.
Q: Piecework?
A: Piece. I worked until there was nothing to do, and then he got me work in the photo store. That paid \$1.50 an hour and it went up to \$2, \$2.25.
- 267 Q: Then there wasn't that much money to be made in the photo store?
A: It wasn't a lot, even now it's only \$3+, \$3.50.
- 271 Q: What kind of experiences did you have in the garment factory? Who was your boss?
A: Who knows who the boss was? I..
Q: No, what kind of person? A Chinese, or a white?
A: A white.
- 273 Q: A white. Was the boss a man, or a woman?
A: A man, a man was the boss.
- 274 Q: Do you feel that he treated you well?
A: Very well. If you, if you had any accidents, (indistinct) insurance would give you a bit of money. I was careless on my way to work, fell and injured my hand, and had to go to the hospital. I went to this white hospital, it was the most expensive one. They set the bones and I didn't have to spend a single penny.
- 8 284 Q: So when you were working here, they guaranteed our insurance??? That way, for all this time, if you had any injuries, you didn't have to pay yourself.
A: If you stop working and leave the factory, after six months you don't get this anymore. You only get it if you work there continuously. Every month, every week, they'll deduct your expenses. This was good, he also bought \$5000 of ~~insurance~~ ^{for the workers}, and the boss worked. That's considered good!
- 293 Q: What was the name of this company?
A: It was called Pattiwoods.
Q: Patti-, Pattiwoods?
A: --woods.
Q: Pattiwoods, that's a woman's name, Pattiwoods.
A: It's a woman (name).
- 297 Q: Did you work all those years in this factory?
A: I worked in two factories. There was a Sinerward(?), which made things like underwear and pillows, and these downy swimwear.
Q: (name) was Pattiwoods, P-A-T-T-I-W-O-O-D-S.
A: I also worked in this Pattiwoods longer.
- 304 Q: For about how long?
A: For 16 years, till now. In 1955 I worked at Pattiwoods.
Q: Sixteen years, from 1960 to now is 20 years. At Pattiwoods?
A: In September, 1955 I worked at Sinerward, and I worked there in 1956, 57, 58, 59 and 1960. After working there for about 5 years, I worked at Pattiwoods, I worked there.
- 313 Q: Where did you work the longest time?

- A: At Pattiwoods. I retired there!
- Q: That's right, you worked there twenty years.
- A: I still think of going back there to work. "Come back! Come back, I'd like to help you work," "Oh," I say, "I haven't done it in such a long time, my eyes are no good any longer, my energy and strength aren't up to it."
- 321 Q: Then are you thinking of helping out your boss?
- A: The boss was very good! But the boss isn't in this factory; he's in the old (Garfield).
- Q: The old (Garfield). Why is he in the old (Garfield)?
- A: He moved there. We didn't want to move there, so he sent some things down, and another floor downstairs, there...
- Q: That is to say...
- A: It was on the 6th floor, now it's been seven years since it moved up to the 10th floor.
- 9 329 Q: So now he has two factories, one in old-(-) Garfield?
- A: Old (Garfield) is outside, at (Wholesale)
- Q: And one is here?
- A: Seven shifts of women work for him, and he himself goes along too. There are many more downstairs, pig companies, over a thousand people working there.
- 335 Q: About how many people were there? Several tens? Several hundreds?
- A: Several hundred, a hundred-odd people. There were several tens of people in our factory alone, plus so many cutters.
- 337 Q: And they all worked for the same boss?
- A: Two shares, at that time there were two shares. I don't know about now.
- 341 Q: Aunties Yee, when did you retire? Last year?
- A: I'm considered, considered retired now.
- 344 Q: When you retired last year, what sort of people would you say made up the majority of people working in your factory?
- A: There were all sorts of people.
- Q: What kind of people were the most numerous?
- A: Mexicans.
- Q: Mexicans. And next to them?
- A: There were also blacks and us Chinese.
- Q: There were also Chinese.
- A: Now there are only a few Chinese. A while back there were 30-odd Chinese! They worked in two sections. On one side they sewed skirts and slacks, on the other side they sewed (clothes) and jackets.
- Q: Are most of your friends now Chinese, or black, or Mexican?
- A: They're mostly Chinese. (Laughter) Don't you have language barriers when you're with whites?
- 358 Q: Do you feel that you're Chinese or do you feel you've become white?
- A: I'm still Chinese.
- Q: You're still Chinese.
- A: (Laughter) But I'm very pleased to be in this white area. I can leave any place at any time time, I'm so happy!
- Q: Then you must feel very tranquil in your heart.
- A: Yes, my own (family), my children are all grown up, (married), now I'm the oldest person in my family and everything is now, that's my motto.
- 368 Q: Do you feel that you've done a lot of things in your lifetime?
- A: Yes.
- Q: Have you done your best?

