

FHS Oral History Project – Anne Tsoi

Description:

Lai Fai “Anne” Tsoi was born in Hong Kong in 1958. Anne recollected memories of her upbringing, particularly growing up in a single-mother household. As the eldest child, Anne understood that she needed to fill in the vacancy of her father, who was held in a concentration camp by the Chinese government, and began working immediately after finishing high school to support her family. Continued financial difficulties and improved economic opportunities prompted Anne to leave Hong Kong and emigrate to the United States, specifically New York City, in 1980. Unable to adjust to the cold weather in New York and North Carolina, Anne convinced her husband to move to Orlando, Florida, later that year. Upon arrival, Anne and her husband immediately worked at Jin Ho Chinese restaurant to sustain their new life in America while sending money back to Hong Kong to support their family. Anne recounted the cultural shocks she initially experienced when working in Jin Ho. After roughly four years at Jin Ho, Anne and her husband transferred to China Garden, where she worked as a server and her husband as a cook. In 1983, Anne quit as she needed to raise her newly born son. During this time of transition, she and her husband planned to establish their own Chinese restaurant. In 1985, they opened China Chef at the corner of Goldenrod and University streets. Anne returned to work in this new operation, serving as the restaurant’s manager. She recalled the difficulties managing a restaurant and raising a child during this time. In 1997, Anne and her husband operated China Garden, the restaurant where they had previously worked, and for a brief moment, they owned two restaurants. They sold China Chef and continued to operate China Garden until 2017. Anne explained how their attempts to attract more clientele in Chian Garden changed within those twenty years. In retirement, Anne joined Asia Trend, an online magazine that reports on Asian American happenings, primarily in Central Florida, and promotes Asian culture throughout the state. Lastly, Anne shared her broader observations about Orlando and how it changed over the past forty-five years from 1980 to 2025, emphasizing the growth of the Asian community and the continual need to highlight their cultural and economic contributions to Central Florida.

Transcription:

00;00;07 - 00;00;24

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: This is Sebastian Garcia interviewing Anne Tsoi on May 23rd, 2025, in Orlando, Florida for the Florida Historical Society Oral History Project. Can you please restate your name, date of birth and where you were born?

00;00;24 - 00;00;36

ANNE TSOI: My name is Lai Fai Tsoi and I go with one name Anne in United States and my birthday is June 29th, 1958.

00;00;36 - 00;00;37

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And where were you born?

00;00;38 - 00;02;59

ANNE TSOI: I [was] born in Hong Kong and born in a single mother family. And I live with my uncle. And I raised in my uncle's house. And I have two sisters and one younger brother. And we have four sibling in the family. And then, I go to school, I educated in Hong Kong, and

I go to school and finish my secondary school. We call you Form Five. And then at that time, I am about eighteen years old. I have to come out to work because I need to support my family. At that time, my mother, want to move out of my uncle's house, too. So I go out and look for a job, and then, I work in Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation. And later I move about two years, and then I move to chemical Bank. It is American Bank but no longer exists. And then, when [was] about, twenty two years old, and then my cousin introduced me to my husband. My cousin is my husband's auntie. So we met each other and dating in Hong Kong, and we married [on] February 11th, 1980, and I moved to the United States on December 1980. And we landed in Seattle, and now I am settled down in Orlando.

00:02:59 - 00:03:21

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Before we get to sort of your immigrant life and your immigrant experience, you mentioned how you were raised in a single mother household, in your uncle's house, particularly. What did your parents do for a living?

00:03:21 - 00:04:12

ANNE TSOI: My mother [worked] as maid in my uncle's house, helping, cooking, cleaning and do all the household work. And then we lived there. My uncle is good and treats us like his own children. So I have a happy life. I have a happy childhood in my uncle's house, and they pay my mother as a maid. And then my mother is even working at home as, sewing clothes at house, too. So she make extra money, too. That was how we grow up.

00:04:12 - 00:04:14

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Your father worked in government?

