

APPENDIX 1: FULL TRANSCRIPTS

First interview: Anita

Alice So, let me talk briefly about the objectives of today. In fact, I have a full-time job, doing marketing. I graduated from the Chinese University. After graduation, I discovered that I am very keen on psychology. Now I am studying a PhD course. To get the degree, I have to write a thesis about smoking. I am not a smoker myself, but I am keen to know what kind of feelings smoking give to smokers, and also in knowing what the world is like when people smoke. For the purpose of this thesis, I have contacted Soso to help me find eight students to interview. I am hoping that through these interviews I will understand more about smoking. Most Importantly, I wish to know what your story is. This interview is fairly open. Sometimes, I ask you a question but I don't necessarily expect a direct answer. You may think of something else, just say it. Now, I have a few questions, and I only need a few, depending what you like to talk about, it really doesn't matter. Just speak what comes to your mind. Anita, do you have any questions before we start? Before we start... Anita is a very special name, who gave it to you? You or your family?

Anita My family gave me that name. Coz my mum likes Anita Mui (late Cantonese pop singer), so she called me Anita. I suppose she would feel closer to her idol.

Alice She only likes Anita Mui?

Anita Yes. And when she (Anita) died, she cried and cried at home.

Alice Really. What about you, did you like Anita Mui?

Anita I like those (singers) from Japan.

Alice The only idol she is really fond of is Anita Mui?

Anita I suppose so.

Alice She is really something. Is she involved in her (Anita Mui's) fan club activities?

Anita She's not that obsessed. But she listens to her songs at home all the time. Then I would feel so annoyed.

Alice Very annoyed?

Anita Every day listening to the same singer's songs, as if there is only one singer's songs in the entire house. Are there no other singers?

Alice She plays the songs loudly?

Anita Oh yes. In the morning, she'd turn it up so loud. At night, I would say people need to rest after work, and I tell her to lower the volume.

Alice Actually, I quite like Anita Mui, but not to that extent. I am quite old, a lot older than you. Back when Anita Mui sang the "Seasons of the Wind", it should be 1986 or 88, in the first singing talent contest. I watched that programme.

Anita Oh really? I think you and my mum should have a lot to talk about.

Alice I think so too. I suppose I and your mum are of similar age. Maybe I am even older than your mum.

Anita Oh no. My mum's older than you.

Alice So how old is your mum?

Anita Sixty

Alice Oh, so your mum is really older than me.

Anita Yes, older. My father is already seventy.

Alice Oh, older than me then. (After viewing a family photo) If I have that look

when I get to sixty, I should be very happy. So, Anita, can you introduce yourself so that I get to know what kind of a person you are, and the important stories in your life. Whatever you want to say, just tell me. Say whatever comes to your mind.

Anita I am Indonesian Chinese. I came to Hong Kong when I was in kindergarten.

Alice Oh, Daddy and mummy are both Indonesian Chinese?

Anita Oh yes. We are so fond of China, so we opted for Hong Kong. I got to know this group of friends when we came to Hong Kong. I studied in a band three secondary school, and that was my choice. Coz when I was in primary school, I was in a band one school. Things were so difficult. Exam results were the only measure they used to judge us. When your results were not good, students teased you. If your results were good, you were the hero. I felt that it was not right. I deliberately chose a band three (secondary) school and I didn't feel any particular concerns. It was quite fun and I could be myself. Then in form three, I met a group of people whom I felt would be my good friends. Slowly, they taught me smoking, drinking, not going home, skipping school, doing a lot of things that broke my folks' hearts. School results, from very good to the second or third from the last of the class. I didn't take anything seriously then. These kinds of schools make you like that and it seemed so natural. All words from the adults were nonsense, rubbish. I thought that they didn't understand me. When my friends taught me to smoke, I felt it was so cool, so grown-up. Then came the problems. It was OK when I was in form two, form three. But in form four, getting close to graduation (so called high level); I didn't think I should continue to smoke for the rest of my life. Then I tried to quit. I realised many people smoke as soon as they get out of bed. Sometimes I would have a craving; I also want to smoke. What about asking him for a cigarette? Surely, he would give one to me. Go ask him for a cigarette. I started to ask for one, then another ... I failed to quit. And now that I have started working part-time, it's even more difficult to quit. People say, "If you work in the office, no smoking is allowed indoors." (So it's easy to quit.) But working in the restaurant business, you have breaks. Those who don't smoke would go to the toilet. Those who smoke would sit down and have a leisurely smoke while playing on their cell phones. Slowly and gradually, it has become a habit.

Alice Talk about life when you were little. When you were small, your father and mother, (being Indonesian Chinese) did they go to the mainland or come to Hong Kong directly?

Anita My old man decided to emigrate, coz of anti-Chinese policies / activities in Indonesia.

Alice Oh, around that time.

Anita Oh yes, he went to the mainland to study, but didn't complete his studies. Then we came to Hong Kong and he worked in a bank, as an errand boy. After a while, his work was replaced by computers. So, my old man, who knew nothing about computers, lost his job when I was in primary three. He stayed at home and my mum went out to work. My mum worked as a masseur, beautician, as she is interested in these fields. That was how she started working and after a while, she started her own company, which was working well. But few years ago, the government took back the property (where she worked) for redevelopment into a new commercial building. So the company was gone and she worked from home. At that time, I was thinking ... people were trying to run small businesses, why did they have to tear the place down? It's no problem to tear the building down (for

redevelopment) but no compensation was given. People say Hong Kong is full of prospects but I think it is very limited. You can prosper only if you have money. What about those at the bottom of the social strata? You don't even give them a chance, a place, and therefore, they will never prosper. It is a happy thing for me when my father and mother decided to come to Hong Kong, but it is not a happy thing for them. Back in Indonesia, at least they had a small shop, selling paints and stuff like that. There, they had enough (money) to buy a house. I suppose if it was not for me, they could have had a much better life compared to now.

Alice Both of them are Indonesian Chinese, went back to the mainland together, then came to Hong Kong and gave birth to you?

Anita I was born in Indonesia. I had a godmother and godfather in Indonesia. I actually call them mother and father. They were very fond of me. But a few years ago, they had a grandchild. Then over time, they became distant. I used to speak Indonesian, but now I can't remember too much of it. They said that if I don't speak Indonesian anymore, I need to speak English. Then they said since I don't speak Indonesian anymore, I shouldn't bother going back. In my heart, I was thinking ... fine, I won't go back. I will change my passport. If I hold an Indonesian passport in Hong Kong, it is rather inconvenient for me. I definitely will change it. I so wanted to ask them, is it true you don't want me to come back if I decide to change my passport? But if I really did say that, I will only embarrass my father and mother. So, I held back. When I graduate, have a stable job, can handle my own affairs, then I will change my passport. It's not too late then. By then, if they don't sponsor my family, I am still capable of taking care of them myself. I am thinking why do people change so quickly? I was their favourite, and now they've turned their backs to me. They don't care about me, just their grandchild. Before, they said they would give me their shop. Once their grandchild was born, they changed their tune, asking if I mind that they take back the promise. So, I say in my heart, mind what? It was they who said they would give me the shop but no one has signed anything since I'm not old enough (to accept the property legally). There is nothing to take back. They made that promise when I was under-aged. So go ahead, take back your promise. I will pretend nothing was ever promised. Sometimes people say you shouldn't really care too much for a particular person, be it lovers, friends, relatives.... I suppose it is quite right. How could you rely on anyone?

Alice They are your godmother and godfather?

Anita Yes.

Alice They are your father's friends or relatives?

Anita My father's younger sister.

Alice Oh, your father's younger sister. That's your aunt, a close relative.

Anita Yes.

Alice They raised you or your father and mother raised you?

Anita They raised me.

Alice Your father and mother were working, with no time to take care of you or what?

Anita I also wanted to find out about this. I heard from my mum ... my mum said that when I was little, I didn't recognise her when she came to say "Hi" to me. I ran away from her. My mum told me, "Back then you didn't recognise I was your mum!" I thought to myself, "It was you who abandoned me. Why are you making it sound like it was my fault?" At that time, I only

- spoke Indonesian. I couldn't speak Mandarin or English. I never went to nursery school. I just played until I was four years old. Then my mum wanted me to come back to Hong Kong. She even booked a ticket late at night and took me away. At that time, the whole family was angry about it.
- Alice Your aunt couldn't have been happy about it. (She must have said) Why are you taking her away? I've been nursing her, and now you're taking her to Hong Kong!
- Anita So strange. My father and his folks don't get along with my mum. My mum and her folks don't get along with my father. So, I am caught in the middle. What am I supposed to do? I don't have many relatives in Hong Kong. They are all over the world. If I go to Indonesia, I will travel with my father, not my mother. I will think of a million excuses not to let her go. I go with my mum to Singapore, where her folks are. I will ask mum to go with me, since I don't want my old man to go. Coz in the past, when my old man went to Singapore, he just wandered off by himself to explore the city, leaving me at home, thinking that the relatives could take care of me. My mum's folks teased him for not taking care of his daughter. What's the point of keeping her at home? She was so bored, all by herself. My father didn't know how to answer back. My father is the sheepish type. The following day, he took me out, but not too willingly and he was not happy at all. Why does he have to do things like that to himself, right? So it's better to avoid such circumstances. Now I seldom go back to Indonesia. Everyone will feel uneasy. If I'm not going to be happy, why should I put myself through it?
- Alice The problem is the grandchild, and you don't speak Indonesia. So they don't favour you so much now.
- Anita That's the reason. Before they had the grandchild, they were fond of me.
- Alice Coz your age is more or less the same as their grandchild's, isn't it?
- Anita If they had given birth at that time, yes. But now the grandchild is only a few years old.
- Alice Oh, so young.
- Anita Oh yes. Moreover, everyone is fond of babies. I'm not as cute as other kids, and I'm not good at sucking up to adults. I have my own principles. I don't like to please others, like some people sucking up to their bosses. I won't do that. I will fulfil my responsibilities and not go out of my way to please others. "Hey, boss! How are you doing?" So fake. It's so unnecessary even if I am keen on a salary increase or promotion! People will know if you are capable or not! I don't really understand why that guy (at her workplace) got to be manager.
- Alice Now you just graduated and working part-time?
- Anita Waiting for the new term in another university.
- Alice When does the new term start?
- Anita Fourteenth.
- Alice Fourteen September, soon.
- Anita Oh yes. It is the top-up degree under the Chinese University.
- Alice Oh, top-up degree. I am a bit out of touch. So, you will get the degree once you've completed the course?
- Anita Yes. It only takes one year.
- Alice Quite good indeed. Where do you go for classes? Chinese University?
- Anita Sometimes at the Chinese University, but most of time in Admiralty.
- Alice Oh, there is a centre in Admiralty. It was in Tsimshatsui during my time.
- Anita I went there yesterday.
- Alice I remember why I went to the Tsimshatsui centre. I was studying for an MBA

and I was taking some classes for the part time MBA course. I was studying full time, but some of the courses were part-time. I remember the classes were in Tsimshatsui. Classes were from something like six to nine in the evening.

Anita Oh yes. There are a few locations, but not decent. Just one room with five computers on one floor for the Chinese University classes. When doing projects, I needed to go early to get a seat. So, if you don't have a laptop, sorry, there's nothing you can do about it. Go home and work from there.

Alice Oh, like that? This I really didn't know. Back then, there were no computers. So the Chinese University campus is better.

Anita Much better, of course.

Alice They don't let you to have classes there.

Anita There's no boarding hall. I call it a fake university. A fake university with no real campus life. Forget it. It was me (my fault) who couldn't get into that (a real university).

Alice You're studying business administration, right?

Anita Right.

Alice Which department?

Anita That I don't know. I picked business administration coz there were hotel, travel, and events courses in my former university. I liked none of the three, and there was only marketing and management for me to choose from. So I picked marketing. Then they said there weren't enough enrolment to start a course. Can I change to management? Ok, management it is then.

Alice Oh. I get it. So now you are studying management?

Anita Right. I won't say I am keen on it or like it. However, I'd better get a degree. My mum said, "No matter what, you must finish the university course. I don't care where you go, even to Japan, I am fine. In any case, you need to graduate from university." So, all right, I'll study. After this course, I am thinking about going to Japan, and see if I will find a Japanese company to work for and apply to stay there in the future. Or better still, get the citizenship afterwards!

Alice You like Japan a lot.