- A: I've done my best. Take the time my family was in China, for example. I was still very young at the time. Whenever anyone needed any help, I'd go help them even in the dead of night. It didn't matter to me, and I never put on airs.
- Q: You're really a fine person!
- A: I've done the same thing here. If I can help I will help, unless there's nothing I can do about it.
- 10 382 Q: That's how it is. When you or anyone in your family gets sick, do you prefer to use Chinese medicine or Western medicine?
- A: Since coming to the U.S. I've mostly trusted Western doctors, but I've never been sick in my life. (Laughter) I believed in (misogynist) but I didn't believe in it very much. I couldn't sleep, I was trembling, trembling so hard that even the bed shook, so people asked me why they hadn't seen me. So I went, I went about three times, I knew myself that (SAD) how come I can't sleep, I've never trembled so violently. I'm not (SAD), and I didn't make it up, either. But he, Divine Light (SAD) I am myself.
- 403 Q: What was the name of the church that you said you joined?
- A:
- Q: , and your health improved a lot?
- A: I acquired the divine light last October, and I've seen a doctor, and I've never had a headache since.
- 412 Q: Do you ever brew Chinese tonic at home now? To eat? With chicken? Like...
- A: No, very seldom.
- 416 Q: Why don't you? Didn't you use to take Chinese tonics, stew chicken, oxtails and such?
- A: Before, I stewed turtle (___) and ate it. Nowadays I don't make that, I very seldom make these things. Since coming over here I've taken medicines. If I'm hungry when I get home, I like to stir-fry something, fix something to eat and then go to sleep.
- 425 Q: So now you seldom put these tonics in stews?
- A: That's right.
- Q: What do you do in your leisure time every day? Do you play mahjong?
- A: I don't play mahjong.
- Q: Do you like to listen to music?
- A: I think I used to have a recorder (___) at home, and a radio, but I never listened. Sometimes I read the newspapers, or watch a bit of TV.
- Q: What do you like to watch on TV? Sports, or shows?
- A: Ball games, and I watch these .
- Q: ?
- A: (Laughter) Sometimes I also like to watch detective shows and the like.
- 441 Q: Why don't you like to play mahjong?
- A: I don't have the patience, I'd rather do these other things, I don't like (interruption, indistinct).
- 448 Q: So you like to read books? Do you have any other forms of recreation? Do you like to go..
- A: I like to go out for fun.
- 451 Q: Where do you go for fun?
- A: To the casinos. When I feel like it I go to the casinos for some fun, and to see a show.
- Q: By "casinos" you mean (game)?

A: Sometimes if a friend calls me up and I have company I'll go. I go often.

11 457 Q: Do you ever go to the races?

A: I don't bet on horses. I don't understand it, and I've never been there.

463 Q: Do you ever in touch by letter with your family members in China?

A: I haven't written in a long time.

(End of Side A)

