**Oral History: Kin Wah Leung**

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| **Metadata Field** | **Description** | **Data Entry** |
| Title | Title of Document |  Rebeca\_Salas\_With\_Kin\_Wah\_041018 Complete  |
| Accession Number | Catalogue Number of the File | (Administrator Only) |
| Interviewee | Name of Interviewee (SURNAME, given name(s), middle initial) |  Kin Wah Leung  |
| Interviewer  | Name of Interviewer (Surname, given name(s), middle initial) |  Rebeca Salas  |
| Interview Date  | YYYY/MM/DD |  2018/04/10  |
| Interview Date (non-preferred format) | E.g. November 13, 2014 or MM/DD/YY |  April 10, 2018  |
| Collection ID |  | (Administrator Only) |
| Collection |  | (Administrator Only) |
| Series ID |  | (Administrator Only) |
| Series |  | (Administrator Only) |
| Summary | Brief summary of the interview session (Copy and paste from Form 13 – Session Summary) |  Kin Wah Leung begins the interview describing his experiences when he first arrived in Vancouver, Canada and what it was like looking for a job in Chinatown. He expresses interest in helping other immigrants through his Kin’s Farm Market business so they can reach success as he did. Kin Wah Leung then explains the foundation for his store’s success and the core values and mission statement that moves them forward to this day. He talks about his fondest memories of growing up as a child in China and what he misses about those days. He paints a picture of his family members, who they were, what they did for work, what they were like as individuals, and how they contributed to the man he is today. Kin Wah Leung reflects on what surprised him about Canada, his first impressions of the people/community, and the various challenges he overcame. Toward the interview’s end, he looks back to the various ways he preserves his Chinese cultural traditions while living in a different country and looks to the future to see what he would like to achieve in his professional and personal life.  |
| Keywords | Keywords indicating interview subjects (Copy and Paste from “Keyword” section of Form 12 Interview Summary.) |  Chinatown, Winter, English, Language, Immigration, Granville Island, Customer Service, Blundell, Business Management, Produce, Farming, Guangzhou, China, Expansion, Community Bonding, Mission Statement, Cultural Preservation, First Impressions, Challenges. |
| Subject | Subject headings applicable to the Interview. The OHC uses Library of Congress Subject Headings. | Language, Culture, Immigration, Customer Service, Business Management, Produce, Farming, Guangzhou, China, Expansion, Community Bonding, Cultural Preservation, First Impressions, Challenges. |
| Duration | Length of Interview Session (if applicable) hh:mm:ss |  01:21:23  |
| Interview # |  Number of the interview (interviewees according to date) |  1  |
| Session # | Session # of the recording (X of all interviews in the session) |  1  |
| Location | Where the interview was conducted |  Richmond Museum and Cultural Centre  |
| Media Type | Audio or Video |  Audio  |
| Restriction Type | Open (Open access)Restricted (Interview has some restrictions detailed below in “Restrictions”)Closed (Closed/No Access) |  Open [[1]](#footnote-1) |
| Restrictions | Details regarding any restrictions on the file’s use (as outlined in Form 6 –Consent) |  N/A  |
| Rights | Release Information regarding copyright and access through the repository (as outlined in the Release Agreement) |  All rights given to the interviewer (Rebeca Salas) and the Oral History Centre  |
| Funding | Information on how the project was funded. |  N/A  |
| Equipment | Equipment used to record the session. (Brand and model number of recorder.) |  H2N Zoom Recorder  |
| Media Format | Digital format. Egg; .WAV, MP3, .doc, .pdf, .tiff, etc |  WAV  |
| Language | Language(s) of the Interview or Document |  English  |
| Type | Document Type. Egg: Oral History Interview, Conference Proceedings, Presentation, Sharing Circle, etc.  |  Oral History Interview  |
| Repository | Location where the project/collection will be stored. |  The Oral History Centre  |

**Transcription Legend:**

. . . = Ellipses used to indicate where an interviewee does not complete a thought.

[?] = Used to indicate indecipherable words or unknown spelling of words.