Anita Oh yes. Although the Chinese culture is quite good, I don't like the people too much. Of course, there are some good ones, but most are no good. There are good and bad in Japan also. Japanese culture, not something I grew up with. That's why I want to find out more, and to try out their way of living. I believe if I settle down in Japan, after a few years' time, I will have my first home. I don't want to be stuck in the same country all my life. I think it is hard, no different from a prison. It's like you are made to study at the same school your entire life, or to live with the same group of people your whole life. Wow, it's so tough!

Alice So, Hong Kong is like a prison?

Anita Similar

Alice It's similar.

Anita It's similar ... Moreover, Hong Kong is so small. People in the Eastern district think the New Territories is so far away. They won't go there for no reason. For example, I want to eat at Little B dessert shop, but, wow it's so far away. The bus fare is expensive; long distances, so why don't we just go to Tsimshatsui for sweet soup. There are not a lot of places for fun. Say you go to Tsimshatsui ... everything is so expensive, I can't afford them. And those designer labels? I don't (have the fashion sense to) appreciate them. I only buy from Uniqlo, a relatively cheap brand. In fact, I think it is

good enough. Things in Hong Kong no longer suit people my age. Maybe when I get older ... but not now. So that's it.

Alice Good. Let me say something else ... we can come back to this later. Can you tell me about... yesterday or today, a cigarette that gave you the best feeling? Can you tell me more about that feeling?

Anita Is it OK if that (the best feeling) is not in these two days?

Alice OK.

Anita For example, on Father's Day, Mother's Day, my workplace was full of people. Normally the cigarette break happens at around seven o'clock. But on those days, it was so busy, and I didn't get a break until eight to nine o'clock. When I sat down and lit the cigarette, I sighed, I blew the smoke out, like blowing out all the fatigue, the grudges from customers. All were expelled. When you finish the first one, you crave for the second one. Not because it tastes good, but it makes you feel so relaxed afterwards. Furthermore, if you have a lot in your head, smoking can make you think about things slowly. I don't know about others. Smoking to me is to speed up the thinking. For example, if you ask me to write an essay, I light a cigarette, I will feel so comfortable even just sniffing it. Therefore, sometimes, smoking is not about whether the taste is good or bad, it makes you feel at ease. Smoking is like drinking coffee, one cup a day. Well but I don't drink coffee because it causes stomach-ache, so smoking is like sitting on a massage chair, so comfortable. So ... a cigarette is an indispensable item. You go out drinking with friends. I don't know why I have to smoke. Smoking a cigarette, so that the hand is not so idle. I wonder if it is getting habitual. The tobacco smell stays in the hand. Several hours after the smoke, you sniff your hand; it (the cigarette smell) gives you a feeling of intimacy. Every brand has a different smell. My godfather in Indonesia... he smokes too. I have smelled that since I was a kid, I am so used to it. I just think his cigarette is unique to me. Basically, every cigarette has its own story, every pack, every brand. From the day I started smoking up until now, I have changed many brands. Maybe I smoke this brand when I am with this partner, smoke it to accommodate her taste. And I smoke another brand when I am single, to suit my mood. The one I am smoking is a mild one, and I feel like I am smoking real cigarettes. The reason I say that is because nowadays there are many different flavours of cigarettes. There is this cigarette with a strong menthol capsule. Now they even have cigarettes with two capsules. I used to enjoy smoking menthol and capsule cigarettes, but now I feel as if I am tasting a toothpaste when I smoke menthol cigarettes! They taste really bad. That's why I smoke non-menthol cigarettes now, those with pure tobacco flavour, but not those particularly strong flavoured ones ... more like a medium flavour. That's why smoking... smelling the smoke gives me a sense of security!

Alice A sense of security.

Anita Oh yes, like when you are in a relationship, and your partner doesn't give you a sense of security. But a sense of security is created by ourselves. You shouldn't expect to get a sense of security from another person. Otherwise, what happens if that person is not there? It's like when you go out, you are afraid of being killed (if you have no sense of security). You can't live like that, right? So, it is normal that you create your own sense of security. Yes, like smoking, I get a sense of security from it. For example, when you're in a busy place, when you get lost in a strange place, you can smoke a cigarette, and think about what you should do. Smoking gives you time to think things

over. If you don't smoke, you would be busy at something else. Smoking gives you a moment to rest, to think, to think things over, those things that are usually not thought of. Like when you're taking a shower, you can think of philosophical problems. It's just like that.

Alice That sense of security is rather interesting. Besides smoking, what else can give you a sense of security?

Anita Besides smoking, friends. Just like sometime ago, I hadn't received the acceptance notice from the university, and I was thinking whether I would end up getting no further education. So, my friends called and asked me to hang out with them. So, I went out and joined them. I was very unhappy and didn't want to speak at all. But with my friends around me, I felt the support from them. All roads are connected. It's no big deal if I have no university education. I could study part-time. With friends around me, I can think positively. If I'm all by myself, negative emotions will surface. Therefore, it is similar to smoking. I think positively when I'm smoking. Of course, there are negative thoughts, but in the end, positive thoughts will overwhelm the negative ones. My friends give me positivity, a sense of security, as long as I don't leave them (I'm with them).

Alice Will cigarettes leave you?

Anita No, it (the cigarette) won't (leave me). At most, you leave cigarettes. They won't leave me for no reason. Cigarettes won't disappear from this world. If people get dependent on one thing, they will crave it, even though it is prohibited. They will find their ways to get them. In the past, when cigarettes were not so expensive... it was around thirty something dollars for a pack of HK flag. Back then, thirty dollars was quite expensive for students, so we tried to find some places to buy cheap cigarettes. We found some drug stores which sold smuggled products. It was quite amusing. I told the guy at the store I wanted to buy cigarettes. He asked what brand I wanted. Then I told him, and he sold me a pack for twenty dollars, which is comparatively cheap. Smoking is not only for rich people, at least not until it got to fifty-five dollars a pack! It feels very expensive to pay fifty-five dollars especially when it gets to the end of the month. They won't disappear ... cigarettes won't leave us, just like people smoking opium in the old days. You will find a way to get them. Otherwise, those drug addicts would have quitted a long time ago. It's the same thing.

Alice So, what do you think it (a cigarette) is? Does it have human qualities? Or is it merely an item? What and where is it to you? What does it represent in your heart?

Anita I feel that a cigarette is something common to people. Like in my former school ... I had a slight phobia about boys. There aren't many in my class and I could mingle with the girls and we played together. But what do I do about the boys? Then, on my first day at school, I thought I would ask them to smoke with me. So I went and asked, "Do you guys smoke?", then they said "Sure. Are you interested in going downstairs for a smoke together?" We did and became friends. So, the first dialogue with strangers was hence opened. Cigarettes are very good for making friends. No matter where you are, at work, for example, just ask, "Do you want to go out for a smoke?" I may ask where the nearest place for smoking is. These questions are already enough for you to befriend strangers. Therefore, I think a cigarette is an item common or mutual to people.

Alice Cigarette is the common item between you and the people around you.

Anita Oh yes. If they don't smoke, we can talk about something else, for example

- "Do you like candies?" and I give them some candies. Nevertheless, people usually smoke, especially men. There is a higher incidence of smoking in men compared to women. Some of my friends are not smokers, but most are.
- Alice Cigarettes to you, if it is a common item, is it a lifeless item? Or more an item with life?
- Anita I don't see that it is an item with life. I see it as a piece in a board game, in a Chinese chess game. You bring this piece out with you, people will accept it as an item. You have many chess pieces in your life. Each piece could be a person, it could be a table. Once you've moved your chess piece, then people will come and contact you (respond). There are many chess pieces in our life, and the cigarette is one of the pieces. Do you get my meaning? Actually, I think what I'm saying is a little confusing.
- Alice No problem, I get it. There is a lot of room for imagination. It is a good thing. Coz the question is not about yes or no, or a multiple choice answer a, b, c, d or e. It is not those kinds of question, so, the broader your answer is, the better. Now I want to ask you about the most disappointing cigarette you smoked in these two days.
- Anita Just a while ago, I went to buy cigarettes. I went to 7-11 to buy them ... they should normally have HK flag in 7-11, with better taste! However, when I lit one, it had such a foul taste! Then I was thinking, "What am I going to do with this packet? Well, so be it. It's better than nothing for now!" What should a good (cigarette) taste like? When you smoke it, it should be so smooth, so slippery that it wouldn't choke your throat, and you can draw it in smoothly. For cigarettes with a foul taste, you feel lots of impurities there when you draw it in, many strange things there, the smell would be very strange, you can't swallow it, you really can't draw it in, and you want to blow it out immediately. There is no way you can smoke another one, but there are no other choices, so I had to smoke that. Yesterday I bought a new brand. Wow, it tasted so good. Two completely different sensations! Just like fries at McDonald's. Sometimes delicious, sometimes totally disgusting. Therefore, I think buying things is all about luck. Did you know that sometimes even big companies will sell parallel smuggled products, which should only be worth thirty to forty dollars a pack at most. I pay fifty-five dollars (at the big companies), and you sell me this quality? But there is no point in reporting them. Those are big companies, and I am so tiny compared to them. So, I will pick newsstands, which sell genuine HK flags, which tastes much better. Also, some newsstands will sell the cigarettes one dollar cheaper, so I will go to a particular one all the time.
- Alice Oh, sell at a cheaper price.
- Anita Oh yes, that's how they keep the regulars. In the long run, they will make a profit.
- Alice You bought the same cigarettes in 7-11?
- Anita Exactly the same.
- Alice But you said there was something choking your throat, and it felt as if there's a lump in your throat. You could not draw the smoke into your lungs.
- Anita You could feel that are a lot of impurities. You feel the inhalation is not smooth, and the taste is different. You feel it has a foul taste, very different, and the smooth and mild taste is completely lost.
- Alice With that cigarette, at that time, did you feel lots of monsters in your throat?
- Anita I do feel lots of monsters in my throat. Before, people said they used newspapers and waste paper to make the China flag (smuggled) cigarettes, so when I smoke those China flag cigarettes, I thought of many newspapers and

waste paper in my throat. If I really cannot bear it, I will ask for a normal cigarette from my friend. I usually don't carry menthol cigarettes. The good thing about smoking mild (pure) cigarettes is that ... the company (I work for) is a sushi restaurant. The staff members are relatively young and they usually smoke menthol cigarettes. They don't want to smoke strong cigarettes, don't want to smoke any mild (pure) cigarettes. So the good thing is that they won't ask me for cigarettes. That is the advantage of smoking mild cigarettes. Why do I think menthol cigarettes taste bad? Coz my mouth feels crispy cool after smoking them. The sensation is not like smoking cigarettes, it's more like eating mint candies. So why bother smoking cigarettes? Why not just go and buy a pack of mints and be done with it. So, I think smoking mild (pure) cigarettes is really smoking.

Alice After smoking mild cigarettes, your mouth feels hot or warm?

Anita Not really hot. In fact, there is bad breath in the mouth after smoking it. For example, after I smoke mild cigarettes, my mouth won't have the crispy cool feeling like after smoking menthol cigarette. It's a "normal" mouth-feel. Smoking mild (pure) cigarettes is more stinky than smoking menthol cigarettes. Say, a group of people smoke together, and someone blows smoke at me. I'll feel it's a bad smell and I'll say it. But he will say, "What do you mean a bad smell? You're smoking too, aren't you?" But it really stinks. The smell of cigarette smoke is really intolerable, but the taste is a different thing. Also, there are roll-your-own cigarettes... in fact I want to try it, but there are too many different flavours. If you buy a pack of tobacco, and after you finished rolling and smoking a few, you may think the taste is not quite suitable for you. You may want to try something a bit stronger, but the tobacco cost one hundred and three dollars a pack! So, what am I supposed to do with this the remaining tobacco? You can't just throw it away, that's rather impossible. Therefore, roll-your-own is really too troublesome. Also, I have to roll the cigarettes at home, but then I don't want to make my home full of tobacco smell. Do I have to go to the staircase to do it? Too much trouble! Forget it. Just go back to normal cigarettes.

Alice Would you use a rolling device?

Anita The device is square shaped. You put the paper in, and then put the tobacco in, then press a button. A cigarette is automatically rolled.

Alice Are filters used?

Anita You can buy (and use) filters.

Alice Do Indonesians like smoking that kind of cigarettes?