00:04:14 - 00:06:19

ANNE TSOI: No. I actually have a story. When he is in China, and then he being caught by Chinese government, say he was doing something illegal. Actually, he was doing his own business. And at that time it was recognized as illegal. So he [was] caught and [brought] somewhere in a concentration camp. So at that time, my mother escaped to Hong Kong. And then even with [her] pregnant [with me], too. So, my father has been in concentration camp for a long time. Until he was bit by a snake. So his being move to the city to get surgery and after that my father is handicapped. So he can walk but he not walking properly. So then he was moved to his birthplace. And then he just lived there until I come to the United States. And then he come out from China to Hong Kong to reunion with my mother. But at that time, I already in United States, because I already immigrate there. So is very funny is, I just do not have some kind of relation to my father because when he come to Hong Kong, I already moved to United States, so I never live with my father.

00:06:19 - 00:06:45

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Yeah. And that explains the circumstances as to why you had to essentially support the family like another parent. And you were still young. How what was that like for you, physically, emotionally, leaving school and working immediately?

00:06:45 - 00:07:46

ANNE TSOI: You know, it is probably based on our Chinese culture or something. We always have responsibility. You know, when the family need you, you need to do it. You know, that is my job is like my job, my responsibility. And then I understand my situation. So at the time, I just face the reality. And then I did not think of anything. And then I thought, this is my responsibility. That was all. I need to support my family. I need to come to United States for earning money is another my purpose. I have a good husband too. My husband treat me very good. And we have a very happy life.

00;07;46 - 00;08;04

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Yeah, absolutely. And so since you mentioned you came to the United States primarily for financial reasons, to earn more money, then some of that money you would send back to continue supporting your family?

00;08;04 - 00;08;06

ANNE TSOI: Yeah. That is right. Yes.

00;08;06 - 00;08;17

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: So you came here in December 1980 to the United States. And then you initially landed in Seattle, right?

00;08;17 - 00;08;19

ANNE TSOI: Yes. In Seattle.

00;08;19 - 00;08;25

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Walk me through the journey of how you got to Orlando. From Seattle you went to New York, right?

00;08;25 - 00;11;04

ANNE TSOI: Yes. My husband bring me to New York, and then we are in New York because, he had a friend there too. And then he asked me, "do you like New York?" I say no, because at that time, it was very cold in New York. I am not get used to. So he say, "okay, we go to next stop will be North Carolina." So okay. He has a friend there too. So we put all our belongings, everything in a car. It is a Camaro. And we put everything there and then drive all the way to North Carolina. And he had friend there did too. And then he asked me again if you I liked North Carolina, and I said, "I do not like it because it was very quiet and," and so he was planning another stop, and then we drive all the way to Orlando, he had a friend there, too. When I get in Orlando, I still remember, we were in Altamonte Springs because we drive all the way I-4 and then to Orlando, we enter in Altamonte Springs. And at that time, it was funny. I saw all the seagulls flying around and the beautiful, beautiful weather. A blue sky very nice, is completely different from North Carolina and New York. So I say, "I like here," so that was why we stay here. And then we have to be working to be living so my husband is immediately, after settled down renting an apartment and then, my husband look for a job as a chef in one of the Chinese restaurant. And that time, not many Chinese restaurant. Maybe about three or four only. And then, me, I want to work, too, because I need to earn money and send back to Hong Kong for my family. So I work as a cashier in a Chinese restaurant, too. At that time, I do not even know what is a quarter, what is a nickel, what is a dime? I do not know [how to] get

change for the customer. But my manager is very nice. And then he teach me everything from scratch, what is a dime, what is a quarter. So I handled the job fine as a hostess and a cashier.

00;11;04 - 00;11;08

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And what was the name of the restaurant?

00;11;08 - 00;11;13

ANNE TSOI: We both worked for a restaurant called Jin Ho, and it no longer exist too.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: So where was it, by Altamonte Springs?

00;11;15 - 00;11;29

ANNE TSOI: They had two locations, my husband worked in the one [on] 1792 called Orlando Avenue, maybe. And I worked in [the] Altamonte Springs [location].

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Besides your manager teaching you the job skills and the currency, how did you adjust to life in Orlando as an immigrant?

