

APPENDIX 1: FULL TRANSCRIPTS

First interview: Samuel

Alice Samuel, how do you do? Let me introduce myself. My name is Alice. I graduated from the Chinese University long ago, in Business Administration. After that, I discovered that I like Psychology, so I continued my studies on this subject. I have a full-time job in marketing. And now, I am also doing a PhD in Psychology. My studies include one part which is about smoking and its feelings. I am very interested in this subject. I am not a smoker, that's why I need to ask questions about your feelings and sensations. I may ask you many questions. I hope you don't mind if it gets too tedious.

Samuel Oh, no problem at all.

Alice For my PhD thesis, I have asked Soso to find 8 interviewees. There are two interviews for each interviewee. This is your first interview. The second interview will take place in a week or two. Soso will be in touch with you on that. Before we begin, do you have any questions?

Samuel No.

Alice No questions? Ok ... I also want to say to you. In the following one hour, I will not speak a lot. The fact is that your story is more important to me, so I want you to speak more. I will not talk too much, so you have more time to speak. Sometimes I may ask you a question or for your opinion. There is no right or wrong answer, so just say whatever that comes to your mind, even though you may not be answering my question.

Samuel I get it.

Alice That's about it. Before we begin the questions, can you introduce yourself, Samuel, so I have an idea about who you are?

Samuel My name is Samuel. I am studying at HKU Space, err, doing Business Studies ... an associate degree course, in my final year. I shall graduate in the coming year. I am 21 years old, so... can I talk about smoking?

Alice Of course, any time you feel like it.

Samuel OK... my father and mother have been divorced for a long time. I live with my mother and my granny (mother's mother). I started smoking when I was in Form 2. I stopped when I was in Form 3 and Form 4. I started again in Form 4 and Form 5. My school results were not good, and that's about it. I am very active, and a bit "sloppy".

Alice Active? So, you have been doing a lot of sports since you were a kid?

Samuel Those days in high school, I played basketball, football and volley ball.

Alice Wow, impressive.

Samuel Yeah, but I could only play football after my knee injury. Then I had to sit for the public examinations, so I stopped. Now, I play football occasionally.

Alice You injured your knee. How did it happen?

Samuel Too much training, I guess. It was the time when I played basketball, football, and volleyball. I was training every day, from Monday to Saturday. Basketball and volleyball are not good for the knees. Football

is a bit better, but basketball and volleyball put a lot of strain on knees. Also, my posture was wrong, and I hurt my bone tissue (endosteum). Then there was inflammation. I had treatment for 6 months before it was healed.

Alice This happened which year in high school?

Samuel At the end of Form 3

Alice What was the training like when you were in Form 3? A few hours every day?

Samuel School started at 8am and finished at 3:30pm. The after school training usually lasted till around 7pm.

Alice Wow, four hours!

Samuel Yes. We had some snacks after school, did some warm-up, and went straight into training. There was some training in strategy in football and we played matches after that. It was the same for basketball and volleyball.

Alice Were you in the school team? Did you play for the school?

Samuel Three teams.

Alice Were there other schoolmates like you, playing in three sports teams, being intensively trained like you?

Samuel Yes, there were. But they had a different mix. I played basketball, football, and volleyball. Some of them played ping pong, badminton and volleyball, and some were in swimming, football and basketball.

Alice Your schoolmates were very sporty!

Samuel Not really. They (sporty types) were in the minority. I studied in a band 1 school. There were a lot of book worms. I was not good at studying, so I opted for sports. But being an athlete in Hong Kong cannot make ends meet. So, I finally took my family's advice to cut down on the sporting activities, and paid more attention to my studies and spent more time on books.

Alice Do you mind telling me which high school you were in?

Samuel On Chu Secondary School in the Kwai Chung District.

Alice I don't know too many schools in that area. I was in Pui Ching. I am more familiar with high schools in the area around Ho Man Tin, Mongkok, and Lok Man Estate.

Samuel Pui Ching.

Alice Pui Ching is very traditional (not sporty).

Samuel Near OU (Open University)?

Alice Yes, that's the one. It is haunted!

Samuel A very big school.

Alice Yes, it is very big. It has a high school and a primary school.

Samuel The entire row of buildings ... occupies the whole road going uphill ... getting bigger and bigger.

Alice Getting bigger and bigger ... isn't it too much? I don't know. I was a very quiet child not doing any extra-curricular activities. Most students bury their heads in books. The only thing in my head was to get admitted to the Chinese University. I must get in; it was the only choice opened to us then. I could not go to HKU.

- Samuel Why?
- Alice Because there was no form 7 in my school. So, we could only study up to form 6, and only CU would take us. If I failed to get into CU, that would be it. It was not like students in English schools.
- Samuel So, you would have had a choice if you got to form 7?
- Alice Yeah. You must know that the universities give provisional offers. I think you still have them now. So, if you had excellent results in Form 5, the two universities would give you initial offers. As long as the examination results in Forms 6 and 7 were not too bad, admission was pretty certain.
- Samuel Something like that. Now we call it conditional offers.
- Alice Yes, something like that. So, you are sports savvy?
- Samuel Yeah, but that was before, not anymore. Because I liked playing football when I was a kid. In high school, when I found out that there was no football team, I changed to basketball. Later on, I got recruited into the school basketball team. And then in my class, there were a few classmates who played volleyball. They were short of teammates and asked me to try. So, I tried playing volleyball, and afterwards I got into the school team also. About the football team ... according to hearsay, students (who played football) were behind in their studies. So, the school management disbanded the team. For football fanatics like us, we carried on playing of our own accord ... as a group, a team, and started calling ourselves the school team. When I got to Form 3, the school team was reinstated. Like that, exactly like we were, we arranged for a teacher to lead us. At the outset, we were just playing, running amateur training.
- Alice Did you consider building a career in sports?
- Samuel I did, when I was a kid. But when I got to Form 1, I gave up the idea.
- Alice You did it when you were only in Form 1?
- Samuel I gave up the idea. Hong Kong is a cruel place (for athletes). Too many incidences tell me that being a professional athlete in Hong Kong is difficult. There is only a very small chance of becoming successful. I must say I don't have that spirit of perseverance and commitment. Yes, sports can be a hobby, a pastime, something to do in one's leisure time. As a career, no way. Firstly, my family will object to it. I will not have their support chasing this dream. Secondly, I know I don't have the resolution to do it. My will power is not strong enough.
- Alice Were you upset that you family stopped you from playing on the school team?
- Samuel Well, not really. They did not warn me until I got to Form 3, Form 4. I repeated Form 3 because I got distracted by the activities. When one gets older, one starts thinking more. Since I would not be building a career in sports, I might as well focus on my studies. Since then, I cut down on the basketball and volleyball activities. I love football so much I could not give it up, and so I carried on playing. I spent most of my time on books. However, this resolution probably came too late as my examination results were only average.
- Alice You got into Space, didn't you?
- Samuel In Space, they will have a place for you as long as you have money.

- Alice You need perseverance to stay focused on your studies. You will persevere, right?
- Samuel Right.
- Alice Studying business?
- Samuel Yeah, accounts (Accounting).
- Alice Why this subject?
- Samuel Why this subject? It is because I see many of my seniors, sons of aunties, my friends' elder brothers ... most of them are in Accounting. When I was a kid, I listened to them (their stories), and saw how articulate they were. They spoke so enthusiastically about their jobs ... I was impressed. When I was in Form 4, I took Accounting, just to see what it was like. But after I got into the subject, I found that it was quite suitable for me. The three elected subjects I took were Accounting, Chemistry and ICC. ICC is Information Communication Technology. But my Chemistry results were pathetic, but it seems that I have a good sense when it comes to doing accounts. After the DSE exams, it was time to decide my future. Eventually, I opted to do an "associate degree". But which subject? When I did my DSE, I did computer and accounting, and since I like accounting, I chose to do Commercial Studies.
- Alice Are you thinking of being an accountant after graduation?
- Samuel The aim is to qualify as a Chartered Accountant first. The decision to make accounting as my profession comes later. Of course, if I am a qualified chartered accountant ... that is, supposing I graduate successfully and get the certification ... at least I have that to fall back on, if no better job opportunities come my way. Speaking with fellow students, we all agree that doing business is the only way to get rich in HK.
- Alice Running businesses may not be the only way. There are "kings of salary men" (high income salary men). They are also very happy.
- Samuel It's very difficult. I don't think I have the ability to get what I want. I always seem to be a bit negative and distrust my own ability. I see many friends around me. There are some who have completed the Form 5 open exams ... some have completed the DSE exams ... some have finished A level's, some have university degrees and some have associate degrees. Among them, some are "out of school and out of work" but there are some who have managed to find jobs. We discussed our situations. We try to find a job after graduation, but there are so many people like us! The best starting salary is HK\$10,000+ a month, and it is already better than many others. Of course, we exclude graduates from law, medicine, nursing and other vocational therapists, physiotherapists etc. But for the average graduate who has a degree in, say, Chemistry or Business Studies, they can only a salary of around HK\$10,000 a month. It is common to plan a marriage before 30. To many people, marriage goes together with buying a flat. Apartments are generally small, and not too many people can live in one flat. I have the same idea. If I get married, I need to buy a flat. But for young people, it is impossible to buy a flat in Hong Kong. With a HK\$10,000 monthly income, even if you save it all, it

will still be far from enough. You can't even afford the down payment. It is impossible for a fresh graduate, say aged 23 or 24, to save one million dollars in 6 years' time.

Alice Have you thought about renting?

Samuel We have. But it seems that once you start renting, there is no turning back.

Alice I see. You give money out in paying rent and get nothing back. Not like paying a mortgage ... at least you're paying for your own flat.

Samuel Yes, exactly.

Alice The salary of my first job twenty years ago was HK\$13,000 a month. So now you guys are still only getting HK\$10,000+, how come?