Anita Not really. They smoke packet cigarettes. Indonesian cigarettes are not like those in Hong Kong. Not many Indonesian cigarettes have filters. Also, their cigarettes are generally sweeter. After smoking it, your mouth still has the sweet taste. It's a good sweet taste, like candies. But Hong Kong people don't like it. Once, I brought some back for my friends to try. They spat out all the tobacco, coz they didn't know how to smoke it. Then they said to me, "Why do you bring this back? The taste is not good." I then told them they didn't know how to smoke it. I got another packet with filters and they said it stank, but I didn't think so. Maybe I am so used to the smell and I think it's quite pleasant. But Hong Kong people don't like it. Hong Kong people like strong taste, but not such a strong tobacco taste. There are many types of cigarettes. In fact, Hong Kong people are ... people my age like a lighter taste. Those friends around thirty years old... their cigarette smell is like pipe tobacco, which is really strong. It all depends on your age group. If I gave the Indonesian cigarettes to those thirty something friends, they may think it

tastes good. So different cigarettes appeal to different age groups. It is not easy for cigarette manufacturers. You have to consider lots of things when making a pack of new cigarettes. Moreover, those new cigarettes... people say some Korean cigarettes taste like Sprite. But I don't think it tastes good. It's still menthol taste. I think all menthol taste are more or less the same, whether they are single or double capsules. They will only increase the menthol taste and is not too useful. My regular cigarettes are 8mg and some are 1mg. People say those 1mg are for people trying to quit. I did try one packet, and it really had no taste. You had to give a really deep drag to feel like you are smoking. If you didn't, it's just like sucking air. Actually, what a waste of money. Some of my friends buy 1mg. I asked them, "Why do you buy 1mg? Why don't you just quit!" Then they said they wanted to quit. Then I thought to myself that's not the way to quit smoking. They should just buy e-cigarettes!" Actually, the mouth-feel of an e-cigarette quite similar. I have one that is vanilla flavour and it tastes really bad. It would taste much better if it's changed to green apple flavour. And when you inhale, you need to have that "smoke" to get that feeling. The feeling of the smoke going to your lungs, and then you blow it out. In fact, e-cigarettes can give you that feeling and effect, but it has less nicotine and is less smelly, very similar to roll-your-own cigarettes. But the only thing is I feel that it would explode easily when I am smoking it. I really don't know what to do if it explodes in my mouth! That's why I don't it anymore.

Alice So, you think it would explode because of the battery?

Anita There are batteries, coz you need to put oil into it, and the battery is underneath. Mine is vanilla flavour so I need to put vanilla oil in it. When water mixes with electricity, for sure it will blow up! I tried it for a few days. Very scary, so what do I do? While I was smoking it, I needed to press onto it, and then there's a "groaning" sound of water boiling, and you could feel a kind of tremor. It's really frightening. That's why I stopped smoking it. Some people have smoked it for years. Amazing.

Alice What kind of feeling does smoking give you? Do you like the sucking in and blowing out the smoke? How do you feel about it?

Anita The feeling of sucking in, actually not much, but the blowing out, your whole body feels so relaxed, like everything has been blown out. You feel better after smoking, more alert. Sometimes when I'm in a bar feeling drowsy coz it's dim and dark, smoking a cigarette would raise my spirits and I can think about what to do next. So, smoking is a kind of pick-me-up.

Alice Just a while ago, you said when you were smoking around people who were also smoking, and you felt the smoke that drifted towards you was very stinky.

Anita Yes, it happened.

Alice Did it happen with the same brand of cigarettes?

Anita Same brand... well I've never tried that before. The one I am smoking is not common, not available in every 7-11. If in the past, it might have happened. The smell of a burning cigarette and the smell of smoke being exhaled are two kinds of smells. They are very different. The smell you blow out, the people around you may find it quite aromatic. The smell from a burning cigarette is more like burning paper, so it stinks. And it stinks even for a similar cigarette to mine.

Alice Does it stink too even from your own cigarette?

Anita Yes. Smoke from my own burning cigarette, I will fan it like that. Then the smoke won't get blown onto me.

- Alice So, by doing this, it will go somewhere else. But will it make the cigarette burn faster?
- Anita Yes, It will. Especially in winter.
- Alice Oh. It burns faster in winter.
- Anita Oh yes. The wind in Hong Kong kind of gets into your bones, so it's the same to cigarettes. I think the wind in Hong Kong is relatively stronger. So, just after a few puffs, you feel the cigarette is almost gone. Furthermore, it is so much trouble in winter. If you don't have a Zippo (windproof lighter), you really can't light a cigarette. So it is good to have a Zippo in winter, but they often get stolen.
- Alice Such as, once you put it down, it just disappears.
- Anita Right, it is so sought after in winter. In the past, I never had a lighter for my cigarettes, so I asked friends for a light, asking one person one time, asking another person another time, and ended up taking the lighters home. It turns out that I have more than twenty odd lighters at home now. Then mum asked why there are so many lighters in the house. Then I said, "Oh it's nothing. I just put it in my pocket by mistake."
- Alice Your mum knows that you smoke?
- Anita She knows. There was a time, when I was in form two or form three, she kind of lost her mind. She kept lighting cigarettes in front of me, but she didn't know how to smoke. She would say to me "Smoke, smoke!" I was thinking, "You are wasting the cigarette." Then I didn't know how, but the matter got settled. Then recently there was bleeding from a cut on my mum's forehead. I was sleeping at the time. She woke me up and asked, "Daughter, do you have any cigarettes? My forehead is bleeding. I need to get some tobacco to stop the bleeding." "Ha, does it work?" "Yes, it does, give me some." Then I gave some to her, and the bleeding really stopped.
- Alice Did she use the ashes?
- Anita No, tobacco leaves.
- Alice Oh, tobacco leaves.
- Anita Oh yes. Just put a bit here, a bit there, and it really worked. Then she left the rest on the table. I asked her, "Why don't you throw it away?" She said, "Save it for next time." I said "Don't be so gross. Next time, you just ask me again." It really works. Next time you should try.
- Alice So now she doesn't mind you smoking?
- Anita It's not that she doesn't mind. She will tell me not to smoke, or not to smoke so much. But I say to her, "It's so difficult not to smoke at work. I smoke only at work; I don't smoke when I go out."
- Alice So, the first time your mummy found out you were smoking, she almost finished your cigarettes. She wanted to smoke all your cigarettes?
- Anita The first time she found out was when she saw the packet. Well, it was when I was sleeping and she woke me up, and asked me, "So you smoke? Let's smoke together." Then she lit a cigarette but didn't really smoke it. She got ash all over the place and she lost her temper. My mum is the kind of person who is very easy to please. Just say something sweet, play timid, then she will let you go and will please you in return. She would say, "Do you know what is so good about you? You know how to please people." In fact, my mum really is a person so easily pleased. Just a few pleasant words will do.
- Alice Your mummy is still working?
- Anita Yes, she still is, from home, although it is not legal in Hong Kong.
- Alice I have seen a lot like this. When I was little, I went with my mum to visit her friend, whose home was a salon. You could get a perm. Mum said she was

going to have her hair permed and we went to her friend's home. There was an auntie who permed my hair.

Anita That's funny.

Alice Oh yes. Not a huge set-up ... three to four machines, and hair dryers. I also remember, when I was little, being taken to see an Indonesian doctor who didn't even have a medical license. He prescribed drugs for me and gave me injections. I consulted an un-licensed doctor, for years!

Anita Did it work?

Alice It was just for flu and a runny nose, and it didn't do any harm. They were just like that. Not sure if it is typical among Indonesian Chinese.

Anita Don't know. Coz my mum had to close her shop, and that was why she started the business at home. There is a spare room at home, so she just put the massage chair, oil and gowns there. Sometimes I am so tired when I go home, I ask my mum to give me a massage.

Alice And your mum indulges you?

Anita Oh yes, cupping and scraping treatment too. Sometimes friends suggested going back to the mainland for massages. A few hundred dollars for the visa, a few hundred for the massage. This is free of charge at home, so why don't I get it done at home? They said it's not the same. The feeling is different when you go with friends. Fine, I went with them once. The effect seemed not good enough, and I thought it was a waste of money. Using money to buy time for being together with friends. I thought it was a super bad deal. Next time they call for it, I need to think again.

Alice Just now, you mentioned that the cigarette you godfather smoked in Indonesia ... you like the smell a lot. Did you smoke it again?

Anita I did.

Alice Which brand?

Anita That is an Indonesian brand, comparable to Marlboro's popularity in Hong Kong. Everyone knows it.

Alice Is it 234?

Anita 234, yes.

Alice 234, I know which one. The one without filters.

Anita Yes.

Alice Hand-rolled.

Anita Yes.

Alice Very strong!

Anita Oh yes, but I like the smell.

Alice That is soft cup. Your father smoked that type.

Anita I just left it burning, as I liked the smell.

Alice Wouldn't it extinguish? If you leave it burning without drawing on it?

Anita No, it won't.

Alice It takes a while to burn and you smelled the smoke when you were little?

Anita Oh yes. I got my maid to buy the cigarettes for me. No way I could ask my mum to get it for me. She would ask, "When have you started smoking?" Of course, I would get the maid to buy it. "Ok, it is a little secret between you and me." Then the maid would go buy them for me. So amusing. They're sold by packet in Hong Kong!

Alice There, they sell it by the stick?

Anita Oh yes, and very cheap. So, I bought one stick (of my Indonesian dad's clove cigarette), and burned it, then smelled it... I want to get that smell, that smell is the source of my sense of security, it helps me recollect how much he was fond of me when I was little, the time he was holding me in his arms, that

sense of security feels so good. I want to feel it again through the (cigarette's) smell.

Alice You still remember the father and mother in Indonesia at that time when you were little? They were your godfather and godmother?

Anita Right. Through pictures, my mind would go back to those happy days.

Alice Before you were four years old, you didn't stay with your real father and mother. Were you all in Jakarta?

Anita Um.

Alice You all lived in Jakarta, and they had their own house. But you lived with your godfather and godmother?

Anita It seems so. Coz Jakarta is a big place. You need to take a plane to places. So, my mum probably lived in a place called Medan, and my father might have been busy with his business, thinking about how to stay in Hong Kong. So they left me in Indonesia. During that time, I was basically living like those little masters and mistresses in TV dramas. We had maids, dogs ... The house there was amazing, triangle shaped with trees in the front, which we planted ourselves. We planted mango trees, coz I like eating mangos. Once the season arrived, we went up to the roof-top. Holding a stick, striking here and striking there, the mangoes would fall into the hole for us to pick up and eat. There are different smells in Indonesia. I suppose every season has its own smell. Just like when it is near winter, you will smell the flavour of winter. I told people I could smell the flavour of winter. People asked, "Are you crazy?" I think the smell of winter is very pleasant. Not all the places in Indonesia have smells that I like, for example the smell at home. Why is that? I would say that there were many trees around the house, many flowers and pastures. Every time after the rain, and the breeze swept by, the smell was so aromatic. Maybe that was the smell of trees. Yesterday, I went past Tai Hang. There was a shop full of plants and the smell was so aromatic. I don't know which plant gave out that smell. If I knew, I would like to grow them too.

Alice Did you just stand there for a long time merely sniffing the smell?

Anita No, not really.

Alice So, you had been smelling this (234 cigarette) until you came to Hong Kong?

Anita Right.

Alice You lived in that house all the time and never moved away?

Anita Didn't move, didn't move ... lived in that house all that time. We were kind of the richest family there. My cousin has a house just next to it.

Alice Who is your cousin?

Anita The son of my father's sister. Her son has a house and her daughter has one too. Three houses in a row. I could go to any of them.

Alice They are much older than you?

Anita Much older, all married, got kids and well established. I am the youngest. But according to the hierarchy, I am the most senior, coz my mum is the eldest sister.

Alice You are the senior one in the hierarchy coz your mum gave birth to you when she was older, though you are young in age.

Anita Right. My mum is the eldest sister. So according to the normal pregnancy age, I should be the eldest. When they (the relatives) see me, they would say, "Oh! You are finally at university. "Oh yes, I am finally at university."

Alice You were the only baby in the house then.

Anita Yes.

Alice No one took your toys?

Anita No. No need to fight with anyone for my toys. Toys were everywhere. I didn't worry about it at all, coz I knew that they were all mine ... no one would come to take it, no other baby to take them away. My goodness ... I was three years old ... the birthday cake was so big and I was surrounded by many gifts. I had no ideas what those presents were.

Alice Did you play with them?