00;11;48 - 00;12;36

ANNE TSOI: That is really a complete, very new job for me because, I used to just sit in the office, in a bank, in the office. But handling money is fine for me. One thing very special I saw in a restaurant, you need a hostess. You need to bring the customer to the seat. But in my country, you do not need to. You work in a restaurant, and you sit down by yourself. And then the waitress or waiter will come. But this country at that time is very formal, very nice. People come here and you have to ask them how many, and then you have to bring them to the seat. That is one of the culture different in Hong Kong and United States.

00;12;36 - 00;12;45

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: So what other cultural differences or shocks did you initially experience at that time?

00;12;45 - 00;13;22

ANNE TSOI: Also, in the restaurant, maybe that restaurant is not where we bake. So we dealing with the cook a lot because we have to talk directly. And in our country we do not need, when they cook the food, they put it there and then you bring out. But here a lot of times you have to contact the chef and sometimes they are very rude to you. Sometimes they yell at you. And I had to get use to the way here, you know.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: How long did you work at that restaurant?

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ANNE TSOI: I worked the restaurant at least about four years. And then I moved to a bigger restaurant, and my husband, too. And that bigger restaurant is called China Garden, there at the

corner of University and 436. That [was] a high scale, higher restaurant. And then we worked there, my husband, as a cook and then, [me] as server there. And the owner is from Hong Kong. And we worked there quite long time until my son born. My son is born in 1983. So, my son born. And then I quit the job. I am home take care of my son, and my husband still work there. And then after my son about one year, my husband is planning to open his own restaurant. So we [planned our] restaurant, looking for location, even looking all the way to St. Cloud. And then after that, we find a location at the corner of Goldenrod and University, at that time [was] a Kmart shopping center. And then we lease a place is about 2000 square feet, and then we built up our own restaurant there.

So my husband is working and a cook inside take care of the kitchen. And then I work as a manager outside. And then at that time, my son is about one year old, maybe close to two years. I put him in a family to take care as a babysit, so I work full time in my own restaurant. It was a very hard life for me because at that time, I have to take care restaurant and now I have to raise my son, too. And every morning, about 9:00, I already bring my son to the family to take care of him and then I go to the restaurant and planning a whole day job. And then I have to buy ingredients because [it was] not a big restaurant it was about, about twelve tables and it was a 2000 square feet. So I worked very hard at that time. And even people ask me “why you have to you can raise your son and you can take care of the restaurant, your own business?” I say, when something facing you, you have to overcome the difficulty. Then you have to do it. So, we worked very hard for the restaurant, but we got very good result. We got very good result, of course, we make some money and then I can buy a house. Actually, this house is my only house in Orlando, so I bought this house and then, and then my husband even filed the paper for his parents to come to United States, and his five brothers and two sisters. And my side, I filed a paper for my mother to come to United States. And then my mother put in the paper for all my sibling, and then everybody is in United States, all my family. Well, my direct relatives, they are all here.

00;17;38 - 00;17;46

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: What year did you and your husband opened the restaurant? 1985?

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ANNE TSOI: Yes, we opened the restaurant in 1985.

00;17;49 - 00;17;51

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: What was the name?

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ANNE TSOI: China Chef.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And you said it was on the corner of Goldenrod and University?

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ANNE TSOI: Yes. Now it is still there.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: It is still there?

00;17;59- 00;18;12

ANNE TSOI: Oh, yeah, still there. We sold it to somebody else and somebody else sold it to somebody else to sell. But still there that restaurant.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: You know, besides, like, monetary, like, you guys obviously made enough profit to buy a house to bring your family in. Did your restaurant also become a space, a space for cultural gathering, like did a lot of Asian community members go there?

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ANNE TSOI: Tell you, at that time, Orlando do not have a lot of Asian. Really do not have a lot of Asian. And I always tell my husband, we walk on the road or shopping in a Walmart, we can yell at each other in Chinese, and nobody realizes what we are talking about, sometimes I can even say some bad words to you, and no one know what we talking about. You can imagine no Chinese, no Asian at that time.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: So was a lot of your clientele in that first restaurant just regular people from Orlando?

