

Community history, Chinese

Roma Leong See (b. 1924)

Roma Leong See: I remember that the fourth mother [the fourth and youngest wife of herbalist and businessman Kwong Sue Duk] was a Christian—because she used to take us along to church and I can remember we used to sing *Jesus loves me, this I know...* The third mother, our own grandmother, used to do the sewing, make her own clothes, and she used to have a little basket with her sewing in it. I remember one day Clifford, my young brother, who was very mischievous at times, took her scissors and hid them. She became very angry until he brought them back to her...

Diana Giese: She had the most children of all the wives, didn't she? [Three of Kwong Sue Duk's wives shared a house in Townsville in Queensland.] Did your mother ever talk about living in that household with so many wives and so many children [18 of them]?

Roma Leong See: Well, Mum was one of the first to get married...she was only 16...

Diana Giese: Did she talk about her father, Kwong Sue Duk?

Roma Leong See: Yes—she used to tell us what he taught...to be kind, and not to be vengeful, and not to speak ill of anybody...and not to do people a bad turn.

(From interview with Diana Giese, ORAL TRC 3567, 1997, *Post-War Chinese Australians*, National Library of Australia)

Roma Leong See is a grand-daughter of herbalist Kwong Sue Duk and the mother of Jenni Campbell who assembled much of the research for the family history video-documentary, A Man of Family. She teaches Japanese. Roma and her husband Eddie have just celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

Jenni Campbell (b. 1953)

Jenni Campbell : The bookseller in Cairns said, ‘I’ve got a great book here.’ He showed it to me. It was Dorothy Jones’ *Trinity Phoenix*. We opened it up and, truly, the first page I opened spoke about Kwong Sue Duk, recording the wedding of one of his daughters...I said, ‘This is my great-grandfather.’ That was the beginning of [our family history work].

...

It was my first trip to China itself... I went with Mum and Auntie Vi [Fong On] and Auntie Phyllis [Hock Hing] who could speak the language. The village was quite an eye-opener. When we arrived there the people came out to see who we were. They could obviously pick us—although we were Chinese. We walked through the village and a lot of people looked at us and asked us where we came from...One horrid incident I recall was that at the back of this house they were killing a dog with a piece of wood. We could hear it yelping. Auntie Phyllis, the dog-lover, absolutely froze. I thought it was awful: I assumed they were going to eat the dog.

Diana Giese: You didn’t want to eat in the village after that?

Jenni Campbell: No, no. We went back to the 3-star Japanese hotel in Shekki.

(From interview used in Diana Giese’s *Astronauts, Lost Souls and Dragons*, University of Queensland Press, 1997, page 138; see also interviews with Roma Leong See, ORAL TRC 3567, 1997, Jennifer Campbell, ORAL TRC 3452 and her husband Paul Campbell, ORAL TRC 3448, 1996, *Post-War Chinese Australians* project, National Library of Australia)