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Interviewee: Koon Hong Gor Lee (Mrs. Albert F.M. Lee)  
Interviewers: Niky Bao and Priscilla Li  
Date/Time of the interview: December 2, 2017; 10:00 AM  
Transcribed by: Niky Bao and Priscilla Li  
Edited by: Saniya Gayake (2/5/2018); Brianna Satow (6/20/2018)  
Audio track time: 1:11:49

Summary: Koon Hong Gor Lee, known as Mrs. Albert Lee in Houston, was born in 1931 in China. She worked in her family's grocery store business in Houston. Her social circle is mainly composed of her family and members of the Houston Chinese community at Houston Chinese Baptist Church. Her paternal grandfather first immigrated to the United States to work on the railroads and regularly travelled back to China. Her father immigrated to the US in 1926 through Angel's Island. She is a current member of the American Legion Auxiliary and Gor's Family Association and has three children who live in Texas.

Setting: The interview was conducted in a conference room at Chinese Baptist Church. Koon Hong Gor Lee was accompanied by her two daughters, Mary Ann Yeung and Susie Lee, and son in law, Thomas Yeung. They helped clarify information and provided moral support for their mother. Mr. Tim Chan was present to serve as an interpreter for Koon Hong Gor Lee, who spoke Taishanese (Toishanese).

Key:

KL: Koon Hong Gor Lee  
TC: Tim Chan  
SL: Susie Lee  
MY: Mary Ann Yeung  
TY: Thomas Yeung  
NB: Niky Bao  
PL: Priscilla Li  
—: speech cuts off; abrupt stop  
...: speech trails off; pause  
Italics: emphasis  
(?): preceding word may not be accurate  
[Brackets]: actions (laughs, sighs, etc.)

Interview transcript:

**PL:** We're here at Chinese Baptist Church on December 2nd, 2017 at 10 o'clock in the morning. Um we're interviewing Mrs. Koon Hong Gor Lee. Um, I'm Priscilla.

**NB:** I'm Niky.

**PL:** And-

**TC:** Do we need to introduce ourselves?

**PL:** Oh, yeah sure.

**TC:** Okay. Uh my name's Tim Chan.

**MY:** My name's Mary Ann Yeung. I'm the daughter- the eldest daughter.

**SL:** I'm Susie Lee, the youngest daughter.

**NB:** Um, so now we're going to start with the questions. Uh can you state where and when you were born?

**TC:** [speaks in Taishanese to **KL**]

**KL:** [answers in Taishanese]

**TC:** Oh okay, uh she was born in uh, uh [**KL:** speaks in Taishanese] Guangdong province. Kaiping, *xian* (?). That's - that is the district, or the county. And then uh, *kai* (?) 企山海, and then 白沙里. This would be - if you write that, that's the direct, in Chinese, so.

**NB:** Oh.

**TC:** You can take a picture of that.

**NB:** I turned my phone off.

[**NB** takes picture of note with Chinese characters of **KL**'s birthplace]

**NB:** And when were she born?

**TC:** Uh. Obviously [**PL:** Oh.] from the record, she was born in uh 1931.

**NB:** Um how was the neighborhood you grew up like?

**TC:** Neighborhood grew up - as far as in China or versus here?

**NB:** Yeah. Like the childhood. The neighborhood.

**TC:** Okay.

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** She lived in a village. Consists approximately of 40 to 50 families.

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Oh. She went to elementary school uh, uh during - before the Japanese attacked China, but after uh that's, uh obviously all the way, Southern China. So, it took Japanese several years to get there. But after the Japanese got into Southern China, occupation, she no longer able to go to school. Schools closed down.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** Oh. So she went all the way to, middle of uh junior high school.

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Just one year in junior high. [**KL:** speaks in Taishanese [laughs]] So essentially, completing 7th grade.

**NB:** Okay.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** At that time, by then, she was 16 years old. And then she was married, and no longer attend school.

**NB:** Um so like what was school like back in China?

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Oh it's a co-education. Uh.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** 開橋. 開門的開. 一個橋的橋. Bridge. 開橋 Middle School. And the schools consisted of [**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]] three to four hundred students. Co-ed. But it was, it was uh set up by the overseas Chinese sending money back to educate their descendants back there.