Samuel No change!

Alice Exactly.

Samuel No change in salary but look at the huge difference in prices of consumer goods compared to twenty years ago!

Alice I have no idea why it is so.

Samuel We have talked about it too. The older generation complains that we (the new generation) are not hardworking enough. I just think they are two different situations. In the past, the general belief was that hard work pays off, regardless of whether you are educated or not. For example, if I fail in school, I can go and get a license as an electrician, or a builder, and my income would be enough to support a family. If I study well, and have a proper degree, I will be sought-after in the job market, and my prospects will be well secured. Look at the situation now! Prices are much higher than before, but the salary of a fresh graduate has not changed. One more thing, the number of graduates was much fewer in the past. Now you can easily run into university graduates. On any given street, 8 out of 10 pedestrians will be graduates, I bet. There are PhD and Masters degree holders in there as well! The situation has changed a great deal. Not that we don't work hard enough. Hard work doesn't pay. We all just go, "Sigh!"

Alice So that's the conclusion from the discussions with your buddies?

Samuel Yes, it's pretty much the thought on my mind.

Alice Let me tell you something positive. The situation may be different but don't be too concerned about the starting salary. In the first two years, my salary had doubled. As long as you work hard, your boss will see it. The starting salary is low, but it will be increased. Once you go past that, the annual increase of at least 10% will add up to a considerable amount. So, this is the positive side. The starting salary doesn't mean a lot.

Samuel I guess that's true.

Alice If you work hard, you will get results, remarkable results. You are a fresh graduate; you must show people you are hardworking. It is important. The salary will increase. So, I think you should not be too worried about it.

Samuel I don't know. Perhaps I have yet to get to that stage. We are still in education, anxious about the future. And we really don't know what the future holds. I do worry now. Three and four years later, when I get to

work, maybe I will be less anxious. Anyway, I still think Hong Kong is a cruel place.

Alice But you won't be starved to death here.

Samuel Right, we won't die of starvation. In Hong Kong, as long as I am willing to work, I won't be starved to death. Unless one loses one's mind first. As long as one rolls up one's sleeves and get on with things, there shouldn't be a problem. In the past, hard work is a merit to success. Now hard work is a prerequisite.

Alice And you need a bit of luck too.

Samuel Umm, luck is the essence. Chances are unpredictable. Well, we'd better equip ourselves well, so to get a good grip on the opportunities when they come our way. If we don't, we will let them slip by. So, it is important to do my part first.

Alice That's very mature thinking. Now, let me ask you this. You just said when you were in high school, you were very sporty. You played on school teams, and you also started smoking around that time. So did you...

Samuel I mingled with dodgy friends!

Alice Tell me more. How did you come by these friends?

Samuel People around me were all dodgy. They all smoked. How did I get into their crowd? When I was in Form 2, I was particularly close to a classmate. My first experience of smoking was with him. He was repeating Form 2. I was outgoing, so we became good friends easily. Then I mingled with his friends too. We were in the same school and we got together for meals. At that age, we were carefree, with no worries or burdens. We went to the park together, chatting, drinking soda, or went to Internet cafes, and played TV games. My first incidence of smoking was after dinner with them, at the embankment. I saw a friend drawing out a pack of cigarette from his pocket, and he gave me one. I was initially disgusted by this. My mum hates smoking. So, I was groomed to hate it too. I saw smoking as devilish, only for bad people. So, I rejected his offer. He offered it again, and I rejected it again. And the third time he offered me a cigarette, and I didn't reject it. I took it and smoked. It was like chewing a minty gum ... nothing special. When I was a kid, I thought the smell of cigarettes was foul and unpleasant. Now that I smoke, I don't feel anything. The taste of a cigarette is just a like mint gum, giving my nose a cleanse. My friends said, "Don't worry. You won't get addicted, it's not that easy!" Well, I didn't get hooked. I used to go out with them, on Saturdays and Sundays, and for football training on weekdays. We were all in the school team. After training, we would have a shower and go out for dinner together. After dinner, we smoked. I didn't think I had crossed any lines. Smoking was no big deal. I didn't go out with them all that often, so it was no big deal. Just a few sticks a month. I didn't see any problem with that.

Alice Did your mum know?

Samuel At the beginning, she didn't know. I was scared when I started smoking in Form 2. I was scared that Mom would find out. Well, it was only a few cigarettes a month. And it happened only after my training. I was stinky

anyway. I showered afterwards, so the smell didn't stay. Then when I got to Form 4, I started working. So I had the perfect excuse ... saying that it wasn't me; the smell was from the guys at work. Until I got to Form 5 and 6, my mum knew. She found cigarettes at home, and she saw a lighter in my drawer. Any sane person would figure out what was going on. Suspecting and seeing are two different things. She knew I smoked, and she said that it was not right to smoke when I was still at school. It is okay when one starts earning his own living. At work, it is okay to socialise and smoke. As long as I was still in school, I was still a kid, I should not smoke. But I did smoke, and I kept it from her. She didn't like it, and I didn't want to irritate her. So, I smoked outside, not at home. Will I smoke (at home) when I start my working life? We'll see. Who knows.

Alice Can you tell me about your relationship with your mum?

Samuel It's complicated. Granny looked after me when I was a kid. The family, Mother, Father and Granny, we lived together. Father worked. Mother had a job, and Granny nursed me. It was like that until I got to primary school. I was little, so I didn't remember much. I just remember Granny looking after me ... Father coming home at about 7pm, and Mother later at 9pm or 10pm. When I was in primary 5, Mother started a business, and came home later and later. I remember that Mother took me out for fun every Saturday and Sunday. I knew how to take the bus home since I was little. Granny was illiterate, so Mother taught me how to take the bus home. When I got to primary 5, Mother started her own business and was very busy. She would come home after 1 or 2 am. Father kept his usual schedule and would be home at about 7pm. When I was little, I had homework and school notices for Mother to sign. Father didn't want anything to do with my school affairs. Studying was my own duty; he didn't have any expectations or requirements from me. But Mother did. She pushed me to study hard. Probably she felt (regretted) that she hadn't studied well, but she still plucked up her courage to start her own business, which was a bit risky. She was hoping that her son could speak better English, so he would have better prospects at work. When I was little, she was quite harsh on me to study hard. We are not a well-off family. I didn't have many toys. My toy was the football and my pair of legs. Yes, I went out to play football whenever I was free. Just running around, and over time, fell in love with football. When I was in Primary 5, Mother was busy, getting home late, late, and later. I needed Mother's signatures on school notices ...

Alice Your Granny and Mother were both from the mainland? Or are they locals?

Samuel They are from the mainland.

Alice You were little then. You should have been 11 years old when you were in primary 5. You had to make a choice to stay with your father or your mother when you were only eleven. You chose to stay with your mother, and your father moved out accordingly.

Samuel No. It was my mother who moved out. She had saved enough money to buy her own flat.

Alice Wow, she is really something.

Samuel Yes. By comparison, my mother worked harder and was cautious on spending. To me, she has been generous. She gave me the best. At meal times, there would be four or five dishes. As a kid, I would only eat my favourite foods, and my mother would eat the rest. When we went to Ocean Park, I got hungry and my mum would buy snacks for me, regardless of the expensive prices. She didn't buy any for herself. I knew she would be hungry, but she only drank water. She started saving up when I was in primary school. She had tried setting up her own business twice. When I was in primary 3, she opened a hair salon. She then found out that the business was not sustainable, so she closed it down and went back to being an employee again. When I was in primary 5, she started another venture; a cleaning company. When I was little, I just felt that my mother was very harsh on me, very unreasonable. My peers appeared to be happy bunnies. All mothers are harsh, but my mum was nothing like them. She has gone through a lot, and at one time, she was juggling three jobs. She is so hardworking. Understandably, she expected her son to be worthy and have a good nature. That's why she was doubly harsh on me. She softened up when I got to high school. Perhaps I didn't turn out as bad as she had feared. She realises that I do have a brain and started listening to me. But she is headstrong, fixated on her own views and stubborn ways. If it is so, it has to be so. She listens to me on trivial matters, but she mostly sticks to her thinking and methods. Our relationship has been a lot better, though she still comes home very late, and so do I. So, we meet up during those late hours, chit chat and snack together. When I was a kid, no late nights were allowed. Even if I had stayed up to see her, I would only get told off. So, I only stayed up if I needed her to sign my school papers. If there was nothing important, I would just leave them on the desk. If the scores were too low, I would stay up and mutter some inaudible excuses. She appeared to be a harsh mother to me. But when I got older, things changed. I stayed out until past 2am in the morning, and she also worked until 2am. We would cook some noodles and have some food and rice together while we chatted. That's why my family's dinner time is very strange. The earliest time for a meal was at 9am, and the latest dinner was past 11pm!

Alice Now your parents are divorced. In the course of divorce, were there any bitter fights between your parents?

Samuel Yes, there were, but not too big or loud. I have a hazy image that they were some arguments, and my mum cried. But then I don't remember much. Perhaps my granny had kept the sounds and scenes of the arguments from me. Or I just didn't want to hear or see them, and that's why there are no images in my memory. But I recall that they did argue.

Alice Do you remember being scared at all?

Samuel No, not scared. Perhaps I saw enough of those situations in TV dramas.

Alice Oh, was it like, "You guys go on arguing and fighting, and I just carry on with my TV!"

Samuel Maybe I was too little to understand what was going on. I just took it like they lived in separate places. It was no big deal to me. Actually, I was happier. I went to stay with my father when I wanted to, or to my mother's when I feel like it. As time goes by, when I got to Form 1 and 2, I began to realise none of my classmates had divorced parents or came from single-parent homes like I did. So, I started wondering why. They all have two parents, but I don't. I sought counsel from my class teacher. At the end, I got to know what divorce was all about; when one couple stopped loving each other, they would be better off being separate, and divorce would eventually come about. It is like that, just like that.