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ANNE TSOI: Yeah because we were in a residential area and all my client mostly [was] from, living in around area. We have a lot of client [who were] snowbirds because at that time, a lot of people retire here, and then they fly from up north a lot. So we have a snowbird because Chinese food is more popular in up north. So when they come to Orlando, they like Chinese food. They come very regularly and very loyal to you. My husband actually [did] roast duck roast pork in Hong Kong. So he [was] very specialized at that because at that time nobody [knew] that kind of food. And then what we [sold], changed to fit American like, sweet sour pork, General Tso chicken and Moo goo gai pan. Those are food a little bit changed, the taste, [to] fit American taste.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: So those plates are not common back in Hong Kong?

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ANNE TSOI: Not common in Hong Kong, like Moo goo gai pan is completely fit for the people here. It is not common in Hong Kong. General Tso chicken you never find in Hong Kong. Of course they based on the recipe but is modified to fit American, like Americans eat something [sweeter]. They tend to be sweeter. And they do not like bone in a meat. We always had to bone out the meat for them. And Moo goo gai pan is a dish mixed with a variety [of] vegetable. We put all kind of vegetable and the chicken together. Chinese like chicken thigh. That means we call it dark meat more. But American like white meat that means chicken breast. So we are using chicken breast in our dish.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Yeah. And how did you come to know that? Just by eating in another Chinese restaurants before you open yours? Like, how did you discover what the Americans like to eat?

00;22;05 - 00;23;05

ANNE TSOI: Usually, those are mostly from up north. Up north is developed Chinese food for long time ago already. You can find out their recipe and you just modify a little bit. At that time, Orlando have a few Chinese restaurants, the oldest one is one called Jin Sha, Jin Ho. They always using Jin. Jin in Chinese is gold. So our name, we like using Jin. That means gold. And my restaurant is called Jin. We call it China Chef. But Chinese name is Golden Island.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Interesting.

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ANNE TSOI: Yeah.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: What was the inspiration for that name?

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ANNE TSOI: Just Jin? Yeah. Chinese like Jin. Jin is gold. We like Jin.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: You mentioned how during this time you were you also raised your son. And so it was difficult for you to manage the restaurant and raise your son. I am curious, how did you maintain your with your son? You know, your son was born in America. So how did you maintain your heritage from Hong Kong?

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ANNE TSOI: My son [was] raised in Vietnam family. And when they small, they eat baby food. And then when he grew up a little bit, we still can keep—because Vietnam is very close to the Chinese. They steamed rice, they cook some congee cooked long, long time and then to feed my children. And then, they are very good family, so my son is always good there. Until he was about age for the school. And then I put him in the school, and then at that time, he was in daycare. Since then, he do not need to spend so many time in a family. He can live to be independent. So sometimes I bring him to the restaurant to. And we even buy a van. And we back up to the back of the kitchen and then sometimes we put my kid in the van for a few hours when I am busy, you know? I feel sorry about that. Seems not a right way to raise a kid, but because that was the way I had to do, so. But they are fine. They a good kid. They grow up and they graduate in UCF. And then my youngest son even finish master in UCF, too. And then my oldest son now is in California and working as a computer programmer. And then my youngest son is working for a Lockheed now, and he is an engineer there, too. So, I feel very happy. Although I raise them in that way, maybe it was my way. I like my son close to me, so

sometimes I put him in the restaurant but still, I feel very grateful that I was able to raise a son and then I do not need to worry about them. They are very good, very disciplined.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: So, how long did you and your husband operate that first restaurant?

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ANNE TSOI: In 1997, actually I mentioned about the restaurant, China Garden. I work then before and then the owner there is having a divorce, and then the man bought the restaurant, and then he called my husband to buy the restaurant because he has not managed good. So my husband is buying that restaurant, too. So I have one year operate both restaurants at the same time.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Wow.

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ANNE TSOI: China Garden is much bigger. There are more than hundred seats. So I have to do both restaurant at the same time.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And can you describe to us what managing entails? What did you do specifically? Give me some examples like your day to day job.