- Q: Chow Sik-ming?
A: Yes, I met him in my association.
- 060 Q: You weren't in L.A. before the war, were you? You hadn't come before the war, had you?
A: Not before the war. I came in 1948.
- 063 Q: What did the Chinese in L.A. do with the money they saved?
A: They put it in the bank, and used it to buy houses. It's always been like this. That's how you make it in this world!
- 066 Q: Did anyone send money back to China?
A: I wouldn't know about other people!
- 068 Q: Do you know of any Chinese who are involved in politics in China?
A: No, I don't.
- 069 Q: Do many of your Chinese friends feel this way: "I'm still a Chinese, I must get to know some Chinese people." Are there any like that?
A: No. The ones that I know at work are often in Chinatown. When I go over there and run into them, we greet each other and acknowledge each other, and that's it. You can't ask others how they are, can you?
- 077 Q: During these decades that you've been in L.A., have you ever felt discriminated against by whites? Have you felt that they looked down on you?
A: There are no whites on the street where I live, so nothing's happened.
- 080 Q: The whole street is occupied by Chinese?
A: The whole street. It's mostly Chinese, and there are a few Mexican households. I don't feel anything about them, but the Mexicans next door say I'm nice, they often say I'm nice, that I'm good, that I've brought up my kids well, and that I'm doing so well, I don't get sick, and they ask me what I eat. (Laughter) I tell them I go eat at Hong Kong Low and so I don't get sick, but "You go now, but you didn't use to go before!" I say I eat some Chinese dishes and rice. They ask me to help them, to help them cook, and I go help them, I teach them how to cook rice, what to do, so they always say that I'm good.
- 089 Q: So your neighbors are Mexican, and you make friends with them. Do you get along well?
A: Italy.
Q: Oh, they're Italian?
A: They're nice Italians, just this one family. On the left side they're Chinese, and also Chinese on the opposite side.
- 093 Q: During your decades here do you feel that Chinese have made great advances in L.A.?
A: Yes, especially during these last few years.
- 095 Q: Why do you think they've made such advances?
A: Chinatown used to be very run-down. Now everything is new, everything is brand-new.
Q: What else?
A: Before everything was run-down, run-down stores. Now they've all been torn down, and built up like this, and there are also many Chinese.
- 100 Q: And what else? What else do you see in Chinatown? What about the young people?
A: There are more young people now.
- 101 Q: There are more, and what kind of work do they do? The young people?

A: Young people now are really something different in their work.

Q: They all work, what kind of work do they do? Do most of them have good jobs?

A: They all have good jobs and they make money. They're not like us when we first came, when we came time were rough.

105 Q: Do the young people now feel that their life is very good?

A: Oh yes, everyone comes and goes freely in a car , in one family they'll have several cars!

109 Q: Do the young people like being in the U.S.?

A: I wouldn't know about other people.

4

110 Q: When you were getting married in the village, someone introduced you. When you heard that someone was going to introduce you to your husband, how did you feel?

A: Embarrassed, very embarrassed! I even said that I was unwilling, and I cursed at the middleman, I cursed people.

Q: You cursed... How old were you then?

A: 18.

115 Q: When you heard about this, how did you cursed the middleman? Who was the middleman?

A: Originally I didn't dare to, but I went, and once I saw her, the girls chased after her to beat her!

118 Q: As soon as she saw the girls, they beat her?

A: As soon as the girls saw her they chased and beat her, they picked up things to beat her with. They stuck things all over her hair!

Q: Oh, that..

A: That's how things were done there. It's not like that now, it's like it is here, very free.

122 Q: So you didn't like your matchmaker, is that right? What did she do after you cursed at her?

A: She left and went back to my mother's house. She didn't dare, she wouldn't leave until she was surrounded by people, she was afraid the girls would start chasing her again. I didn't chase her, the girls chased her, it's always like that down in the village. Maybe it's not like that where you come from.

127 Q: Then what finally happened?

A: In the end, I had to marry someone. (Laughter)

129 Q: Did you have a new-style or an old-style wedding?

A: You could say it was new-style.

130 Q: How was it new? Can you briefly describe how you were married?

A: Just like that, I wore a civilized veil.

Q: What?

A: I wore a civilized veil, I didn't wear one of those "phoenix crowns." My wedding was considered new-style.

Q: Then you...

A: A veil, I wore it. There were two ceremonial palanquins with two long ribbons trailing behind them like this.

Q: A cloth one and a flower one here, like this?]

A: They were pulled with ribbons, another one was like a phoenix, it was pulled.

138 Q: Could you see the entire face?

A: My face was covered with a cloth! You can't let people see it! (Laughter)

Q: What did you wear?

A: Red clothing.