START OF TAPE PART 1 OF 6

[00:00:28]

*KIN WAH LEUNG*

Hi, my name is Kin Wah Leung. I’m from Kin’s Farm Market, owner and the president. I’m from China, Guangzhou in 1981. I came from the Guangzhou City. I managed to immigrate to Canada. I just finished high school and then my whole family immigrated to Vancouver. When I came to Canada, I have nothing. No money. I have to borrow money to buy an air ticket. When I came in 1981, from December, very cold and snow. First time seeing snow in Vancouver, in Canada and because I’m from Asia, Guangzhou, I’ve never seen it. It feels very cold. I looked for a job in a Chinese restaurant in Chinatown. My family is . . . My mom is taking care of the baby, looking for a nanny to look after the baby. My dad worked in Richmond, one restaurant, washing dishes. My brother is working in a Chinese restaurant, too, in Vancouver. The whole family . . . excuse me. The whole family is working to survive and make money, you need money to survive, and living in Chinatown, around Chinatown. It’s very small. . . It’s around 200 square foot the whole family is living. After two years . . . Sorry, when I worked in Canada, I worked in Chinatown. I didn’t speak English and we’d go to school to try and learn English with my brother and two sisters. When it’s the afternoon, then we go to school and mornings in the Chinese restaurant. After two years, there is one friend to tell us that we can open the stand, one table, to Granville Island. Bring us to Granville Island to see the how’s the Granville Island. First time, two years, and then we go to Granville Island to see it. Oh, this is a very good market and very busy at that time. It’s very . . . the travel from another country, the people, to go to the Granville Island to shop around and buy the fresh food and veggies and meat. It’s very busy and very interesting. After that time, I buy one table to starting selling for the first time. My family never doing the business, just, at that time bringing some veggies and fruit to one table, eight-foot table, in Granville Island. They’re starting. We don’t know how to do business but we tried, the whole family, how to, from the eight-foot table to make money to survive. When we started doing that, I very enjoyed living in Canada and Vancouver. It felt very new for us and interesting. Really freedom. Can do anything to . . . Just you are interesting that means you can apply to try. Our three brothers and sisters were really young. Around twenty years old. Working very hard every day to shop with the farmer to bring the veggie every day to display it on the table, especially in Richmond. When I lived in Vancouver, I never heard of Richmond. At that time, everybody said Richmond has lots of farmers, good farmers, good products, and it’s very fresh. So, at that time, I had a small car and every day driving to Richmond to bring the romaine leaf or something like that to put it on the table but, still, I don’t know how to do business. I just wanted to display them and have customers buy it and be interested, but it’s not that simple. Produce is really simple but doing good is not that simple. You have to tell the customer how to eat, how to cook, and how to store it, like marketing. I never heard of it. I don’t know how to do it, but I put heart on it and told the farmer and the customer how it’s fresh, and it’s really the best in pricing. The customer really liked it. Every day they’d come in to look for us. Every day, like going in the backyard. Every day they’d come in. So the eight-foot table is very busy. That means I’m learning business from the customer. I just know the customer is very simple. They like it very fresh and every day they can see it, bring it home, and the whole family enjoys it. That means they come back again, and come back again.

END OF TAPE PART 1 OF 6

[00:08:18]

START OF TAPE PART 2 OF 6

[00:00:00]

*KIN WAH LEUNG*

From Granville Island, when I opened the eight-foot table . . . our stand is the best in Granville Island. It’s always, doesn’t matter – four seasons – it’s always a long line up. Another stand, still in there, no compare our table. Ours is the best because our product and customer service is always the best. Why is it like this? Because the customer is just like, always, a customer. We give the best product when they come in. It doesn’t matter who. I give the best, choose the best product for each customer coming. A whole family, too, I try to give them a sample or cut them the best berry for the kids to make them happy. From the heart, I always tell everybody, it’s just like our customer by themselves. So the Granville Island Market, the management team at the upstairs office really liked our stand. That table is only one table. So we’re planning how we can do better or bigger business. We’re looking for a location. We’re looking at Richmond. They have one new development at Number 2 and Blundell shopping centre. At first, I don’t have the money for renovation or to build a new store. I just tried doing it by myself. The table, display, everything by myself with my dad and my brother. I never build, before, the millwork but I learned and bought any lumber in lumber-land or something at that time. We built it ourselves. I’m really happy. I really enjoyed it. Our whole family is in Blundell, Richmond. It was our mission, every day bringing the product to the store, delivery. When the customer sees our car delivery, they think of the timing to come in to wait for our delivery of the product, like waiting for something, they line up waiting for strawberries, or raspberries. They’re fresh. They really enjoyed it. After two years, I see that we’re a success at Blundell and Number 2, very busy. Always, it’s packed in the store. We’re planning, with my brother, to open another one. In a Ladner store. Number 2 and Blundell is our family business but Ladner store, opening another one, how to planning. . . Management at another store is not easy. The Ladner store was at a new shopping Centre. They have lots of farmers, fishermen. My brother said, “Oh, they really like our product.” So I opened a Ladner store but the Ladner store is the first time for management, hiring a manager to manage, how to, in the cooler upstairs, set up the office. So it’s very new for us. Still, it’s okay, very good because it’s around the area, Brentwood Mall, and another is in Burnaby. The landlord who came to see our store is very famous. So he came in, asked to open a store in Brentwood Mall because all the shops at that time is in… all the enclosed mall there is no produce because the customer sees it’s very dirty and not a match for the shopping Centre. Enclosed mall is always fashion but they enjoyed the Kin style of selling fresh and it’s very clean. It’s not very dirty or something. So they give us all the benefit for us to open the store. When we opened in Brentwood Mall, it’s the same. Very busy, very good, and very famous. I think it’s good timing for looking for another enclosed mall like Park Royal or New West. All in a busy shopping mall. We tried to build Kin’s store, retail.