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ANNE TSOI: Every day you go to restaurant, you open the door and then make sure the kitchen, the ingredient is enough for the lunch and then make sure the menu for the lunch and, of course, make sure the server is coming for job and then just waiting for the customer to come and greeting customer and sit them down and then serve them. And then sometimes they have question for me about the meal. And then, I would answer them and then, sometimes they will complain. You know, sometimes they would say, the food is not fresh or give me a hard time or I have to solve this kind of problem. When we first start restaurant, takeout food is not that popular. Mostly is dining in. But now gradually, people like take our lot. So we developed take out, people come and pick up food and then I have to answer the phone, taking order and, put it into the kitchen and, pack the food and then wait for customer to pick up. And then after that, people like deliver. So it is more work. So we have to get people address, get people, hire driver to deliver. And then, at that time, I handle everything because, we even have to create a big map. We enlarge the map and then the drive, when they go to deliver, have to look up the map how to get to the house and at that time, there was no computer and, afterward having computer, and then it was much easier. Afterwards, we have Uber for delivery, so it is much easier. We do not need to hire driver. I sold my restaurant in 2017.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: China Garden?

00;29;57 - 00;31;00

ANNE TSOI: I sold my restaurant, China Garden, in 2017 because my husband was getting tired. Plus, Chinese food is already getting done because the competition, because of the Thai food, Japanese food. So, people like more variety in a restaurant, more variety. And then they like a Chinese food. They like Thai food. They like Japanese together in a restaurant. So it gave us very hard time. And my husband only specialized in Chinese. He did not have that kind of gut to learn [and] to change a restaurant to a different variety. So he just say, "Oh, I am too old to handle now, I better quit." So in 2017, we sold the restaurant.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And where was China Garden located?

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ANNE TSOI: At the corner of University and Semoran Boulevard. Now the restaurant is demolished, and then they create three restaurant there, three American restaurant, the restaurant have drive-thru. I have a lot of memory from those restaurants, [particularly] China Garden. They just really gave me a very big challenge to handle our restaurant like this. And then we do not have partner. I just handle everything by myself with my husband.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And you said you briefly manage to the two restaurants. How long was that?

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ANNE TSOI: About one year.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Like one year?

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ANNE TSOI: Yeah, because I really cannot handle both.

00;32;02 - 00;32;07

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: You just sold the restaurant and then you focus full time on China Garden.

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ANNE TSOI: But another thing is, these two restaurant is actually very close to each other. I do not want to compete, so I just want to concentrate on my own. They are very close, so I hope to sell the other restaurant to somebody else. They have their own concept. They do their own. So I just concentrate on the China Garden.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: You said you have a lot of memories in China Garden. Can you share some specific memories managing?

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ANNE TSOI: Dealing with a big restaurant is not like dealing a family restaurant. And you are constantly looking for the sales. You know, you have to think of different way to attract more people, more customers to come and eat. And you have to think what is good. You have to change the menu all the time, change the dishes all the time. And also, you have to do some marketing, bring out some coupon—at that time is coupon we only send out coupon to customer. And also, we [thought], “what is the way to attract more people?” We have to do a celebration. Like, if we have some kind of Chinese festival, we would put a little celebration. Like Chinese New Year, we have to put a special meal, special menu to attract people, let them book the table, and we even have a performance there in the restaurant. And then we have a lion dance performance during the New Year celebration. And then I have to make sure the kitchen's handle good, because suddenly you will have a lot of people come to your restaurant, sit down at the same time, look at your lion dance and eat your food. So you have to at that time have to bring the food at the same time, you know. But we are not a hotel. So I have to think of how to handle good in order [for] the customer [to not] complain, so all kind of headache you know. But this is the way to attract more people coming so they know your restaurant more.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: I am assuming during this time, you were—how were you involved with Asia Trend?