Anita Did I play with them? That I really can't remember. Coz those people didn't buy toys for the kids. They bought toys for the grown-ups. So, I couldn't tell what gifts they were. But when I came to Hong Kong, I got only one or two presents. Well, maybe more when I was at school ... gifts from friends and classmates, but not many from the family. The most pathetic time was Chinese New Year, when only one relative, my father's brother, gave me a red packet. It was unfortunate that he passed away last month. In the past, red packets were mainly from him, and maybe some from other relatives. But I asked my old man, the uncle that gave me the big red packet last time, where is he? "Gone to the UK." "So, what about the one who came to the BBQ?" "Ha, he is broke!" "Ha, what about my red packets this year, will I get any?" "Ha, just the two from us." Every new year, I would go out with a particular friend, who is also like me, without many relatives in Hong Kong. In the new year, I'd meet up with other friends who also don't have too many relatives in Hong Kong. Some friends would say "I have got many red packets, with almost ten thousand dollars (inside)!" Then I would say "I don't have much. I just have those from my father and mother!"

Alice So, when you were little, you mummy lived in Medan. Did she come to visit you?

Anita She did.

Alice It was quite far away ... she took the aeroplane?

Anita Oh yes, took an aeroplane. In fact, I don't have much recollection of Medan. Coz I had lived in too many places... relatively longer in Indonesia. I lived for a while in Singapore, also a while in Medan. There in Medan, the house had an upper and a lower level. At that time, with my cousins, the youngest cousin, I don't know why he took me as his little brother, not little sister. He said, "Look, here are some candies. You play wrestling with me and I will give you the candies, but you can't cry." I said, "Yes." I could do anything for candies. Oh my goodness, he really hurt me, so painful! So, I cried and jumped down. My mum asked why I cried. I really wanted to tell her I was hurt playing wrestling with my cousin, but I didn't. Instead, I said my cousin refused to give me candies. Then my cousin said to me, "Um. I will give you candies again next time." It was quite amusing.

Alice Can you tell me the order of the places you lived in?

Anita I suppose... Indonesia for a long time, then Medan, then Singapore, then Indonesia again.

Alice Then you came to Hong Kong.

Anita Oh yes. Actually, I was in Singapore for only a short time. Coz the folks there were relatively serious and traditional. Also, I really didn't like those early morning church services every Sunday. But it's their faith. I was so little then and didn't know a thing. I just got woken up early in the morning. So, I carried on sleeping. Those days when I was in Indonesia, there was only me. No one fought with me or played with me. Only the house workers played with me. There in Singapore I have a cousin who is one year older than me. We fought for food, but we were so happy. I heard from her parents that I

would hit her, just when we were eating dinner, I would slap her. I said, "What? Really?" In fact, my cousin was quite fond of me. I pity her. She got married last month but didn't invite us. The wedding was not as big as her sister's and brother's. Why not? Coz she married a coloured guy. To be honest, I don't see a problem. I asked my cousin if she was getting married. She said she was. "If I can invite you, I will. But my mum won't allow it." Her mum didn't mention it to any friends or relatives. My mum, nosy as she is, asked me, "Your cousin's getting married and I want to go." I said, "Don't be gossipy." So, my cousin's wedding was a modest one. Her mum didn't notify others. Before, my cousin dated a Caucasian teacher. Then her mum said to her, "Family rule - marriage with overseas Chinese, marriage with Chinese only!" So crazy! My poor cousin. She would love to have a high-profile wedding, so that the whole world knows about it. Her sister's and brother's weddings were elaborate ones with lots of fun. And this cousin, she had devoted so much effort in making those weddings successful, but I just don't know why hers ended up like this!

Alice Are they Indonesian Chinese emigrated to Singapore?

Anita Yes.

Alice I can understand that. Indonesian Chinese will only mix with Chinese... mix only with Chinese, refused to marry Indonesians. If one gets married to an Indonesian, the old family clan seems not willing to invite you to dinners.

Anita Only twenty something guests in my cousin's wedding, so few! So next time when it's my turn, I will say to them, "Come if you want to. I won't force you if you don't want to!" I am sure my cousin will come. Coz it was a childhood promise between us. No matter what happens in the future, we will attend each other's wedding. Well, I couldn't attend hers, but I hope she will come to mine.

Alice But you hit her.

Anita No big deal. She didn't remember. I went back to Singapore when I was about ten years old. I could not quite recognise her. She was eating her packed lunch at the airport, and I was searching for my cousin. Then I fixed my gaze on a girl who was eating her packed lunch, and she was looking at me too. Then her eyes were wide opened. She looked at me and came to hug me. She is really a close relative of mine. When I have some secrets which I want to keep from my other relatives, I will just talk to her. She is the one, in the entire family clan, who will support me. So, she is really a good cousin to me. I think this kind of wedding is so unfair to her; she deserves better!

Alice I think we are almost done. Finally, I have a question, out of curiosity, to ask you. If you had a choice, would you rather your father and mother had not come to Hong Kong and stayed in Indonesia? Or would you prefer your situation like it is now?

Anita Like now. If we stayed in Indonesia, there won't be so many development opportunities. More so, it is a developing country, and even running a family business, the best you can do is to open a paint shop. You can also get into other construction business to make money. My godfather is in construction, so he has money and reputation. In the long run, one learns more in Hong Kong than in Indonesia. Those people in Indonesia don't normally get university education. All my cousins finished their universities overseas, and then returned home. I can see that they are all living quite well, earning good money in Indonesia. But if you come to Hong Kong, in similar situation like mine... if I stay on in Hong Kong, language-wise I know Cantonese. Secondly, I've come to know more people. After all, Hong Kong is a

cosmopolitan city. I would rather be in Hong Kong. Once you graduate, you have more opportunities for personal development. I did think of returning to Indonesia to get my shop back, after my graduation.

Alice Now you have reminded me of one thing. My father was in a similar situation in Indonesia. Have you asked your mum why they put you in the care of another family after your birth? Coz it happened to my daddy too. He did not grow up together with his blood brothers. Once he was born, he was given to his rich uncle in another place. It only happened to him in the family. He was bestowed upon his uncle. He was with his uncle from childhood to adulthood.

Anita Does his uncle have any kids?

Alice He does, seven. He played with his cousins. He lived with them from when he was a kid to when he was a grown-up. My father told me that he has no particular feelings towards his birth parents, coz he was "thrown" to others when he was small. People said it would give a better chance of survival for the kid. It was not that the rich uncle didn't have any kids. They had four sons and three daughters. For some strange reason, they took on one more. So, I wonder if it's some kind of Indonesian tradition.

Anita It's the first time I've heard about this. I really don't know.

Alice You go and ask your mummy. Ask her why she gave birth to you but didn't keep you in Medan and decided to send you to Jakarta.

Anita Oh yes. I kept changing homes. My mum was in fact a kind of princess at home. She wasn't really keen on getting her hands dirty. Also, her thinking was rather conservative. Back then no one played with me, so I had fun with the house workers (domestic workers). I got told off, "Why do you mix with workers? Workers are of a lower rank!" "But they are humans too!" I thought, "Just like you! It's just that they have different jobs. They amuse me, can you do the same?" I was very close with one of the helpers, and we talked about everything. She was the only one who would play those crazy games with me. I talked about strange things when I was little. When she was watering plants in the garden, I told her to press onto the mouth of the hose-pipe and point it upwards. At that time, there was a water (amusement) park called Water Boom. Then I called out "Water Boom". No normal person would imagine that was Water Boom. But she played along, splashing water here and there. But other workers wouldn't play along. They only hold the hose tight, leaving me to run around by myself. I thought it was so much fun. That worker was really a lot of fun. In fact, it is all a matter of affinity about going along with helpers. No different from picking your own partner. If he could please you, he is a perfect helper. But if he only knows how to do his job and fulfil his duty, but didn't know how to please you, he would be so dull! And this helper will only be worth 50 out of 100!

Alice Can cigarettes please you? How do you compare cigarettes, workers and partners?

Anita This is a good question. Cigarettes have a lower status than workers. Of course, the partner comes first. Only a minor difference between the partner and workers. Because you can own the partner, but you can't own the workers.

Alice You can own workers.

Anita No, you can't own workers.

Alice So, partners are above workers

Anita Oh yes, then comes cigarettes.

Alice But you can own cigarettes.

- Anita You can own cigarettes, but cigarettes can also affect others.
- Alice Oh.
- Anita Like, some workers cannot bear cigarette smells. Some are allergic to cigarettes, so it depends.
- Alice What about pets?
- Anita I suppose the lowest.
- Alice Worse than cigarettes.
- Anita Coz my home is not the spotless type. Some people keep dusting their homes non-stop. My home is dusty. Once my friend was going on holiday. She has a dog, and she wanted her dog to stay with me. I said, "Please, no. My home is dusty." I really don't want to do dusting day in and day out. Therefore, I don't really fancy having any pets. Back in secondary school, there was a female teacher, whose hamster gave birth and she gave the baby hamsters to various students. It so happened I was given one. It so happened too that I was in my adolescent phase. I argued with my mum constantly and didn't go home at times. The poor hamster was so innocent. My mum panicked, said it was like a mouse. She didn't feed it and just gave it water. So it died. I suppose I am not fit to have pets. It's OK if I just have fun and play with them at times.
- Alice Poor pets. They are even ranked lower than cigarettes.
- Anita Oh yes. If my home is the clean and well-kept type, no problem. But my home is not well taken care of, and I am too lazy to do housework. So, there's no point (in keeping pets).
- Alice OK. Good. So, for today, time's almost up. I will go back and listen to the recording. Then I am going to jot down some questions. Those topics I want to find out more about, and I will ask you again next time. I will also ask you about those areas I want to understand more about. If you can, please ask your mother about the Indonesian tradition of sending one's own kids to other siblings' families. I will ask my father too. I suppose our family backgrounds are similar. The difference is that my daddy and mummy went back to the mainland, gave birth to me, and I came to Hong Kong to study when I was two. And for you, you came to Hong Kong directly from Indonesia. That's the only difference.
- Anita My old man studied in the mainland. Once he'd finished, he made his way to Hong Kong, by hook and by crook.
- Alice Was that because of the cultural revolution? That period was really hard. It should be around that time, since my daddy is also seventy odd.
- Anita That's similar to my daddy's age.
- Alice I suppose so.

Second interview: Anita

- Alice Silly me! I didn't take a nap. I was supposed to take a nap after a meeting. Who knows that there was another meeting after that! So I ended up not sleeping for about thirty to forty hours. Now, I am like a walking dead!
- Anita No wonder you've fallen ill.
- Alice Oh yes. Then I went out with my colleagues for dinner, and drinks. I said I couldn't drink because of my liver problem. They looked at me, saw me looking like a zombie, they did not dare to press me on drinking. At that time, I hadn't slept for forty hours.
- Anita No wonder.
- Alice As soon as I returned, I fell apart. Anyway, how are you?
- Anita Let me have some candies first.
- Alice Sure, have some candies. ... Any dinner plans with friends tonight?
- Anita Today? Not really. I have to go back to work.
- Alice You need to go back to work later?
- Anita Hmm.
- Alice Really? Go back to work at this late hour? Shouldn't you be off duty already?
- Anita No, I need to work. Work starts at seven o'clock.
- Alice Oh. Until when?
- Anita We can knock off at eleven o'clock.
- Alice Seven to eleven?
- Anita Yes. Normal working hours start at six o'clock. Coz someone went to play snooker yesterday, and I covered for him. That's why I can start late today.
- Alice Oh, seven to eleven o'clock, four hours a day?
- Anita Right. Sometimes four hours ... usually five hours, at night. But on Saturday and Sunday, it is eight hours' work.
- Alice What time do you start work on Saturday and Sunday?
- Anita Twelve to three then break from three to six. Start again at six until eleven o'clock.
- Alice Wow, you go to bed very late, if that's the case. You finish work so late.
- Anita Oh yes. What is the worst is I can't get to sleep right away. I can't get to sleep until three or four o'clock.
- Alice Aiya! That's not good at all.
- Anita No. Therefore, recently I went out drinking (after work) and alcohol makes me sleepy. So when I go home, I smoke a cigarette, then sleep. Going to bed after a few drinks ... I suppose it does me good.
- Alice Is that red wine? Red wine or what?
- Anita White wine, coz I am not a good drinker. White wine ... coz, firstly, white wine is easier to drink. Secondly ... well, it has become a habit now. I'm OK with whatever, and it's cheap.
- Alice Good. So, I want to know ... I want to ask you... can you tell me in these two days... try to remember what the moment was like when you smoked the ideal cigarette.
- Anita The ideal cigarette? Wow ...
- Alice Yesterday or today ...
- Anita Today! It's today ... coz I had to go to the Chinese University this morning at eight o'clock. I had a late night yesterday, and I'd just slept for a few hours, and then I had to get up at such an early hour. I didn't have a chance to smoke until three o'clock in the afternoon. Coz, I normally don't like ... coz maybe it is something strange about me, I don't like smoking on an

empty stomach. Some people like to smoke first thing when they get out of bed, but I don't like that. I definitely will eat some bread first, something ... have some taste in my mouth first before I smoke, so that I can feel full. A thick smoke screen on top of the full tummy seems better.