**NB:** Okay.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**NB:** So was it like a bilingual in like international education because they funded by like overseas Chinese?

**TC:** I - well let me ask her.

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Bilingual. Yes.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** [laughs] Yeah at 7th grade, they start learning English.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**NB:** So did she receive more education uh after she came to the States?

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Well by the time she got here, she's already been married, so there's no longer - [**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]] I mean, her status changed to a housewife.

**PL:** Was it an arranged marriage?

**TC:** [coughs] Excus-

**PL:** Was it an arranged marriage?

**TC:** [coughs] Excuse me.

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Oh they went to school together. They know each other.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese] [laughs]

**NB:** Like what school - elementary school...

**TC:** That's the school that we just talked about.

**NB:** Oh just like the junior high?

**TC:** Yeah, yeah.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** He was in uh 9th grade.

**NB:** 9th grade.

**TC:** She was in 7th.

**NB:** So two years older.

**TC:** Yeah.

**NB:** And like how many siblings did you have?

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** So uh, uh she's the oldest. And then there's two brothers. [speaks in Taishanese to **KL**]

**KL:** [answers in Taishanese]

**TC:** The younger - the youngest brother was born in the United States. He's a doctor right now at Longview, Texas. And the uh the second brother, actually, served in the U.S. army and he is in Houston. And you might notice from the family tree picture - I mean the information, the second brother is Jim Gor, and then the third brother is Henry Gor.

**KL:** Henry Gor.

**TC:** Yeah.

**NB:** So what is like the - oh sorry. Uh so like what did uh your parents do?

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**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Uh [coughs] they opened a grocery store.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** I - I know them. Yeah, I know her parents.

**NB:** Oh okay. So like why did they choose to come to the States?

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Oh the reason-

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** Now her-

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**MY:** World War II.

**TC:** Yeah. Actually her parents was the sec- the, the her grandparent immigrated to the United States first. So do you wanna start there? Do you wanna go to her parents?

**NB:** Um maybe the grandparents.

**TC:** [coughs] Okay. Uh-

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Okay, uh - grandparents individually come first. Yeah grandpa. Grandparent. Grandfather come to the United States to build the railroads.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** [speaks in Taishanese] At the time, when they came, obviously it's under the Qing Dynasty rule and they still have a pigtailed. And that was one thing that was unusual and then obviously when they got here, they had to cut it off, to - to conform to the - conform to the American way of life. That's her grandfather. Now.

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Okay. So her grandfather come to the United States. At that time, the American rule would not permit you to bring a family. It's not by choice. They would not allow you to bring them because of discrimination against China. And then - but he was allowed to go back to China periodically. And the third year, he came to the United States, he went back to China and uh conceived - have a son and then have a second one before he came back. Obviously the second one was still in the womb at that time. And then uh the - the - her grandmother was still in China, along with her at that time as well. And you know subsequently she obviously is uh third generation.

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**PL:** These are her father's parents. Her father's parents?

**TC:** In uh China. Yeah that's her. Yeah.

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Four - the grandparents has four offspring. The first one died rather young. And then the other three are the sons that they uh subsequently was brought over to the United States.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** Her grandfather is actually a family (?) of, of three brothers that came. So that's the first generation that came-

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**NB:** So like how did her parents come to the States then?

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Oh uh during the San Francisco earthquake fire, a lot of document was destroyed. So uh her - her grandparents were able to reproduce the documents - and that's her father came when his-

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** He came when he was 14 years old to the United States. To join their grandparent.

**MY:** Angel's Island too.

**TC:** Yeah. So they all go through the hardship of coming through Angel's Island.

**NB:** Um so like her dad come like at the age of 14?

**TC:** Correct.

**NB:** Uh so like was she born in the States or like she went to [inaudible]?

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Okay. [coughs] Following the same process, after they come to the United States, work for a while, male members can return to China cause they cannot bring their family. So they repeat the same process their grandfather, in which he went back to China, 14 - I mean 17 years old, got married, and then have childrens in China.

**NB:** Mm, okay.

**TC:** So you can follow the same process. That the male member can come to the United States - only the male member can come. They cannot bring their family uh during that time. The Chinese Exclusion Act.

