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**Harmonisation of the self:
Narratives of older Chinese about
ageing, health and wellbeing**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of**

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in
Health Psychology**

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Abstract

The older population in New Zealand is increasingly culturally and ethnically diverse. While the New Zealand Government has acknowledged that these diverse groups of older people have their specific ageing processes, needs and expectations, there is a paucity of research conducted to understand their ageing lives and experiences. This research seeks to explore the experiences of ageing among older Chinese migrants through the lens of subjective wellbeing. Specifically, it looks into older Chinese migrants' experiences of happiness, struggles and challenges while they are ageing in New Zealand. Particular consideration is given to the role the self plays in the creation, restoration and preservation of a sense of happiness in old age. In-depth narrative interviews were conducted with fourteen older Chinese migrants from diverse backgrounds. The analysis was informed by the dialogical self theory, Chinese philosophical perspectives of *yin/yang* and harmony, Chinese conceptions of happiness and the self and narrative methodology to focus on the dynamics of the self, through which a theoretical link between the self and human experience of happiness is developed. The results indicate several factors that could enhance or undermine the participants' ability to live happy and satisfying lives. The enhancing factors included: the natural environment, social welfare, health, wellbeing of the offspring, and family, ethnic community and social supports. The potential hindering factors were: language barriers, transportation problems, crimes, and inadequate healthcare services. The central findings reveal that happiness is a function of the harmonious interplay and balance of different aspects (*I*-positions) of the self within a dynamic, complex and ongoing process of dialogical negotiation. Three prominent pairs of *I*-positions, including the "independent" and the "interdependent" positions, "*xiao wo*" (the private and individuated self) and "*da wo*" (the large self) positions, and the "devoted" and the "affirmed" positions, were identified. Examples from three cases show that happiness may be attained when these self-positions interact with each other in harmony. The research also illustrates that happiness is dependent upon the individual reaching a balance among mind, body and surrounding environments. Furthermore, happiness is dependent upon the balanced dynamic interplay between individual agency and the social structures of changing contexts and situations.

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Chapter 1

An exploratory project in the context of ageing and migration

The age distribution of the world's population is undergoing a gradual but remarkable transformation. The major improvements in nutrition, sanitation, education and economic condition and the advancements of medical knowledge, technologies and health care have made it possible for people in general to have longer lives than their ancestors (Vos, Ocampo, & Cortez, 2008). In addition to other social, economic and aspirational factors, both fertility and mortality rates have declined (Boulton-Lewis & Tam, 2012). This results in a gradual shift in the age distribution of the world's population from younger to older ages. Ageing has become an inevitable global phenomenon (Bonoli & Shinkawa, 2005). Countries worldwide are experiencing this demographic change although the population ageing process is in different stages and occurring at different speeds. This chapter discusses the context in which my research is located. It firstly explores the shifting demographics, both worldwide and in New Zealand, and the recent history of Chinese migration to New Zealand. It then briefly examines the international and national policy responses to and academic perspectives of this population shift. Finally, it develops the rationale for the research interest in the self and subjective wellbeing in the context of ageing and migration. The chapter ends with summarising the research aims.

A rapidly growing world population

The United Nations defines "population ageing" as "the process whereby older individuals become a proportionately larger share of the total population" (United Nations Population Division, 2002, p.1). According to the United Nations, not only is the world population of older people aged 60 or over increasing but the growth rate of the older population is also increasingly higher than that of the total population. A population of 737 million of people aged 60 or over in 2009 has more than tripled since 1950 and the population will triple again to 2 billion by 2050 (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010). The average annual growth rate of the older population was similar to the growth rate for the total population at 1.8% in 1950-1955, but it doubled to 2.6%, as compared to total population of 1.2 % in 2005-2010, and is projected to increase to 2.8% by 2025-2030, four times the growth rate for the total population

(0.7%). Moreover, the United Nations also indicates that the population of older people is itself ageing and the fastest growing group is that of the oldest-old (aged 80 or over) (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010). The population aged 60 or over is projected to nearly triple between 2005 and 2050, whereas the population aged 80 or over is expected to increase by a factor of 4.5. The number of the oldest-old is substantially increased by a factor of 6.8 between 1950 (less than 15 million people) and 2009 (102 million) and it is projected to almost quadruple by 2050 and reach 395 million.

