

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHINESE AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Richard Lung Interview Number: 111  
 Chinese Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Tapes: 2  
 Date of Interview: 6/28/80 Length: 1 Hour  
 Interviewer: Beverly Chan  
 Others Present: None  
 Language: English  
 Summarizer: Stella Ling

Contents

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary	Tape: <u>1</u> Side <u>A</u>
1	005-015 016-028	Introduction. Richard Lung's (RL) mother has been a housewife all of her life. RL's father, after arriving in this country, had a variety of jobs. RL's father worked at RL's grandfather's general department store called Sing Fat in downtown Los Angeles. Sing Fat was one of the first Chinese stores in Los Angeles. Sing Fat dealt in Chinese art goods and other Chinese goods.	
	029-040	After the store closed in the Depression of the 1930's, RL's father was a chauffeur and handyman for a family in Beverly Hills. Then he worked as an elevator operator for a hotel in Los Angeles. He was also an elevator operator for a building in downtown Los Angeles. He has also held some jobs in between these main occupations.	
2	041-047 084-054 055-070	RL's grandfather came to the United States around 1886. RL's father came in the early 1900's. RL's grandfather first worked in San Francisco as a manager of a store. He then worked in Los Angeles for the same company. RL was born in 1932. He was born in Los Angeles. RL's forefathers are from the Canton area. RL's mother attempted to teach her children Chinese but was not too successful. One of the main problems is that the children did not grow up with Chinese children since they lived in Hollywood.	
3	069-073 074-080 081-082	RL has three brothers and three sisters. RL's oldest sister passed away in 1976. All the children were born in the United States. RL's father returned to China in order to get married. RL has not lived at any other residence aside from his present home in Hollywood.	

## Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
3	083-089	RL attended Vaness Avenue Elementary School, Bancroock Junior High School, and Fairfax High School. He went to UCLA for college.
	090-094	RL did post-graduate work at UCLA as well, after being in the Army for two years. RL was drafted into the Army from 1954 to 1956 -- that is, between the Korean and the Vietnam War.
	095-103	Before RL graduated from college, he did some part time work, usually during the summers. He worked for one of his brother's businesses in Los Angeles. The business is an industrial X-ray company which X-rays metal parts, mainly for aircraft and missiles.
4	104-110	After receiving his masters in geology, he then worked for a consultant in engineering geology.
	111-115	RL's father passed away in 1972. RL is presently living with his mother as well as one brother and one sister.
	116-127	RL's parents purchased their house in 1918. At that time, there was an unwritten restriction preventing Orientals from moving in that particular neighborhood. They bought the house and moved in anyway.
	128-137	RL played with Caucasian children while he was growing up. There were no Blacks in the neighborhood at the time. Only recently have minorities been more common in their neighborhood. There may have been one or two Chinese while RL was growing up but RL never became friends with them.
	138-141	RL identifies himself as an American more although he has no negative feelings about being Chinese.
	142-146	RL never attended Chinese school although some of his brothers and sisters did go to a Chinese school for a while.
5	147-150	RL felt that he was treated equally during his friendships with Caucasians. Right now, RL's friends are still mostly Caucasians.
	151-160	Although RL's parents did try to influence RL to follow a Chinese way of living but it was natural for them to associate with Caucasians because of the neighborhood they lived in.
	161-164	RL does not have a Chinese name.
	165-177	RL's father and grandfather did use Chinese medicine from time to time. RL's mother probably uses Western medicine more often.

## Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
5	178-186	RL's family eats a combination of Chinese and American food. They usually eat rice as a staple food. RL can probably cook Chinese food but he has never had to. That is probably one of the reasons he has never left home.
6	187-220	RL's father played mahjong occasionally. RL's mother plays pai gao (dominoes) once in a while. RL's mother has Chinese friends in Chinatown. One of RL's older brothers and RL himself both bowl and play golf. RL's oldest brother, Joe, probably did more Chinese recreation -- he has more Chinese acquaintances compared to the other siblings. RL's oldest sister, Dorothy, who died, also had more Chinese friends.
	221-252	RL's parents did not go to American movies very often. RL's parents went to Chinese movies on rare occasions. In RL's generation, they went to movies quite often when they were young. RL did not have any strong objections to Chinese portrayals in Charlie Chan movies. As kids, they did not think too much of these roles.
7	253-257	RL does not write to any friends or relatives in China mainly because he does not know how to write Chinese. They left that up to their mother.
	258-265	RL's parents did send money back to China. It has been more of a regular thing in recent years since their family is in a better financial situation.
	266-274	RL's father was of no relation to the owner of the Sing Fat Company for which he worked.
	275-288	RL imagines that other Chinese were affected by the Depression. He was very young at the time.
8	289-303	RL believes that the merchants in Chinatown were probably the most prominent figures in the Chinese community. RL did not join any of the associations. RL's father and grandfather did not join any association either. There is probably no direct relationship between their family and the Lung Association.
	304-313	RL's father and grandfather did not join any other social clubs. they belonged to a Methodist Church but it was not Chinese.
	314-319	RL belongs to professional organizations related to his field.
	320-346	Since RL does not have many Chinese acquaintances, he does not know what types of work the Chinese engaged in.

