

理由：香港心態錄

Hong Kong—

A Psychological Survey: excerpts

By Li You

Translated by Qian Weifa and Wang Suqin with Janice Wickeri

Two Professions are Sacred

Ms S, Restaurant Owner

“1997 DID YOU SAY? Well, it may scare some people, but not me. I came here from China legally, so why should I be afraid? Once I earn enough money, I’ll buy a house in China and spend the rest of my days there. It’s a nice place to retire to.”

Ms S is talking at the top of her voice. Standing by a table near the entrance of the restaurant, she is skilfully making meat- and leek-filled dumplings. Round her waist is a large apron from which hang two big bags jingling with Hong Kong money. Business is brisk. Every seat in the restaurant is occupied and streams of customers come and go while some passers-by stop to gape.

“All Hong Kong people should be admitted to hospital to see what ails them,” she said. “Well, I’m one of them. I’ve been here a dozen years. I’ve got the ‘black I.D. card’ of a permanent resident. But I still think Hong Kong people are sick—overly suspicious, hyperactive or hyperthyroid! The more upset they get, the calmer I feel.

“See the barber shop on the corner? Is the decor garish or what? The boss there comes from China, too. When he first arrived, he worked as a barber and beautician in Kowloon and Happy Valley and saved some money. During the Sino-British negotiations three years ago, Hong Kong people had a bad scare. Many rushed to sell off their property at face value. They just wanted to get out as soon as possible. But that barber kept his head. He bought two shops for a small sum. In the three years since, his business has taken off and he’s made lots of money; why, the value of the shops alone has doubled! But the original owner didn’t leave

Li You, a writer of reportage in China, spent five weeks in Hong Kong in 1986 interviewing over one hundred people. The result is “Hong Kong: A Psychological Survey”, published in Renmin wenxue 1986, No. 6.

after all. He's really fallen on hard times, but it's too late for regrets now. Hong Kong people call this 'Lose out by taking the lead and you fare worse than if you'd thrown away the family fortune.' The Cantonese like to invert their clauses; they think it's genteel. The saying means, the consequences of failure when you risk being the first to do something are worse than if you'd squandered the family fortune. Of course they all know this saying, but they still make the same mistake. The spectators see most of the game. To hell with them!

"My neighbours around here are fond of jokes. They say there are three model workers in the district and I'm one of them. All my husband's relatives are in Hong Kong. He is a qualified graduate of Beijing Medical College. We got married in China and then applied to emigrate to Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Government is really shabby. It only accepts diplomas from Peking Union Medical College and Zhongshan Medical College in Guangzhou. Other doctors from the mainland are not allowed to set up practice here, however talented they might be. There was nothing we could do about it. We were reduced to selling steamed meat buns from a cart outside factories.

"This was an out-of-the-way place then. There were very few shops or factories. During the day we made the buns and in the evening we pushed our cart to the factory gates where we waited for the night shift workers and then for the morning shift workers. So we waited from late in the night till daybreak. Winter is cold and wet in Hong Kong and there's no shelter from it. We stood out in the howling north-west wind, our hands split with cold like a child's open mouth. As soon as the workers came out, we rubbed the blood from our hands on our aprons and grabbed up the buns to sell. I felt terribly sorry for my husband. He was used to handling test reports and stethoscopes. Doctors like him are a rare breed—he treated his patients so kindly. But he sold the buns without complaint, just as he used to make house calls at night in China. At dawn we'd go back to our small room and fall into bed. When he woke up, he started all over again.

"This is a developing industrial district. More smoke-stacks than you can count have sprung up in front of our eyes in the last few years. There're tall buildings, and shops, Western restaurants, night clubs and Chaozhou restaurants too When the time was right, I rented a shop in the centre of the business district and set up a Northern restaurant specializing in noodle dishes. It's really a marvellous spot, like a mini-Wangfujing, or Nanjing Road or Confucian Temple.¹ I wasn't sure if my dishes would suit the Cantonese, so I took a lot of trouble over my soups, boiling the stock down over a slow fire for hours each night. Into the pot went dozens of catties of soybeans and pork chops; I made delicious soups without MSG. Poured over the noodles in a bowl the broth was as thick and white as milk. I also made many new kinds of noodle dishes: noodles with brisket of beef, *won ton* noodles, noodles with pig's trotters, with shredded pork and pickled mustard greens, with potherb mustard and minced beef, with pork chops My prices are really low and one heaping bowl of my noodles will fill you right up.

"From the minute the restaurant opens each day, business is incredibly brisk.