Alice Oh, were you scared or upset when your father and mother separated?

Samuel No.

Alice So, you felt something like, "Oh, I will stay with Mom tonight. When I feel like it, I may go to see my father."?

Samuel Yes, it was like that. All my childhood neighbours and friends were in my father's area. When I went to see my father, I would also get a chance to see them. I would take a shower there, ate there, and slept there. Mum's home was bigger and prettier, but I didn't know anyone in that neighbourhood. I didn't grow up there; it was not my playground. There was a computer in mum's home, and I could play games and surf the Internet. So, it was all outdoor activities at my father's, and indoor activities at my mother's. TV games at Mum's place ... football at my father's place. It didn't matter to me when I was little. It was just a 10 minute journey for me.

Alice How many days did you stay with your father? And how many with your mother?

Samuel Err ... It was not fixed. I would be taken to the mainland during the summer holiday. On normal days, I would be in my mum's place where all my stuff is. Sometimes when I was late going home because of after-school activities, I would go to my father's home, eat, shower and then go home. On Saturdays and Sundays, if I played football, I would stay with my father.

Alice You said you would be sent to the mainland during the summer. Did your mum go with you?

Samuel No. Granny went with me.

Alice Oh, just you two.

Samuel Granny can't read, nor could I. My mum went with us two or three times. She took us to the border, then to Shenzhen bus station. She took us onto the bus, and saw to our luggage. When everything was in order, she would leave. Afterwards, I began to speak and understand a little of the Chiuchow dialect. My mum pronounced the words to me, showed me the Chinese characters of the name of the place where we were supposed to get off. At that destination, we would be met by my uncle.

Alice Ah, summer holiday ... three months long.

Samuel Two months only. One month in Hong Kong. My mother kept the month for any school activities. I usually stayed in Hong Kong the first half of July till all things were settled. Then I would leave for the mainland until the

middle of August, and then come back for the new term.

Alice Oh, when did you go back to the mainland for the first time?

Samuel When I was about 5-6 years old?

Alice So little, ah, you were smart.

Samuel It should be when I was in Primary one.

Alice 6 years old only.

Samuel Yes.

Alice You took care of your granny when you were 6 years old?

Samuel There were only the two of us ... but I was not scared. It was actually quite fun. It was quite boring on the bus, so I just slept. It was a long journey, four to five hours. I just slept, Granny also fell asleep. Some buses had TV's, and we watched TV. There were only three stops. I remember that ours was the first stop. Once we got to the stop, I woke granny up and we would get off. There, we would be met by my uncle. I was used to it and it was not a big deal to me.

Alice Now I am going to ask you about smoking. Can you tell me about the ideal cigarette you had today or yesterday? The sensation or feeling of that cigarette. What was it like?

Samuel (My ideal cigarette is) the cigarette after a full meal.

Alice Yesterday or today?

Samuel Yesterday.

Alice Can you tell me more about that?

Samuel It happens to me every day. Most of the time I am not even aware of it. Perhaps it is something to do with my friends' routine. We usually smoke after we feed our stomachs, so the feeling is "full", very satisfying. A bit drowsy after the meal, in full stomach, smoking makes us feel soothed, very relaxed, so comfy after the full meal, so full, in this sleepiness, smoking a cigarette makes me feel soothed and satisfied.

Alice Will it get you sleepier after smoking the cigarette?

Samuel Oh, it could happen. If that happens, I just go home and sleep.

Alice Was the meal dinner?

Samuel Yes.

Alice Can you describe to me the sensation you had when you smoked that cigarette? What the world was like around you?

Samuel Very enjoyable. How should I put it? Usually, when I need the kick, when I have nothing to do, smoking a cigarette is merely a routine. There is no feeling, blowing out, sucking in the smoke, dumping the cigarette, as if nothing has happened (to me). The cigarette after a full meal is so relaxing, I smoke slowly, very slowly. When I need a kick, while I'm waiting for a bus, say, I will quickly finish the cigarette, and get on with what I was doing. The cigarette after a meal is a slow smoking (moment), savouring it... I feel very relaxed, comfy.

Alice Is there any taste in cigarettes?

Samuel Yes, it has taste.

Alice It does? The taste is minty or what? A taste that you like?

Samuel It tastes minty. I like mint leaves, I like the taste a lot because it is very soothing. There are menthol taste, full taste, and mild taste. I don't

smoke full taste and mild taste. My friends are easy. They smoke everything. I only smoke menthol cigarettes and not any of the others. I only like the menthol taste and its feeling. So, people say you can eat mint candies, and be done with it. But it is different. Mint candies give you a "mouth sensation". Even if you eat a strong mint candy, and you take a deep breath, the strong menthol taste is only inside your mouth. With smoking, you draw the smoke into your lungs, so, it is different. Yeah, it is difficult for a non-smoker to understand.

Alice So, is it like taking the mint (taste) to the lungs. Is it like that?

Samuel The sensation is very cooling; it could be. There is a difference between "know" and "don't know" how to smoke. When I was little, I didn't know how to smoke. We call it "empty cannon", just drawing the smoke into the mouth and blowing it out. And we thought that was smoking. This kind of smoking will not get you addicted. Because you only draw it and blow out immediately. You think you are smoking the cigarette, but actually you are not. If you really know how to smoke, you would draw the smoke into your lungs before you blow it out. You see those kids, just drawing in the smoke and blowing it out ... and they call it smoking ... they think they are smoking. When I was little, I thought that smoking was such a cool thing to do. As time goes by, people don't like smoking, very few people like smoking. I don't care what they think. It is my choice. I don't smoke in your face, I don't irritate you. If I smoke in your face, and make you feel uncomfortable, then I am wrong. Or if I draw a cloud of smoke and then blow it right into your face, then I am wrong. For instance, there will be a cigarette smell after I finish smoking, and it will annoy people, but I don't think it is a big deal. If you say there is a bad smell, what about the foul smell everywhere in Hong Kong? The cars, the people jam-packed, why don't you hate them? There are plenty of smokers in Hong Kong. Okay I smoke, and you get the smell of it, and you give me the "contemptuous" look, I feel upset. It is my personal habit. I may die early (young), I may have health problems ... it is my choice, and you have no right to complain. I know it does me harm, but I stand by it, and you should not interfere. I am not here to kill you; I am playing with my own life. When I was in Form 4, I had quit smoking for a while. I smoked too much at work, I felt bad when I smoked too much, and I couldn't carry on like that, so I cut down.

Alice Coz you wanted a clear conscience?

Samuel Yeah, kind of. Firstly, I was afraid of being found out by my mum. Secondly, I felt bad about it. I just thought that it was not right and I asked myself, "Why don't I just quit?" So, I stopped for about three to four months. Afterwards, the bad habit resumed.

Alice How did you feel when you stopped smoking?

Samuel Not much. I didn't quit for long. I started smoking when I was in Form two. I wasn't really smoking ... just playing "empty cannon" ... drawing in the smoke and blowing it out. I was holding the smoke inside my mouth, and I thought I was (really) smoking. So, I really didn't have an addiction. When I was in Form four and five, I tried to quit (smoking). It did not

really matter to me. No smoking, so what? Then I went out a lot. It is no good to turn down others when people offer you cigarettes. Coz I went out with friends who smoked. At work, my colleagues smoked. I might be seen as unsociable, so I went back to smoking again. Then I came to know how to smoke properly.

Alice But now you have a "target" right?

Samuel It's just that I want to get married before I'm 30. After I get married, I will quit. Before that, I will just continue.

Alice Quitting is for the money, or just that it is not good for health? Do you want kids?

Samuel I don't want to affect my partner, coz when I am with a stranger, so to speak, I would smoke. I will have the smell of cigarettes on my body. Although she does not get second-hand smoke, but she will get third-hand smoke, which is the smell left on my clothes.

Alice Oh, you call that third-hand smoke?

Samuel There is third-hand smoke and it affects people. For those strangers (passers-by) acquaintances, we won't be together in a place for more than ten twenty minutes. They may not like the smell but the impact on them is insignificant, almost zero. But to my partner, once we are married, we will be together a lot, and second or third hand smoke will affect her. So I will quit, yeah.

Alice Good. Final question for today. What role do you think the cigarette plays? Is it an animal? A person? An object? What you think it is? Especially the one that has made you feel very enjoyable.

Samuel The most enjoyable cigarette was the one I smoked when I was in Japan, on a holiday trip, with friends. We were hanging on the balcony, watching the sun set ... three chaps, each of us holding a cigarette, drinking sake. It was really very comfy. Smoking is a habit, a habit to help me de-stress, to pick me up, a dose of something soothing when I get stressed out. Many people say that it is difficult to quit after years of smoking. Really, it is a habit. Like for example, there are people who are so used to keeping a cigarette in their lips when they are thinking. There are people who are so used to having a cigarette after meals. So, smoking to me is a habit. It is a habit that is also a contentious issue. Some say it is good and many say it is bad. It is not a lifeless object to me, although it is really a lifeless object. Usually the time I smoke is the time I do my thinking. In other words, sometimes I sit in the park, or places where smoking is allowed, and I just sit there and do my thinking. And there, I will smoke and smoke. Smoking kind of helps me think. But it is only my experience. A lot of people do not agree with it. That's how I see it (cigarette). I won't call it (cigarette) my friend. It is something special ... a special habit. After all, I am used to it. Just like a friend of mine ... he will light a cigarette every time he walks out from a building. Some of my friends will light a cigarette once they are done with their tasks. For instance, I will smoke a cigarette after I finish a journey. I need to smoke a cigarette after a meal. I smoke when I have finished a document. Everyone's habit (pattern) is different. I have a friend who smokes only

one brand, just that one, or nothing. Some only smoke when they are in bars, chit-chatting with others, watching ball games. Some smoke only when they play TV games. So, I sense (think) every one's pattern is not the same. It is purely a habit, a behaviour that may affect our own health, and possibly affecting others'. Actually, it is the same as rich guys smoking cigars. They have money to buy cigars instead of cigarettes. Just like that.