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
9	347-352	RL does not know what the average income was before World War II.
	353-360	RL did notice that Chinese tend to live among Chinese in prior years. Then they became more dispersed until recently, the new arrivals seem to be concentrated in the downtown and Monterey Park areas.
	361-369	RL's family was one of the first Chinese families to live in Hollywood. RL does not know why his parents chose to live in this area aside from the fact that it is a nice area.
	370-399	When RL was a child, he did receive an allowance, but not regularly. RL's family was a middle class family while RL was growing up.
10	400-407	RL used his allowance to buy toys -- the allowance was not much and they would use it to purchase minor things.
	408-415	All the money RL's father earned was probably used to pay for their family's living expenses.
	416-442	RL's father did gamble -- mainly mahjong. Pai gao is also a gambling game but RL's mother only played during rare occasions. RL's oldest brother did gamble and it was frowned upon by RL's mother. None of the other children gambled.
	443-449	RL's father was the dominant figure in the family, more because of tradition than because of his personality.
11	450-454	RL did not personally experience any discrimination or hostility.
END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A		
1	018-026	RL did not personally experience any discrimination or hostility. Discrimination was not that common when RL was a child.
	027-034	The Chinese were probably mistaken for Japanese during World War II. RL remembers the buttons the Chinese wore to prevent people from mistaking them for Japanese. RL never wore any of these buttons.
2	035-050	RL's parents' marriage was arranged by the families involved. It was a common practice at the time. People from RL's generation would probably not use a matchmaker.

## Contents (cont'd)

Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
2	051-058	RL would not necessarily give a Chinese woman higher priority than other ethnic groups if he was considering marriage. Although he has no such preference right now, a few years ago, his mother's influence would probably have resulted in his marriage to a Chinese woman.
	059-066	RL's parents did want their children to lead a Chinese way of life but because their family was isolated, this was very difficult to do.
	067-075	Looking back, RL does not regret not knowing his culture better and not being able to speak the language. Now that he is so busy, it is difficult for him to learn Chinese.
3	076-089	If RL did have children, he would encourage them to learn about the Chinese culture as well as explain to them why it would be beneficial.
	090-096	Most of the Chinese Americans of RL's generation that he knows are the children of his parents' Chinese friends. The others are those in RL's profession or people that he has occasionally met through the years.
	097-105	Most of the Chinese Americans that RL knows have been married in the United States. RL does not know of too many Chinese Americans but he does not think they would prefer to have sons rather than daughters.
4	106-116	RL has no strong feelings about interracial marriages although his mother probably had a big influence on his thinking.
	117-118	RL has never heard any say that they are embarrassed of being Chinese.
	119-124	RL does not really feel as if there is a gap between himself and other Chinese or Chinese Americans.
	125-131	RL cannot really speak Chinese. He speaks English to his mother. If his mother speaks Chinese to him, he can understand.
	132-142	The Chinese of RL's father's generation did not really consider any particular occupation as ideal. Most of the Chinese immigrants were merchants and knew that they could not secure professional jobs since they did not have the proper education.
143-159	RL's parents did hope that their younger children who had proper educations, would secure professional jobs. For himself, RL prefers a professional occupation over engaging in business. Professional work suits his personality more.	

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Time Segment	Counter Number	Summary
5	160-190	RL used to do things together with his Caucasian neighbor. They would go to a baseball game, or go play miniature golf, or go to the park, or play together. There was nothing unique about RL's childhood.
6	191-203	RL's older brothers did not necessarily follow the Chinese ways more than RL himself. RL's older brother, Joe, did have more Chinese friends. He was fourteen years older than RL so RL does not recall many of the details.
	204-217	RL's family did celebrate Chinese New Years. Chinese New Years was celebrated every year but it was not always a big occasion -- it was not as big as Christmas.
	218-237	RL's family probably celebrates the Caucasian holidays more than the Chinese holidays.
7	238-244	RL feels that because of living in that particular neighborhood, their family has assimilated into the American culture.
	245-257	RL has ever wanted to return to China. His older brother, Walter, and his older sister, Dorothy, have gone to Hong Kong and Taiwan on a tour about ten years ago. Mainland China was not open to the outside at that time.
	258-284	Maybe RL will go to visit China one day, but China is not a higher priority compared to other places RL would like to go see. RL has one aunt in Macao and another one in Hong Kong. RL has one uncle who still lives in China.
8	285-296	RL's parents are probably from Kaoshan, in Canton.
END OF TAPE 1 SIDE B		
1	006-015	Introduction.
	016-025	RL's parents' dialect is closely related to Sam Yup. RL's mother has difficulty understanding Sze Yup. She does not understand Mandarin at all.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE A

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