**NB:** Okay.

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** She was born in 1931. Yeah. Born in China, as part of the offspring uh of the return Chinese immigrants.

**NB:** Um okay. Also, what does she know about like the - her grandfather's work- like the railroad work?

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Oh, he was working on the west coast near San Francisco, [**KL:** speak in Taishanese] in the railroads. And then after the earthquake, he generally just said that it was very, very difficult and hard work, but did not go into any much, more elaborations. [**KL:** speaks in Taishanese] Not much details.

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** [coughs] Okay. She did not get any detail as to how they immigrated from the west coast all the way to Texas. She did not get that level of detail.

**SL(?) & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**SL:** World War II

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** So her uh - her father uh participated in World War II in Asia, near Philippines. And he- their ship was sunk and they had to swim ashore and uh he witnessed many dead. But uh - that was - it was a difficult time. But there was not a lot more detail described than that. Other than, they were - try to survive on limited freshwater and uh and [**KL:** speaks in Taishanese] he there was - their ship was sunk and they had to swim ashore on their own.

**PL:** For three days, three nights?

**TC:** [coughs] Uh they said approximately three days.

**NB:** Did her father like uh represent like the United States?

**TC:** Yes, yes. He was a U.S. uh-

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** U.S. army.

**KL:** Army.

**NB:** So does she know anything about like the social life of her grandfather or her father - like the friend circle - how they were treated-?

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Oh so her - her grandparents open up a-

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** In Galveston, Texas, has a multi-partnership - a restaurant. And uh. Before the war, and then the grand- her father got drafted into the war.

**MY:** First came through Waco.

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** So they have a lot of friends that are Caucasian - non Chinese friends as well. So social life was you know, acceptable.

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** So they - they go fishing they go hunting with the native you know Caucasians as well.

**MY & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** So they [**KL:** speaks in Taishanese] first immigrated from California to Waco, Texas.

**SL:** We would stop at McDonald's on the way. [**KL:** speaks in Taishanese] No there's a little town we always stopped by, a McDonald's before we go. That's when we go hunting with - where grandpa used to go hunting. I remember that - he told us that.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** [laughs] So they do have a uh a social life.

**NB:** Oh okay. But for the railroad work, I heard like uh Chinese uh railroad workers were treated very differently in terms of wage and uh like uh the welfare.

**TC:** Uh-huh.

**NB:** So like what - does she know anything about like how her grandfather was treated in terms of like work, like any discrimination, like in terms of that.

**TC:** Oh okay,

**MY:** Or the salary?

**NB:** Yeah.

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]



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**TC:** They did not communicate in regard to how much money, but it's very little and it is segregated  
[**NB:** Segregated.] [**KL:** speaks in Taishanese] as Chinese workers.

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** She said she was very young so it was difficult for her to ask all these relevant questions.

**NB:** Okay [laughs]. And like how was like her father treated like in the army cause like I think there were very few Asians?

**TC:** [speaks in Taishanese to **KL**]. Yeah she mentioned that when the ship had sunk, there was not - he probably was the only Chinese. There were other Caucasian uh comrade and Black, they were all mixed together as a troop, so - so-

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**MY:** Grandpa George, after the war, was over - he had a close-knit uh group of friends, and they would have reunions.

**SL:** Yeah, he'd go to the World War II reunion every year until he couldn't go-

**MY:** World War II reunions and he would go um uh revisit his old veterans.

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** During World War II, obviously, he was the only one - he was the only member family member in Galveston managing the restaurant among other partners - and the business dealing that tried to squeeze their family part out because the son obviously was in the Army already, and they had to work real hard to maintain his share of the uh of the business. So that's probably any other business.

**NB:** Okay. Um so what was her first job? Like her first job?

**TC:** Oh.

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** When she arrived in 19-

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** 1956. She arrived. Their family had already moved from Galveston restaurant to a grocery store in Houston, Texas and so she were able to just help the family as part of the family business.

**KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**MY:** I can't read that. What was the address on that?

**SL:** I don't have the address.

**MY:** It's on the paper.

**TC:** And here is the picture. Can they keep this?

**MY:** Yeah, they can and I have the um - I have uh-

**TC:** Copy.

**MY:** Yeah.

**NB:** Thank you.

**TC:** That's the grocery store. [**KL:** speak in Taishanese]

**SL:** On Market Street Road. You had the address at home.

**TC:** I think the address is in here.

**MY:** It's on here, but I can't read it.

**SL:** Okay. No, no there's no address because I didn't have it.

**MY:** No it's on here [**SL:** It's on there.] [**TC:** Pleasant-]

**SL:** It's on the picture,

**TC:** It's on the picture, right? [**KL:** speak in Taishanese]

**MY:** Okay, I can't um-

**SL:** Near the Galena Park area, east side of town.

**TC:** It's not-

**MY:** I have it at home

**SL:** Yeah. I saw it last night.

**TC:** Okay, alright.

**MY:** You didn't bring it?

**SL:** I didn't have it, I never had it. [**NB:** Did she face any discrimination in the workplace?]

**NB:** Like when she was working at - at the store?

**TC:** Okay. This is - you realize that this is a family business. So all of them - all of the Chinese were working in the business. So there was no discrimination among the employees.

**NB:** Yeah. What about the client that come to you?

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**TC:** Okay. [coughs]

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Okay. She said that majority of their clientele were Black.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** And they always get along with their clientele and not much discrimination. Not much. I didn't say there was none.

**MY:** We grew up, when we were little kids in the grocery store, too. So I remember um how much we would sack groceries with - for my grandpa. And he would give us like a nickel or a dime a week. [**NB:** [laughs]]

**SL:** It was a quarter a week.

**MY:** Yeah a quarter a week. [**TC, NB, KL, & SL:** [laughs]]

**MY:** And they would have all these aisles-

**TC:** So essentially they worked for the family without pay.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese] [laughs]

**TC:** And they also had to deliver in order to - to survive in that business, they had to deliver the groceries to their home. [**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]] So it's not like today that like - Amazon does it. They do that then too. In order to promote the business.

**NB:** So was it hard for them to like promote the business, because they were Asians and there were other like Caucasian competitors - or like African American competitors?

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Yeah there's not much competitive business, because no one willing to serve the Black except them. So they - they pretty much got their own business.

**MY:** They had two groceries-

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** They had two - they had-

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese] [laughs]

**SL:** Good Neighbor-

**MY:** Yeah Good Neighbor-

**SL:** Yeah it was Good Neighbors Food Market. We had two. Grandpa ran one Uncle Jim ran the other one further in.

**MY:** It was all in Pleasantville.

**NB:** Mmm.

**TC:** I don't even know where Pleasantville is.

**MY:** Right across from Budweiser. [**SL:** Right off the street on Federal Road.]

**TC:** Oh off Federal Road?

**SL:** Yeah.

**TC:** Okay. At that time I only not Clinton Drive. That was it.

**MY:** Yeah, yeah.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**MY:** The interesting thing was Judson (?) Robinson Sr. was there. The landlord order - owner of the building at that time on Pleasantville.

**TC:** Yeah.

**TC & KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**MY:** The area was so bad they just don't bother with the land. [**KL:** speaks in Taishanese]

**SL:** Industrial-

**MY:** Industrial. Yeah.

**TC:** So they - they lost their business because uh industrialization of the area - the owners. [**NB:** Ohh.] Sold the land.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**MY:** Then we moved over here?

**SL:** Yeah, we moved over here.

**MY:** It was Judson (?) Robinson Sr. [**TC:** It was probably '50, '60 already right?]

**MY:** Yeah, when we were born. Yeah when we were kids.

**TC:** '60... '70?

**MY:** Yeah, there's a picture of dad at the last day when the grocery store-

**TC:** This is a picture of-

**MY:** That's when they were closing back in the - back in the 70s.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** That's the - that's the first generation... that's the railroad - the gentleman that worked the railroad.

**MY:** Yeah, you can have - you can have them

**NB:** Oh okay.

**MY:** Yeah I have the original copies I can email them to you.

**SL:** I have the colored one.

**MY:** Yeah, give them the colored one. Yours is better.

**NB:** [referring to picture of **KL**'s grandfather] So for the grandpa's like uh hairstyle is it because of like the pigtail or like-

**MY:** They cut it.

**TC:** Well, it's probably due to age loss of hair.

**NB:** Oh age loss [laughs]. Okay.

**MY:** When they were younger, they had the pigtail-

**SL:** You can have that.

**TC:** Yeah, that one's probably good.

**SL:** Oh here's a single one.

**NB:** Um so did she ever face any discrimination in the U.S. or Houston?

**TC & KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** They - they pretty much limit their life - social life within the family [**NB:** Ohh.] within the business and because of that they did not sence - I don't want to say they don't have discrimination, but they didn't sence too much discrimination among their clientele.