Alice A smoke screen so that there is no direct contact with the tummy?

Anita Yes.

Alice Otherwise you will vomit?

Anita I would feel uncomfortable, and that the cigarette would taste awful. Sometimes when I'm sick, smoking makes me nauseous. Just the smell of it makes me nauseous and actual smoking makes me even more nauseous. I don't know if it's because I am not a serious addict, I won't want to smoke when I am not well. I just think it is foul and offensive. So anyway, sometime around three o'clock today, I smoked my first cigarette ... I was in an area, not on the official Chinese University campus, as I'm not really studying there. I'm at CUSES, that one is called Chinese University College...

Alice Is it in Tsimshatsui?

Anita No. So Chinese University is on this side, this is on the other side, from the slope. So, you go to the Chinese University from this side, but (where I was going) is from the other side.

Alice So, in the same stretch.

Anita Yes. So, the whole stretch is university campus where smoking is not allowed. If I smoked, it would be very eye-catching. So, I just walked, walked, walked, and walked to the back, then ... with friends, I smoked. I felt little bit more awake after smoking. Though I still felt tired after that. If I hadn't gone there to smoke, I wouldn't realise there are so many people smoking on campus! I thought there wouldn't be anyone there. And it turned out that the place was full of people standing around. Most of them were like me going for the eight o'clock opening session, coz I saw all of them in class. They all seemed to be smoking much faster than me, which means they were there earlier, and they already knew about that location. Wow, so smart! How did they find that out? I was thinking about making some friends there, but they were smoking so hastily. I felt very relaxed after the smoke. Coz they all spoke English, and my English is not good, so that made me quite nervous. Once I had my cigarette, I felt relaxed, my brain emptied out. That's the best cigarette in these two days.

Alice Those people were still there when you were smoking?

Anita Some of them, some were not there. The group that was gone were people from my former school, but in different classes, so I don't know them.

Alice That place was part of the campus?

Anita Outside the underground station.

Alice Oh. Outside the underground station ... outside the train station, with tree shades. So, everyone... you guys went there, hiding in the trees. From there... you need to take a bus up to the college?

Anita No need to take a bus. You can just walk up.

Alice Nice. I don't think I saw that when I was studying ...

Anita Coz it's quite new, I suppose it wasn't built back then.

Alice So that's the ideal cigarette in these two days?

Anita Yes.

Alice What about the worst one?

Anita The worst one was the one I lit by mistake. I drew a cigarette out (from the packet). My friends had not started smoking yet. So, I was rotating the

cigarette, turning it around and around. Finally, they started smoking, so I put it into my mouth, and lit it. Then I thought, "How come it's not lighting up?" I sucked, and sucked. What happened was I had turned the cigarette around and I was trying to light the filter! So, the whole cigarette was wasted!

Alice Why? ... Oh... You couldn't, coz you had burnt the filter.

Anita Right. Some people will cut off part of the filter. But then the filter will be shorter, then you will inhale more stuff, and the taste will be different.

Alice When did that happen?

Anita Yesterday.

Alice Last night?

Anita After work, we went for a hot pot meal. Then we were chit chatting, getting ready to smoke and I was turning my cigarette around and around, waiting for them. No one reminded me that I was lighting the wrong end. They just watched me and laughed.

Alice Were you very upset?

Anita I wasted a whole cigarette! I suppose. In fact, my own pack ... not quite enough for myself, but now I ... all because of my carelessness, I wasted an entire stick of cigarette. In the past, one stick of cigarette cost about one dollar and fifty cents to two dollars. But now, it's something like three dollars, right? Or two dollars ninety cents? Can't remember. A lot more expensive than before, I was thinking. I went back to the mainland some time ago ... coz ... it's such a bad deal to go to the mainland because I have to pay for the visa.

Alice Coz you're holding an Indonesian passport.

Anita Yes.

Alice You didn't apply for Hong Kong ... do you have a Hong Kong ID card?

Anita I do.

Alice Can you apply for the "Entry Permit for HK and Macau Residents" with this?

Anita No, I can't, not at my age. Furthermore, you can't apply for another country's official documents if you hold other country's passport, something like that. I am not sure if there are places in this world that allow things like double passports. Some people may have. Maybe they paid a lot for the second passport. That may happen... perhaps. So, if I had a second passport, I suppose I would apply for a Japanese one.

Alice That's quite good. You don't need visas for a lot of places. You can go anywhere you like (with that passport).

Anita Oh yes. Also, Japan is my favourite place. So, if I had a second passport, I would choose a Japanese one.

Alice So last time, we were saying... Oh, let's change this... your dad and mum put you under your godfather and godmother's charge when you were little. Then we wondered why it was so, or whether it was a custom in Indonesia, coz my daddy was also like that too. They were poor then, I mean my father's family, so he was given to his uncle to raise. How about your family, what was the situation?

Anita My side... I have asked my mum about this. She was rather surprised that I would ask such a question, coz she didn't want to talk about it. Then I asked, "Answer me, quickly, if you don't answer me, I can't get my money!" Then she said, "Oh, how much can you get?" "Six hundred! Don't tell me that you want to give me that!" Then she said, "I'll tell you." Then she told me. Coz at that time my old man was coming to Hong Kong to work. She then said,

"Who is going to look after our girl if you go to Hong Kong?" Then my old man said, "Get someone to keep her." My mum said, "Who will keep her? Get your younger sister to keep her?" My old man said, "Can." Then I was given to my old man's younger sister to keep. And then I asked my mum, "Why not get someone in Hong Kong to look after me?" Then my mum said it would be difficult to keep the first child in Hong Kong. "I needed to work, and your father needed to work too. Who was going to nurse you? You were so little then." Then I said, "Oh, therefore, you gave me to them, to keep me." So, I asked, "So what did you do then?" "Those beautician stuff, something like that." Then I said, "What about Old Man?" "He worked in the bank." Have you ever regretted giving me away?" "Yes, very much. But we were penniless then. When you are penniless, that's the only way. They were rich so they could afford to keep you. Now you are in Hong Kong after all. Do you regret (coming)?" I said, "I have no regrets. I'm quite happy here." That's it.

Alice Coz you mum could not take care of you, coz she had to work, so you were given to another person to raise.

Anita Yes. My mum has a younger sister too, but she already had three kids who were much older than me, like I was in primary six, they would be in form six. In other words, my mum's sister really couldn't handle a baby like me. Also, her other siblings were not too well-off, all developing their own business, or just beginning businesses. My father's side seemed to be more affluent, coz their construction business was very profitable, not to mention the shady deals they were involved in.

Alice Those activities must have earned them good money, especially in places like Indonesia.

Anita Right. For my passport, they had to spend a lot of money to get it for me. I was born in Indonesia, so naturally my passport was an Indonesian one. At one time, it was due for renewal, an extension. So, I went back to Indonesia to have it done. I couldn't really speak Indonesian well, coz I had lived in Hong Kong for a rather long period of time. So, I listened (to the official) and he said something like, "Where do you live in Hong Kong? Which district?" They used different terms which were a bit complicated, and I couldn't understand it. So I asked in English, "Pardon, please say it again." But they didn't speak English. Afterwards, they took me to a room which was a room for police questioning. They suspected that I was a stowaway, so in the police room, my cousin panicked. No sooner had I gone into the room, she came in. She was so scared, and she kept saying to me, "No worries. Don't be afraid." She kept saying that to me. In fact, I think she was more frightened than me. Then she and the officials talked. One asked, "Why doesn't she speak Indonesian?" My cousin said, "She studies in Hong Kong, that's why she has forgotten." Then the police said, "Wow, you were born in Medan, lived in Indonesia, and you have a guarantor?" He spoke in a very imposing manner. Then he checked my personal information, and asked, "Where has his father gone?" My cousin answered, using a particular term. Until today, I still have no idea what that term means. Well, afterwards, I was thinking why they had asked about my old man. Normally, they should have information about my father there. After that, I didn't pay much attention. Then I went to a place to get a passport photo. Then I was asked again, "Have you seen your father before? Do you know where he is?" In my mind, I was wondering, "My father is in Hong Kong ... why ask! There must be something dodgy going on, the way they kept asking like

that." So, I said, "I don't know. I have seen..." "You have seen?" "... From photos." Then he said, "Oh, from photos. Do you miss him?" I said, "A lot, I miss him a lot." Then it ended like that. Afterwards, I asked my cousin, "Cousin, does my passport say I don't have a father?" Then she said, "Of course, didn't you know?" "I didn't know. No one has ever told me." Then my cousin said to me, "Ha, it is also my first time to attend to you. They haven't said anything to me. I thought you knew." She was so amazed that I said I didn't have a father, even without knowing what was written on the passport. About the term she used, I still don't know what it is ... "deceased, divorced, separated" or what? I really don't have a clue. Then my cousin went home and my godfather asked, "How was it? You got it done?" My cousin said, "Done. Why didn't you guys tell her that it said "nil" in the father's information on the passport?" I thought there might be an answer, so I was eavesdropping attentively. But the question never got answered. It was skipped and the conversation moved on to other subjects. I thought, "Why is it that they don't talk about it?" All right, I didn't ask them back then. Ever since I was a kid, I have wanted to go to Japan. I want to be a resident there. I want a passport with Japanese language in it. My godfather said, "What are you going to do with your Indonesian passport, if you have a Japanese passport? Cancel it?" He was so serious when he said that, I was frightened. I said, "I won't cancel it. I can have two passports, no problem." He said, "Don't tell me that you will cancel it. I spent heaps of money to buy this passport for you!" So, I wondered, "Why did he spend so much to buy me a passport? Is it so difficult to apply for an Indonesian passport?" Maybe it was about the anti-Chinese sentiment in the past. That was why it was so hard to get a passport. Coz when I was little, my Medan passport was done very quickly. A senior ranking officer was called first, then I went to his office to pay, answered one or two questions and it was done! I was one of a privileged class. Now I have to follow the usual process like other ordinary people. It's unnecessary to spend so much money to get a passport. If my old man was so resolute about staying in Hong Kong, why didn't he get any passport... and change to a Hong Kong passport later? Why bother to spend so much money for this passport? Now if I want to emigrate, something like that, I dare not breathe a word about it. There was a time when I was in secondary school. I was supposed to join some activities at the Whampoa Military School. I told the school authorities that my passport was really problematic, and asked if I could be excused. Then my mum said, coz my mum was really obliging ... I don't know why she's so afraid of me, maybe coz I was so rebellious when I was little. She was so scared of me when I was in form two, form three, and she said, "Cancel (your Indonesian passport), cancel it, don't have it, change, change! Which country's passport do you want?" But Father didn't agree and my godfather didn't agree. Then she tried to talk to my old man, but he said, "Change what? No changing!" My old man is actually a softie, but my godfather is a tough one. So, we dropped this subject. In fact, it's really problematic! The entire family clan is so conservative and I can't do many things!

Alice How old were you when you renewed your passport? That time you got interrogated?

Anita Last year.

Alice Oh, last year, going through the normal process, so painful.

Anita Yes, it is. For people like us in Hong Kong ... that was last year. The year before last, I was preparing for the DSE examinations, so I didn't go back.

Alice Why did you go back to Indonesia to get it done? Why couldn't you have it done here in Hong Kong?

Anita My old man wanted to go back. He wanted a holiday. Indeed, it was quite fun. Coz we didn't have to pay for a thing when we were there. Also, over there, there were lots of things not available in Hong Kong. It's similar to going to Thailand. When we were there last year, we went to a small island nearby, like Ping Chau, or Cheung Chau in Hong Kong, and there was a water park. When I was waiting to be buckled up for a particular game (towed by a speed boat and flying in the air), I saw lots of foreigners. Actually my English sucks but I saw a girl, so tall and brave, so I decided to talk to her. I found out she was only twelve years old! Just twelve! But she was so tall! I was wondering, "Are you kidding me? You're twelve years old?" Then she said, "It (my height) is quite normal in my country." I was thinking, "No way! Well, it's not normal in my country!"

Alice Was she Indonesian or what?

Anita No, she was Russian.

Alice Twelve years old, so tall.

