

The Show Goes On at Shek Kip Mei (5-min version)

Super: “Community Impressions”

Summer, 2010 Maple Street Playground, Sham Shui Po
Community Oral History Theatre: “Fine Memories of Sham Shui Po”

Lam Lai-ha

Lam Lai-ha: My name is Lam Lai-ha
I have lived in Sham Shui Po for over 50 years
Back then, life was tough for everyone
We just hoped to bring up our children properly

The drama I take part in today is called
“Fine memories of Sham Shui Po”
It’s all based on our genuine stories

Super: Sound bytes of the drama
(The fire actually broke out at the Shek Kip Mei squatter area on 25 December 1953)

Actor A: “It was the Silent Night, in December 1953”

Actress A: “Look! There’s a fire!”

Actress B: “Fire! Fire! Let’s run!”
“Pack up and run! Fire! Fire!”

Lam Lai-ha: That night, the fire raged furiously across the area
There were flames everywhere
The fire left many families homeless
Where else could they go but sleep on the streets?
The fire victims slept in Shek Kip Mei
on Nam Cheong Street, Fuk Wing Street
and all the way down to Hoi Tan Street

Super: Community Oral History Theatre: “Fine Memories of Sham Shui Po”

Actress C: “That Silent Night wasn’t peaceful at all”

Actress D: “Come and look!
Government is building resettlement blocks
for fire victims in Shek Kip Mei. Come and see!”

Actress E: “Right, eight 6-storey blocks in the first batch
with dozens of units on each floor. Take a look!”

Actress F: “Let’s pack up and be ready to move in!”

Lam Lai-ha: I remember my classmates once asked to visit me
I said no problem, my house was awesome
It’s a 4-bedroom unit in the mid-levels
We built an attic with two rooms
and partitioned another two below
A living room was formed in the middle
where we could assemble plastic flowers
That’s our flat with 4 bedrooms and a living room!

Despite our poor living environment at that time
my family comprising three generations did know
how to respect, love and care for each other

Looking back, there were plenty of happy moments
Like in the Lunar New Year, I helped my mum
carry a bamboo basket to give out red packets
It was usual for a family to have a dozen kids
Parents would give each kid 2 red packets
For say, 10 children, it would be 20 red packets
Together with those received in return
the bamboo baskets were all full of red packets

During Mid-Autumn Festival, we made our own toys
such as lanterns. We made them all by ourselves
We used to celebrate with 3 other families
We lit up many candles
Viewed from the opposite side, it was spectacular

I lived in the resettlement block for some 20 years
There are many unforgettable and sad memories too
For instance, there’s a greengrocer next door

who had two sons and a daughter
One day we heard his eldest son crying for help
as the man was going to jump off the building
I ran there at once and held him down
Some others pulled his son and daughter away from him
We tried to calm him down, telling him that
his wife had run away probably on an impulse
and might come back home soon

I believe one must be positive towards life
In my case, I am a long-time caregiver
For 22 years, I'd looked after my second elder brother
who had a stroke and was bed-ridden for 17 years
After he passed away, my ailing eldest brother
also needs to be cared for
That's why I moved back here to live with him
That's familial love. If he could move freely around
he wouldn't need my attention
They just need to be taken care of
I have learnt the importance of total commitment
and serving people without expecting a reward

Actor A: "What you have seen are all real-life stories"

Actor B: "Maybe you and your family know more"

Actor A: "Maybe we could spread it by word of mouth"

Actor B: "Let's pass on such memorable and laudable stories"

Actor A: "from generation to generation"

Lam Lai-ha: Yes, today's performance is the final one
But we'll keep taking lessons and stage new shows
For us, the best is yet to come!

Super: The Show Goes On at Shek Kip Mei