¹Places in Peking and Shanghai famous for their shops, restaurants and food stalls.



By John Wu

The customers are all locals and people who work nearby. Hong Kong people like to get their money's worth too. The rich and the idle may linger in tea-houses or eat in expensive restaurants, but those who have only an hour's break the whole day come straight to my place. They can down a tasty bowl of noodles in ten minutes or so and it only costs them a few dollars to eat their fill. My prices are right in line with their budgets! Of course my money hasn't come easily. We scrape it together coin by coin. My husband gets up at five every morning and stands in the close, hot kitchen for a dozen hours, making more than a thousand bowls of noodles each day. I make the *won ton* and dumplings, oversee seven or eight waiters, see to supplies *and* act as cashier. I'm the owner, but I get more tired out than the

workers. The waiters go off work all dressed up while I still have endless sundry duties to attend to. Still, there are times when I feel very pleased with myself. Evenings, under the lamplight, I take the coins and banknotes from my apron, count them over, wrap them up and give them a gentle 'kes' [this in English]—my darlings!

"I've worked like a dog for the last ten years, as few shopkeepers around here have. As a rule I should be very rich, a millionaire at least. Other people imagine that I keep my wealth to myself. Well, let them think what they like. . . .

"I was so involved with my life in Hong Kong during those years that I lost touch with my relatives in China. When we left the mainland, we didn't dare go to see them because we were afraid they'd get into trouble for having overseas connections. All I could do was take the bus to their place, go quietly into the lane and stand at the corner gazing at the familiar black door and weep a little as a way of saying goodbye. Since there was no contact between us, my family didn't know how I was doing in Hong Kong. Maybe I disappeared from their thoughts as though I'd never existed. But I can't blame them. . . .

"When China started its open-door policy, I wrote to one of my cousins. That time I didn't dare to go up north, so we managed to meet in a hotel in a southern city. I stayed there for two days. We poured out everything that had happened to us in our separate places. Of course I only told my cousin about my restaurant business; I never said a word about the push-cart. No need to pour out that kind of misery to my cousin! I learned from her that my mother had passed away, but that other family members were all right. Our family suffered a lot during the Cultural Revolution. But all of them, old and young, kept their integrity. And all were sound and healthy. Some have been rehabilitated, others were assigned jobs; all are settled. I gave my cousin a cassette-radio and a suitcase of clothes to take home with her. I still remember the looks on the faces of the other people in that hotel. The cassette-radio was a '4500-K', very common in Hong Kong. But when they heard Deng Lijun's throaty voice coming out of it, those people all stared at it dumbfounded. You could hardly tell whether it was because of her voice or the machine itself. . . .

"Not long after I returned to Hong Kong, I decided to go up north. To think I used to be considered the least-promising girl by my family, neighbours and classmates! Now, in Hong Kong terms, I was going back to 'show off a bit'. I just wanted to let them know I was not as useless as they thought. I wore stylish clothes made in Hong Kong and, laden with all sorts of packages, returned home in happiness and glory. All the family members had a happy reunion. Friends and relatives streamed in and gathered round me just like stars round the moon. I have a dozen uncles and aunts—tick them off on your fingers—who have ties of one sort or another with me. I have more than twenty cousins and a row of nephews and nieces, and a host of old friends. . . . Too bad I didn't take enough stuff to satisfy them all. Yet I didn't want to play favourites, so I granted all their requests. Some of them came right out and asked; others only hinted; and some were too shy to say anything, but I could guess. It's not easy to make money in Hong Kong but it's quick. A month's hard work brings in far more than the few dozen *yuan* each of them

earns in China. Besides, I had been brought up in that family. The joys and sorrows of childhood, all my clearest memories—sour, sweet, bitter, hot—are mixed up with that family. It's fate! When you grow up and leave home to face indifference in a foreign land, you long for the cradle in which you were raised. Even if they've scattered salt in your heart, it will dissolve in the blood of kinship. If they treat me well, I'll repay their kindness ten-fold!

"Since then I've been making trips to China frequently. I have a notebook in which I've put down every family member's height, waist measurement, inseam length and shoe size. I also try to figure out what colours suit their professions and personalities. I may be sitting here in unfashionable clothes making dumplings, but I consider myself to be quite artistic and put this knack to good use when I'm shopping for others. I have a longer list in my mind—this family member needs a colour T.V., that one needs a refrigerator, and another needs a hi-fi system. . . . I'm going to see to it that they all get the eight big items!² Whenever I see that the restaurant can get along without me, I have a few quick words with my husband and hurry downtown to raid the shops. I spend lots of money. You can look high and low but you won't find another man like my husband. So honest and open-minded. He's so busy making noodles he can't even take the time to look up but just says, 'Take care on the way!' Then I head straight to Hung Hom and get on the train. I cross Lo Wu Bridge bent like an ox beneath my heavy load.