Alice What is the best part throughout the whole process?

Samuel The last few puffs. Coz at the beginning ... the taste is the richest in the last few puffs. The most menthol is there, so it is the best.

Alice With the strongest feeling?

Samuel Coz the cigarette is about to finish. Of course, you can light a new one. When you're getting the last few puffs, the taste is the richest.

Alice Because you don't want it to go (finish)?

Samuel Not exactly like that. Depending on what type of cigarettes you are smoking. Like the cigarettes I smoked in Japan, I really didn't want it to finish, coz the taste was so good. I don't know why. They are different ... the cigarette (wrapping) paper, the flaking of the cigarette ash, the intensity ... everything is different. The first Japanese cigarettes I smoked really made a special impression in me. I don't smoke strong cigarettes or mild ones. In Japan, basically 80% of people smoke and drink, both men and women. The smoking incidence in women is high. That's why there are a lot of feminine type cigarettes. Women generally do not like strong cigarettes or mild cigarettes. They only like menthol cigarettes. It suits me. There are so many choices of menthol cigarettes for me, like blueberry menthol, strong tasting ones like grape menthol, super strong menthol, super light menthol, floral menthol ... a lot more choice for me. They were so good and I didn't want to leave at all, yeah.

Alice I understand. Good. The session is running so smoothly that I lost the sense of time. What a story. Very interesting tales, especially about the sensations smoking has given you. I haven't heard so much about menthol cigarettes. I have been to Japan. You are right. There are many different menthol tastes, fruit tastes.

Samuel Have you been to the Family Mart in Japan?

Alice Yes, I've been to the Family Mart.

Samuel I was quite struck by it the first time. I don't go to Japan on holiday that often. I did it more when I was little. My first visit to Japan was deeply imprinted in my memory. I had already started smoking then. My first visit to Japan was when I finished the DSE exams, the year when I was in Form six. I went with my family folks and my mum. She felt (thought) that she hadn't taken me on any travel tours ever since I started school. So, the two of us plucked up our courage, joined a packaged tour to Tokyo, and stayed behind after the tour. Friends around us had all been to Japan, and they told me that the cigarettes there were great. So, when I entered a Family Mart, the first thing I did was to check out the cigarette cabinet. In Hong Kong, the cigarettes are normally displayed behind the cashier counter. In Japan, they have hanging display panels. I

remember looking up and was struck by the sight. There were more than two hundred brands. It was amazing, from one to two hundred! I was thinking I would never forget this in my whole life. The first time in a strange place ... and when I walked in, I had simply wanted to buy a packet of cigarettes. When I looked at the display, I said to myself, "Wow! Is there really that much choice?" So, I guessed from the packaging, the colour of the pack, in order to find the menthol cigarettes of my taste. I tried more than ten different brands in my first visit to Japan. Two or three were light in taste ... wrong guesses. I was happy with the other six or seven kinds. I never got that taste in Hong Kong. Like the one I am smoking now, double capsule ... double capsule with a blue berry taste. They are on sale in Hong Kong but only recently. The double capsule and blueberry ones were available just six months ago. They've been on sale in Japan for a long time. I saw the two kinds when I travelled to Japan. I tried them, and they were great. They are available in Hong Kong now. I like smoking Japanese cigarettes, so I bought them.

Alice What is special about the cigarette paper? Is it the difference in (design) pattern? Or the burning rate, or the flavour?

Samuel The burning rate, how should I put it? Look, just like this cigarette. We can see that the cigarette paper is not the same. The paper of Hong Kong (cigarettes), the ash has many flakes when burning. They get onto me, all over me. It is not the same with Japanese cigarettes. The wood-like stripe pattern (paper lines) kind of holds the paper together. Of course, the ash will fall after burning, and sometimes the flakes would drift to our clothes, but I don't feel that they are as big a nuisance. I think they stuff or layer the tobacco in a better way ... the tobacco leaves and the cigarette paper are not the same, although they are similar, but the tobacco is different.

Alice You saw that the colour is different?

Samuel It is the taste and sensation in my mouth that is different.

Alice Oh, so the difference is in the taste?

Samuel The taste is not the same. Take the blueberry taste (flavour), for example. They have been on sale in Hong Kong for six months only. When I smoked them in Japan, the taste was like red wine ... red wine with a mint flavour, just like chewing a mint gum, and at the same time drinking red wine. The one I smoke in Hong Kong is like eating blueberries. The taste is not that strong and tastes just like blueberries. That taste (I tasted in Japan) was like red wine. So that's the difference. Those in Hong Kong are milder, some are stronger, but not the same as those in Japan. I believe that those in Japan are much better blended. Coz they are for the local Japanese consumers. I think they provide the best blend, the most suitable for Japanese smokers, and that's why they have that taste. Those in Hong Kong are not the same. That's my personal feeling.

Alice Ah, now you have made me want to buy a few of them for my friends next time I visit Japan. I will get my friends to try them and tell me the differences, as I don't smoke myself.

Samuel They're definitely not the same. Very special. The sensation is quite amazing and astonishing. Perhaps that Family Mart I went to was a relatively big one, where one to two hundred different kinds of cigarettes were on display. It was in Tokyo city centre. There are Family Marts in Shinjuku, smaller ones, but they still a hundred odd different kinds. In Hong Kong, we don't have so many brands, say fifty odd, at most. Not the same in Japan; they have a few hundred. In Hong Kong, Marlboro has more than ten different tastes.

Alice I think about ten.

Samuel See? Ten tastes; double capsule, black ice, black Marlboro, white Marlboro, middle Marlboro, red Marlboro, and some others. There are more than twenty Marlboro brand tastes in Japan.

Alice Yes, some are long (super long).

Samuel Yes, long and short, some are not so rich (in taste). But when I was in Japan, I just thought Japanese brands are more special, coz I can't buy them in Hong Kong. Initially, when I bought Marlboro in Japan, I just thought that Marlboro is Marlboro. You can buy (them) in Hong Kong, and you can buy them somewhere else and it won't make a difference. Then I tried the Japanese ones, and compared them to the ones from Hong Kong. Once I drew in (the smoke), I realise that they are not the same!

Alice Also, Japanese cigarettes are cheaper too.

Samuel A lot cheaper.

Alice Around three thousand odd yen per pack?

Samuel Last time I bought them, it was \$28.9. The time before last was also \$28.9. I asked some of my tour guide friends to buy cartons for me. That's why they are \$28.9 a pack. Two packs there cost almost the same as one pack in Hong Kong ... a huge difference. \$289 a carton.

Alice It will only get more and more expensive.

Samuel It's not fair! Tax on red wine and cigars is reduced but increases on cigarettes! But red wine and cigars are for rich people, and cigarettes are for commoners... commoners smoke cigarettes and drink beer. But those items used by the upper class got reduced (tax), and the commoners' increased. It makes me angry!

Alice So, every excise increase will enrage you?

Samuel I will get angry, I feel that it's not fair. Why did you reduce excise on red wine and cigars? If you want to increase excise, increase it on all of them, you can't be that partial!

Alice I don't know about the excise reduction on cigars. I have just learnt about it now. I only heard about the excise reduction on alcohol.

Samuel Reduction on cigars and red wine. Those consumed by rich people. Increase on items consumed by commoners. That's my impression.

Alice I think you are correct.

Samuel Because it is not the first time. When they increased (the cigarette price) it from \$29 to \$39, there was a reduction on red wine! When it (the cigarette price) was increased to \$55, tax reduction continued on red wine! I didn't mind it much when it was increased from the twenties to

thirties, it might only be just that time, but you did it time and again! You are doing it on purpose!

Alice The saying is that there will be another increase next year, it is said cigarettes will be from sixty to seventy, or even ninety dollars a pack.

Samuel If it costs one hundred a pack, I will not smoke.

Alice Quit?

Samuel Ask people to buy smuggled ones or ask for a favour from friends to get them from other countries. One hundred a pack. That will be it.

Alice In England, they are something like twelve, thirteen pounds a pack. It is crazy.

Samuel But a lot of people still smoke.

Alice In England?

Samuel Yes, many smokers.

Alice Perhaps they have money.

Samuel Possibly...

Alice Their income is higher than ours.

Samuel Probably.

Alice That's why they have money to buy the expensive cigarettes.

Samuel Yes... Oh, Hong Kong ... forget it.

Alice OK, Samuel. I will go back and listen to the recording. If there are some topics I may want to know more about, I will take them up with you next time. Soso will set a date with you. I will ask you questions again based on today's content.