In line with the profound age structure transformation worldwide, population ageing is also taking place at an accelerated speed in New Zealand. According to Statistics New Zealand (2010a), the number of people aged 65 and over has doubled since 1976, to 550,000 in 2009 and is projected to further increase to 1.44 million in 2061 – 2.6 times the 2009 population. The largest increase in the relative size of the population aged 65 and over will occur between 2011 and 2037, as the post-war baby boom generation is ageing and moves into this age group (Bourke, 2005; Miller, 2001). People aged 65 and over will make up over 20% of the total population in the late 2020s, compared with 13% in 2009 and will comprise 25% of the population in the late 2050s. A remarkable aspect of the ageing process is the progressive demographic ageing of the older population itself. Within the 65 years and over age group, the number of people aged 85 and over has trebled since 1978 to approximately 55,000 in 2005 and will reach 320,000 in 2051 (Statistics New Zealand, 2006a). One in five older people will be aged over 85 by 2051.

International migration has been a distinctive feature of New Zealand's history, which inevitably affects both the size and ethnic composition of the population (Zodgekar, 2005). Cultural and ethnic diversity of New Zealand's population is anticipated to increase in the future according to Statistics New Zealand's (2010a) population projections. The population aged 65 and over is also projected to increase for all four broad ethnic groups. The European ethnic group will mainly provide the numerical increase between 2001 and 2021, projected to increase by 270,000 to 690,000. The Māori population aged 65 and over is projected to increase from 20,000 in 2001 to 56,000 in 2021. The Pacific population aged 65 and over is projected to number 26,000 in 2021 compared with 9,000 in 2001. Asians have the fastest growth in the population

aged 65 and over among these four ethnic groups, and is projected to reach 56,000 in 2012 – five times the 2001 population of 11,000 (Statistics New Zealand, 2006a). When compared with the total New Zealand population, the Asian population is relatively youthful and comprises a small proportion of older people. In 2006, the median age of the Asian population was 28.5 years, compared with that of 35.8 years for the New Zealand population. Despite having a younger age structure than the total population due to net migration inflows, the Asian population overall is ageing as well. Asian people aged 65 and over will make up 11.2 percent of the Asian population in 2026, compared with 4.7 percent in 2006 (Statistics New Zealand, 2010b).

Perhaps the rapidly growing proportion of Asian ageing population is expected as Asians are the fastest growing ethnic group in New Zealand, increasing from 6.6% of the total population in 2001 (238,176) to 9.2% in 2006 (354,552) (Statistics New Zealand, 2007). This ethnic population is expected to further increase to 790,000 by 2026, an increase of 232% since 2001 and make up around 15.8% of the total New Zealand population in 2026 (Statistics New Zealand, 2010b). The Chinese ethnic group comprises this nation's largest Asian population (44%) and 3 percent of the total New Zealand population in 2001 (Statistics New Zealand, 2002).

Chinese migrants in New Zealand

Chinese people, mainly males, first came to New Zealand as itinerant labourers re-working the Otago goldfields in 1866 (Ho, 2006; Ip, 2003; Ng, 2001). They then constituted a small but distinctive ethnic group as a result (Bedford, Ho, & Lidgard, 2000). However, there were substantive barriers to their entry between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Chinese population was kept extremely small in number under the unwritten White New Zealand policy of exclusion and Chinese people suffered from pervasive social and legislative discrimination (Ip & Pang, 2005; Ng, 2001). Between 1881 and 1920, the New Zealand Government passed a number of anti-Chinese laws to restrict the number of Chinese migrants. The Chinese Immigrants Restriction Act of 1881 imposed a poll tax of ten pounds for Chinese entry. The poll tax was raised ten times to one hundred pounds with the introduction of the Asiatic Restriction Act of 1896. In 1908, an additional law was introduced to deny citizenship to Chinese residents. The right to apply for citizenship and to vote was not

regained until 1952. Consequently, the originally small number of Chinese people further decreased from 5,004 in 1881 to 2,000 in 1916 (Ip, 2003).