Anita Very tall indeed. Ridiculous! Then my cousin met a German guy who travelled to Indonesia after going to the Philippines and Thailand. Then I asked him, "Is Thailand more different than here?" He said, "Actually, there's not much difference between Thailand and here ... just the language, and the currency. In fact, it's more or less the same everywhere. All the fun things are expensive." Then I said, "Which place do you like more, Thailand or here?" He said he liked Thailand more." So, I didn't ask anymore coz I hadn't been to Thailand and didn't know what Thailand is like. Even if I had gone to Thailand, I suppose I would still prefer Indonesia more, coz I think Thailand is a place that is full of spooky things.

Alice Oh, so you mean there are a lot of foreigners?

Anita No.

Alice Oh! You mean ghosts, real ghosts!

Anita Yes, oh yes.

Alice There is lot of that in Indonesia too. Don't you think so?

Anita Those in Indonesia ... perhaps I had been there since I was little, I feel more at ease. There is a deity in every house. So, I ... perhaps in the past, I was so full of confidence that we would be blessed by deities. All my school results were a bit of a fluke, including those I got in the DSE exams. Then I was wondering, "Ah, I must have been such a good kid when I was little, and my guardian angels blessed me with good school results!" And I even managed to get through to university. I don't know for how long I could be fluky for, so I am not too at ease. But I am not 100% sure about the deity thing. When they worship the deities, I don't know what they are praying for! I wished them to hurry up with their praying and then they can play with me. I was so bored! I really don't know, maybe I feel an ease believing in them (the deities). Maybe I am the kind of person who lacks a sense of security, and therefore I'd keep looking around for it. Even a small thing could give me a sense of security.

Alice The deities at home, and the smell ...

Anita Oh yes, the smell really gives me a sense of security. So, I have said, we need to find our own sense of security. A sense of security from others is very unreal. It will vanish once the people have gone. But the sense of security conceived by us are in our hands ... you know where to find them, you know what sense of security you are looking for, which is so much

better. Moreover... but then the smell is rather difficult to find. I have looked for it in a few Indonesian grocers in Hong Kong, but they said they didn't sell it.

Alice That cigarette, what smell?

Anita 234 ...

Alice Oh! The flavour of 234, the flavour that floats about....

Anita Right.

Alice I should have given them to you. I have some.

Anita Really?

Alice I don't smoke. A friend gave them to me.

Anita Can you post them to me?

Alice I can. But I don't want to be caught by the authorities, so I won't write a sender's address.

Anita Seriously?

Alice No one smokes them in Hong Kong.

Anita Right. No one smokes them. I gave some to my friends to try. They all went boo boo boo ... what's that? In fact, I won't smoke them either when I get the packet.

Alice You will burn it?

Anita I will burn it.

Alice Can you really spare it?

Anita If I only have one left, I won't. I will wait, keep it for the moment I get really unhappy, so unhappy, unable to handle it, and when all my friends are not around, then I will burn it. Some cigarettes ... oh, I am very fond of things that are in stick form ... When I have a pack of cigarettes, I will smoke quite liberally, but once I get past half a pack, I'll slow down a bit but when I get to the last one, or the second last one, I will really treasure it. Therefore, if I have a pack of 234, I wouldn't know how long I am going to keep it, coz its smell will change. Moreover, this 234, I like the old packaging. Old packaging is in paper and is folded like this ...

Alice The original packing, yellowish, with 234 in the centre, made of paper, that one?

Anita Yes.

Alice They have introduced some new packaging. I have been to Indonesia a few times recently, so I saw them.

Anita With plastic wrappers ...

Alice I have one pack in a plastic box.

Anita Now, some of them can be opened.

Alice Oh yes. I didn't see that pack. I have only seen the one with the whole plastic box, with each stick wrapped in paper. I suppose that is expensive.

Anita I suppose so.

Alice I saw many (different packagings). Many different types have been produced, but I suppose they (the cigarettes) are more or less the same.

Anita I think there are cigars in Indonesia too. The cigars there, well I smoked one once; I didn't think the taste was good. In fact, I thought it was rather tasteless. Cigars, I first heard the name, I thought the taste might be a bit creamy.

Alice Why so? Coz its Chinese name sounds like ice cream?

Anita Right!

Alice Do you think that it should be put into the fridge?

Anita No. I just supposed it might taste a bit sweet. But after the first try, I realised the taste was bitter and not good at all. So I'd better go back to cigarettes,

even though they're not too good, but better than cigars. Why is it some people like having a cigar in their mouth? I just don't get it.

Alice If it's 234, can you smoke that?

Anita No, I can't.

Alice Too strong? But will the cigarette extinguish if you just leave it burning?

Anita Coz the whole stick is tobacco. If the whole stick is tobacco ... It depends on whether there are any impurities inside. If there is, it will burn faster. If there isn't, it will burn at the normal speed.

Alice Turn on the fan to keep a draught going. Then the cigarette will not go out.

Anita It (the fan) can't be too close. If it's too close ... I need to keep the smoke like a line.

Alice Like a line? The smoke is in a line?

Anita Yes.

Alice What's so good about keeping a line of smoke?

Anita Coz in the past, when I was looking at my godfather smoking, he was also like that ... leaving the cigarette burning like that ... with a line of smoke.

Alice Oh, really? Isn't it rather windy in Indonesia? Did the smoke get blown all over the place?

Anita No, it didn't. Coz he only smoked in his office. There, we have two living rooms. Through the door, behind it, was his office. Over there was his office desk. In one area, there was a TV and other household appliances. Then going further in was the dining room. Beyond the dining table was the kitchen. In the past, this kind of house was so amazingly big to me, and I felt so happy. There's no such thing in Hong Kong. Hong Kong is so tiny. Of course, we are not rich enough to buy a villa of similar size. So, I was quite happy to go back there occasionally, to live like rich people.

Alice So last year when you were back there, did you meet your godfather and godmother?

Anita Yes.

Alice But they were not treating you too well?

Anita Right, that's why I didn't like it.

Alice Since you came back to Hong Kong, have you written any email or letter to them?

Anita No.

Alice How old were you when you came to Hong Kong? When you were four years old? Being snatched away?

Anita Yes. I started school here when I was five years old.

Alice Did your mum ever tell you why she stealthily took you away to Hong Kong?

Anita I had basically settled down with their family, and then my mum said she wanted to take me back to Hong Kong. My godmother said, "Why do you have to take her away? She is doing fine here. I will provide for her, let her go to university ... we have money." They had no grandchildren then. Goodness knows what would become of me if I were still with them! Then my mum said, "But she is my daughter." So, they argued. One (mother) had been with me since my birth, and the other was away from me. No matter what... the adoptive parents had become attached to the children. Of course they wouldn't let go easily... so they quarrelled, then my mum got angry.

Alice What were you thinking when they were fighting?

Anita I was such a little kid...

Alice A four-year-old.

Anita Oh yes. In fact, there shouldn't have been too much drama, just crying. Coz I

would cry every time I came back from Indonesia. I remember there was a time... I went there (Indonesia)... in the summer holiday, then I came back to Hong Kong. I was very little back then, my body was so tiny but I would still hug my old man, and asked him, "Can I go back again?" I wondered why I would ask him if I could go back. I don't quite remember things that happened in the past, but I clearly remember that I asked him if I could go back again. I wondered what incident I had gone through at that time. I was really surprised that I asked this question, "Can I go back?" So, my old man said, "Of course you can!"

Alice (You asked that question) To your godfather in Indonesia?

Anita No. The father here in Hong Kong. Therefore, I went back every summer holiday ... every year, when I was in primary school. As soon as he had bought the air ticket, he would stick it on the fridge. He didn't like talking ... didn't talk. If there were any surprises, he just stuffed it in my pocket, or put it on the table, or on the fridge. Sometimes hiding it, but also giving it away deliberately. As soon as he had bought the ticket, I would be over the moon. "Am I going? I am! I am!" That day, I was flying high.

Alice Back then when you were little, did you go by yourself? Or...

Anita With my family.

Alice With your father and mother?

Anita Yes.

Alice For a few months?

Anita One or two months, as long as the school holiday.

Alice So, you lived there, at your godparents' place?

Anita Yes. That's why, in my primary school days, I didn't have many good friends. After all, they were all from rich families. The things that they used and talked about were different. But all kids liked to chat about television programmes and relationships with family members. My family folks didn't like to mingle with my classmates' families. So, I ended up not having too many good friends in my primary school days. I am very envious of those people who have known friends from primary schools, to secondary schools, and from secondary school to universities. It's really a very long time from primary school to university.... but I don't have any such friends. In my old school, at one time there was a girl who was the granddaughter of Tung Chee-hwa (former Chief Executive of Hong Kong). We played together a lot. My mum was so happy and said, "It's so good that you know her. Being friends with these people will be useful to you in the future!" I basically had no clue about that. In fact, that girl was quite nice to me. I don't know what happened and the girl changed schools. Then one day my mum asked me, "Have you seen her recently?" I said I hadn't. "Have you got her telephone number?" "Yes, I have." "Call her." So, I called her. "Hello, are you free?" "I am practising the violin now. I will call you later," she answered. That "later" never happened, and that was actually the end! Therefore, I guess it has nothing to do with whether you "have money" or "have no money", it is just that our worlds are so different, and there is a gap... anyway. I was in one of the band-one primary schools. It was very competitive on exam results. I really didn't want this to carry on in my secondary school life, so I chose a band-three school. Then my primary school friends said to me, "Hey let's meet, but you must put on your secondary school uniform." Back then, they had no idea about the school I was in, so they just said, "Nice looking uniform. Mine is all white, the whole set!" Then I said, "I think it is nice too. I quite like my uniform." That was

the last time we saw each other. From then onwards, I excused myself from all the gatherings. Coz there was really a big gap between us, and the gap was getting bigger and bigger, and I had no intention to narrow it, coz I didn't want to chase after results. It was so hard. I knew that some of them studied medicine. Some went to Beijing to study traditional Chinese medicine. Basically, they are all in university now. None of them are not in university. I am the only one not studying in a local university. So be it, I don't care!

Alice So, the last time you had mentioned ... this is rather special, you said every stick of cigarette has its own story, and every pack of cigarettes has its own story. Then you told me the story of 234. Besides 234, do you have any cigarette-related stories that you would never forget about?

Anita I do ... a love story.

Alice So, the cigarettes and the love story are linked together?

Anita The cigarette pack, the brand. Back then my regular cigarettes were the menthol type. At that time, there was no Marlboro Black Menthol, and everyone just smoked Marlboro Lights. Before Marlboro Lights, I smoked Marlboro Ice blue. My ex... a girl, and she smoked Marlboro Black Menthol. So I changed my brand for her. Actually, she was such a bitch, but I got to like her so much for no reason. She liked to finish her cigarette before coming to my home, coz smoking was not allowed at my home. So I didn't let her smoke, not even at the back staircase. Every time after she finished smoking and came to my home, (she had a habit of touching things here and there at my home), my room would have her cigarette smell. I quite liked that smell. There was a time I sniffed her hand and found the smell quite pleasant. Actually, she was ... why I said she was such a bitch, coz she was. We were together for three years, on and off, on and off. It was her who first said she felt for me. Then she fell in love with others, so she is the good and the evil in one body. Once she was put into a youth rehabilitation centre. After that, she asked to stay at my home. I wondered why she didn't go back to her own home. Fine. Stay with me. Then she brought her clothes and stuff. That was fine too. But she was a kind of nuisance to my family, and that was really the problem. I said to her, "Why don't you go back to your own home?" Then she said, "Your family doesn't like me here?" "No, it's just that my family likes to have their own space." I said it as indirectly as possible. "Fine, I will go to sleep at my friend's place." "You go to stay with your friend! Fine, whatever suits you!" Her clothes were still at my place, and I thought of her. Those were the first things that came to my sight every morning. What an eye sore!" "Please take your clothes away. They get in my way!" She said, "You just want me to take my clothes away as soon as possible. Have you thought about my feelings? Have you thought what if I need to come to the Eastern district?" "It's your own doing. Everything would be fine if you didn't play missing and disappeared from your family. If you have arguments with your family, go and stay in a youth hostel. If you stay in a youth hostel, you are not missing, coz youth hostels have guarantors. There are many ways. Why do you have to play missing?" She said, "You just don't understand. "You said I don't get it, OK, I don't get it." So that was the first time we broke up. After that she went to those places (girls' homes), she kept writing letters to me. I don't know how she remembered my home address and wrote me letters. I didn't reply. Then she got discharged (from the girls' home). I can't remember how we got in touch again. She said she had never forgotten me and asked, "Don't you think we

should go back to the good old days?" I didn't say anything. "Have I left a shirt at your home? I'll come to get it!" "Fine. Come and get it." I don't know how, unknowingly, we hooked up again suddenly.

