

## Appendix

### Interview with Mr Liang, 79 year old (5 year old during occupation)

Me: How was the life under Japanese rule?

Mr Liang: My life was not bad

Me: Not bad? Okay, that was about 1943 to 1945, compared to before did your lifestyle change?

Mr Liang: That time I was living in Hainan street, it was good, I still remembered there was a Japanese restaurant on that street

Me: Were there any arrests in the neighborhood?

Mr Liang: In that neighborhood the Japanese did not disturb us

### Interview with Huang Yin Di, 77 year old (3 year old during occupation)

Me: How was life under Japanese rule? Enough food to eat?

Ms Huang: I was still young at that time, could not remember much. However, I can say that I was lucky that my dad was running a business at that time so my family was well to do.

### Interview with Lim Boon Seng, 80 year old (6 year old during occupation)



Mr Lim: After the Japanese kill people in Singapore, the Japanese hid in the mountains, there were 3 Japanese hiding in the mountains.

Me: Why were they hiding?

Mr Lim: They were scared of getting caught, so i knocked on the entrance of the cave to get them out to eat tapioca and sweet potato. The moment they came out they were arrested. (laughs)

Me: Who arrested them? The British?

Mr Lim: Yes British (laughs)

Interview with Lee Yan Dong, 82 year old (8 year old during occupation)

- 1) Recalls one incident when he was in Primary 1, British were firing near his school. Shocked he abandoned all his possession and went to hide. However, he was curious hence he looked from afar atop a tree. After the incident, he heard that the British were hunting Mao Ze Dong.
- 2) British did not liked them as they were in a Chinese school.%
- 3) When asked about the rationing of rice, he said that there was no limit to how much rice a family could buy, the only constraint was the rice shop closing in the evening. He also said that the rice was cheap, but it was of a lower grain quality.
- 4) He says that the old first port(now one raffles quay) was a happening place where a lot of crimes was committed by the Japanese but Singapore relocated the port to silence the history.
- 5) Japanese apparently entered using American warships, hence no one expected it, just like a trojan horse strategy. He blames this on the British and America.
- 6) He said there was an oil refinery at Pulau Bukom, the British/America used that to control the South China Sea region
- 7) When the Japanese surrendered, they spent 1 year in Singapore to redeem their sins as they were guilty. Upon asking what they did, he said Japanese helped empty night soil along the streets under British supervision.
- 8) Describing Sook Ching, he recalls seeing 5 lorries carrying 40 tied up man being sent to “centerway

Interview with Tan Ah Tong, 80 year old (6 year old during occupation)

- 1) At that time no schooling was available
- 2) Not enough food at that time, meager pay from odd jobs
- 3) Parents not working, living off savings
- 4) Japanese mostly did not bother kids, arrested adults were sent to Myanmar to work on railway, out of 10 only 1 or 2 returned

Interview with Hsiao Yan Kai, 85 year old (11 during occupation)



- 1) Was in Malacca during occupation, hid in the rubber plantations belonging to the parents' employers in the mountains to avoid the Japanese, occasionally cycled back home at night
- 2) Self-sustainable farming of sweet potatoes and tapioca in the mountains
- 3) Mother hung the KuoMinTang flag at their house upon hearing news of Japan's surrender received house search from Japanese soldiers. British were not here yet to manage the situation. Many families got arrested and subsequently killed for hanging of flags. His family got away as they were kids and parents were old.
- 4) Japanese did not bother most civilians, but occasionally demonstrated the power by public use of violence on those who opposed them
- 5) Father made small donations to KuoMinTang aiming to contribute to the Chinese in China prior to the Japanese invading Malaya. Was given a badge as a form of recognition of their efforts. Japanese soldiers almost found it during a house search, others that had the badge found in possession had the whole families arrested.

Interview with Xie Xiu Ling, Wife of Hsiao Yan Kai, 81 year old (7 year old during occupation)



- 1) Chose not to study in Japanese schools
- 2) Life was decent, enough food to eat as father still had a job in a Chinese pharmacy
- 3) Criminals were hanged publicly
- 4) Girls were told to dress shabbily and cover their faces with soot to make themselves less attractive
- 5) Night curfew were enforced, Japanese troops would patrol the streets at night, houses with lights on or with noise would be arrested

Interview with Chua Ah Leng, 79 year old (5 year old during occupation)

- 1) Too young to understand the situation, but felt it was fortunate that there were bomb shelters to avoid the bombing
- 2) Food was rationed but it was just enough to fill their stomach, tapiocas were used to fill their diet

- 3) Attended Japan school for a short while, classes given in Japanese, learnt the basic Japanese language

Interview with Mr Tang, 90 year old (15 year old during occupation)