The first time New Zealand opened its immigration door to Chinese was in the Second World War when China was threatened with invasion by Japan (Ho, 2006; Ip, 2003). The New Zealand Government allowed wives and dependent children of permanent Chinese residents to come in temporarily as refugees on the condition that they had to sign a pledge with two hundred pounds as a bond and promise to return to China once the war ended. When the Government prepared to repatriate the Chinese refugees in 1947, the Dunedin Presbytery ran a social campaign to enable the Chinese families to stay. Ip (2003) states that the 1947 event provided a chance for transforming an itinerant bachelor group into a settled Chinese community of families. This transformation resulted in the growth of the Chinese population, particularly of locally born Chinese. This self-contained and low profile ethnic population reached 19,000 people in 1986 (Ip, 2003).

Between 1986 and 2001, the Chinese population in New Zealand quadrupled to reach 105,000 people (Ho, 2006). The dramatic increase of migrants from Asia has resulted from the changes to immigration policies since 1987 (Friesen, 2006; Liu, McCreanor, McIntosh, & Teaiwa, 2005). Since the early 1980s, successive New Zealand governments have pursued a programme of economic restructuring and liberalisation. They have looked to countries on the Asia-Pacific rim to develop economic and social connections (Lidgard, Bedford, & Goodwin, 1998). Immigration was one of the crucial features of this economic restructuring, leading to a review of immigration policy being undertaken in 1986 (Trlin, 1992). The main objective of the policy review was to regulate migration flows in order to match current economic and social policies. The New Zealand 1987 Immigration Act was then announced. The 1987 Act eliminated the preference to migrants from “traditional originals” such as Britain and North America and facilitated the entry of migrants from “non-traditional” source countries such as China and Korea (Bartley, 2004; Ho, 2006; Ward & Lin, 2005; Zodgekar, 2005). In 1991, a points system was introduced to replace the inflexible occupational basis for granting applicants residency (Zodgekar, 2005). Under the system, applicants are selected based on a range of factors such as age, qualifications, work experience, occupation, business skills and available investment capital (Ip, 1996). These more

open and flexible immigration policies have contributed to a dramatic influx of Asian, particularly Chinese migrants with younger age, good education, professional qualifications, business skills and investment capital (Bartley, 2004; Friesen, 2006; Ho, 2006).

Family reunification was a new category of permanent migrants established during the 1986 immigration policy review. Since then, the parents of Chinese people who are New Zealand citizens or permanent residents are eligible to apply for permanent entry under the Family Parent Category in the Family Sponsored Stream (Ho, 2006). According to Immigration New Zealand, the sponsors (adult children) are now requested to sign a declaration that they will provide accommodation in New Zealand for and all necessary financial support to the sponsored parents for the first 5 years of sponsorship. This policy change has mostly contributed to the growth in Chinese ageing population. The New Zealand population statistics have shown some evidence. For example, there were 9,069 Chinese aged 65 and over living in New Zealand in 2006, compared with 5,715 in 2001 (Statistics New Zealand, 2001, 2006b). Migrants comprised 91 percent of the total Chinese ageing population in 2006.

Policy responses to and academic perspectives of population ageing

The accelerating worldwide phenomenon of ageing has raised considerable concerns throughout the world. It presents a critical challenge to the economic and social sustainability of countries (Davies & James, 2011), especially regarding governmental financial support and care of an increasing number of beneficiaries of publicly funded health services, social assistance, long-term care and pension programmes. Since the World Bank published an influential report, *Averting the Old Age Crisis: Policies to Protect the Old and Promote Growth* in 1994, the ageing of the world's population has been constructed and generally understood as a crisis. The World Bank (1994) stated that this impending old age crisis would have a profound impact on the worldwide economy and put potential economic burden on the younger working age population. This negative view of population ageing and the aged has been formed under the longstanding assumptions that most of older people are economically dependent and unproductive and that they have high demands for publicly funded social welfare and health care provisions (Lloyd-Sherlock, 2004, 2010). Together with the other stereotypical views of old age including decrepitude, inevitable declines in memory and

mobility, ill health, cognitive deterioration and dependence (Boulton-Lewis, 2012; Harvey & Thurnwald, 2009; Miller, 2001; Phillipson, 1998), older people are frequently portrayed as a burden to society and a great drain on government and family resources (Vos, Ocampo, & Cortez, 2008).