Second interview: Samuel

- Alice Hi Samuel. I went back and listened to the recording, and now I have some questions to ask you. Before that, let me ask you some other questions first. Can you tell me your ideal cigarette yesterday or today?
- Samuel The ideal cigarette I had was yesterday in Stanley. I was with my girlfriend in Stanley. Unlike me, she doesn't smoke. So, I stole a chance, and told her that I wanted to go to the toilet, and in fact I went to smoke instead. Sitting by the seaside watching the sunset, this is what one calls ""truly enjoyable!"
- Alice During that moment, how did you feel about this world? What was the feeling when you were smoking the "very enjoyable" cigarette?
- Samuel I felt very content. The world was purely wonderful during those few minutes. The feeling was gone when I finished the smoke, and I had to go back again.
- Alice To the real world.
- Samuel Returning to the real world again.
- Alice Very interesting. Last time you told me when you and your friends were in Okinawa, on the balcony, watching the sea, you had an enjoyable smoke. Most of your indulging smoking moments seem to be linked to when you were looking at the sea, isn't it?
- Samuel I love smoking in a comfy environment. When I'm watching the open sea, it gives me a feeling of calmness, very comfy... I don't like being hectic, I like the comfy feeling, I like to feel free, so... maybe it's because of my personality, I would feel content as long as the environment can give me a sense of comfort and relaxation... so I would feel peaceful even when I am standing next to a trash bin while I am smoking! Yes, talking about Okinawa. Yesterday in Stanley, I ran into the tour guide. He went there to visit a friend, and we met again by chance. We didn't go smoking, coz my girlfriend was there.
- Alice Oh, so if your girlfriend was not around, you would go smoking together?
- Samuel I think so. Usually I will do that when I run into a friend ... if I know that he is a smoker. We would smoke and chit chat. Usually it's like that.
- Alice Can you describe the "very enjoyable" and "very indulging" few minutes? What were they like? What is a "very enjoyable" and "very indulging" world? Who is there?
- Samuel It's best if there is no one there.
- Alice One person only (alone)?
- Samuel I am outgoing, but I also like quietness, I enjoy tranquillity. For example, if there are no people at home, if there is no one at home, I enjoy sitting in the living room quietly smoking my cigarette... do nothing, think of nothing, no need to use my brain, time seems to have stopped. That moment belongs to me completely, and I have to return to the real world again a few minutes after I finish smoking... so it's that feeling... which is not easy to describe. I don't think there are many people like me. I don't know. My friends are not like that and they are quite normal. They smoke for the kick, to satisfy their addiction. When they get annoyed,

bored, in waiting, they will smoke. I like smoking in a comfy environment. Sometimes I'm in for a long wait, and I feel annoyed, I will smoke. Also, when I need the kick. Those situations also happen to me. However, I like smoking in a comfy environment, not necessarily beautiful, but comfy, with no one there to bother me, as simple as that.

- Alice Time suddenly stopped, like Doraemon (cartoon character), just by pressing a button.
- Samuel (In the comfy environment, time) stopped for a short while.
- Alice Time stopped, and there is stillness ... there's only you, no need to think of anything, just you there, smoking.
- Samuel I don't like being in a noisy environment, and I don't like places that are crowded with people. Firstly, I don't feel well. Secondly, I have to push my way here and there. Thirdly, it is noisy. Actually, sometimes Hong Kong is quite noisy. But there is nothing we can do. So, once we get to places that are quiet and calm, we feel comfortable.
- Alice So ... there's only you in that world, and everything stopped. In that world, what is the role of cigarettes to you?
- Samuel It is something "nice to have", icing on the cake. (I guess) I would still feel comfy even without a cigarette in that quiet environment, but something is missing, that's what a cigarette can give me... with a cigarette there (in that quiet and comfy space), the world becomes perfect!
- Alice It is not the alcohol?
- Samuel Alcohol may do it too. People say cigarettes and alcohol are inseparable. I like cigarettes more. Alcohol is all right. I am not fond of beer. I love hard liquor. But drinking hard liquor in a nice and tranquil environment is a bit incongruent. The sensation from cigarettes is very satisfying. Probably because you feel hot after drinking alcohol, a bit dizzy, not very comfortable, but relaxed. However, after the relaxed feeling will come the uncomfortable feeling. The impact from cigarettes is just momentary. The momentary feeling of extreme satisfaction won't leave me any feeling of discomfort. Cigarettes are no good for health, but the negative effects won't get to you instantly.
- Alice While you were talking, a thought came to me. When you spoke about hard liquor and cigarettes, it led me to think that hard liquor is more masculine and cigarettes are more feminine ... from the way you described it.
- Samuel You may say that. It (a cigarette) is kind of soft, a cigarette makes me feel soft, gives me a sense of peacefulness, it belongs to the quiet type... liquor, on the contrary, is very masculine and heroic. The ambiance I like is the quiet type, so I need something soft to go with me, then I will feel satisfied. Well, liquor can make feel relaxed, but cigarettes give me a better feeling afterwards.
- Alice What about the moment the world stops? The cigarette in your hand, where does it belong? Do you think it belongs to an imaginary world or the real world?
- Samuel A cigarette belongs to the real world, but I'd love to take my cigarette to the other (ideal, dream-like) world, and when the cigarette is smoked

out, I know it's time to return to reality.

Alice Is a cigarette in the imaginary world the same as one in the real world?

Samuel They could be the same ... I don't know.

Alice I guess you seldom think of these kinds of things when you smoke, right?

Samuel Yes. Are they the same? They should be, coz I am not sure. It is just a matter of feeling.

Alice Good. It is not important. It is quite normal that you can't answer this. It is a really difficult one. There are feelings that not easy to be articulated and described.

Samuel That's true. It is difficult to find words to describe it. How do you put it? There are feelings that can only be experienced. You may have heard many people say things about this and that, but if you haven't experienced and tried them personally, you won't understand the feeling that you have at that moment. It is difficult to find words to describe the feeling.

Alice The world when you smoke and its associations ... do they have any resemblance to some experiences in your childhood?

Samuel Yes, they do! When I was little, and I see on TV guys holding their cigarettes in their mouths. They looked so cool. Coz no one smoked at home, so I didn't know that cigarette smell was stinky. I didn't get to know it. So, I just thought holding a cigarette in the mouth was really a cool thing. Just like those gangsters holding cigarettes in their mouths, killing their arch rivals, or spies, or businessmen when they're talking business ... they were all holding cigarettes in their mouths. So, I got the impression that everyone held something (in their mouths). When I was little, there were chocolate biscuit fingers that were shaped like cigarettes. So, I bought some home, turned on the TV, and put a biscuit finger in my mouth, so that I could look like them. When I got older, I went out a bit more, and saw people smoking. I usually only watched it on TV. So, when I saw real cigarettes, I was intrigued. Since I was little, my family folks have told me not to play with fire. I thought fire was so much fun ever since I was little. Smokers would light their cigarettes with fire. So, when I saw it, I felt I was so close to the source of the fire. When I saw the smokers blowing out smoke, they seemed to look so relaxed, and I saw the cigarette burning... so I really wanted to try. I really had that feeling when I was little. Sometimes when I smoke, I would think of things I had done in childhood. I would think of which actors I impersonated when I was little. I would remember strolling in the park with my father, seeing those teddy boys smoking and hanging around. I would have those images and associations in my mind (when I smoke). When I was little, people told me that smokers were bad people. Smoking was equated to bad people and nastiness. But I reflected on it after I started smoking ... and I think it's not true. Everyone has their own habits and preferences. In my childhood, I got the perception that smoking was not good because I was taught that it was not good. Nevertheless, I was really curious about what smoking was like. After I tried it, I realised it wasn't such a bad thing after all. It is not necessarily

equated to something bad. The fact that most “bad” people smoke doesn't mean that smoking is bad. In other words, bad people have a smoking habit, so people get the impression that smoking is bad. There are good guys who smoke too, or they smoke cigars. You will see that some businessmen are holding their cigars when they discuss business, but we don't say that they are not good. That's all.

Alice You played with fire when you were little?

Samuel How I played with fire when I was little! My first time was probably in Mid-Autumn festival, lighting candles. We were so happy ... so many sparks of fire! Kids in our family were not allowed to touch lighters, and I didn't have one. The gas stove was not much fun, coz the fire would just come out after you pressed a switch! I tried to flick switch a lighter when I was little. On every first day and fifteenth day of the month, our family had burning rituals, burning paper offerings. I would hassle my granny to let me do the burning. When the burning was done, I would keep the lighter, and went out to the streets to find something to burn ... searching for anything that could be burnt. There was a time when I started a fire.

Alice You meant your home was on fire?

Samuel Yes, something was on fire, a small one. I forgot what caught on fire... it was very close to a switch, and the switch kind of short-circuited and there was a charred smell. I was so scared. I thought I had made a big mistake. I called my mum. She was at work. The police was called, and then the fire brigade came.

Alice How old were you?

Samuel Five or six years old. I was very curious, very eager to have fun.

Alice I was also fond of burning things when I was little. But only once a year, in Mid-Autumn festival, burning wax (candles), playing with lanterns. I could not explain why I liked playing with fire.

Samuel Me too. I don't understand. The feeling was "very happy".

Alice Could it be because you liked destroying things?

Samuel I don't think so. But the bigger the fire, the happier I got. Why so?

Alice The bigger the fire, the happier you got...

Samuel Yes. Just like burning wax. Lighting a few candles was not enough, so I lit more and more. Then the small flames together became a kind of fire. I feel that it is really beautiful. From then on, I would go and look for more things to burn, burn and burn, and the fire gets really big. I played with lanterns before. Those were made of paper, different from today's plastic ones. I put the paper lanterns into the fire, too.

Alice Is fire like a living creature?

Samuel It is like that. There's life in a fire. I think they have lives. They can do a lot of things if we use it correctly. If we use it badly, it can destroy many things. It can be evil as well as righteous, so it seems to me as if it has a life of its own. It gives us warmth, and at the same time, it can destroy everything ruthlessly. It depends on how we use it.

Alice To you, is fire a man or a woman?

Samuel It can be a man; it can be a woman. When it is enraged, it becomes a big

fire, a blaze. When it is only a small fire, it is like a woman, weak and soft. It can be blown out easily. When small fires come together, they get so powerful. Then it is like a man who can destroy everything, yeah.

Alice Fire and cigarettes, what relation do you think they have?

Samuel They need each other. You can't light a cigarette without a fire. Fire and cigarettes are friends ... they are like friends. When you smoke, you have to light a fire. You can adjust the size of the flame on some of the lighters. Sometimes you may not be aware that the lighter is adjusted to produce the largest flame. When you click on the lighter, you can hear a "chak" sound. If you're not careful, you may easily hurt yourself. Your hair will get charred. It had happened to me before. I had long hair then. It caught fire as soon as I started to light a cigarette.