- 1) Kids had an easy life during occupation, could choose to take up whatever job that was available to learn new skills. Upon applying for jobs, the Japanese would pick them up from their homes in the morning using lorries to send them to the factory to work.
- 2) Japanese enjoyed teaching the workers new skills especially kids. Japanese soldiers would be ranked by colour. The lowest rank would be blue followed by red followed by yellow which is the highest rank and would carry a long sword. The red soldiers taught the workers in the factory the skills required for the job
- 3) Appreciated the Japanese as they taught him to be an engineer
- 4) More than enough food to eat, father owned a business while him working at the factory paid 6 catty(3.6kg) of rice a week
- 5) When the Japanese entered they would randomly choose and publicly execute 1 man and 1 woman just to serve as a warning to everyone not to disobey them
- 6) Japanese provided education but he chose not to study

Interview with Fong Bo Ming, 86 year old (11 year old during occupation)



- 1) Spend the whole duration of occupation running away, always on the run, family got split apart during the process
- 2) Japanese fired randomly at civilians, widespread panic on the streets
- 3) Had no idea where he was most of the time, grew tapioca and sweet potatoes to eat
- 4) Only returned when British returned to Singapore

Interview with Au Mun Wai, 85 year old (10 year old during occupation)

- 1) Father owned a chinese pharmacy before occupation, ditched his job and whole family went to live in the mountains
- 2) Family grew their own crops such tapioca and sweet potatoes for sustenance, family was often starving

Interview with Lam Lee Yin, 87 year old (12 years old during the occupation)



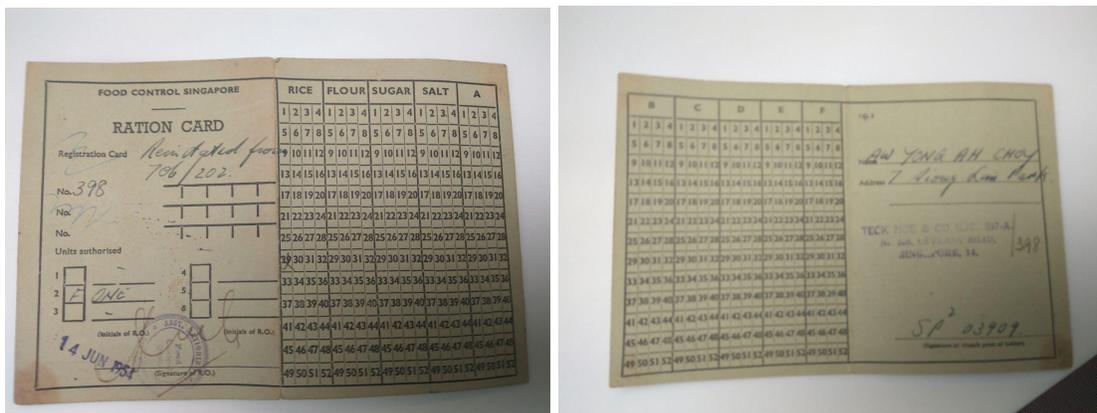
- 1) Japanese came in from Hougang
- 2) British was too weak, not able to fight back effectively, kept to retreat
- 3) Singaporeans kept raiding the warehouses, since the British had no power to stop them from entering, no actual government prevent any sort of crimes, everywhere was in chaos

- 4) The Japanese use rattan to make war mats, in order for the tanks to move in smoothly. (3 pieces of rattan, the size of a coffee table will be pieced together, about 10cm will be pieced together in order to create 1 mat. Her family that ran a rattan business that provided for these rattan. The rattan would be collected from neighbouring places such as Malaysia and Indonesia and would be processed in Singapore, before being shipped to Japan. The family that ran this business came from Nagoya, Japan and carried on this business here. Reason for shifting over unknown. Another product made were bamboo shades were made, to raise the shades up and down. This is done only by women and kids, as it is an easy job. The war mats were created by men only, as the work was tough. The Japanese provided 2 trucks to the family to transport the workers between their homes. As children they could joy ride around on the truck. Because of this business, her family lived well, were able to grow their own food due to large plots of land and did not suffer during the war. This factory was beside the old Kallang Gasworks, along the Geylang river, near the Current ICA building. After the war, due to its business with the Japanese, Singaporeans boycott the business, so the family closed the business down and sold the land in 1952.
- 5) Pasar malam culture was started here, people had to make money, hence brought out their items to sell as second hand. A large flea market started as everyone congregated to sell their items.
- 6) Many left school due to the lack of interest to work. She was one of them. Used to school at Victoria School (Current PA Hq). After awhile left school and went to work as no interest in learning Japanese. Schooling was not enforced as well. Working can earn money also, since she working in her own family business.
- 7) As a child we were not scared of the Japanese soldiers, often cycled past their houses during the day, many of the Japanese troops recognised me and the Japanese commander would talk to me.
- 8) The soldiers would have war games conducted and trainings in the morning, and people would often watch them fight. Children often learnt how to fight by imitating the moves of the Japanese. The soldiers would not disturb them as they did each other nothing wrong.
- 9) Japanese liked to collect rats, they will extract their blood and inject it into people's blood as a form of torture. Every week, day will come by the factory and ask for rats, the Japanese will pay for the rats.
- 10) Japanese walked all the way back from the Burma railway, left to die at Kim Keat Link
- 11) Comfort women seen often around Kim Keat Road also, they were housed behind today's Tan Tock Seng Hospital. They were able to walk around freely.
- 12) There was no lack of entertainment throughout the war period. Films were often shown, although propaganda, the seats were always sold out. One notable film remembered is 万里千红 starring a famous actress Hua Lili. Everyone knew the song in that film, was the most popular film in Singapore in 1944. Other films cannot remember, but another

notable actress is Li Xiangnan, also known as Yoshiko Yamaguchi. The 7th month getai singing started during the war, as Japanese government had no restriction to such outdoor concerts. Some even attended these concerts.