**NB:** Mmm.

**SL:** Especially for the women (?)-

**TC:** But they work so hard, seven days a week - there's not too much time off to have the opportunity to [**KL:** speaks in Taishanese] have a social life.

**TC & KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**SL:** Half day on Sunday.

**MY:** And they would go to CBC (Chinese Baptist Church) too back in the early days yeah.

**TC:** So they'll go to church. They were Christian. Their grandparents become Christian in San Francisco. **[KL: [speaks in Taishanese]]** So therefore they socializes mainly within the church community. **[KL: [speaks in Taishanese]]** And it's this church.

**NB:** Oh this one?

**TC:** Yeah. Except at that time, this church was downtown Houston.

**NB:** Okay.

**TC:** This church relocated.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**MY:** There's stories that uh when he came they went to Waco. They had a restaurant in Waco and that his three sons had a restaurant there and that's where they befriend Reverend Lok Tin Cheung. He was a missionary student at Baylor there.

**TC:** That particular pastor eventually became the first pastor at the Chinese Baptist Church.

**MY:** He is the first pastor here.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** Yeah it was... He converted to Christianity. Then, he went back to China. Obviously, only very few Christians in their village.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**NB:** So did her grandparents have like any other religion before, because she used the word "convert?"

**TC & KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** He was a Buddhist before he converted. Yeah. **[KL: speaks in Taishanese]** So the grandmother was still a Buddhist. **[KL: speaks in Taishanese]** And then, she had to secretly uh do her worship because the grandfather was a Christian.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** So there's some conflict within the worships between the two. One is a Buddhist the other is a Christian.

**NB:** But all the children were brought up with like the Christianity?

**TC:** Yes

**TC & KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** Yes. All Christians, Protestants.

**TC:** She was baptized in 1961.

**NB:** So when she was 30?

**TC & KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**MY:** She came to America in 1956, and then she got baptized her in 1961.

**NB:** So is it because of family reason that she believes in Christianity?

**TC & KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** Her father converted to Christianity in Hong Kong before he came to the United States. **KL:** [speaks in Taishanese] So it's family, you know.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** Her grandmother is still at that time bound her feet. You know about that that's the Qing Dynasty custom.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**MY:** We found an old picture. You have a copy of this one?

**KL & TC:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** In Kaiping district where they took this picture, Kaiping county.

**MY:** This is her. Do you know who is her?

**NB:** No.

**MY:** This is her. These are the grandparents.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** So you want to write down which one is her.

**MY:** You want to take a picture of this?

**TC:** Yeah that has the identification.

**KL & TC:** [speaks in Taishanese]

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**NB:** So for the feet binding, was it like very hard for the grandmother, or was it a natural process that every woman like accepted?

**TC:** Yes. And at that time, obviously, it is another way to limit the mobility of females, and as a way to force them to be in the family, not to being able to go out, to, you know, do other things.

**MY & KL & TC:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**MY:** Beautiful. Meaning beauty.

**TC:** That's part of the Qing Dynasty's custom. [**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]]  
So when you were a real real young girl, they bound their feet.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** You can only walk. Essentially, give you a similar posture(?) as if you wore high heels. It is considered to make you look [**MY:** beautiful] walk. With the walk, give you a swinging walk.

**TY:** Yes. See... That's the history of Qing... tradition...

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** Those with larger feet will convey a lower economic status because you have to work. If you are able to have bound your feet, then you are wealthy enough. [**KL:** speaks in Taishanese] So those are considered upper-class. But that's very well documented.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** So those with bound feet actually had to have maids in order to take care of them.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** Not able to walk well, not be able to take care of yourselves. So you... Status. So that give you a status.