Alice Were you scared?

Samuel Not really.

Alice Will it go on burning if you let it?

Samuel Yes! It sparkled and sparkled.

Alice Sparks!

Samuel Yes, there were sparks. I just brushed them off, and they went out. At that moment, I felt I must be more careful next time. Fire ... if you use it well, it will be useful. If you use it badly, you will get hurt. So, it (fire) and cigarettes need each other. If you don't have a fire, you are helpless, even if you have the cigarettes. Sometimes friends don't have money to buy cigarettes, but they would still carry their lighters. They can ask another smoker to give them a cigarette. Like when you have no money, or you have finished your pack, you can ask your friends for a cigarette, even from strangers. Have you seen anything like that? There are old guys saying to you, "Hey good brother, can you give me a cigarette?"

Alice No, I haven't seen that before.

Samuel Coz you don't smoke.

Alice Maybe.

Samuel They will only approach smokers. When you offer them a cigarette, they usually have their lighters with them. You can ask people for cigarettes, but not everyone has lighters with them, only smokers do. I don't know why, but we usually have our lighters with us. People around me are like that too. Some of them don't use the common types of lighters. Some gas lighters are refillable, like Zippo. They cost two, three hundred dollars each. Some of my friends use them.

Alice When you smoke a cigarette, you light it with fire. When you draw in the smoke, there is a light smouldering at the end of the cigarette. Can you feel anything special from that? Every time you draw in, the light brightens up. What do you see in that?

Samuel It is like a timer. The faster it burns, less of the cigarette is left. The more you suck in, the faster it burns, like counting down the life of the cigarette. Even if you stop sucking, it just goes on burning, a lot more slowly though. It is not the case if you smoke a roll-your-own. There are a lot more inflammable substances in RYO's and there is no pattern in the burning. Usually the burning is spiralling in cigarettes. But in smoking a

RYO, there is no pattern. The burning (ashes) is irregular. When you stop smoking, the flame goes out. When you inhale again, it comes back.

Alice There's no need to light it again and again?

Samuel When you smoke a RYO, you can smoke two puffs, and stall it in an ashtray, and it will go out. After a while, when you come back to it, the temperature will have gone cooler. Then you need to light it again. If it is just twenty to thirty seconds later, you can go back to suck on it again, it (the burning) will continue.

Alice Do you prefer your cigarette to be like that?

Samuel It sounds good. Smoking on the streets is OK. The cigarette goes on burning, in an environment with good air circulation, and the ashes are insignificant on the streets. But if you're at home, after you light up a cigarette, and you may get distracted, for example when you go to turn off a tap, or close a door. By the time you go back to your cigarette, it would already be half gone. It's so wasteful. It will save money if it burns like a RYO.

Alice You can save a lot money coz it won't burn away just like that. You said that the most enjoyable smoke is the last few puffs, and that they give you the best feeling. You also said that you watched yourself finishing the whole cigarette. What was your feeling when you watched yourself finishing the entire cigarette?

Samuel I feel like I have finished a business. It (smoking) is not a task, but it feels like I have finished a task when I'm at work. When I finish smoking a whole cigarette, the last few puffs are so good, coz it is about to end. It feels like I have indulged myself in the entire cigarette. Sometimes when you're waiting for a bus, you light a cigarette, and you have to dump it when it's only half finished because the bus is here! What a pity. I would think that I have wasted the cigarette. So, when you get to finish a whole cigarette, it is like a mission accomplished, and it (the cigarette) has been a good helping hand. It is like you have completed something, and you haven't wasted him (cigarette suddenly turned into a human!). Sometimes you would see that people would sneak away to a stairway or to the streets just to get one or two puffs. Then they quickly stub it out and leave. I think it is just a waste. Maybe I am poor, and cigarettes are so expensive. You should enjoy every bit of it. Smoking to me is enjoyable. So, you should enjoy the whole cigarette, to feel comfortable, to end it in a perfect way, not half way.

Alice So, this is what you said about not stubbing out a cigarette when waiting for bus. Did you get upset?

Samuel I don't. But I will usually finish the cigarette, even if it means missing the bus. I am strange, and am not like others. Having smoked for so many years, I don't know anybody like me who would miss the bus in order to finish the entire cigarette. Normally, people would just quickly suck a few more puffs, flick it away, and board the bus.

Alice Yes, smoke it really quickly.

Samuel Suck and suck, (as much as you can), ditch the cigarette and get on the bus. But I won't. Sometimes I just want to smoke the whole cigarette,

and then ditch it, then get in the queue again for the bus. I have even tried this. This bus is really annoying as it comes every twenty minutes. Just when I have smoked one third of the cigarette, the bus arrives. I really don't want to waste the cigarette, but then I would have to wait another twenty minutes for the next one. So, I would smoke the cigarette while I walk to the next station.

Alice Oh, so you walked back and forth?

Samuel Forward. I held the cigarette in my mouth, smoking and walking, brisk-walked to the next bus stop, arriving just in time to catch the bus. No normal person would do such a thing. I am weird. For sane people, once the bus is in sight, they will quickly draw a few puffs and get on.

Alice It is quite a smart way ... carry on smoking while walking to the next stop.

Samuel Of course. But sometimes it doesn't work. Only when I am sure the next stop is only a short distance away, I'd do it. Sometimes the stops are quite far away. I will do it if I know I have enough time to finish the cigarette during my walk. There is no way to catch the bus at the next stop if one stop is on the top of the hill and the next one is at the bottom. It is not sensible to do such a thing. I will just finish my cigarette first.

Alice Will you also do this when you are in a hurry rushing to school? You won't mind being late for school? You'd just want to finish the cigarette?

Samuel Yes.

Alice What about seeing your girlfriend?

Samuel I am late all the time.

Alice Wow! I don't care. I just want to finish my cigarette. She is my girlfriend, so that's fine.

Samuel Exactly.

Alice Let me try to figure out the priority. Is your girlfriend or a cigarette more important to you?

Samuel My girlfriend is more important.

Alice But you don't mind keeping your girlfriend waiting. Just let me finish my cigarette. Is it not the case?

Samuel My girlfriend is more important, I guess. A few minutes of waiting is no big deal. Many people think having twenty-four hours a day is just not enough. Some people hate being kept waiting, hate people being late, but I am easy. Some people are very strict about punctuality. If the appointment is at six, they must be there at 5:45. But I am not too fussy about it. I will arrive at around 6, or a little bit late. My friends know me. Maybe I am easy going, a bit slack. Punctuality is important to a lot of people, but I am wishy-washy. Even when I have a date with my girlfriend or her family, I have been early, punctual, and also late. It depends. I am not a person who is fixed on being punctual. I won't work too hard to be on time. Usually, because I want to finish my cigarette. For example, when I am supposed to go for dinner at 8pm, in a shopping mall. I will be there by 7:55pm, but I won't go straight to the dinner venue. I will smoke a cigarette first. Well, a cigarette may take a short as well as a long time. I would usually smoke it slowly, for about six or seven minutes. So, by the time I finish smoking and arrive at the dinner place, I would be late. Coz

- you need to walk there, wait a little, so I will be ten minutes late.
Actually, I was on time, but I won't go straight to the restaurant yet.
- Alice Earlier on, I heard you say it is like the world has stopped when you are smoking. There is only you existing during those few minutes. Will it be like a magic play? Is it good that you could press a button and the world would stop?
- Samuel Why not. But it had better be done in a specified environment. After all, when you are standing next to a trash bin on Nathan Road, you won't feel this, as it's so noisy. You won't get a sense of stillness in those surroundings. When you get to a place which is quiet, like the seaside, or the peak, the country park, you feel so relaxed, so comfy, the whole body is unwound, then you will get "the world has stopped" feeling when you smoke.
- Alice Besides smoking, what else can make you think "the world has stopped"?
- Samuel Sleeping.
- Alice Sleeping. Nothing else. Does drinking make the world stop?
- Samuel Nope. It shouldn't do. Drinking is for fun and celebration. Cigarettes and alcohol give different effects on different occasions. For example, if you are in a quiet environment, smoking is very indulging and soothing. Say you get to a new place and meet new people, and if you know they smoke, then the cigarette is a tool to get inside their circle. It's the same with alcohol. Say you are drinking in a bar, and you are happy having fun with friends, alcohol helps everybody get high. However, it is different if you drink with friends in a park. So, I think cigarettes and alcohol have different effects when you apply them in different environments. Some friends think that smoking will pick them up. Some friends think smoking makes them feel relaxed, comfortable, and sleepy. It's the same feeling. Just like you have had a long night partying, smoking will pick you up, but in fact you are only hypnotising yourself. If you want it to help pick you up, then of course you would feel awake. But if you smoke before bed for relaxation and a better sleep, you just tell yourself that it is relaxing, and then your senses will tell you that it is really relaxing, very comfy, and you drop off to sleep accordingly.
- Alice So, the cigarette is a thing that keeps changing. Whatever you want it to be, it will help you. Good. Can you tell me the most disappointing cigarette you smoked in these two days?
- Samuel My cigarette was soaked in the rain!
- Alice When was it?
- Samuel This morning.
- Alice Can you describe the situation?
- Samuel I should be at school, attending some kind of open day, where we meet new and old schoolmates, play petty games, engage in activities and seminars. So, today's programme was quite meaningless. Inside the school, smoking is not allowed. We attended the seminar, where speakers talked about elective subjects, holidays, when the official term starts, what students should pay more attention to and where the examinations would take place. (After a whole day of meaningless open

day program at school) once the recess came, I ran out to smoke in no time, to relax, to get comfy. I lit the cigarette, then came the rain! The whole stick got soaked in the rain!

Alice Oh, you were in an open area?