END OF TAPE PART 2 OF 6

[00:06:48]

START OF TAPE PART 3 of 6

[00:00:00]

When we opened the store in enclosed malls, it’s very successful, but we need lots of managers and training managers and focus on people . . . HR. That time we had lots of immigrants. Immigrants from Hong Kong or Taiwan at that time; I think back south, too. So when I came to Canada, we don’t know anything. All the immigrants, too. They need some people to help. They have the education, money, and different from before but they have the education and the money. They wanted to do business, too. So we worked together because they want to be successful in Canada, too. So it was very easy to find the right people because they’re all interested. So we worked very well for all our partners until now, still, we work together. At the same time, we learned for all the chain stores and put the marketing and donations in all the community. The local, like soccer or hockey, we sponsored and put it together. When the parents, the customer, parents, they really enjoy our Kin’s retail store, they bring their kids, high school kids, and ask us to let them work with kids; young boy or young girl. They work very happy together, involving the kids themselves just like with the community together, bonding with each other. Up to now, it’s very famous in all the community. The Kin’s always keep the products very fresh for the customer. It never changes.

END OF TAPE PART 3 OF 6

[00:02:52]

START OF TAPE PART 4 OF 6

[00:00:00]

*KIN WAH LEUNG*

When it was 1990 my brother, Kin Hun, with me and my wife, Queenie; our three directors and owners. The thing is, our Kin’s, if have success, together we have the mission to make . . . write down, if never go something wrong, that means I have to have five things. We made a mission statement. The first one is a leader in specialty produce and (Second) family-team environment. Third is delivering freshness. Four is unique customer service. The last is providing rewarding careers. This includes everything. Speciality produce, our Kin’s, is up until now it’s 100 percent selling the fresh fruit and fresh veggies. It never changes. We’re very focused on specialty produce. The second is family-team environment. We always think if doing produce is a success it has to be like a family keeping it fresh just like for the customers. If it’s very easy to spoil the veggies, it’s not fresh but to keep it fresh you have to put the heart on it. Always think of the customer. Our staff is just like a customer. If fresh and brought home, the whole family is happy. If it’s not fresh, then they will never come back again. So it’s very important. Delivering freshness, same, it’s every day to keep every day, the delivery. Customer service, just only our Kin’s in the market can do it. I’m proud of ourselves. Every section we have staff to do customer service and give them the sample, which one is a good season and tastes good, and always cutting for the customer, right away, a sample. Providing a rewarding career, our staff is just like our family together. It’s providing, like a partner, franchising, and bonus. They’re always sharing the reward together. Before and now and future. We always think like this. We’ll be together, just like a family.

END OF TAPE PART 4 OF 6

[00:03:18]

START OF TAPE PART 5 OF 6

[00:00:00]

*REBECA*
Alright, so I’m going to start with my questions here. So, one thing I wanted to know was what your life was like before you came to Canada. So, in China, memories that you have from your childhood about your life there.

*KIN WAH LEUNG*
For me, it’s just high school things, high school. As an immigrant to Canada, it’s totally new for me and just starting from nothing. Really lost, when I came to Canada, it looked nothing like China. Being born in China working is very simple but when you finish high school it’s like a new born baby coming to a new area. From nothing, looking for a job, looking for a life, looking for the . . . The whole family worked together. Looking for a better life and to survive is two things for me. Anything good, that means I’m very happy. So I came to Canada, from the first day until now, we still every day are very happy.

*REBECA*
Right. So what was your family doing for work before you came to Canada? Were you farming as well in China? What was life like?

*KIN WAH LEUNG*

My family, my daddy and my mom, had no relationship with any business. It’s just a government job with a bus management company. My mom was just only a cashier. So it was totally new for us.

*REBECA*

Right. Do you remember much about school and what that was like?

*KIN WAH LEUNG*
Say again?

*REBECA*

School. Do you have memories about school and friends when you were young?

*KIN WAH LEUNG*
Oh, yeah. I really missed our high school because high school just finished. I always say, when you’re young you have no worry. You’re only happy but now it’s every day for surviving and lifestyle. It’s very challenging.