"I suppose you've seen the path to Lo Wu Bridge. Not long ago it was a muddy rut. When it rained, it got so muddy and it was so long that you felt you'd never reach the end. Recently the road's been repaired and a building put up. But you still have to stumble along, turning this way and that. I had to drag my heavy baggage all by myself and I was out of breath after a few steps. I ached all over and my legs could hardly carry me any longer. All I wanted was to sit right down on the ground. It was then I discovered that there were lots of other people in the same boat: thin old men and strong young ones, stylish girls. . . . All of us heavily-laden with suitcases or baskets on our shoulders, in our hands, or on carrying poles, bent like shrimps beneath our loads. Bleary-eyed, we rushed to customs, as if pursued by an unseen force. It was this kind of energy, like the final spurt in a hundred-metre dash, that's carried me up and over Lo Wu Bridge time and again.

"But it's like a father-in-law carrying his daughter-in-law across the river—a tiresome and thankless job. And I was being just as silly. Each time I went back home, if I happened to forget to bring somebody something or if they wanted something that couldn't be carried, I had to put up with the looks they'd give me. They'd pull a long face and slam the door on me, as if I owed them something. That's fate too! After all they *are* my relatives! The bone breaks, but the muscle is still connected. I had to cure the disease I myself had caused. What's more, I had to put up with suspicious looks on the faces of the customs officials. They hated to see me carrying so many things and thought I was an itinerant pedlar. So they opened my packages and scattered the contents on the ground. Once they even

²Electrical appliances and other modern conveniences. The term originated with Chinese customs regulations permitting Chinese citizens travelling abroad to bring eight such items back to China duty-free.

wanted to drag me into an inner room for a body search. I was so angry I jumped up and cursed them: 'I'm no pedlar! If you think I'm carrying too much, take it home to your ma and pa!'

"It's all right for me to talk like this, but I don't like Hong Kong people abusing China. I get fed up when they say bad things about the mainland. Hong Kong people call immigrants from the mainland 'Ah Can' after the hero of a film. 'Ah Can' came to Hong Kong illegally and had a taste of the high life. Naturally his luck ran out in the end. 'Ah Can' and 'Uncle' are both sarcastic terms for people from China. Is that fair? Take my husband for example. He has as much education as any Hong Kong person. But he has to work in the kitchen, wearing his sneakers with the backs folded down, making noodles while Hong Kong people just sit in their tall office buildings or in their private clinics and put on airs. Hong Kong people are hard-working? Well, I'm no slouch either! The neighbours say I deserve to be the model worker of the whole district. Those who have tasted the sweet and the bitter in China may say what they like about people from the mainland. But not Hong Kong people! Hong Kong people stand there and make sarcastic remarks. They think of us as underclass citizens, even lower than second class. Blood is thicker than water, isn't it?

"Sometimes when I get angry, I take it out on the British. One day an Englishman in uniform was strolling about in front of my restaurant. He looked like some kind of official. He was gesturing with his hands trying to tell me the stove in my restaurant was an inch longer than regulation. I got really angry. The street was full of illegal shops, why pick on me? I smiled and said to him politely, 'I've got no time to give a damn about you. I dare you to touch so much as a hair on me! If you bully me, I'll settle scores with you when the Communist Party comes!' He didn't understand a word I said. He nodded and smiled! He thought I was licking his boots!

"But say what you will, in Hong Kong everything has to be done by the rules. Two professions are sacred: doctors and lawyers. I'm generally law-abiding, so I seldom need a lawyer. As for doctors, my husband's a doctor, but he can't even take care of himself. He's got heart disease brought on by over-exhaustion. His heart skips a dozen beats a minute. And I'm so tired that I have dark lines round my eyes. I have the feeling that my health is getting worse all the time. In the past dozen years we've been struggling for ourselves and for our relatives in China. We've never been to a nightclub or to the races. We've never been to Ocean Park. We begrudge the time it takes to see the doctor, but now I've made up my mind that my husband and I will each go to the hospital for a thorough check-up. We want to see what's wrong with us and whether it can be cured

"To Hong Kong people 1997 seems quite near, but to me it feels far away. I'm not afraid. I'm looking forward to it. I'm only afraid that when the time comes, I'll be too tired to stand on my feet. . . ."