- Q: A red cheongsam?
A: A red blouse and a red skirt, Chinese- style clothing.
- 140 Q: Then what else was there? Did you have to send it?
A: There was that too.
- 5 143 Q: Did the bride's family ask for a packet of lucky money from the grooms's family?
A: That I wouldn't know. How would I know? I wouldn't dare ask about these things.
Q: But didn't the groom's family send any over?
A: They gave some money and some cakes, I don't know. () I saw them bringing some cakes into the house. They were given to aunts to take away and to those aunts to carry away in a basket. The girls were invited to eat cakes, that is, this daughter is getting married, let her give them out as she pleases. Each person gets a share, she can give some to the aunts, and some to the girls. Carrying cakes!
- 152 Q: Everyone asks about how many cakes you get. Were there several dozen? Several hundred?
A: The groom's side sends them over. The bride's side looks at how many she needs and asks for so many.
Q: How many did you ask for?
A: I got as many as my mother gave me, why knows how many? I divided them up among my friends, and however many were left, I gave them to the aunts. Whichever aunt came by, I'd give her some. That counts, you have to share them, "Have some of those, cut them up and eat them!" That's what you say. You don't have to say a word yourself, don't worry about other people not knowing how to eat them!
- 160 Q: When you fixed a day for the wedding, do you remember how things were on your wedding day?
A: There was a palanquin on the day of the wedding.
Q: A palanquin? What else, besides a palanquin?
A: A dowry.
Q: A dowry?
A: The dowry was carried over in two batches. Tables, big living room tables and things like that.
Q: Furniture, furniture too..
A: Yes, big bureaus, trunks, suitcases, lots of big and small ()!
- 167 Q: How could you be so lavish then if your family was so poor?
A: The other side gave you money, and you'd use it to buy things and make things. People gave you so much money, and they told you it was to be like this, you couldn't not do it that way. Otherwise they would always curse at the bride. Things were like that in the village.
Q: So your mother told them how much money and you gave...
A: No, it was "It's up to you, it's up to you to decide. I don't have anything for my daughter's marriage, just a good girl." That's what my mother said.
Q: And that's how the wedding-portion was given?
A: They gave the money, and she took the money to buy furniture for her daughter. When people see how many things there are they'll know, they'll know how much it cost.
- 178 Q: They bought a lot of things for your dowry. What was there?
A: You know, those things they put on the big living room table?
Q: What?
A: Those things they put on the big living room table?

- Q: What table?
A: The big living room table.
Q: I don't know about that. Was that ?
A: No, it wasn't , all kinds of miscellaneous woods.
Q: Oh, various woods. There were tables, and many benches?
A: There were cigarettes (), incense tables, tables and chairs, crane ewers, things like that, it was very grand! Those are the kinds of things you should have on a big living room table, smoking pipes and such!
- 187 Q: So there were , and tables and chairs, and what else? A big bed?
A: No big bed, that he had to buy!
Q: Were there also a lot of foodstuffs?
A: There was clothing for the bride.
Q: Clothing, was that for the whole year? For cold and hot weather?
A: Yes, it was for all four seasons.
- 192 Q: You had clothing there for all four seasons, about how much money was that worth in those days?
A: I don't know, the things there...
Q: It'd be if you could remember.
A: We used there.
Q: I know, these all were. So all that furniture went along with the bride?
A: Yes. He had a big bed over at his house. And they paid money to this side to carry it over. People fought to do it, relatives fought to do it! There were lots of things to carry, and they paid you for it over there!
- 201 Q: They gave lucky packets, everyone got a lucky packet? Then you went in, through the doorway of the groom's house, and then what?
A: They escorted me inside.
Q: The groom came out?
A: The groom came out.
Q: He came out to bring you inside?
A: Yes.
- 205 Q: What happened after you went in? Did you have to pour tea and all that? Can you tell us briefly?
A: Of course! I even had to pour for "the boys," and of course for my father-and mother-in-law, using a !
- 208 Q: You poured tea for your father- and mother-in-law and who else?
A: "The boys," you always had to pour for all of them.
Q: What "boys?"
A: The group who came with the groom.
Q: What were they called?
A: Ushers.
Q: Oh, ushers. You also poured for them.
- 211 Q: What about the women, where were they? When you first went in?
A: There were also women there! There are always women. There were men and women who wanted to see the bride.
Q: Did you go in the morning or in the evening? To the groom's house?
A: I went in the evening, and we worshipped "Bak kung" the next day.
- 219 Q: So then what happened after you went to the groom's house and poured tea?
A: It was over after the tea-pouring.
Q: When did the groom's family hold their banquet?