Samuel Yeah, you get to an outdoor area once you leave the room. Smoking is not allowed indoors. Sometimes I break the rule and smoke indoors. But after all, it is my school, so I went outside. The rain just came down on me before I finished drawing the first puff! The whole stick was completely wet. No more smoking. I was wet too, then I went back in.

Alice How did you feel at that moment?

Samuel Furious.

Alice Oh. Furious. This time you really got furious. Are you sure?

Samuel I just wanted to smoke. Why on earth did that happen to me! That's how I felt. Afterwards, I walked back in to borrow an umbrella from someone, and I smoked while holding the umbrella!

Alice Oh. So, you did smoke at last.

Samuel Yeah. I didn't want it to end (finish) like that! I lit the cigarette and I was not done with it yet, and it ended! So, I smoked the second one to compensate for that!

Alice Oh. That must have been quite upsetting. This is more or less related to my next question. Has anyone ever nicked your cigarette while you are smoking? Or has something similar happened before?

Samuel Yeah, out of nowhere came the rain when I was smoking! It is also pouring down today. It is normal that the cigarette gets wet when I smoke in the rain. I don't know about other people but I hold a cigarette in my mouth when I am having a shower.

Alice In the shower? How?

Samuel In the shower, holding a cigarette while I'm having a shower. I smoke, holding the cigarette in one hand. This method is taught to me by a friend. They said when you smoke menthol cigarettes when you're having a hot bath, the whole body can feel fits of cool air. So, I tried it one time, and it felt okay, quite comfy, and then it became a habit. I don't know if other people do it, probably not. It is generally thought that smoking cannot be done during a shower, coz you have water on your body ... you wash your hair. I can wash my hair with one hand while the other hand is holding a cigarette. After I wash my hair, I go back to smoking, and then I soap and rinse my body. The cigarette finishes very quickly, coz some water would spill on the cigarette, but it dries up very quickly, coz the cigarette is hot. If there is not too much water (on it), the wet spot will get dried up very soon. When it's pouring with rain, the cigarette easily gets soaking wet, and it breaks apart, then I am really angry! My cigarette being snatched away while I'm smoking? I've never have that experience, but it is no big deal. As long as that person is not malicious, I'd just light another one. It's no big deal, just a way of socialising with friends. Sometimes we smoke different cigarettes. I smoke double capsule, they smoke blueberry. When I am smoking mine, and someone suddenly wants double capsule, I will give it to him, and I

will take his.

Alice I suppose you have cold showers during the summer?

Samuel Yeah.

Alice Is it cold to smoke a menthol cigarette?

Samuel Not really, very comfy.

Alice Oh, not feeling cold ... you just feel comfy ... cold water shower and menthol cigarettes.

Samuel Yeah. Let me show you an experiment.

Alice Sure. But you will waste a cigarette.

Samuel It doesn't matter. Let me get some water from you ... and put it here ... just like this. Look! It will dry up easily when you light the cigarette. We use a lighter to dry it.

Alice Will it affect the burning too much?

Samuel No, it won't. You will see it dries pretty quickly. Normally, this will happen when you smoke the cigarette.

Alice You are right. It does get dried quickly. I have never done this kind of experiment before.

Samuel You will see that it gets dried. Earlier on, I poured plenty of water on it. But you don't keep it wet for too long. If you keep it in water for too long, it gets soft and wet, and it breaks apart. That is what happens in heavy rain. The middle part is the most fragile part. If you soak it with water here, it breaks apart easily.

Alice Let's not spoil the cigarette. Can you still smoke it?

Samuel Sure.

Alice Have you come across cigarettes that can't be lit, no matter how?

Samuel Time and again?

Alice Maybe because of strong wind.

Samuel Yes.

Alice How did you feel about it?

Samuel It happens all the time. My friend taught me a method. Don't mind the heat ... use your fingers to make a circle here. It works no matter how strong the wind is. So, there is a way, everyone has their own way.

Alice Ah, this is something I didn't know but now I know.

Samuel So sometimes you want to light something. If it doesn't no matter what you do, just get something to circle around it, to shelter it. If it's still not working, then you may try this, but you must be able to withstand the heat.

Alice Good. Here I have a last question to ask. Smoking will leave a smell on you. Do you have any particular feeling about that smell?

Samuel No, I don't. But people around you will say you stink.

Alice So, you don't think the smell would give you a sense of kinship? Let me tell you a story. My father smoked Kent and there was always a cigarette smell on him. Then I got used to it. He smoked in the toilet. So, I smelled cigarette smoke in the toilet. Now I am a grown-up, moved out from home, and not living with my family anymore. Sometimes I go out for meals with my father. I don't know if he still smokes secretly, but I do sometimes smell from my father's breath that familiar cigarette smell. I

don't hate that smell. It provokes a lot of images in my mind.

Samuel I understand. It only happens to those people around the smoker. Coz the senses of smokers would get worse. Also, they won't notice the smell on their own bodies. I do realise that cigarette smoke is stinky. I will smell the odour on others, and it is stinky. I know it is stinky, but I am not offended. But people around us would feel offended, so I will get around this by drinking water, using deodorant, or applying more soap when I shower. If I smoke in the toilet, I would be drenched in cigarette odour, but I wouldn't realise that the toilet is stinky. I won't be able to smell the odour. Of course, I know the odour stays in the toilet after I have smoked there, but I won't be physically able to smell it, but others will. You need others to tell you. I did talk about it with my girlfriend. I have been smoking since I was in secondary school. It so happens that I met my girlfriend when we were in secondary school. We have been together until now. We were in Stanley yesterday. I am used to applying deodorant on my body, and I rarely smoke when I am with her. Sometimes when I really crave a cigarette, I would sneak out to smoke, just like I did yesterday. The environment was so relaxing, so I smoked, and I felt so content. When I returned after sneaking out to smoke, she knew. She could smell it. Then she said to me it was just like in the past, she missed that smell so much. She said it was just like when I was on the school (football) team. After practice, I would shower, put on deodorant, smoked with my buddies, and then went to see her. She missed those days, the smell of school life. She then said that everyone has their own smell, and everyone's smell is different.

Alice Can you smell the cigarette smoke from your friends?

Samuel Just the smell of cigarettes in general. I am not that good. I am unable to discern the brand of cigarettes they smoke. Just the smell of cigarettes in general. Just like when I finish my smoke, I would sniff a bit of my own hands and clothes, that's the smell. It is nothing special to me, the smell. I have not studied the smell thoroughly, so I can't really tell, and I don't really feel how irritating it is, how stinky it is. I just know there's a smell of cigarettes, that's all. So, you go into a bar, and so many people smoke there. Once you step in, you would be overwhelmed by the intensity of cigarette smells. You wouldn't smell much when there is only one smoker.

Alice How do you feel about the cloud of cigarette smell in those crowded places?

Samuel Nothing in particular.

Alice Do you mind? Maybe you don't mind your own cigarette smell but how about the smell from other people's cigarettes?

Samuel I don't feel anything in particular. Initially, I quite like the smell. I am not sure if smoking has numbed my senses, or I've got used to it. I think I have got used to the smell. Like in game centres, Internet bars ... they are full of people smoking. When you go into those places, you won't feel a thing. You would be so used to the smell already. The subconscious already told me that it is inevitable once you go into the bars. Unless you

don't go into bars, but if you do, you'd better accept this. You feel that the smell is bad. The smell of smoke being drawn in through your mouth and the smell from other people's cigarettes, they are not the same. But you do smell that it is bad. But then after a while, you don't care about the bad smell, and you carry on smoking. There is nothing you can do. It is nothing after you get used to it. Just like that. So, there was one time we had a house party. We were a group of smokers, and the father and mother of the friend (the host) were also smokers. Together, there were five or six smokers. We turned up the air conditioning, kept the windows wide open, so that the home would not be filled with cigarette smoke. It was such a funny feeling. In an area where everybody knew each other, puffing the smoke together, plumes of smoke clouded the place ... it was so amusing. But then if you are in a place with a group of strangers smoking together, it's nothing special.

Alice What kind of feeling was it? With people you know, in a place, smoking together, fogged in a cloud of smoke?

Samuel The feeling was err ... birds of a feather flocked together. Having a group ... feeling the warmth of a group of like-minded people. We are all addicted ... we are all bad ... we all like smoking ... we all have such bad habits. It was such great fun to be together, to smoke together. Just like that ... really very interesting.

Alice Really very interesting.

Samuel Very interesting. It does not happen every day. We are circling around in a room, the ten of us, and all ten are smokers, smoking together. We feel that we are close friends ... so close, so warm, very interesting, yeah.

Alice The clouds of smokes, what kind of feeling do you have with that? With ten people smoking, it should be quite blurry?

Samuel Yeah.

Alice Depending on what type of cigarettes you smoke?

Samuel So foggy, with clouds of smoke, so... err... the smoke and the fog, I feel the changes, it changes all the time like a kaleidoscope of shapes. You can play it in whatever form and shape you like. Like my friend is very good at blowing smoke circles, after drawing in the smoke, he blows out the smoke in the shape of circles. When many people smoke at the same time, the place gets foggy and it's covered in smoke, some people would write characters, or draw patterns in the smoke. Of course, it will disperse instantly, but they get to play with it first. I don't really play with the smoke. Yeah, but what kind of feeling I have with that? It changes all the time, you can play it in whatever form or shape you like, but it can't be touched, it is transient and fleeting, it disappears the moment it appears. This thing will disappear very quickly, it only stays there for a while, (seeing) the smoke rise up, or drift off, and it's vanished, gone!

Alice To you, smoking is really fun. You have fun with the fire and fun with the smoke.

Samuel Yes, I do.

Alice Besides the smoking itself ...

Samuel Exactly, that's why I said it is so functional. When you want to have fun,

you can do so with your cigarette. There are people who smoke because they want to have fun with the smoke. It's exactly that. They think they will look cool if they can blow smoke circles. Just like that.