My Sun—Ms M, Import-export Merchant

"I CAME to Hong Kong from mainland China. Hong Kong is no big deal. You want to make money? First make an effort to dress as if you were rich and fashionable, then try to mix with the rich. They'll only take out their money when they see you're as rich as they are. Then you can grab some for yourself. Once you've made your money, you can stop swindling Yes, I call it swindling. I like to call a spade a spade. That's all there is to it."

Seated on the azure velvet sofa, Ms M threw open her arms and shook her shoulders convulsively as she spoke. She has a habit of emphasizing her points with frequent and exaggerated movements of her shoulders instead of her hands, which makes her conversation highly dramatic.

Through the window, you could see the blue mountains of Aberdeen; even the winding, serene paths were distinguishable. Clear daylight flooded into the elegant sitting-room through the window and shone upon the light blue walls, the dark blue carpet and the extravagant blue chandelier, adding a soft lustre to everything in the room. Ms M picked up her thin wool coat from the back of the sofa and slipped it on, then struck a pose like a fashion model. Obviously, her best years were past. Her complexion had lost its youthful dewiness but a little make-up lent her a mature feminine grace. Her figure was well preserved, and in her perfectly-cut coat, she had the bearing of a real lady.

"Would you think this coat was tailor-made?" she asked. "Actually I bought it off the rack. If you spend enough time shopping around in Hong Kong, you can put together the right outfit much more cheaply than having it made. Purple is *the* in colour this year. It's a warm colour with a hint of metallic sheen to it. Last year's colour was dark grey. Clothes should be cut full on top, nipped in at the waist and midriff and the skirt should be pleated like a morning-glory—I mean for a dress. In Hong Kong, you have to pay close attention to changing fashions. You should wear a different outfit every day and you shouldn't repeat an outfit for at least two or three weeks. Clothes are a person's price tag, and you're judged by your clothes first, not your personality. In business, you have to appear totally confident at the negotiating table; they'll size you up to see if you're worth investing in! Hong Kong males are the most practical animals on earth. They're narrow-minded and deserve to be cheated. Once you understand this, you can start making money.

"When I was in China, I never talked about money. I was too proud and when money matters came up, I was afraid to open my mouth. My parents are very conventional in their thinking, even now they still think there's something vulgar about business. Why did I come to Hong Kong, you may ask? Well, there's no point in going into the whole story. Anyway, I came, and with a small child. My husband and I were divorced a few years ago.

"With my darling little son in tow, I went to an office building to register. I was met by one of those 'uncles' in a trim Western suit. Do you know what an

'uncle' is? Well, it's Hong Kong slang. Here all the officials sent to Hong Kong from the mainland on politics or business are called 'uncles'. If you come to Hong Kong as part of a delegation with some high-sounding title, you're an 'uncle'. Remember the revolutionary model opera 'Tales of the Red Lantern'? Li Tiemei, the heroine, has a line in an aria that goes 'I have countless uncles'. Hong Kong people have borrowed the term and laced it with sarcasm. Here, there really are more 'uncles' than you can count. Most have been sent by the state ministries, committees, and offices of trading companies from various provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. My letter of introduction led me to one such company. The 'uncle' there cast a critical eye upon his 'cousin'. When he saw that I had a little 'nephew' with me, he became extremely nasty.

"He said that in Hong Kong a child is nothing but a burden for a woman. He had intended to make me director of public relations, but unless I sent my child back to China, he wouldn't take me. This really hurt. Didn't I know what a burden it was for a middle-aged woman to have a child hanging on her apron strings! The very fact that I brought him to Hong Kong with me at all showed I was prepared for every eventuality, including being less attractive as a woman in the eyes of men. My son was sensitive and willful, and he had been spoilt. He accepted nobody but me, so he would be a burden to anybody I sent him to. It is our fate that we should stick together. He pesters me, annoys me, torments me, but he's the apple of my eye and I'm willing to sweat and slave for him. My life up to now has been full of frustration, but whenever I feel miserable, I go back home and take my son in my arms. That comforts me like a cup of mellow wine. I was disgusted with what that 'uncle' said. Forsake my son? Did he think he was talking to some empty-headed twit? To hell with him!

"I wandered through the streets with my son. In all of Hong Kong, we had no one to turn to.