**MY:** Three maids service helping her.

**NB:** None of the other female members like received this kind of?

**TC & KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** So her grandmother is the last generation that has bound feet. It is a very difficult process.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** Her feet is decayed. So can't walk. But after the uh Qing Dynasty, the end of the Qing Dynasty, once become Republic, it is no longer required, or no longer fashionable to have bound feet.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]



**NB:** So like after her grandma came to the States, did any like American coworkers see the bound feet and react?

**KL & TC:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** Her grandma never came.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** So uh usually the grandfather goes back. **KL:** [speaks in Taishanese] Have conceived one, have one born, and have another conceived before he comes back. He usually stayed in China approx.- little bit more than a year. And then he comes back. So they'll have two offspring out of that one visit.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**MY:** Ok so that was with Uncle Ben and his sister. And then uncle...

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** So their offspring are separate by 9 months from each other. The birthdays. In order to have as much descendants as possible.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** They are 9 months separate from each other. The siblings.

**KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** So four sons and three daughters. The grandparents.

**NB:** So like how many children does she have?

**KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Three. So they had two daughters and one son.

**NB:** What values did she want to bring up her children with? Or what values did she bring up her children with?

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** All the grandchildren also brought up in the Christian values.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** Not all of them are Protestants. All of them are Christians. Some of them are Catholics. But they're all Christians.

**KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

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**TC: KL:** [speaks in Taishanese] The grandmother eventually converted to Christianity in Hong Kong even though she didn't come.

**PL:** When did they move from the village to Hong Kong?

**KL & TC:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** 1953 went from the village in Kaiping to Guangzhou, Canton. And in 1955 from Guangzhou to Hong Kong. **KL:** [speaks in Taishanese] 1956 immigrated from Hong Kong to the United States.

**MY:** And then my brother and I was born I think two months later. Uh we're twins. [**TY:** They made in Hong Kong] Made in Hong Kong, born in the U.S.

**MY:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** So they left uh in March of 1956. [**MY:** She said made in Hong Kong. [laughs]] The two, the twins were born four months later.

**KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**NB:** How would she identify herself? Identity

**TC:** As for her nationality or religions?

**MY:** Her name?

**NB:** Like everything. [**MY:** Oh yeah. She has different names.] Like who she is kind of?

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** She does believe she is a Chinese American. A Christian. And bringing up the family in the Western culture.

**MY:** She goes by...her name is Koon, K-O-O-N, Hong, H-O-N-G, Gor Lee. Okay? Sometimes people call her by Mrs. Albert Lee.

**SL:** She has been known as Mrs. Albert Lee in Houston.

**MY:** Her American name is uh May Lee. M-A-Y. Lee.

**TC:** And her husband served during the Korean War.

**MY:** He was a cook in the Korean War.

**NB:** A cook.

**KL & TC:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Even though he served in the Korean War he did not go because the time when he got drafted it was at the end.

**KL & TC:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** So her husband was born in China. So he did not become a citizen until almost till the end of the Korean War. So he did not go because of that.

**NB:** So like how did she manage to find her identification? Like throughout like the change from being a Chinese to being an American? Was there any struggling of identification she went through?

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** She said it was a real slow transition. She really does not remember any particular milestone in which change from a Chinese woman to an American.

**SL:** She still speaks little English. So... But she comprehends.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**NB:** In bringing up her children, she also held this kind of gradual combination of the cultures?

**TC:** Correct.

**NB:** So how do you like Houston? And how long have you lived in Houston?

**TC:** Well I think the timeline. 1950... I think when she arrived, they were living in Houston.

**NB:** Okay.

**MY:** She keeps up with the current events by reading the newspaper pretty much everyday.

**TC:** Chinese newspapers. Because she can read and write Chinese. So she keeps up with the current events through the Chinese newspapers.

**MY:** She knows all the current events. What's going on. She has the cable television.

**NB:** So uh how does she like Houston?

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Just as hot as Hong Kong. **KL:** [speaks in Taishanese] Weather-wise. It would be the same as Taisan's.

**MY:** There is still the Gor village. Y'all went back to visit that right? It still exists.

**NB:** How does she perceive like how the Asian American population in Houston has changed over the years?

**TC & KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

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**TC:** When they first come, she mainly socialized within her family clan. But now with the church. She has broadened her knowledge with other people. Get to know more other Chinese.