*REBECA*

Right. So did you have hopes and dreams that were different when you were in high school versus what actually happened in your life? So did you dream of doing something else when you were younger?

*KIN WAH LEUNG*
Um, when in high school I didn’t have a dream. It was just only quite normal. If no immigrant to Canada it’s just doing one job. I don’t have a dream. When I came to Canada, oh, I had a big dream. Every day was different. Every day was better, better. So, until now, we still have a big dream. So I very like Canada and Vancouver.

*REBECA*
Okay. So when your family did decide to leave, what was that journey like? Did you come on . . . Like, how did you transport? Did you take a boat, a plane? What was that journey like?

*KIN WAH LEUNG*
I don’t have money when I came to Canada. That means we borrowed money from my auntie to buy a plane ticket; the whole family coming. Right away looking for a job to make us survive. It’s still every day very happy. We enjoy it because we have a dream here and can do anything. Lots of things, to do it.

*REBECA*

So do you still have family back in China?

*KIN WAH LEUNG*
Yeah.

*REBECA*
Okay.

*KIN WAH LEUNG*
I have family, not in China, in here. The whole family lives in Richmond.

*REBECA*

Okay, okay, so everybody came?

*KIN WAH LEUNG*
Yeah, everybody came. My brother and sister and my mom and my dad. My dad passed away in a couple months.

*REBECA*

Did you want to tell me a little bit more about your family? Just, sort of, what are they like?

*KIN WAH LEUNG*

Oh, my family is very unique. Before, in China, our family worked in different areas. My mom and my dad worked in a government bus company. My sister worked with a manufacturer, and my brother worked in a restaurant, dim sum. Me, it was a mechanic, fixing cars. So it’s totally different. When I was an immigrant to Canada, we worked together. We were so happy working together. We, three sisters and brothers, worked very closely. So every store is together, working. So the whole family is very close.

*REBECA*
Right. Does each person have a different personality? Do you have a funny person in your family, or someone who’s a little bit more emotional, or . . . What are they like in person?

[00:06:24]

*KIN WAH LEUNG*
Our three, sisters and brothers, is a different character. My father and my mom are emotionally very strong. They’re working hard and opening communication with all. It doesn’t matter who, it’s their friend. Don’t just only do it yourself. Make sure you work together, work together, honestly, humbly. They taught us to always listen. The main thing my dad always tells me is just, anything, just do it. Don’t just think, always thinking. Just do it. Wrong? That means do it again. Never give up. Never afraid. Just do it.

*REBECA*

Supportive and motivating.

*KIN WAH LEUNG*

Yeah.

*REBECA*
Yeah, right.

*KIN WAH LEUNG*

My dad is very like a role model.

*REBECA*
That’s great. Do you have any special memories from your journey from China to Canada? For example, memories of travel or memories of having to leave or arrive?

*KIN WAH LEUNG*
For me, it’s comparing China and Canada. It’s . . . I just think it’s totally different. It’s like opening your eyes. Certainly open and can, oh . . . The world is big and you can do it. Just if you’re interested or you like it then you can do it. In China, it’s only very normal. You just finish school and then work every day and then go home. It’s very simple. In Canada, if you’re working harder, smarter, and you’re interested in that, you can do it very successfully.

[Group speaking in Chinese]

[00:08:35 – 00:09:07]

*HEIDI*
In Chinese, he wants to explain it in Chinese. There’s a story.

*REBECA*
Of course. Of course.

[Kin tells his story in Chinese]

[00:09:13 – 00:11:08]

*JEREMY*

Yeah, so Mr. Kin Wah Leung was saying one of the most fond memories that he has was right before when he had to travel to Canada. So his grandma was actually not able to accompany them to Canada. In fact, Mr. Kin Wah Leung’s grandma gave him a red pocket. So, in the Chinese culture that represents something of good luck or good fortune. Since Mr. Kin Wah Leung is the eldest grandchild he was expecting, “Oh, this would be something very important,” and, in fact, his grandma instructed him not to open it until he has gotten to Canada. So he’s actually brought the red pocket with him to Canada and he also expressed that he did miss his grandma. He was, at one point, when he first got here there was that emotion of sadness in terms of leaving his grandma behind and just maybe not being able to see her again. When he arrived and when he opened the red pocket, which is, um, so inside there’s a note reminding Mr. Kin Wah Leung to work hard in life and try to honour the family and he will be very, she believes he will be very successful in that way. Mr. Kin Wah Leung was actually saying he also, he still has that red pocket with him today because that’s what motivates him in life and for his company and in terms of his career because that’s what set off everything. Is there anything to add?