While some have predicted gloom, others have brought an alternative positive perspective of ageing and promoted the situation as an opportunity. Vos, Ocampo and Cortez (2008) have claimed that “ageing is a reflection of success in the process of human development” and longevity reflects our achievements of effective public-health interventions and healthy practices promotion (p. xii). We can survive with longer healthy life expectancy than ever before. Therefore, we have great potential to continue being productive and make contributions to both family and society. Emerging from this more positive view, research on ageing has moved away from mainly focusing on ageing as a problem or burden to exploring other ageing aspects such as wellbeing and its related psychological and social factors (e.g., Phillips, Siu, Yeh, & Cheng, 2005; Smith, Young, & Lee, 2004), quality of life and life satisfaction of the older people (e.g., Choi, 2001; Gabriel & Bowling, 2004, Grewal, Nazroo, Bajekal, Blane, & Lewis, 2004; Tsang & Liamputtong, 2004). Several ageing concepts have been proposed and developed from a series of large studies, which aimed to promote wellbeing and quality of life of older people (Swindell, 2012).

“Successful ageing” is described as a state of optimal being in relation to avoidance of diseases and disabilities associated with old age, maintenance of high physical and mental functioning and ongoing active engagement with life (Minkler & Fadem, 2002; Rowe & Kahn, 1998a, 1998b). “Healthy ageing” refers to individuals’ abilities to adapt to physical and psychosocial changes across the life course and preserve positive health outcomes in order to continuously function with physical, social and mental wellness and financial fitness (Barlett & Peel, 2005; Hansen-Kyle, 2005). “Productive ageing” regards older people with their valuable skills, wisdom and life experience as important assets for continuing to make economic and social contributions (Kerschner & Pegues, 1998). Through active engagement in either paid or voluntary activities, older people can benefit not only themselves but also their families and larger society (Ranzijn, 2002; Rowe & Kahn, 1998). “Active ageing” which has been proposed and advocated by the World Health Organisation (World Health Organization, 2002) is based on optimising

opportunities for physical, social and mental health, social participation and financial security in order to extend healthy life expectancy, to maintain general wellbeing and to enhance the quality of life for people as they age. The conceptual framework of active ageing combines the health focus from successful ageing and healthy ageing as well as participation and productivity focus from productive ageing. It also captures the crucial but frequently ignored economic aspect for ageing well.

The concept of “positive ageing” is frequently used interchangeably with that of successful ageing (Bowling, 1993). It encompasses aspects of physical health, psychosocial functioning, cognitive capability, financial security and sustained social engagement. Through examining findings from positive ageing studies, Gergen and Gergen (2001) have identified an overall pattern of relations to which the studies contribute. They refer to the pattern as “the life-span diamond” which comprises four points of departure – relational resources, physical wellbeing, positive mental states and engaging activity (p. 8). Rather than working in isolation, these four points function in a mutually reinforcing manner, thus producing profound positive consequences for older people. Gergen and Gergen (2001) have further distinguished the positive ageing from successful ageing initiatives from an epistemological point of view. Successful ageing is empiricist in its orientation and reflects Western cultural value of “success”. Hence, the successful ageing researchers focus on looking at the factual criteria which could lead to age “successfully”, whereas positive ageing is embedded in constructionism in which other interpretations and ways of ageing well are possible. Moreover, unlike the successful ageing approach, which gives insufficient attention to ageing over the life course (Minkler & Fadem, 2002), positive ageing is also about the continuance of positive living throughout life (Prime Ministerial Task Force on Positive Ageing, 1997). Positive ageing also emphasises the role of society and the undeniable responsibility of government in enacting appropriate policies and providing adequate support that allow older people to age well. Each of these positive modes of ageing concepts shares basic similarities regarding fostering physical, psychological and social wellbeing but differs from the others in emphasising different aspects of wellbeing (Chong, Ng, Woo, & Kwan, 2006; Friedrich, 2003; Hung, Kempen, & De Vires, 2010) and gives different priorities of ageing experience.