- 13) During the Japanese Occupation the crime rate was much lower as compared to post war. Any small crimes committed often resulted in death by beheading. Can go to the Kallang river bridge to see. Hence many people did not dare to commit any crime. Anyway, people so poor steal what? (Laughs to herself)
- 14) During the war, my aunt worked in the mess at the where the Japanese lived during the war. Most of them lived in the western houses along Mountbatten Road and Tanjong Katong Road. The bigger your rank the bigger the house. The blue flags people were the lowest rank, followed by the red and then the yellow. Their swords were also of different sizes. A lot of blue ones were around but very few yellow. When the yellow and red came, everyone had to salute. If not the soldier will come and slap you. The Japanese were not excluded to this rule. I followed her into the mess a few times. There was a guard that would stop as at the gate and check us before we walked in. The mess was very big, and the food was very nice. The Japanese were polite also. After they have dinner, they will have a night out at Fort Canning park sometimes, at a bar. They would be tended to girls or escorts. But only to accompany these soldiers, nothing else. The girls worked as clerks in Japanese office during the day. As a hostess they could earn extra cash.
- 15) Post-war nothing much changed, people still had lack of food. Only difference was there were jobs to provide you with money to buy food. But it wasn't enough. A piece of evidence of this would be the ration card given, dated 9 years after the war. Even then, the country still needed rations.

Link to Video: <https://goo.gl/ukcW4f>



Ration card from the Post Japanese Occupation

Interview with Anonymous, 79 years old (4 years old during the war)



Me: What memory do you have with the Japanese?

Anon: I saw them surrender. When the Japanese surrendered, the British used them to clean up the place. But I suspect them to be Taiwanese.

Me: Taiwanese?

Anon: At that time they were all under Japan, so they fought for Japan.

Anon: I used to live at 114 Palembang road. There was a lack of everything. Had to salute the soldiers if not you will get it by them. There was nothing much to eat. The basic war stuff, no basic necessities such as soap and all. Due to the malnourishment, I became this size, small frame, and had a problem in walking since then.

Me: You won't hate them for this?

Anon: Depends on your perspective. Japan wanted to cooperate with China in the beginning, but complications arose and started in a war. (Continues to talk about other stuff)

Interview with Anonymous, 78 years old (3 years old during the war)



Nothing much experienced as he was young. As a kid, they didn't care much about what was going on, and did not understand sufferings.

Interview with Lau, 84 years old (7 years old in 1942)

Me: Were there any significant experiences during the war

Mr Lau: I lived in Jalan Besar, didn't see any soldiers. The Japanese did not arrive, many of the British just left and abandoned the civilians. They were afraid of capture.

Me: Did you suffer during the war?

Mr Lau: No. My parents did business. Being able to make money, we didn't suffer that much . After the war, things got better, was able to study and all. Everyone was relieved as there was work. To me it didnt matter much as i was still rather small. Out of 10 people, 9 people will suffer.

(After Recording)

Mr Lau: I picked up Gambling during the war, as it was the easiest way to make money for alot of people. (Carries on to talk about his skill in mahjong and how he teaches his son math with cards)

Interview with Myint Kyaw, 81 years old (6 years old in 1942)



Lived in Bassein, Burma, now known as Patheingyi, moved to Singapore when he was 60.

- 1) Saw Japanese Soldiers marched past his house at the beginning of the Occupation, they did not raid or search the houses.
- 2) His elder brother was part of the Japanese revolution group
- 3) Japanese caught his brother's friend, forced him to dig a ditch and kneel in front of it and was executed.
- 4) He said that he was young so life was normal to him
- 5) Japanese allowed Chinese schools but prohibited English schools, the teachers before and during the war were the same.
- 6) Army officers will come to the school with rice cakes, he remembered having to sing Japanese songs when they arrive and be awarded with the rice cakes
- 7) The British will bombard the town, thus run away from the bigger towns. He ran to a village 10 miles away from his hometown, Bassein.

Interview by Mr Akbar, 85 years old



Mr Akbar and his son on the left, who helped to translate what he said.

Mr Akbar: At the time during the occupation, I was in Saigon. When the Japanese came i escaped across the border to India. Alot of people die along the way.

Me: Did you encounter any Japanese?

Mr Akbar: By the time i was in India i was in the village, they never touch agriculture areas. Only disturb the cities. So never see the Japanese at all. Nowadays so peaceful here already

Plaque found at Sook Ching Massacre Inspection Site



<https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/music/Media/PDFs/Article/3925be16-a91a-4900-bf6f-bbf143f1667b.pdf>