*HEIDI*
That’s good.

*JEREMY*
Yeah.

*REBECA*
Oh, that’s lovely. I’ll pause this.

END OF TAPE PART 5 OF 6

[00:12:48]

START OF TAPE PART 6 OF 6

[00:00:00]

*REBECA*

Okay, so my next question is still, sort of, about that journey. You mentioned that one thing about Canada that was different was that it was very cold. Did anything else about Canada surprise you when you first got here?

[Chinese translation]

[00:00:20 – 00:01:03]

*JEREMY*

So what Mr. Kin Wah Leung is saying, what other stuff that surprised him other than the cold when he first arrived in Canada was, um, actually, um, a buffet meal because he was from Guangzhou and, I’m assuming, from China everything, like, we don’t do a buffet style. You pay for every item for your food. So he was very surprised when he had a buffet meal in the Eaton’s Centre. He only had to pay around, he can’t remember exactly the amount it was, maybe $10 or something, but just for that amount you can have all the food that you want and that was very surprising for him. He was like, “Oh, you can have all the food that you want. You don’t have to pay more for all the food.” That was just the one amount and you can have all the food you want. So that was very surprising to him.

*KIN WAH LEUNG*

[Speaks in Chinese].

*JEREMY*

Yeah, so once he arrived he’s having a lot of food at the buffet [all laughing].

*REBECA*
Okay, what did you think or were your first impressions of the people? Were there, sort of, any, I guess, surprises but also challenges of coming to a new community?

[Chinese translation]

[00:02:22 – 00:03:26]

*JEREMY*
So, Mr. Kin Wah Leung is saying his first impression of the people here, they’re all super friendly and super nice. One example that he provided was friends and relatives from church, that go to church, and even though they’re new immigrants and they don’t know anything about Canada they’re always very supportive. Another example, or challenge, he’s saying is a lot of things are different in Canada compared to China. One example is filing taxes. They didn’t have to do that in China and he’s very grateful that, for example, Success, the organization, they’re able to help them with getting used to filing taxes and all this support. Overall, he was saying that he has a very good impression on the people when he first arrived because they’ve all been very supportive and very friendly.

*REBECA*
Okay. One thing I thought of was that you had to learn English, right? So, many of the adults and children that might listen to your interview or read your interview will be in the same position. So could you tell me a little bit more about your experience learning English and what that was like for you?

[Chinese translation]

[00:04:42 – 00:05:49]

*JEREMY*
So Mr. Kin Wah Leung is saying he’s not very good with languages and learning English is definitely one of the most difficult things for him arriving to Canada. He was also saying he’s very glad that there are all the support systems there to help him learn English. For example, he was able to go to Vancouver Community College to learn English. There are also some free programs for new immigrants during the night time. So, although it’s something that’s very difficult for him and he was still working at the same time, that’s something, if he wants to continue living in Canada, he knows that he has to work on. So he still had to put in the hard work to learn and, even though he was still working, he had to still take time out to learn English.

*REBECA*
Mhm. I think many people will be in the same position. So, at the same time, what are the ways that you still keep your own language and culture important and a priority in your life, too? Because I think a lot of people have that balance to carry.

[Chinese translation]

[00:06:55 – 00:08:13]

*JEREMY*
So, Mr. Kin Wah Leung is saying, for him personally, because he graduated from high school and then he came over here, so it’s hard to, in a sense, not, like, or leave behind his Chinese culture. It just came with him. A point that he was mentioning was that there’s his Chinese culture and a new culture in Canada as well. There are pros and cons for both cultures and what he was more focused on was how to incorporate both cultures, for him. Both his Chinese culture and the new culture here. In terms of preserving his original culture, he believes that’s something that came with him naturally to Canada.

*REBECA*Right.

[Kin Wah Leung Speaks in Chinese]

[00:09:01 – 00:09:23]

*JEREMY*

In terms of passing on the culture, he was mentioning for his children, he tries to educate them in terms of the Chinese culture but since they have been growing up here, they have been brought up in a totally different culture. They do their best to educate them and let them learn about the Chinese culture.

*REBECA*

So how did they do that?

[Chinese translation]

[00:09:51 – 00:10:40]

*JEREMY*

So one example would be in the family setting what they try to do is use the language. In this case, it would be Cantonese, I’m assuming [asks a question in Chinese]. Okay, so in the family they would be using Cantonese to try to maintain that culture. When you’re at home they will try to speak and communicate with each other in Cantonese. They’ll try to, for all the family, like, Chinese cultural traditions they’ll try to do it with them as well. He also mentioned another point which is there are certainly some things that could be improved on for the Chinese tradition or culture. They also work together to improve on it and not just blindly, I guess, forcing it on the children. So, yeah.