Alice Hmm hmm ... You smoke because you want to play with fire? Is that it?

Samuel Not really. When I was little, I would just get a lighter and play with fire. I didn't really need to smoke. Smoking... initially, I was curious about it, plus, there were offers of cigarettes from friends. I declined at first and then accepted them, tried them ... tried and tried, like that. Just like that.

Alice Was there a time you found that the cigarettes you were smoking was not the same as before? Something has changed, say, the design of the cigarette was changed, or its taste. The brand you are used to, then ...

Samuel There is, yes, yes. It is different coz ...

Alice Ah (cough cough).

Samuel Yeah... err ... err ... When I first started smoking, there was a brand called Winfield menthol.

Alice Ah, Winfield

Samuel Yes, Winfield menthol was my first cigarette. They stopped producing it for many years. When I smoked them, I was very little. The tasted like mint candies.

Alice Was it the twenty-five stick (packet) or twenty?

Samuel Twenty. The taste was very minty, like eating mint candies. Then they stopped producing them. Then I got so angry for a period of time!

Alice Ah, angry.

Samuel Yeah, very angry, because they stopped producing them, they were irreplaceable! It was my first encounter of this thing (smoking). I might change to another taste (cigarette) later, goodness knows, but I didn't want to at that point in time, I kind of felt like "why are you forcing me to change?" So, I switched to (Mild Seven) ... Marlboro Menthol Lights. They had menthol taste as well as cigarette taste. But that was the feeling when I was little. In other words, I smoked Marlboro Menthol Lights at the time when I was in secondary school, in junior forms, yeah. I smoked Marlboro Menthol Lights, smoked them for about half a year, err... then Mild Seven Company (Philip Morris) changed the tobacco blend. Then I felt that the taste had changed. All the people in my circle also thought that there was a taste change. Then I really didn't feel like smoking them anymore. Afterwards, I changed to other brands. Afterwards, I got curious... I am a person who is full of curiosity. So, every time a new taste is launched, I will try, but I will only try new menthol tastes. Like if Winfield has launched a new menthol cigarette, or Mild Seven has launched a new menthol cigarette, Kent has launched a new menthol cigarette, I will try all of them. Yes, it was like that. But only menthol cigarettes. If they launched a new mild cigarette, or a new full flavour cigarette, I wouldn't care. I will only try menthol cigarettes, and I will compare which one of them has a better taste and choose one that I like the most. So basically, I have smoked (tried) all of the menthol cigarettes in Hong Kong, yeah.

Alice That time Winfield stopped producing your favourite cigarettes, and the

time your cigarette got soaked in the rain ... which of these incidents made you angrier?

Samuel I was much angrier about Winfield (being discontinued, compared to his cigarette being soaked in rain)!

Alice How angry were you?

Samuel I was so angry that I wanted to blow Winfield's office into pieces!

Alice Wow, you were really quite angry. Did you stock up before that?

Samuel I didn't. That's why.

Alice So, you knew nothing about it.

Samuel I didn't know. Exactly, I utterly didn't know about it. Well, initially, I didn't spot anything strange. When I said "initially", I meant I was still a minor. In other words, I was not eighteen years old yet, so I was not legally allowed to buy cigarettes. I went to certain grocers and newsstands and bought them secretly. I didn't wear a school uniform. Or I asked an uncle (a chap) to buy it for me. I went there, saw a chap who was also a smoker, and I asked him to buy cigarettes for me. I tapped his shoulder and asked him to buy a certain brand for me. Some grocers and newsstands owners got to know me, and when they were certain that I was not a (police) decoy, we got chatting. I could easily buy cigarettes from those places after that. I didn't know this (trick) at the beginning. I smoked much less then, not even a pack a month.

Alice You smoked much less (then)?

Samuel Much, much less. Also, it may be because I was still a beginner smoker and wasn't an addict yet. Usually my friends bought cigarettes, and I smoked only when they offered me cigarettes. I wouldn't smoke if they didn't offer. Later on, err ... I came to think that it wasn't so good (taking their cigarettes), and I had to stick around with them, bothering them, bothering them so much that I sometimes would go and buy them myself and offered them back to my friends. So, sometimes, err ... that time when I began to look for my cigarettes and found that they were out of stock. I didn't pay much attention to it at first, because I thought they were only temporarily out of stock ... err ... like you looked for the brand from the newsstand and the guy said to you it was out-of-stock, and it could just be a trivial delay in restocking, something like that, so I didn't think too much into it. Afterwards, I kept looking for them, and one day, they just stopped producing them completely, no production, no stock! So, they were not out of stock! So, no stock because no production, then I got furious!

Alice Did you complain about it?

Samuel Of course not. Firstly, coz I was little, I had no idea what I could do about it. Secondly, I was still a minor, I could not really say it out loud that I was a smoker. There was no way that I could make a complaint. I would be dead. The whole world would say, "Do you smoke?" Of course not. But I really had to get it out of me. How could I do that? So, you stopped producing, oh blast! OK, I just change to other brands!

Alice How long had you smoked Winfield Ice?

Samuel About nine months, give and take.

Alice Not long.

Samuel Not long.

Alice Was it your first brand?

Samuel Yeah, it was the first brand I smoked.

Alice So, Winfield was your first cigarette brand.

Samuel Yeah.

Alice Umm ... Let me tell you something... about the blend of Winfield. Do you know a brand called Pall Mall?

Samuel I know.

Alice They are the same.

Samuel Is it More?

Alice Ah, no. Bo Ma ... is there a brand called Bo Ma? Is it not called Bo Ma? In Taiwan, it is called Bo Ma, aka Pall Mall

Samuel Oh, Pall Mall, I have seen it before!

Alice Seen it.

Samuel Seen it.

Alice Actually, they have the same blend.

Samuel Same blend really?

Alice My friends told me that. Manufactured by the same factory. Afterwards, they stopped producing the then Winfield. Its blend was Pall Mall, but then they put Pall Mall blend in Winfield. Afterwards, they found that Winfield's sales were no good, so they switched back to Winfield's original blend and gave that blend back to Pall Mall. I think the price is the same. So, you may... I mean when you go and look for it, you may look for Pall Mall ... err ... there should be a ... um ... what is it called in Chinese? Do you know Pall Mall?

Samuel I don't know.

Alice Yeah, that one is not so popular, and not many people have seen it. But the green Pall Mall has capsules. The green menthol version should be the same as the twenty (sticks) packet green version of Winfield.

Samuel Yeah, green Winfield.

Alice Yeah, green Winfield is the same as green Pall Mall. I've seen them in Taiwan. People there call it Bo Ma. I don't know what people call it in Hong Kong.

Samuel There is not a lot of that in Hong Kong. I also ... shouldn't be too many.

Alice Does 7-11 have that? What about Circle K and the newsstands?

Samuel I don't know. I don't think newsstands have them. Newsstands or those cafes in the past, they did have cigarette cabinets. They have licenses. But usually they only carry popular brands.

Alice Like Marlboro.

Samuel Marlboro, Mild Seven, or Kent, etc. Like those brands, like a brand called Lamborghini.

Alice The Korean one?

Samuel I don't know if it is from Korea.

Alice What is the colour of the pack? Yellow, red ...

Samuel Yellow colour, blue colour, red colour, black colour, they have all these, yeah, four kinds. So, this Lamborghini is sold only in Circle K, not in 7-11.

So, like them, I have no idea the basis of their ordering. Cafes and newsstands only sell popular brands, and new brands... coz most people fuss (get excited) about new brands, but they will only stock some.

Alice Ah...

Samuel Oh yes, some new brands have got stickers on their packs. You will get a one-dollar discount from the newsstand owners if you return the sticker to them.

Alice Oh really?

Samuel Oh yes.

Alice 7-11 does not have them because it charges a listing fee. I know because I have been doing marketing. So, I know the listing fee for each product is dependent on the number of stores. So, 7-11 has seven or six hundred stores. So, we are talking about one or two million HK dollars a year. If you want (your product) on the shelf, it is a lot cheaper in Circle K, because it has less stores, only three or four hundred.

Samuel So that's why Circle K...

Alice They have a lot more choices

Samuel More choices because it is cheaper.

Alice Hmm hmm ... Ok. Good. I think I'm almost done with my questions. Samuel, do you have anything to say or to ask?

Samuel Nothing in particular ... err... I never regret that I smoke, that's it.

Alice No regrets, because the feeling of "so enjoyable" is really so ...

Samuel I reckon no matter what you do, you should not bear regrets. It is a personal choice, it is my mantra ... "Don't do anything that you will regret." On smoking, I never have regrets, even though I know it is not good for health. When I smoke, I come to meet friends in my circle. We are good friends. I have other friends I've come to know because of smoking, just like the tour guide I met when I travelled to Japan. We all met through this level (group) ... this medium ... this medium that brings us together as friends ... brings us close to each other, makes us know each other better. Sometimes ...err ...cigarettes stand by me when I am down. Like in examinations, open examinations, breakups with girlfriends, yeah.

Alice Like a friend, is it not?

Samuel err ...

Alice That standing by you as a ...? It is not a puppy, right?

Samuel I don't feel it as a friend. My definition of friendship is a two-way relationship. You treat me well, I will treat you better. That's how I treat my friends. However, ... maybe it can indeed be like a friend, now that I think a bit deeper. I know a cigarette is nice to me, but I don't know how to treat it well. I buy it, smoke it, like I am burning its life out.

Alice Then there is another packet, so it won't die.

Samuel It has ... it has relaxed me, it has brought me comfort, and it has picked me up. It makes me feel content, feel very enjoyable. It has helped me, but not like a friend. That's all.

Alice Umm, thank you very much. Thank you Samuel.

Samuel Hope it is useful to you.

Alice It helps. It definitely helps.