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ANNE TSOI: Asia Trend actually the founder is, Shally Wong, and Gary Lao. Shally is my sister. And she immigrate to this country with my help. And then, she study in UCF and graduate in UCF and actually she working as a part time in my China Garden for quite a while because of the study. So she met her husband in Orlando, too. And then, even her husband work as a part time in my restaurant before. And then they all have a passion of Asia Trend. They really want to promote Asian culture in Orlando. Maybe they work in a Chinese restaurant and then they think, “Oh, Chinese food should be developed in Orlando to let more people know.” And then that was what they were thinking, to let more people know and Chinese New Year's to let more people know or we have another festival called Moon Festival is always in September. Let more American know. Maybe they were in the Chinese restaurant. They thinking of that. So that is idea developed from my sister. So they are the founder. I [was] busy in the restaurant. I [did] not have time to know what was going on with Asia Trend, but until I retire in 2017 and then my sister tried to get me to participate in Asia Trend. Until now I still learning because it is kind of a new concept for me. I do not have a very high education. I do not even know what is going on with a computer. What I mean is dealing with more like apps or something. A lot for me to learn. But I like it. I feel that in particular Orlando is getting more and more Asian and we do not want to hiding. We just tell the Asian, no hiding. You have to expose yourself to American to all the people even some of the American born Asian, they not even know the culture of Asia, too. So it is good for your next generation. So I think that is a good thing for me to involve. So I hope I am doing good. But Gary still handles Asia Trend, he is the executive director. So most of the work is done by him. And then he will discuss with me. We will work together. If a certain kind of event, we need to go, then I will represent them to go and know what is going on. To bring the Asian to the society, to the community, especially our culture.

00;38;19 - 00;38;43

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And speaking of Orlando and in the Asian community and you have been here for over forty years now. So you have a deep experience with Orlando. How has Orlando changed generally, but also Orlando's cultural scene with Asians? How is that changed since 1980?

00;38;43 - 00;39;44

ANNE TSOI: A lot changing. I can tell, of course, is more Asian. A lot of Asian [has] moved from up North, New York, Chicago or somewhere very cold. They like the Orlando weather. So a lot of Asians moving here and, for Asian culture, as I say, is good for next generation too. So I like to let people know what Asian culture is, like lion dance performance, like our dragon boat paddling and sometimes it is hard for them to understand, but I am willing to put more time to do that.

00;39;44 - 00;40;04

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Do you think the increase of Asians in Orlando, do you think that was reflected in your restaurant, as China Garden evolved over time? Like, did you see more Asian clientele from '98 to 2017?

00;40;04 - 00;40;53

ANNE TSOI: Let me see. Yes, it is more Asian, moved to Orlando. But also, we have to let the people living here—a lot of them, they move from up north, they already know some of the culture, but they just do not care about it. But we are in Orlando, I just want to let them know a more different kind.

00;40;53 - 00;41;02

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: What is your specific role right now in Asia Trend?

00;41;02 - 00;42;54

ANNE TSOI: I works as a president in Asia Trend now and we have a board member. And every other month, we have to have a board meeting. And then we have a magazine, online all the time, in the web. So people can go to our website to visit and find out more information there. And, during the year, we have at least three events and one is called Moon Festival is going to be happen in September. And after that, we have another core Asian culture expos, we collaborate with another company, GWN from Canada. They have Dragon Boat competition in Orlando. So we set up Asian Culture Expo performance in that event. Another one will be our Chinese New Year's celebration, usually in February. So this is the three main events we are doing. And then, of course, when the event coming, we have to planning and then I will contact upon sponsor, and then I will contact performance. And then, we share with the board member, and share the duties and some doing performance, some doing sponsorship. You know, some doing marketing to get the event in success.

00;42;55 - 00;43;14

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Why is it important to expose your culture, to promote your culture here in Orlando?

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ANNE TSOI: One thing about myself, for example, I would be very happy if people know our culture like, “Oh, they can speak Chinese. Even Americans can speak Chinese.” Of course you are proud of it. So that was at one point I want to promote that. And also next generation, as I say, a lot of American born children here, they do not know where they come from, where they parents come from, what they parents do. And all kind of culture, like calligraphy, like dragon boat paddling. So, I [want] them to know [their] parents life before.

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SEBASTIAN GARCIA: So, how has—

00;44;09 - 00;44;49

ANNE TSOI: And also another thing is now a lot of people is economy, they want to do business with Asia, with China. And I feel like introduce some of the culture for them will help them to promote their business too. They will be willing to, they want to, they eager to, is because of China now is growing and they want to know what Chinese culture is or Asian culture is.

00;44;49 - 00;45;03

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: That is a good point. You know, just generally, how has Orlando changed from your perspective since 1980?

