

Transcript Interview

Interviewer: Vivian Chow
Interviewee: Shui Chow
Interview: Oral
Date: January 17, 2015
Time: 7 pm
Place: Rosemead, California

Interviewer: Thank you so much for conducting an interview with me, Grandma.
Shui Chow: No problem.

Interviewer: Is our family connected in any way back to China and Mao Zedong's rule?
Shui Chow: The only thing I remember . . . is an event back in the 1960's.

Interviewer: Was it the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution?
Shui Chow: Yes, that was it. You see, my father-in-law, which was your great-grandfather, Bao Chow, died during that time.

Interviewer: What happened?
Shui Chow: My father-in-law had encountered the Red Guards one day on his way home from work. The Red Guards stopped him and asked him several questions from the Red Book. His answer to the Red Guards was not satisfactory, so they beat him up very badly. When he got home that night, it seemed like he would not make it to see the sun rise.

Interviewer: Why would the Red Guards pick my great-grandfather out of the crowd for questioning?
Shui Chow: No one really knows how your great-grandfather encountered these Red Guards. He never talked about the situation to anyone; we only know that his answer was unsatisfactory.

Interviewer: I am confused. Do you know why his answer did not satisfy the Red Guards?
Shui Chow: Hmm, beside intermediate families' members and close neighbors, no one knew that he had a very hard time to express himself because his words would be slurred and slow. My father-in-law had some sort of disorder, which we did not know what it is. However, now I know that he had dysarthria.

Interviewer: I see. Grandma, was my great-grandfather able to make it to see the light of day?
Shui Chow: Oh yes.

Interviewer: How badly was he beaten up?
Shui Chow: Horrible. Very horrible: he had faced verbal, physical, and mental threats. He was forced to wear a dunce cap on his head while a crowd spat insulting phrases at him. This abuse had shook him so much, that later, he came down with a frightful sickness. A few months later, he died at home.

Interviewer: That is so sad for my great-grandfather.

Shui Chow: Vivian, please remember that my father-in-law did not do anything wrong.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your time, Grandma. It was really nice speaking to you about our family history and, once again, thank you.

Shui Chow: You are welcome.