Anita One time I went to Cheung Chau on a pleasure trip. She asked, "Why is it always me who is waiting for you instead of the other way around?" I mean, it took time for me to travel from my camp in Cheung Chau. It was just bad timing and she was asking why she had to wait for me every time instead of the other way around. And then I thought to myself, "Well, does it matter? The first time you fell in love with another person was when you went to a friend's place and you hooked up! It was you who said you loved me and then fell in love with someone else, and you even slept at her place! So, was it really such a big problem that you had to wait for me?" And then I let it go without saying anything coz maybe she just wanted to have fun at that time. After a while, she told me she didn't want to go to school, and she wanted to work part-time. I thought it doesn't really matter as she can work part-time and go to school at the same time. And then she said, "Ok, I will do part-time work while I go to school, but I will have less opportunity to see you." Then I said, "That's all right. It's a good thing for you to be progressive and have a target in your life!" And then the problem came! She went to this place to work part-time, and then she fell in love with a person in her workplace. I thought, "Why are you like that again? Have you ever thought that you are troublesome?" And then she didn't say anything. Well, I found that out when she posted a photo and said "Why would anyone be as silly as you? Leaving some candies in my locker without telling me ... just leaving some notes!" And then I thought, well, I don't work for her company and of course I couldn't get in. So I asked her, "Who is that nice person?" "A colleague. She's funny, and she's tall!" That's fine. Later on I went swimming with her and her younger sister and I asked her younger sister if she was behaving strangely at home lately. She told me that her sister was always on the phone. "Wasn't that you?" she asked. And I said, "No. Can you help me find out whom she talks to all the time?" And then I found out she talked to that colleague again after we finished swimming, and she appeared so happy even while I was standing beside her. I got angry and after she hung up, I asked her who that person was. She said, "Just somebody." I said "Really?" And then I ended the conversation. And when I got home, (there wasn't WhatsApp at that time), I sent her a message on Facebook and asked if she was in love with that person. She asked me why I said that, and I said, "Wish you all the best." And her reply really made me furious. She said, "It was you who said you wouldn't let me go. Why are you saying such a thing now?" Well, look at what she's done! I wouldn't tell her to leave that person and stay with me! For goodness' sake, it's the second time already! So, I just ignored her and didn't reply. Then she asked, "Have you ever loved me?" I answered, "Well,

Anita if you behave like this, then we are over!" So that was the second time we broke up. Ok, then there was a third time. When I was in form five... well she went back to those places (detention centres) again not long after we broke up, which was from form two to form five. Then she wrote letters to me again and talked about what was interesting and what she did in detention. Actually, it was really full of nonsense. It was the first letter from her (at that time) and I didn't know why she wrote to me. So, I left it aside. And then she wrote me a second letter and asked me why I didn't reply to her first letter, and she'd already written twice. In fact, I could feel

what she wanted to say, but I didn't show any reaction coz I wasn't sure. Then, I said ok, if you... coz she was already discharged at that time. I asked her to send me more letters, and I would reply to her third or fourth letter. She said, "Great, you said it!" And then she wrote me a third letter and said she'd never forgotten me when she was inside (the detention centre) ... well, she said the same thing again, and then she added at the end of the letter that she wouldn't have said those bad words to me if it wasn't because so and so forced her, and that she knew that I wouldn't trust her anymore and my friends also didn't like her. And my heart melted when she said those things. So I said, "OK, but you won't repeat the same mistake again this time?" And she said no, and she said it in an authentic way, so I agreed to be with her again. In short, I would smoke that cigarette brand when I was with her, and I would switch back to other brands when I was with other people. I would also try new brands if they are available, but I would only smoke that particular brand when I was dating that particular person. When I was with her the third time, I asked her, "Have you quit smoking?" She said, "Don't tell me you have!" I said "No, I haven't quit." She said "OK, still (smoking) that brand?" And I said "Yes, still that brand!" But actually I had already switched to lights cigarettes gradually by that time. So I just continued to smoke menthol, coz I was with her and she didn't like Marlboro Lights. After we broke up (the second time), she started to work in the finance industry and got involved with a couple. Well, with someone who had a wife. Then she told me, "I think I have fallen in love with a person, but I am the third party." After I heard that, I said, "Oh well, you are in love with a person and you are the third party. If we are together, that person you're in love with is a third party to our relationship!" And she said, "Not really, because she has her own family." I said, "What? So you think this whole thing is normal and you haven't done anything wrong?" She said, "Can I choose both?" I said, "Of course not!" And then she told me she loved both of us, and I said, "You have to choose one person, I can't deal with this!" And then she said, "In fact, she'd never promised anything." Then I said, "It's ok, you stay with her and you continue to be the third party, but don't come and find me again when you are unhappy. I won't please or comfort you. This is the last time for us to break up!" And I never smoked that brand after that. I won't accept that brand of cigarettes from my friends even if I have none myself. I just would not smoke this cigarette brand anymore. It was until last year that we got in touch with each other again for some reason, and she said, "Long time no see" when we met. I asked her, "What now?" She answered,

Anita "Nothing, I am still with that person." I said, "You're still stealing another person's girlfriend?" She said, "Oh yes, not that I want to, but I really like her." I said, "Has it ever crossed your mind that you are such an idiot?" "I know. I've always been like that." I told her, "And you know I won't say anything to please you." She said, "I know. You don't have to please me. Just listening to me moaning is enough. I don't need you to say anything." So, I went on with my talking. "Let's go have a drink," I said. "Good, let's do that," she said. I felt something... I said earlier that I am not a good drinker. I went to the toilet, and goodness knows why she followed me to the toilet. I was already quite dizzy (from the alcohol consumption) and I asked her, "Why did you fall in love with another person?" And she said, "Why ask?" "It is only a question." I said. Afterwards, the conversation got repeated. "Why ask?" "It's only a question." I grabbed her, and then I let go.

"It's OK if you don't want to answer." I veered towards the door, and then she grabbed me and pressed me against the wall. I was startled. "What happened to you? Suddenly so manly!" I said. Then she said, "Do you love me?" "Why ask?" I said. "It's only a question," she said. I then said, "It's really just a question. So, answer it." She thought for a long time and said she hadn't had enough fun. "Not enough fun yet so, what about now? Enough?" Then she asked why I asked if she was done with having fun. "Why? Do you still love me?" "It's only a question," I replied. Just at that moment, a person walked in, but left after seeing us like we were. Then we stopped and laughed, out of no particular reason. Then I said, "Now what?" She concluded the conversation by saying, "I'll give you three days, to answer if you still love me." Three days later, I didn't answer any of her questions, and she asked me out. She said, "Sorry, I didn't realise that I have hurt you so much these three years. I never thought that I would do anything to break your heart." Those words kind of softened me up. She drank a lot those few days, and the person she was involved with didn't seem to care much about her. So I comforted her a little. She was drunk, not wanting to go home. So, I said, "Come over to my place. She said ok. On the bus, after about 30 minutes, she said, "No, I'd better go back to my place. I don't want to make things worse." I was speechless, silent. "All right, go back to your home." Since then, no more has been said about us. Now, she is with a normal person (person who is not involved in another relationship). That normal person is so much worse than me. I wonder why she picked her. But it really doesn't matter. Being with a normal person is much better than being an outsider (third party) to another couple. In fact, she still had feelings for her old lover, and the normal person knew. That normal person said, "I know if your old lover comes back to you, you will go back to her." And the normal person is ok with that. I said, "So generous, not getting angry?" I wondered how someone can allow her lover to love someone else or even taken away by someone else. What kind of a person is that? Forget it. Since then, I didn't get in touch with her anymore. So, in fact this brand of cigarettes is a nightmare. Every time the smell comes to me, there is a bittersweet feeling.

Alice Do any of your friends smoke that brand of cigarettes?

Anita Yes. A friend's younger brother smokes that. He changes brands from time to time. Whenever he smokes that cigarette, I would smoke one from my own pack so that that smell is covered (by the smell from my own cigarette). Actually, I don't feel too offended by that smell. It's just that I don't want any bad memory.

Alice Therefore, every pack of cigarettes has its story, just as you said.

Anita Oh yes.

Alice Let's go back to smoking. You said to me you feel nothing when you draw in the smoke. On blowing out the smoke, you feel relaxed. What kind of stuff has been taken away, after smoking, which makes you so relaxed?

Anita Like when you draw in (the smoke), it is like you suck in all the negative energy. Being in the world, sometimes you cannot speak your mind, something unhappy, you won't say it out loud. You let it stay inside your mouth. So, when you draw in the smoke, you suck in the unhappy stuff which you want to say out loud, but you cannot. Then you wait for it to be filtered, so the good stuff can be sucked in, the bad stuff gets blown out. What I blow out is what I don't like. Those blown out... to the air, vanish in the air, it's pointless to think too much of it. Every issue needs a

solution. So, once you find the solution, it will be so nice. So, smoking is a kind of a concept that there is always a way, a solution. If (the issue is) not solved, it will get stuck, and I won't be happy. So, I must have a solution, (I must) force myself for this.

Alice So, the stuff that gets sucked in, only the good stuff will stay.

Anita Yes. Blowing out the bad stuff.

Alice You own bad stuff.

Anita Oh yes. Those that can't be comprehended, can't be understood and can't be solved, I just blow them all out. Blowing them all out doesn't mean they're really gone. You still need to find the solutions; therefore, I will force myself to find the solutions, the ways.

Alice Smelling another person's cigarette smoke is like smelling another person's bad stuff!

Anita Oh yes. I really don't understand why some people like blowing smoke into other people's faces.

Alice There are people like that?

Anita Yes, there are. Maybe they are just careless. Once, someone did that to me ... "foo" (sound of exhaling cigarette smoke) like that, and I got all the smoke. I said, "Can you blow to the other side, please?" "No problem, so sorry that I blew on you." Then he blew the smoke to the other side. When you are at the bar, it is so easy to "foo" when talking, especially after you drink too much.

Alice Like that? I suppose people blowing sideways, "foo" this side, or "foo" that side.

Anita No. Sometimes, I "foo" ... I usually "foo" upwards, so "foo" upwards is much easier. If you "foo" downwards, it will get to the unfortunate people next to you again.

Alice In my mind now, is the image of your father smoking 234. The smoke of his cigarette is in a straight line. How come you had that observation? Have others observed the same as you, or was it just you who loved looking at your godfather smoking when you were little?

Anita Coz I suppose he looked so cool...

Alice The way he smoked?

Anita No. Every morning, he had a meeting in his office. There was no door in his office. It was like a living room. I woke up early, and I had no better things to do. What does a little child do? I didn't go out, so I stayed in the house, running around, and he kept checking on me. "Keep quiet," he would say. So, I wandered around, in and out of his workplace. Outside the room was a chair and I sat there, and I could see right through to his desk. So, I sat on the chair, and watched him as he worked ... watching them laying out the draft papers, even holding a pack of cigarettes and moving it around in his hand. He knew I was next door when he was doing all these things. When I looked at him, I would be looking at him through the smoke. I suppose the smoke was kind of in the way. Every morning, sniffing that smell ... it gave me a sense of security. He doesn't smoke anymore now, coz he has lung problems. Afterwards, when I went back there, without that smell, I felt something was missing. I would go to the bathroom, to see if I could find one or two packs in the locker, so that I could take one away. I am not used to not having that smell. Moreover, when I was little, he was not smoking only five sticks a day. He smoked many sticks a day, probably two packs a day.

Alice So, in other words, forty sticks a day.