00;45;03 - 00;46;13

ANNE TSOI: Orlando changed a lot. As I say, a lot of people is moving from up north, and then got more people and more traffic, and more construction, and more houses. You can say change but still not that many as a New York, of course, but still keep quiet here. But you can see the growing is gradually, gradually. And then, so far, I am still very satisfied the way it is now, but I do not know later, maybe I will move out here, but now I am still satisfied with that. But I hope the government will do more like traffic you can solve, housing you can solve. You know, I hope the government, they should have their way to solve it. So I do not really worry about that. I trust the United States government the way they handle the citizen.

00;46;14 - 00;46;14

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: What challenges—

00;46;15 - 00;46;55

ANNE TSOI: But another thing about more Asian coming here, but I can tell now more people know our Asian culture, so I feel so happy. And then, that will be—even I talked to some of the American, they kind of know, some even know some Chinese, for example, they can say “*Zaoshang*” which means good morning or something in Chinese to me. I feel very happy. So I feel I do a right thing.

00;46;55 - 00;47;00

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: And that is a good point that more people are understanding different cultures. Yeah.

00;47;01 - 00;47;45

ANNE TSOI: And you living here, you feel more belong to Orlando, belong to here. And then bring my own country here but not bring a lot. At least people know what my country is. You know what my language is? Even Chinese language, we can communicate with them because the language, a lot of time, is a barrier for us. For me, I am lucky. I educated in Hong Kong, and we study English a lot, but a lot of country, they not even know English. So they come to here and it is a barrier with them

00;47;45 - 00;47;54

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: What challenges does Orlando face today?

00;47;54 - 00;48;54

ANNE TSOI: As I say, physically, you can see traffic is a lot. So they have to improve, as I say, improve traffic, improve housing. The challenge is now got all kind of people moved to Orlando, like Asian or Thai or Lao or something. I think another challenge for them, they should kind of diversity, getting American [melting] pot for all the people, I mean, every country because they got all kind of country come here. Lao, Thai, Indonesia, Philippines, they are all here. Another challenge for Orlando later on, probably, they really have to look at the diversity more.

00;48;55 - 00;49;04

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: From your perspective, how do you think Orlando will change in the next forty years since you have been here for forty years?

00;49;04 - 00;49;42

ANNE TSOI: More and more Asian faces and more and more people will know what Asian culture is and also learning a lot of our Asian technique, like Chinese musical instrument, like calligraphy, a little bit Chinese, taught a little bit other Asian language. So, I think later on will be developed like this.

00;49;42 - 00;49;58

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: How has your heritage, your Hong Kong heritage, influence your perspective on life generally and living in Orlando specifically?

00;49;58 - 00;50;57

ANNE TSOI: Hong Kong is a little place. I grew up in Hong Kong, I know, I understand, most of the people just pay attention to their living expense, and then they are not involved in the government a lot. But now is changing because of, Hong Kong belongs to China. So China have a lot influence to Hong Kong. And now people know they need to understand what China's doing, Hong Kong people especially. So, here, the most I like is people learning Chinese.

00;50;57 - 00;51;10

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Lastly, if someone is listening to this recording fifty or hundred years from now, what do you want them to know about your culture and the state of Florida?

00;51;10 - 00;53;02

ANNE TSOI: I would like them to know, dragon boat paddling because, I know, particular American they do sport a lot. dragon boat paddling is a kind of sport and can maintain our culture. And also dragon boat paddling have a story behind it. You want to heard about the story? Long time ago, there was very loyal officer to the king. And then the king is doing something wrong. And then he cannot persuade the king to do something good according to his idea. And then he is very upset. He jump to the river and die. And then he is a very famous, very good officer, a lot of people know him. And the people is very upset, his death. Because the body to the river, they scared the body will being bite by the fish. So they put all the food to the river in order to the fish hopefully so the fish and all the creation in the river will eat the food rather than the body of the death. So they create that food. So, when dragon boat paddling, we eat rice dumpling too—is the food [that was] created. Also the noise, the paddling [makes] noise [that] will get away all the people to eat the body. So that was [the story] of dragon boat paddling.

00;53;02 - 00;53;12

SEBASTIAN GARCIA: Interesting. Thank you, Anne, not just sharing that story, but sharing your life story and taking sometime today to speak with me. I really appreciate it.

00;53;12 - 00;53;14

ANNE TSOI: Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you. Sebastian.