"I pursued every possible avenue through friends and acquaintances and heard about the wife of a local businessman who would be willing to give me a room for the moment. Her place was a Western-style luxury building with a garden. Hong Kong law says that new immigrants like me are not allowed to visit relatives on the mainland during the first year of their stay in Hong Kong, but that old lady's rules forbade me even to step out of the door of her flat. Only then did I realize that I had fallen into a trap and was now her unpaid servant. What's more, she even assigned me a harsh task: locked in a tiny room, I wrote endless letters trying to make business connections for her in China. Every day, wearing a patched dress, I mopped floors, washed clothes, cooked meals, and wrote letters, and my son suffered with me. In China, I'd grown up among intellectuals and I had never been treated like this! Two months went by. One day my landlady was out. The doorbell rang and I went to open the door. It was a strange woman carrying a basket of greens. She told me that my landlady had asked her to bring some things back from the market. When she saw my shabby clothes, she asked timidly: 'Where are you from?' 'From the mainland . . .,' I answered, tears running down my cheeks. 'Me too,' she nodded.—By the way, would you like to meet her?—Later we became bosom friends, the only one I have in Hong Kong. Today is the second day of the

lunar New Year. I've invited her and her four children to dinner in a restaurant"

That evening, the restaurant was brilliantly lit. Because it was the New Year, customers flocked in. Ms M led her motley crew upstairs with great dignity, waved the waitress over and deployed her guests around a table. It was a peculiar group. Ms M, the hostess, sparkled with pearls and jade. Her son, in a Chinese-style blue cotton-padded jacket of silk and satin, snuggled up beside her. The guest of honour, by contrast, was a miserable-looking middle-aged woman, surrounded by four listless children. Ms M was begging her son to stop pestering her for a moment, and she was so busy talking and helping the other four children to the food that she herself did not have a chance to eat.

"To continue—this lady is a graduate of a university in China. Her husband was a businessman in Hong Kong. She and her children were allowed to emigrate to Hong Kong where the whole family was dependent on the husband. He used to do business with China, but only had limited capital to invest. In the first few years of China's open-door policy, there were no orders to speak of. Her husband got involved in business litigation and was threatened by some people who said "this Hong Kong trader" would be arrested and shot by the mainland authorities sooner or later. He was terrified. After a few sleepless nights, he took his own life by jumping off a building while his family was out Of course, such misgivings were quite unnecessary; and it was cruel of him to have abandoned his poor wife and children. But Hong Kong is typified by such over-sensitivity. If the mainland sneezes, Hong Kong will catch a bad cold.

"Her husband had died when I first met her. She had a serious injury from being struck on her mouth. Her brother-in-law had taken over her flat by force and had given her a nasty beating to boot. That day the two of us stood talking in the doorway for a while. 'You should get out of here,' she said, 'I know what kind of person that woman is. She's bound to mistreat you.' 'I want to get away,' I answered, 'but I don't have a penny to my name!' Later she snuck back, thrust two thousand Hong Kong dollars into my hands, and told me to get away as soon as possible. I took my child with me. We didn't dare to be seen in the streets; we took the MTR. And so we ran away.

"Now you see how much I owe everyone! I am indebted to my parents in China, to my son, and to all the Hong Kong people who've treated me kindly. I love life, but I'm full of hate too, especially for the rich. Here money and power are worshipped and bad people always make out better than good. But don't let it get to you. The more you think the more unhappy you'll be. Why be so hard on yourself?

"You want to do business? O.K., let's sit down and talk. Use me—I'm only too anxious that you should. I used to beg friends and acquaintances from the mainland for small loans now and then; I had helped them in the past and now they were making out well in Hong Kong. But when they saw me, even before I opened my mouth they'd blurt out: 'I have no money.' I've had enough of their icy stares. It's better to go to the local moneybags than to ask these people for charity. They're rich, but no matter how much they have it's never enough. Want to take advantage

of my mainland connections? O.K., I'll use you, too. Let's get down to business, sign an agreement, enter into a contract. As long as you know your way around, you can find a loophole in any contract. There're hundreds of thousands of dollars on the line. Well, so you get taken, and what's worse, you have to keep it to yourself. But that paltry sum is nothing to them. It'll hurt for a while, and then it's all over. In the past few years, some Hong Kong businessmen struck it rich trading with the mainland. They simply had unsalable goods from Taiwan transported over the border and ended up with thousands and thousands of *yuan* in exchange. Their wallets were bursting. Why shouldn't I get my share . . . ?