A: They had it during the day.

220 Q: They had it before you went over there?

A: They had it before I went. It was just for relatives.

Q: How many days after you went there did they have the banquet?

A: They had it on the day I went, and the next day we worshipped "Bak kung."

Q: That night you went over..

A: They readied the palanquin, held the banquet, ate and then went to bring the bride over.

Q: So that's how you went over.

7 230 Q: At night, the bride came back, and the ushers all left. Then what? You and your husband were in the room, and they rested there that night, and then on the third morning, what did you say happened?

A: The third morning, overnight, overnight everyone left. We worshipped "Bak kung" and everyone left.

Q: Who left?

A: The aunts who escorted the bride, the women, the bridesmaids, they all had to worship "Bak kung," and see things through the end.

Q: Who was "Bak kung?"

A: That was the Great Ancestor.

238 Q: So you worshipped Bak kung. When did you worship Bak kung? The next morning?

A: Some did it then, some wait till the next morning. At that time, I did it the next morning.

Q: You worshipped Bak kung and then they all left?

A: Then it was all over.

Q: Then after two years your husband came back over here?

A: He came back here, and several years later he joined the army.

Q: He joined the army?

A: He didn't bring us over here until he had joined the army and come back.

Q: Oh.

A: At that time, he was native born and couldn't bring his wife over.

247 Q: Where was he sent by the army?

A: To Europe.

Q: Europe, then he was lucky.

A: He was there for four years.

251 Q: Four years, and then he was lucky to come back. He wasn't wounded, was he?

A: When he was in the army? He wasn't wounded, but he was unlucky, his appendix burst while he was running and he almost died.

254 Q: He was running while he was in the army and his appendix burst?

A: He fell down there. They operated on him and cured him, so he lived to go back and bring me over here.

259 Q: Was it because he had joined the army that he had the right to bring his family over?

A: He went back and became a citizen, an ex-G.I., that's how he came in.

262 Q: Did he ever talk about how he felt at joining the army?

A: He never said anything. It was just that that, they wanted him to join.

Q: He went to Europe, and he was lucky, he came back.

A: He was there for four years. He went to London, Europe, Germany, we went to all those countries.

- 268 Q: Many people went especially from the U.S. back to China to marry wives, why was that?
A: People with old-fashioned ideas always went home and their fathers found a wife for them. They always let their mother take care of everything.
- 274 Q: What other reasons were there for them to want to go back to get married? Why not marry here?
A: They wanted to accomodate their elders, to show theirs elders respect.
Q: To respect their elders?
A: That's right!
Q: Because that's what their elders told them to do?
- 277 A: Yes, you went to marry so that they could choose for you. All the people back home were like that.
- 278 Q: Did you like that, having your elders choose for you?
A: You had to do it even if you didn't like it. Back home then, who would... (Laughter)
- 283 Q: Then now would you like your children to go back to their village to get married? Would you like to choose spouses for them?
- 8 285 A: It's not for me to choose. If it were up to me, I'd like them to go back, isn't that so? If you don't go back, they all think it's fine here. But it's not for you to think like that, so now I don't think about anything. Whatever they want. These people are so 老, they know what you old folks are thinking.
Q: You're very open-minded, to let your children marry whomever they want...

(End)