*REBECA*
Okay, okay. That’s interesting because I think a lot of people from different backgrounds have the same, sort of, situation, I think. Okay, so moving forward a little bit into the story of the business. One thing I was wondering was what the . . . I heard a little bit about some of the challenges from moving the store from Granville to Blundell, but what was the, I guess, the biggest challenge in getting things going from it was Blundell to the Ladner store, right?

*HEIDI*
Yes.

*REBECA*
Yes.

*HEIDI*
What was the biggest challenge?

*REBECA*
The challenge. So how did you do that and was there anything, sort of, different that you had to do versus moving from the Granville location to your first store.

[Chinese translation]

[00:12:20 – 00:14:21]

*JEREMY*
Yeah, so, um, Mr. Kin Wah Leung was saying, in terms of business, he thinks that it’s a challenge every day. So going back from Granville Island to Richmond, the main reason of the move was because it wasn’t stable enough. In the Granville Island location, every week they’ll have to move to different tables, like the specific tables or different slots. So, by the end of the week they have to bring all their produce home which is another task that you have to do, right? So that’s why they began looking into the Blundell store where they could find something more stable so they can have their produce there and something that they can set foot on. So that’s why they moved to the Blundell store. They already had a great reputation at the Granville Island location, so how could they maintain the same reputation. Mr. Kin Wah Leung later on explained that they’re still maintaining their same mission, which is bringing the most fresh produce to the store in Blundell in order to keep attracting customers to come back. Soon after, it was very successful in terms of how they were doing their business. So the Blundell store became really busy and Mr. Kin Wah Leung saw another opportunity to open another store. They decided on bringing the new store to Ladner because they already had working relationships with farmers from Ladner. That’s why they decided to open the new store after Blundell Centre to Ladner.

*REBECA*

Okay, okay.

[Mr. Kin Wah Leung speaking in Chinese]

[00:16:03 – 00:16:56]

*JEREMY*
Yeah, so, the challenges faced at the Ladner store is completely different from the one in Blundell, because the Blundell store, when they started, it’s still like a family business. Mr. Kin Wah Leung was explaining that he was responsible for purchasing the produce and then his brother and his wife would be managing the store. In that case, it’s still very tight knit. It’s just within the family. However, when they decided to open the Ladner store they would have to move on to hiring people and, in addition, managing the new store. So there are new layers of challenges and learning how to do the business now that it’s getting bigger. In terms of managing people and hiring people, managing the store, and stuff like that.

*REBECA*
Okay, okay.

[Mr. Kin Wah Leung speaking in Chinese]

[00:17:52 – 00:18:18]

*JEREMY*

In addition, although there’s a lot to learn in terms of management and stuff, Mr. Kin Wah Leung was saying the Government of Canada was, at the same time during that period, they were actually providing a course on small business for owners. So they were able to participate in that course and learn more about how to manage a business, how to operate a business which helped them in, today as well, in terms of how they can continue on expanding the Kin’s Farm businesses as well. So they are very grateful for the help provided by the Canadian Government.

*REBECA*
Okay. Interesting. It sounds like you were about twenty years old when you started, right? So quite a bit of time has passed. Many experiences, many new opportunities have come up. I wanted to know what you think is the biggest way that the business has changed your life. Maybe something that you didn’t expect aside from the fact that it, of course, brought you a lot of success.

[Chinese translation]

[00:19:30 – 00:20:34]

*JEREMY*

Mr. Kin Wah Leung is saying even just being in Canada, when he first arrived in Canada, that has changed his life already. They strive to be better every day and, for the family, they’re able to work together and slowly achieve all their goals. For him, just being in Canada, stepping foot in Canada has already changed his life even way before the business has started. So I think, I guess, the business is just an extension of that. They can all work together and strive to be better and work together as a family together improving every single day.

*REBECA*
Okay, okay. That’s nice. So what . . . We’ve heard a lot of practical business advice but is there any personal wisdom from your own experience with the business that you could pass on to other people who are, I guess, starting in a new country?

[Chinese translation]

[00:21:43 – 00:23:03]

*JEREMY*

Okay, so Mr. Kin Wah Leung believes the number one thing is hard work. In addition to hard work, it’s constantly learning new things. Once you find your interest and your goals, he believes that constantly learning just adds to that knowledge pool to help you do what you want. Personally, he believes even with his educational background from just only graduating from high school and then from that on he’s still able to carry on his successful business, he believes that everyone can do the same. One of the things that he emphasizes would be constantly learning and constantly improving oneself.