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** Due to her lack of English knowledge, she does not socialize with other Caucasians. **KL:** [speaks in Taishanese] But she has not experienced drastic discrimination.

**TC:** Do you have the extra copies of these pictures?

**SL:** I can scan those pictures.

**KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** These are the family clan pictures.

**MY:** These are the three brothers that came through Angel's Island. One, two, and three. One that's Uncle Dick. Unc- Grandpa George. Um. Uncle Ben. And this is the baby sister that also came to America too.

**TC:** They will scan it.

**MY:** I will scan it. I already scanned it.

**KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**MY:** Three other brothers and the little sister all came.

**KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** These would be the direct descendants of the grandfather. [**MY:** That migrated to Houston.] This would become his large family.

**MY:** This another picture too. With the first one would be Robert Gor Senior. That's a family descendent.

**TC:** So you scanned it.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**MY:** This one is Edmond. There is Edmond there.

**TC:** Once you scan it, try to identify them.

**KL & TC:** [speak in Taishanese]

**MY:** Identify everybody. Ok. Correlate it to the family tree there.

**NB:** Is it due to her job and everything, like she doesn't really know on a large scale how the Asian American population in Houston has changed over the years, like large scale?

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** She did not think too much uh how well it makes, because she has always been in the family business. So there is not too much uh understanding. She mainly functions within the church community.

**NB:** What was the toughest thing she had overcome in her life?

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** She mentioned struggling through life, work 7 days a week is always been difficult, alongside bringing up the family. She says she never heard of the word five days a week. They were always 7 days. Non-stop. **KL:** [speaks in Taishanese] It was far difficult to work in the United States than it is in China. Because of the long hours and the isolation within the family clan. You don't get [inaudible]. From 7 in the morning to 11 p.m. **KL:** [speaks in Taishanese] And the grocery store is a family business.

**KL & TC:** [speak in Taishanese]

**NB:** But like how...

**KL & TC:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** She worked all the work. She performed all the duties within the grocery store. She worked from the meat counter cutting up the meat all the way to stocking boys.

**MY:** She cooked for the family too.

**TC:** When you own a business, you have to do everything.

**MY:** They had two checkout stations. **KL:** [speaks in Taishanese] They would have meat and cut them up and sell by piece.

**KL:** [speaks in Taishanese]

**TC:** Beyond the family, they also employed four other outside employees.

**KL & TC:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** But all the employees are black.

**MY & KL & TC:** [speak in Taishanese]

**KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** All the four clientele is black.

**NB:** What was the thing that helped her like persist through all the work?

**TC:** Oh, I think it is probably mainly family loyalty.

**TC:** They just work wherever it is needed. Because they are the owners, they just have to do. So they just do whatever it takes to get it done, as long as it takes.

**NB:** What are some of her most proud accomplishments?

**TC:** The proudest moment would be the offsprings achieved.

**PL:** So what neighborhood did she live in when she was working in the grocery store?

**TC:** The east side of town in the Galena Park area. That is G-A-L-E-N-A P-A-R-K. Eastern Park north side of the ship channel(?)

**MY:** The street address is 12317, Kitty Lane(?) That's our home address. And grandma would live a block down.

**SL:** Two blocks down.

**MY:** Two blocks down. On what was it? Ledger Lane(?) **KL:** [speaks in Taishanese] [Inaudible] and his grandfather would live another street down.

**TC:** They also performed services for other Chinese families, like taking the children to church. Just helping each other within the Chinese community.

**KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** They performed a lot of services for other families as well. Any other question?

**PL:** I was curious what was the economic background of her paternal grandparents. I know her paternal grandmother she had bound feet so she was from a good economic background. What about her paternal grandfather?

**TC:** Her paternal grandfather?

**PL:** Yes.

**TC:** So the one in the United States working on the railroad?

**TC & KL:** [speak in Taishanese]

**TC:** At the time, the grandfather's family was not too well-off. But he is coming from the United States, so able to bring home a lot of money. And the grandmother even though her feet is bound was considered good luck for her family. Her main job was to create offsprings.

**MY:** Now her grandfather has three other brothers that he brought to the United States too. So they have families here too. So.

**TC:** Anything else? Are you done?

**NB:** Yes.

**TC:** You have a lot of information.  
[interview ends at 1:11:49]