- Anita Many a day. Sometimes when he held me in his arms, he was actually smoking at the same time. Therefore, I could smell the heavy tobacco smell on him. When he held my hand when we went out, the strong smell of cigarettes would naturally get transferred onto mine as well. I would sniff my own hand and he would ask, "What are you sniffing at?" "Nothing ... very aromatic."
- Alice When you were little, you were closer to the godfather than your godmother?
- Anita Yes. He speaks Mandarin. So, when I came to Hong Kong, (I forgot my Indonesian) but he could still understand me when we speak Mandarin to each other. But my godmother, her Mandarin is not good and I had to speak to her in Indonesian, (which made it difficult for us to communicate). My godmother, I felt her body warmth and it gave me a sense of security which I couldn't from my own mother.
- Alice From your godfather or from your godmother?
- Anita The body warmth of my godmother.
- Alice (The body warmth is) Hotter or what?
- Anita Hotter. Perhaps my mother is not as fat as my godmother. My godmother is fat, and she can hold me up like that, so comfy. I don't understand why she is in the kitchen all the time. From the time she is out of bed, she was cooking and cooking until the night, still cooking and cooking. Washing dishes, and cooking, non-stop. Then when I was holding her, I got the smell of food and vegetables, and I knew there would be lots of food for dinner that night. I can't remember how old I was, but I was already quite old but she would still bathe me. Not that I didn't know how to wash myself ... it just that I didn't want to do it myself. I feel warm and close to her when she bathed me.
- Alice So, your godfather held you in his arms and your godmother held you in her arms and bathed you as well.
- Anita My godfather was actually quite skinny. So, holding him was like holding a skeleton.
- Alice Really?
- Anita He was really bony, coz he smoked so much that he became very skinny. My mum told me not to smoke so much, otherwise I might become a skeleton. I said to her, "I won't, I won't smoke so much."
- Alice So, now I want to ask ... you had said the good thing about smoking is that it is totally yours. Friends are not like that. Has it happened that your regular brand of cigarettes was not more available, because of external reasons, or manufacturing was stopped so you couldn't smoke your regular brand anymore?
- Anita It happened with a food item. It was an Indonesian brand of chips. I liked that brand when I was little. Then when I returned to Indonesia, I said I wanted to have those chips again. In fact, my cousin had looked for it for a long time, even asked the manufacturer. They said, "No more, stopped manufacturing. If you really want them, I can give you two (last) boxes." So, they really gave us two big boxes to bring back to Hong Kong. I was so happy. Then my mum said, "You can only eat one packet a day." Then I secretly put two packets into my school bag. Then I said to her, "I took one. I am off." Of course, there were two packets in my bag, for me to eat during recess. But they were gone in a flash. Really, those chips were so delicious, but they have stopped making them. No more eating and that smell is completely lost. Cigarettes... I dropped a pack once when it rained,

- so it was gone, just like that.
- Alice You can still take them out to smoke?
- Anita It got wet outside. If water had got in, it would be completely useless. Some people may think it is really nothing. Water drips from the ceiling and may have dripped onto their cigarettes. They may use a lighter to burn off a little. I would do that too. But I think the taste after burning is different. The taste gets worse, I feel that... So usually I won't smoke it. If a cigarette is really good but almost got snapped into two, burning it may help rescue it. But I still won't smoke it. I think any cigarette that got wet / damp will taste really bad. Therefore, I usually won't smoke it.
- Alice So, it has to be a complete cigarette.
- Anita Yes, no add-on, no water, no saliva, no rain, definitely no ...
- Alice It's OK if it's your own saliva?
- Anita Normally, my own saliva is fine. I don't understand how some people can get their cigarette filter so wet! It's full of their own saliva. The filter becomes soaked and soft. Sometimes I want a puff from their cigarette, but it's so wet ... it doesn't matter ... I can still smoke. Oh! Recently I have discovered something. You know how filters will become yellowish during the smoking process? I discovered that only one half of my filters gets yellow. The bottom is not stained.
- Alice Oh, only the upper part gets stained? So you only smoke from the upper part. How do you do that?
- Anita Who knows.
- Alice Pressing it with your teeth? Do you bite the filter with your teeth?
- Anita Perhaps I use my upper lip when I'm sucking in the smoke. Then the cigarette tilts upwards. I suppose it's like that.
- Alice So, therefore only one half becomes yellow.
- Anita Oh yes. I noticed this often when I was smoking. It's happened more than once. In fact, quite a few times. That's why I've realised that the way I smoke is a bit weird. Most of my friends' filters get yellowed in the middle, like this.
- Alice Have you ever smoked a certain cigarette called Winfield? I wonder if it is available here. I saw the brand in Australia. On the side of the filter, there are many pinholes.
- Anita Why?
- Alice They let more air in so that the inhaling is smoother and the taste is stronger and better. The tip of the filter is round, but on the side there are many semicircles, many pinholes. Then I saw that the filter of a smoked cigarette is yellow, very evenly distributed.
- Anita I heard from friends, those cigarettes are quite expensive.
- Alice Yes, quite expensive.
- Anita Yes, therefore my friends will buy roll-your-own instead.
- Alice More than one hundred dollars a pack. It costs that much in Canada. I just came back from Canada and saw that. Now the exchange rate is lower. Still, it's twelve (Canadian) dollars a pack.
- Anita Very expensive.
- Alice Hong Kong is expensive too, not as bad as in those places.
- Anita Quite right.
- Alice I want to ask you one thing. How you feel about fire? You need fire for smoking.
- Anita My feeling about fire?
- Alice Let me put it this way. You need to have fire in order to smoke. After it gets

in contact with a cigarette, something happens... smoke. So, do you have any particular or associated feelings in relation to a cigarette being lit up? Before and after it is lit up?

Anita An unlit cigarette is a cigarette that has not started its mission. When it gets lit up, the mission starts right at that moment. Once the flame is out, its mission is complete... if a cigarette has a life, then its life is really quite sad. Coz it is manufactured, sold to the consumers, and smoked for five to ten minutes. Its life is over in only five to ten minutes! It's more or less similar with humans' lives, only that the duration is different. For instance, if the length of a human life is the same as that of a cigarette, now my life has passed one fifth. Let's see ... if I am inhaling fast ... if I'm inhaling fast ... then it will... how should I put it... my life experience will be richer... like you have a life rich in experiences, with a faster burning rate, it is OK. If your life is not rich, like a fake cigarette with only newspaper bits inside, you won't enjoy smoking it and your life is not a happy one. Therefore, if you smoke a cigarette, you know how to smoke it, you know what to enjoy it, it means you know how to live your life, what to do to be a decent person and you will actually be much happier. Therefore, fire is a Bo Le (a master with knowledge, instinct and talent for good horses). It gives you an opportunity, I suppose. Fire is a chance. Without fire, there will be no smoke. It is quite logical.

Alice If a cigarette is an object, with life or without life, is there any difference between a lit and an unlit cigarette? Do they give you different feelings?

Anita I suppose when it is lit up, it is like a king of an erstwhile era. When it is not, it's merely an under-aged commoner.

Alice Tell me how it is like an under-aged commoner before it is lit up.

Anita So before lighting it up ... like when you have found your usefulness. When a cigarette is lit, the head (the lit end) looks like a king's crown. Under-aged commoners are not allowed to smoke. You are allowed to smoke only when you come of age. Under-aged commoners don't have crowns. The fire is a chance. If someone is progressive, he will be able to seize the chance when it appears and make use of it ... become someone or achieve something great ... just like an unlit cigarette, catching the fire when it appears and becomes lit. So, for commoners (unlit cigarettes), if you don't have a progressive intention (seize the fire when it appears), you will be, all your life, remain a commoner. So, if you want to be a king (achieve something great), you have to have progressive intention. If not, your life will be no more than that of a commoner.

Alice That's interesting. One last question. Tobacco advertising. What comes to your mind when I mention tobacco advertising?

Anita I thought of the advertising on cigarette packs in Malaysia ... so gross, so revolting. They have those ... In Hong Kong, we have pictures of legs with lesions. I usually won't choose cigarettes with those pictures. "Can I have another one, please?" Any other is better. In Malaysia, none of them is tolerable. I have an ex, who once said to me when she was travelling, "Let me buy you a pack of cigarettes." I asked, "Where are you?" "Malaysia." "No, No, please, there's no need (the pics on the packaging are) so gross." They have pictures of aborted babies, malformed faces, horrid-looking mouths, those sorts, really disgusting, really intolerable. If I were in Malaysia, I don't think I will smoke. The pictures are so gross, so over the top. But not in Japan. I really appreciate how things are done in Japan. Mild Seven is the most famous Japanese brand. I am a regular reader of

Japanese magazines. There are always one or two pages of cigarette advertising in them. There, the advertising is beautiful and attractive. Also, they have cigarette machines in Japan. I think it would be good if there are things like that in Hong Kong. But Hong Kong is so ... don't know what to say ... I certainly think that it's not suitable for Hong Kong, or if it's in Hong Kong, the approach and style will be different. There are things that are only available in Japan. I think these are so great and unique. "Made in Japan" seems to be superior. If it's made in Hong Kong, I will think that it is made in China.

Alice Since when have you started to like Japan, or to like living there? When you were little?

Anita When I was little. Coz I loved reading Japanese manga (comics created in Japan) with digital dinosaurs etc. When I was little, I thought that Japanese kids were all super smart, and knew how to call Pokémon to come out. They knew this, and knew that. Afterwards, when I grew up, I came to realise all that was not real. Then in form four, I don't know how, I was in touch with the fan clubs from Japan. The members were my age, and despite that, they were in the top range of the class (results). That group, three hundred odd people globally, had made it to the top. I supposed they were very clever, just twenty-one years old and they've already got to the top. What am I doing when I'm twenty-one? I'm waiting to go to university when I'm twenty-one. I am dilly-dallying. Look at them! They have distinguished results and they are really something. Now, I keep an eye out for their news. Their stuff is really cute and you won't find them in Hong Kong. You can't find these types of girls in Hong Kong. So, I will go on supporting them. My friends said, "They are only humans after all, no big deal." I know, but they work hard, and they get to be so famous. Can you?" They were silent.

Alice So that's why you love Japan, love Japan so much that you want to move there.

Anita Of course I'd love to. I definitely will emigrate if I can. But then it is no good to be a third-class citizen in Japan, or so I heard.

Alice Japanese people admire foreign people, those red beards and green eyes (Europeans), the foreigners (Caucasians), not Chinese.

Anita Oh yes. Once I went to Beijing for a holiday. There was a foreigner and we chatted. He said he had been to Indonesia. So, I asked, "Did you have a good time in Indonesia? Anything interesting?" He then said, "A lot of people were taking pictures with me!" I asked, "Who took pictures with you?" "Those cute girls. It seemed like they had never seen a foreigner, scrambling to take pictures with me." That foreigner was not a particularly good looking one. I laughed. My friend asked, "Why are you laughing?" I said, "Nothing. Everyone scrambles to take pictures with him. Would you like to take pictures with him?" "Really?" she said. In fact, I was thinking, even for a backward country like that, it is a bit over-the-top that they ran to take pictures with a foreigner, especially when that foreigner is not a good looking one!

Alice Also in Pakistan. In Pakistan, seeing people who are not local ... they would run to take pictures with them.

Anita Really? The whole business is just over-the-top to me.

Alice I think I have asked all the questions I want to. So Anita, do you have any questions for me? Anything you want to say? Anything you want me to know?

Anita Not really. Basically, I have told you my entire life story ... told you everything.

Alice A short one... You are still young. You are just twenty-one.

Anita I am hoping that my life would be richer and fuller.

Alice Of course, it will definitely be fuller. Those 234 cigarettes, I will try and find them, and pass them on to Soso. She'll call you to go and pick them up.

Anita Great. Good.

Alice So, you can light them. They won't last long coz I don't have too many, just one or two packs, and some others ...

Anita So many cigarettes.

Alice When my friends go on trips, they would shop if they come across something interesting. I don't smoke, so it really doesn't matter. If I find them, I will pass them to Soso. You keep them at home but don't smoke them too quickly. They are very strong cigarettes, so you should just light them ...

Anita My mum will kill me.

Alice You can enjoy watching the smoke going straight upwards, and sniff the smell. I think I have two packs of 234. But those are not the traditional ones you like.

Anita Oh, the new ones.

Alice The new one ... in a hard box. I have another box of maybe 234 or some brand with a black logo.

Anita Black colour? Never seen it.

Alice But I can tell you that the cigarettes are exactly the same, exactly the same. Coz I know the boss who manufactures the packaging for 234. He's an Indonesian who lives in Surabaya.

Anita Once I went to Surabaya in a private car. After a while, I felt so sick that I wanted to vomit, but I couldn't speak a word. The vomit all in my mouth. Then I tapped my godfather and he asked what the matter was. I pointed at my mouth. He asked, "What's the matter? Want to eat?" Then my godmother said, "Do you want to vomit?" Oh yes, and I instantly threw up.

Alice Because of motion sickness?

Anita Yes, (the journey was) too long.

Alice From where? Jakarta?

Anita Denpasar.

Alice Oh, can you go there by car? I thought you could only take a one-hour flight.

Anita First by car, then ferry, then car.

Alice I had a slightly shorter journey. I went from Surabaya to Malang, about two hours' drive.

Anita That's near.

Alice That guy (cigarette packing manufacturer) was in Malang, so he gave me some cigarettes, all 234, their company's products. Soso will contact you if I find them. I'll pass them to her. She will contact you. (Alice starts coughing)

Anita When you recover.

Alice It's killing me. I should be fine in a week's time. But it's killing me. One week, I will be fine.

