

Margaret Mary

To our Grands, Jaslynn Darling and Justin Dear Dear

Wow, it sure made my head spin to think that Justin will turn 2 this October!!! Ye Ye is always thinking of games to keep you both busy and he has to hop, skip and jump many steps to keep ahead!!!! Amusing ourselves when we were your age was a breeze!!!

How to keep ourselves occupied when there were no computers? Television and movies were luxuries, and toys and game sets beyond our reach! You will surely say BORING BORING BORING.

Your Late Tai Gong was the sole bread winner with many mouths to feed. Your Kau Gongs and Eee Pors had to make do with boxes, bed sheets and what have you and turn them into robots and spaceships! The great green open expanse was our playground.

Our favourite safari was hunting for spiders in the thick undergrowth. Yes, girls, too! We were tough, then! I was about 10, your Kau Gongs and Ee Pors were between 4 and 13. All prized catches were kept in matchboxes and primed for battles. Your Leong Kau Gong was always the First King, his spiders, I mean!

Fishing was also a favourite. We often wade in the monsoon drains, straining our eyes for the beautiful guppies aka drain fish aka rainbow fish. Once we were prevented from climbing out of the monsoon

drains by a group of boys. Luckily, your Hong Kau Gong came in the nick of time and stared them down.

This Hong Kau Gong is the Chan's live wire. He enjoyed making his layang layang and flying them with his special strings. His strings were treated with a secret formula and can cut his rivals'. He was not acknowledged as Champion Layang Layang Raja for nothing!

He often made chaptah for us, too. These chaptahs are small circles cut out of discarded rubber inner tubes from his bicycle wheels. They are held together with a nail and have beautiful rooster feathers on them. Speaking of feathers, where did he get them from? He enjoyed taking the younger Kau Gongs and Ee Pors for rides on his bicycle. He would also take them for swims, without your Tai Por's knowledge.

Tai Por kept a few chickens in the toilet. Dai Ee Por, about 20 then, with a few of us would hunt for COCKCROACHES in the dustbins at night. She would catch them with her bare hands while we shine our torches for her! These cockroaches were shredded for the chickens. Yes, shredded by Dai Ee Por! Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!!

Food was extra delicious when we had them boiling hot off the hawkers' shoulders! The hawkers carried pots of piping hot *yong tau foo*, *laksa*, *satay* on poles across their shoulders. We would stand around and slurp up these heavenly food. There was home delivery of Tock Tock Mee before 2353535! A guy would knock on two bamboo pieces producing lovely melodies of 'tock tock tock' hence the name of

the noodles. He would take our orders and deliver to our doorstep. Bread, curry puffs and Cantonese pastries were sold off bicycles. There was also the much loved *satay* which we can only afford during Chinese New Year when we receive *angpow* from Tai Gong and Tai Por!

Jaslynn, you are most fortunate to be able to attend the last of the NDP held at the National Stadium, as it would be pulled down next year. Your Tai Gong, the Clerk of Works with Sime Darby, was in charge of the piling for the National Stadium. The first pile was “driven” by Mr Othman Wok on 7 December 1966.

Play was so interactive and hyperactive then! Well, I think we can start on our mini safari for want of ideas to keep you both busy!

Love you!

Ma Ma