*REBECA*
I think that’s a very important message, yeah. So it sounds like family is a big part of this story, especially with the business. Do you have any special memories or stories about your family in regards to the journey that you took together with the business? So anything special in his memory.

[Chinese translation]

[00:24:11 – 00:25:53]

*JEREMY*
So Mr. Kin Wah Leung is saying he’s very grateful that he’s been able to be in the business with his brother and his wife ever since the Granville Island stall. From then, it has already been more than thirty years. Although each of them have different perspectives, they share the common goal. He’s really grateful that with all their different perspectives they’re able to put it together and make the company work. Lastly, he mentioned, like, he brought up an analogy of a puzzle piece. All the pieces are different but he believes a great picture can be put together because of all these different pieces. It’s kind of an analogy to how they run their business. They’re all, sort of, different and unique, have their own perspectives but yet they’re still able to work together very well for over thirty years. So he’s really grateful for that.

*REBECA*
Do you have any stories then about your brother? About, maybe, how you came together in that sort of puzzle analogy. Any actual memories about working with your brother or your wife.

[Chinese translation]

[00:27:07 – 00:28:17]

*JEREMY*

It’s not a specific memory but, in general as well, for them they all have their own perspectives and their own differences. They often make compromises with each other. Obviously, there are times when they would argue with each other, right? They have this unspoken rule of, um, well, and he’s really glad that there’s always, it’s not two of them fighting so it’s never resolving, right? There’s always, for them, in their business, there’s a third person coming up as a mediator to try to solve the situation. They also have kind of like an unspoken rule of where they would vote for it in between the three of them. They’re all very open to it in terms of how to improve their company and having that in mind. So they’re really open on having the right decision. So they have three people and they can all vote on it, whichever way that they think is better for the company then they would go for it.

*REBECA*
Like a business democracy [laughs]. Okay, so family is very important but community is also very important, it sounds like. So how and why do you give back to the community?

[Chinese translation]

[00:29:35 – 00:30:58]

*JEREMY*

Okay, so Mr. Kin Wah Leung is saying he is very grateful for all the help that he has received when he had first moved to Canada. So now that he is successful in his business, that was one of the reasons why he wanted to give back to the community because he was once in that position where he first immigrated to Canada and he didn’t have much help. So he feels very satisfied in terms of being able to give back and help the community, be it donations to community, um, donations to specific organizations such as Success and Vancouver General Hospital, the Children’s Hospital, and Richmond Hospital. He is actually really happy because he can see the changes that he makes. For example, he can see the improvement in medical equipment in the hospitals and stuff like that. So one of the reasons why he . . . I guess the main reason he wanted to give back was because he also received a lot of help from the beginning of his journey. So now he wants to be a part of that to contribute and help others that need help, that are in the same position, that are new immigrants coming here or just in general the community. He also donates for scholarships at UBC, food science scholarship as well.

*REBECA*
What was the other question? Oh, right. So, I think we have a very good idea of the journey that your family has taken, that you have taken, and the development of the business and the important parts of that. So, now, looking to the future what are, sort of, the hopes around development there?

[Chinese translation]

[00:32:49 – 00:34:01]

*JEREMY*

So, Mr. Kin Wah Leung was first saying his dream or his goal was to keep on bringing fresh and healthy produce to people. That’s one of his dreams and goals with his Kin’s Farm business. In addition, he feels like he’s comparing himself to businesses such as Starbucks and McDonalds. They’re so successful globally he’s asking why can’t we be as successful as them. He believes that his business model is unique in North America and globally as well. He keeps his dreams and goals in terms of bringing fresh and local produce every day to people. Another point is Mr. Kin Wah Leung, being an immigrant, he wants to continue on improving his business and be a role model for other people, be it for the community or the country such that if I can become successful at being an immigrant, other people could actually do the same thing and potentially inspire and motivate them in doing the same thing as well.

*REBECA*

And, uh . . . Oh.

[Kin Wah Leung speaks in Chinese and translation follows]

[00:35:15 – 00:35:35]

*JEREMY*

So Mr. Kin Wah Leung is saying his goal or his vision is to have a Kin’s Farm Market in every community or every city. So that’s his goal. That’s a big number, being in every community and every city. To strive in that goal he understands he will have to work hard every day and keep on improving it in order to reach his goal and vision.

*REBECA*

Okay.

[Heidi speaks in Chinese to Kin Wah Leung and translation follows]

[00:36:05 – 00:36:35]

*JEREMY*

Another goal for Mr. Kin Wah Leung is to work with new immigrants and, to do that, Kin’s Farm Market actually provides a platform to collaborate with new immigrants and help them achieve success in the community and in Canada as well.

*REBECA*
Okay, nice, yes. What about hopes and dreams for the future more personally, maybe for you and for your family? Outside the business.