"I'm bad and shameless and I want to be worse than the worst among them. That's the only way to compete with those ruthless money-makers. You never get rich by being good. What's the use? This is a dog-eat-dog society; honesty is rubbish. It suddenly came to me that my material desires were just repressed while I was in China, and now they have woken up like the coming of spring. I want a lot of money. All my dreams can be realized through money. You want to be above worldly considerations? First you must be absolutely unscrupulous, you must do whatever you can to get money, you've always got to be one step ahead of the game. Then you can look the world straight in the eye and say all the high-sounding things you want.

"The 'uncle' I just mentioned is already sitting pretty. You'll see him sitting at his desk, his fat hands covered with colourful gold, platinum, jadeite, and diamond rings. . . . God should have given him more fingers. He's even more underhanded than I am, and his smooth talk is gaudier than my fashionable clothes. If he tells people in Hong Kong that Kai Tak Airport was built as a result of one of his proposals, or that a certain Peking VIP is his god-father, or that two American senators are waiting to see him, they may have some doubts, but they'll still be rather bowled over. He's bought some fine houses with public money and drives around Hong Kong in a Mercedes. Where did all his money come from? He swindled it out of China; either he ganged up with foreign businessmen and they cheated the Chinese together or he cheated both sides. He's not the only 'uncle' like this. Some people get kickbacks of thousands of dollars out of a single deal. To get themselves a colour TV they let the country take a beating. What's more, they live it up in night-clubs and make merry in the 'red-light districts', patronizing local and imported whores alike. You want evidence? It's hard to come by, but these things are open secrets here. Just think, how can Hong Kong people be optimistic about 1997 after seeing all this? A few scum are all it takes and a hundred pieces of propaganda can't stand up to a single fact. Talk is cheap.

"I have to give myself credit; I'm not as bad as they are, I haven't become so utterly devoid of conscience that I've made a pile for myself at the expense of my country. While I was in China, I was sent to the countryside and did all kinds of hard work. I saw with my own eyes how the peasants suffered and struggled, earning only enough for a day's backbreaking work to buy a few boxes of matches. I know how they live. Things may have changed for the better now, but by how much? You mustn't be too ruthless about making money; I haven't got the heart to cut off their flesh to pad my own. This lady has some scruples about how she makes her

money. I differentiate between my countrymen and foreigners. I only cheat the Hong Kong rich, not the Chinese. Why do men curry favour with me and play the big spender? Simply because I am still good-looking and charming. But I can't take them seriously. I've been taken advantage of by men before in my life. My love was kindled, died away, was kindled again, and died again. Lots of men chase women for whatever they can get, but I haven't found anybody who wants to take care of me. I've seen through it all and have become very indifferent. To me, love is an extravagance. My son is already a bit neurotic. When a man comes to our place, he jumps up and starts hitting and kicking . . . My son is my heart and soul. There are still so many emotional debts left unpaid in my life . . . love seems so remote. Yet, my heart leaps in spite of itself at the mere mention of the word.

"True, I've done pretty well for myself. I have my own business, my own home, and none of it has come easily. 1997 is coming, and I am just as scared as the rest of Hong Kong, only for different reasons. By that time, I may have earned some money, but I'll be old. Shall I put my money in the bank and live on the interest? Don't be so naïve. Society, like a boat sailing against the current, will always be in a state of turbulence. To stop moving ahead is no different from casting yourself onto a desolate river bank. When China takes over here, there will certainly be more 'uncles' and more immigrants. You doubt it? Go to Central and have a look for yourself. All those 'uncles' in their poorly-tailored suits, here for a week as part of some delegation or other, strolling leisurely among the rushing crowds in Sheung Wan and Central like feudal lords about to take over. To be frank, I am not so generous that I want to share all my comforts and hardships with a billion people. By 1997, even if Hong Kong doesn't suffer a depression, the actual living standards will surely be lowered by population pressure. Some people are afraid Hong Kong will be deserted, but my hope is that there'll be few newcomers.

"It is useless to talk about all this A person has to take the long view or suffer in the short term. The saddest moment of the day for me is when I get home at night. I have changed, changed in ways even I myself can't believe. It's a short step from the pursuit of one's ideals to the worship of money.

"Looking at the light-blue sofa, the carpet and the empty walls, I ask myself: is this what life is all about? I just want to run into the bathroom and have a good cry. In the whole range of human emotions, I'm most susceptible to a sense of agony. Here my son is my only consolation. Come, my darling, my angel. I'll send you to Canada to study one day. Can I depend on you? Give me a kiss, my sun."