Interviewee: Keiko san

Date: 29 March 2019

Q: Interviewer A: Interviewee T: Translator

Q: Could she describe what she is growing now?

A: She makes a lot of crops, hot chillies, cabbage, turnips, broccolis, cauliflowers, egg plants, cucumbers, tomatoes, okra, sweet potatoes, garlics, and she grows a lot of hot chillies. (explaining the potatoes species, hot chillies species)

A: She never buys any vegetables because she can grow all of them herself.

T: I want to make garlics myself as well, but she said it is difficult around here because soil and temperature are different.

Q: It's easy to grow garlics in Hong Kong.

A: Around here, she put the seeds around September in the soil, so it is growing under the snow, and the shoots come out in Spring.

Q: When did she start farming?

A: Her actual job was a kindergarten teacher, she got a bad knee so she retired. She was already growing something before she retired, but that was for self-consumption. She is also one of the members of the farmers who provide vegetables for school meals.

T: We have the lunch system to provide lunch for children to make sure that children can get enough and healthy food for lunch. Some people are trying to get local vegetables for kids, she is one of the local vegetables suppliers.

A: She expanded her farm after the retirement.

Q: Was she already providing vegetables already before retirement?

A: She said no.

Q: Why did she expand the farm after retirement?

A: It's not like she expanded it...she mentioned that she could work on more than what her family has to consume, she will just bring here to sell. She is not a big farmer, and she is just doing it by herself. After retirement she could spend more time on farming, so she can grow more.

Q: What kind of farming method is she using?

A: She has the spring onion and carrots that grow under the snow, she is also selling them. For some products she has to use chemicals, but mostly she does not use it.

T: I actually told her that I have heard from baba san that you do not use many chemicals, she said yes. About the fertilization, she uses the one made by cow dungs, she mentioned that when she is using it, the vegetables do not have any diseases. Recently, the fertilizer company is closed, she cannot get the cow dungs fertilizations anymore, so she kind of quitted using the fertilizers, then the vegetables get some diseases. The fertilizer is made of natural things, after she stopped using it they crop get some diseases in their roots.

Q: What is she going to do then?

A: She is going to use chicken poos fertilizer. It is good for fertilization, but it has too much nitrogen in it, if you use too many of it then it is just the leaves that would grow. For crops like radish or turnips, it might not be good. For cabbage, she uses a little bit of chemicals to kill the bugs. She provides cabbages to the lunch system, it has certain requirements and she has to record what did she do on the crops, so she does not use many chemicals.

Q: Why did she choose the method of using a little bit of chemicals plus organic fertilizers?

T: She mentioned about using the chemicals, the bugs come everywhere even though she put a net on it, to make it kind of looks clean, she has to use chemicals.

A: Because the vegetables are mainly for self-consumption, if she does not need to use chemicals, she just does not use it.

Q: Is it common to use a mixed method to grow vegetables here?

A: She is minority. It is normal for local people to use some kinds of chemicals to prevent bugs and weeds, but all comes back to our body.

Q: How did she develop her sales channels?

A: She sold her veggies at JA supermarket and the veggie park that we have been, those are JA supermarkets. She is always selling at a few local markets, when she has more harvests, she sells at those four places. Right now she is getting old, she is quitting some of the farmlands.

Q: Is she doing it all by herself?

A: She has a husband literally, it's on the paperwork, she is doing it with her husband.

T: It's so funny, she keeps saying it!

Q: What's the difference between selling to baba san and those places at JA?

A: When she was selling her veggies through JA market, they are selling her hot chillies powder through the internet, she is selling a lot of it there. She makes hoe chillies powder too from her hot chillies, at first the sales were very good in this place (a local market), she kind of stayed physically and offered people to try the it, she got a lot of customers. About selling to baba san and JA market, she does not see the difference.

T: She is another person who is worrying about baba san's life, people are always worried about baba san's life.

Q: Why would she let the JA to sell her veggies? Is it very common for local farmers to sell their veggies through JA?

T: Yes. One more things about selling through the internet, the person who is in the JA group said to her that the color of hot chillies powder is really good, that's why she could sell through the Internet.

A: She said it is kind of rare because only the one who can drive to the city centre can sell their veggies at the JA market, at her age it is too tough, there are not many farmers here who could just go there and sell their veggies themselves, so only younger generation can do that, that's why selling through JA is uncommon.

T: There is a place at supermarket, like Harashin, you can see the local product area, they have a system of taking 20-30% of the profit, they have all the labels. I helped with it before so I know how it works.

Q: She mentioned that she is a minority for using a mixed method, is it challenging?

A: She is trying to use as little as possible, but her cabbages still look like a net. Even though she is using chemicals, she is just using the weak one so the bugs still come and eat the leaves of the cabbage. She has to throw them away; it could not be a product. She let her husband to spray the chemicals, he is lazy and he did not do it thoroughly, so half of the cabbages were not sprayed. There are two types of chemicals, one of them could be used a day before harvest, another one has to be used a week before, the ‘a week before’ on is a strong one, so she is only using the ‘a day before one’. That's her challenge.

Q: If there are so many bugs, why does she still stay with this method?

A: Because she eats herself too, all things will come back to her body and she knows it.

Q: What are the positive experiences?

A: She is happy when she harvests. If you do not feel the joys of harvest, you would not do it. She sells only the leave veggies here because she has to take care of them every evening. She is still selling hot chillies powder through JA because she does not have to check it frequently, it's okay for her.

Q: She mentioned that she is reducing her farmlands, what's her plan for the future?

A: She does not own much land, she is renting it from other people, as she gets old, she is going to return the land to the owner. She is going to quit making vegetables for sales but just for self-consumption.

(showing her the pictures of artworks)

(Translator explaining the artworks and their locations, and why I'm

A: Maybe locals do not feel that way. She likes the views, but she is not interested in the art pieces, nature just calms her down (Rice house). That's wild edible plants (Scarecrow project). She has seen this one when she passed by (The Rice Field), but she has never seen the other artworks. She is asking if this is a figure or an actual person (Human re-entering nature). She knows this is Matsudai (Scarecrow project).

Q: Which one does she find the most interesting?

A: When she saw those picture, she was attracted by this figure (Human re-entering nature).

T: I'm explaining why there is a poetry there (The Rice Field).

A: If you look from far away, then you recognize this view, in her memory

T: She likes this (Human re-entering nature).

A: (saying in amazement) She wonders what he is thinking, she likes that she wonders what he thinks, it is cute, she could imagine a lot of stuffs by looking at this.

Q: What could she imagine?

A: She wonders why he is standing like that, nowadays we don't stop and stand like that because people are all moving around. When snow comes, people kind of feel relieved when winter comes, it means that they can take a rest. It is relieved to see snow, she wonders how he looks. These pictures are good.