[Chinese translation]

[00:37:05 – 00:37:53]

*JEREMY*

For his personal goals he feels like he’s already content and satisfied with all that he’s achieved right now but, I guess, one thing that he wants to continue to work on is to set an example to let people know that even if you have nothing, if you started with nothing and you’re a new immigrant you can also be successful. One way in achieving that is constant learning, even for himself. He really wishes to be able to set such an example for people so that they can achieve their own success in their own terms.

*REBECA*
Mhm, mhm. Do you ever take vacation? [laughs].

*KIN WAH LEUNG*

Yes.

*REBECA*

Good [laughing].

[Kin Wah Leung speaks in Chinese and translation follows]

[00:38:42 – 00:39:27]

*JEREMY*

He does take vacation.

*REBECA*
That’s good.

*JEREMY*
When he goes on vacation he usually has two, I guess, goals. One of the main things with going on vacation is to relax and to see the world. Another thing is he likes to learn new things. So sometimes he would go on vacation where there’s a conference in regards to special produces. He would attend to that and learn more knowledge from the conferences. From that he would always think about “Oh, can we bring this to Canada? Would this work here?” So, he believes that, um, keep on learning and, I guess, going abroad and bringing in, trying to bring new information, new produce into Canada is one reason why Kin’s Farm is so successful today in Canada because, for him, it’s quite unique in terms of always learning, bringing new knowledge, bringing new produce to Canada as well.

*REBECA*
So kind of vacation but sort of not vacation [laughs]. Okay, well I have reached the end of my specific questions but I wanted to give you the opportunity to add anything or tell any stories that, um, I didn’t pick up on or that we haven’t had the opportunity to talk about yet.

[Chinese translation]

[00:40:42 – 00:41:30]

*JEREMY*
One thing Mr. Kin Wah Leung wanted to add is from having nothing and just starting the business he really wants to thank his elder sister in helping him because he was asking his elder sister “Oh, you’re always doing all these businesses. How come you’re so popular and people keep coming back to you?” One of the things that, I guess, opened his mind or one thing that he still keeps dear to his heart is his elder sister told him for businesses you have to pour your heart out in terms of how you do the business. You can’t just . . . She believes that’s the most important thing when you pour your heart out, when you’re honest, when you’re humble in terms of working with the customers. That’s a very important thing. So he really wants to thank and credit her elder sister for opening his mind so he could keep that value in his business.

*REBECA*
Okay.

[Kin Wah Leung speaks in Chinese and translation follows]

[00:42:32 – 00:43:23]

*JEREMY*
So one specific example would be for their local store, like, for a cauliflower section. What Mr. Kin Wah Leung’s sister was saying, you would always want to pick the biggest or the best cauliflower for the first customer that comes in and, I guess, that goes onto the next customer as well. For each customer, you should always bring them the biggest, the best rather than keeping it for yourself or keeping it for your own family. In that sense, that’s how you put your heart out and use your heart to treat your customers, be honest, be humble, and be passionate in terms of what you have in providing to customers. That’s the specific example that Mr. Kin Wah Leung provided in terms of what his elder sister has taught him.

[Heidi speaks in Chinese and translation follows]

[00:44:13 – 00:45:16]

*JEREMY*

Another example in terms of doing business with pouring the heart out, it would be, for his sister, back when they were in Granville Island plastic bags or just shopping bags in general aren’t very popular. So it’s hard for people to carry their produces or whatever they bought from the market. Mr. Kin Wah Leung’s sister would provide a bag for the customers regardless. Even if they have a previously relationship or not she would always be providing one for them just so that they could have, it’s easy for them to carry their produce and they can continue on with their shopping and all of that. For her, she has to, kind of, go out of her way to collect all these bags for their customers. That’s another example on doing the business with passion and helping the customers as much as they can. Customer first, customer oriented.

*REBECA*
Right. Right.

[Kin Wah Leung speaks in Chinese and translation follows]

[00:46:19 – 00:46:34]

*JEREMY*
He’s saying his sister never learned all these stuff but it’s just something that she believes in and she really values and because of what she does, her generosity, her customer oriented model of serving the customers, a lot of customers would try to help her or come back to her as much as possible when it’s needed.

*REBECA*
Sounds like she’s a role model for you, and you’re a role model for us [laughs]. Okay, well, I have finished all of my questions and, again, if that’s . . .

*KIN WAH LEUNG*
Good, thank you.

*REBECA*
Good? Oh, thank you.

*KIN WAH LEUNG*
Thank you so much.

*REBECA*
Thank you so much.

END OF TAPE PART 6 OF 6

[00:47:16]

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)