Tape 2 Side A

- 015 Q: As you know, many Chinese are now marrying non-Chinese. How do you feel about that?
- 017 A: I don't care, as long as they like it!
- 018 Q: Why doesn't it matter to you?
- 019 A: You can't do anything about it! Just let them do whatever they please.
- 020 Q: Did any of your own children marry non-Chinese?
- A: My daughter-in-law is Japanese, and my youngest daughter also married a Japanese. They treat me very well!
- 022 Q: How long have they been married?
- A: My son was married in 1973. After they got married, they lived with her mother.
- 024 Q: Where does her mother live?
- 024 A: In Hawaii. He says he wants to stay with her mother, and I don't mind either. He can live wherever he wants to.
- 026 Q: What about your daughter?
- A: My daughter lives quite far from here, about 30-odd miles away.
- 028 Q: How long have they been married?
- A: Since 1974.
- 029 Q: Oh, one in 1973 and one in 1974. Do both of them have children?
- A: The son who got married in 1973 doesn't have any children yet; the daughter who got married in 1974 has one son and one daughter.
- 031 Q: Is your son in Hawaii doing well?
- A: He works in a bank.
- 033 Q: Does his wife work?
- A: Yes! They even bought a house. Paid hundreds of thousands for it.
- 2 036 Q: Do they treat you well?
- A: Quite well.
- 037 Q: Does the daughter who got married in 1974 have any children?
- A: Two, a son and a daughter.
- 038 Q: If they work, do they have to find someone to look after the children?
- A: Yes. It costs several thousand dollars to hire someone to look after the kids. They asked me to do it, but I can't do that, I can't look after anyone.
- 041 Q: How do your friends feel about Chinese marrying non-Chinese?
- 043 A: I don't know. There are a lot of people like that, and you can control them. Even if you could control this generation, you couldn't control the next generation.
- 046 Q: Have your children ever studied Chinese? Did they like it?
- 047 A: They did. They studied several years in Chinese school, and they all liked it. They stopped when they got to high school, because there was too much homework. But they can only write their own names in Chinese.
- 049 Q: Why did you want them to study Chinese?
- A: I wanted to know about the culture and civilization of their homeland!
- 055 Q: Would you like your grandchildren to study Chinese?
- A: I can't worry about so many things! They're so far away, over thirty miles. If they were to study, they'd come to my place, and then I'd have to take (). I don't want to do that.

058 Q: Have any of your Chinese friends told you that they wanted to go back to China to live?

060 A: No. Someone asked me to go to China for pleasure, and I said, "I don't have many feelings about China any more." First of all, I'm advanced in years, and I've been gone for several decades. I don't know how things are there now, so I don't want to go back. I may as well spend the money here for pleasure.

066 Q: Have you ever asked your grandchildren if they wanted to study Chinese?

A: I never asked, and I don't want to get involved. They're still young, only 4-5 years old. They've only just begun to go to school.

070 Q: In some movies, Chinese have been portrayed as the bad guys. Do you have any feelings on that?

A: That's bad. Chinese imitate whites and debase themselves. They shouldn't make themselves look so bad.

080 Q: Have you ever joined together with other Chinese to protest the way the movies make Chinese look bad?

A: No, I ignore them. There are so many Chinese, I wouldn't know which one they mean.

086 Q: What kinds of jobs do you consider to be the best jobs? What kind of jobs would you like your children to have?

088 A: I'd like my children to have respectable jobs, that is, respectable jobs where they don't break rules and can get by.

096 Q: What was it like to join this church? Do you go to the Buddhist temple every week?

A: No, I go when I have time.

100 Q: Who runs this Buddhist church?

A: A Japanese.

101 Q: What street is the temple on?

A: I don't know the name of the street, it's very far away. If you want to go, I can take you.

106 Q: Who introduced you to the church? How many Chinese are members?

A: Auntie Liu and Uncle Hung Hee introduced me. There are 20-30 Chinese members in it.

111 Q: How can you understand English and Japanese?

A: They speak English mainly, and there's also some Chinese that I can read. There are also quite a few whites in the church!

117 Q: What benefits do you feel joining this church has brought you?

A: I believe it in my heart. Before, I saw doctors often. Since becoming a believer, I've never seen a doctor. Also, I used to have trouble sleeping, and I had palpitations. After I became a believer I've been sleeping well, and even when I haven't slept well, I don't have palpitations. The Auntie Liu who introduced me to the church couldn't raise her arm above her head before. After she became a believer, she could raise her arm over her head, and she can even lift things now. Uncle Liu used to cough a lot, but he's been cured since he became a believer, and now he often goes out to eat and have fun.

147 Q: How many people are there altogether in the church?

A: When we get the divine light, the head of the church comes, and the church is filled with dozens of people. Of course not everyone is there yet, some don't come because it's too far away. Sometimes the head of the church flies in by plane. Those of us who have the divine light go meet him at the airport.

28

157 Q: How many times a year do you go to church?

A: I go two or three times a month, and I give some donations. It's up to you, one or two dollars or fifty cents, it's up to you.

173 Q: How much do you give?

A: I usually give \$2. If I don't have any change I'll give \$1. There are also some people who'll give \$5 or \$10.

(End)