Although ageing will provide new possibilities and opportunities in relation to the active participation and engagement of older people in the economy and society as a whole, population ageing inevitably brings vital challenges. The United Nations (2002) released the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in response to the challenges of adjusting to an ageing world and building enabling societies and supportive living environments for all ages including older people. The objectives of the Madrid Plan of Action are to ensure that all people are able to age with security and dignity and to continuously participate in the social, political, economic and cultural life of their societies as citizens with full rights. The past contributions of older people to their local communities and to the society at large are valued and their potential to make continuing contributions is recognised.

Embracing the positive view of ageing, the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy was launched in 2001 in response to demographic trends of population ageing in New Zealand (Ministry of Social Policy, 2001). The developed strategic framework and its annually associated Action Plans reinforce the government's commitment to promote and support positive ageing in policy and service development. The underlying principles of the Positive Ageing Strategy have been developed, which echoes the five major principles for older persons proposed by the United Nations – independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity (United Nations, 1991). They are to ensure that: older people can age positively; they are highly valued and respected; they are recognised as an integral part of families and communities; their contribution is affirmed; their physical and social participation is encouraged; they are able to live satisfying and secure lives; they can make choices about their lifestyles, health and wellbeing and maintain their independence. The Positive Ageing Strategy adopted ten specified goals including: secure income, accessible health services, affordable housing, accessible transport, ageing in place, culturally appropriate services, adequate support and resources for older people living in rural areas, positive attitudes to ageing, promotion of flexible employment and increasing opportunities for personal growth and social participation (Ministry of Social Development, 2001). According to local older population's needs, regional councils have developed their own policies and initiatives that support older people to maintain their independence in community and promote their social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing (Austin, 2006).

An exploratory project

The concept of positive ageing among the other contemporary conceptual frameworks of ageing seeks ways to achieve the best possible old age. Apparently, the basic principles of the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy are sound. Rather than placing sole responsibility for wellbeing in older age upon the individual, the Positive Ageing Strategy recognises the undeniable responsibility for older people's wellbeing upon society and the Government. The key role of the Government is to enable older people ageing positively through the development and implementation of appropriate social policies and supportive structures. As such, older people can unload some of the burden of the assumption that they have full control of the undesirable conditions and environments for achieving ageing "successfully". To a certain extent, the Positive Ageing Strategy has paid attention to the social factors that promote or discourage wellbeing and quality of life of older people. With the derived goals for promoting positive ageing, a range of fundamental needs of older people are considered, which include: security of housing, health, employment and relational resources, social engagement, respect by others and freedom to make independent life choices. Given these underlying principles and related goals, positive ageing can be a useful tool to counter the economic and social deprivation experienced by some disadvantaged older people and has the potential to improve their lives.

However, like the other conceptual frameworks of ageing derived from Western nations, the concept of positive ageing applied in New Zealand is predominantly based on middle-class and Western individualistic values of independence, freedom to make rational choices and productivity and structured around Western concerns. Research indicates that the conceptualisation of ageing concepts such as healthy ageing and positive ageing is subject to profound cultural variations (Chong, Ng, Woo, & Kwan, 2006; Hung, Kempen, & De Vires, 2010). Hung, Kempen and DeVires (2010) also found that there are substantial variations in this conceptualisation between academic persons and older lay people. Therefore, to what extent these Western derived concepts, which mainly reflect Western academic and professional viewpoints, can be generalised across and applied to lives of older people from different cultural and social backgrounds remains a question. Moreover, the assessment and interpretation of ageing positively or successfully are individually variable and subjective (Strawbridge, Wallhagen, & Cohen, 2002). However, the concept of positive ageing neither considers

broadly the older people's first-person viewpoints and their experiential perspectives nor does it explicitly address the subjective side of wellbeing such as happiness or life satisfaction.

Happiness is often used interchangeably with subjective wellbeing by social researchers (Srivastava & Misra, 2012). Some researchers take the terms "wellbeing" and "subjective wellbeing" to be interchangeable (e.g., Easterlin, 2003). Indeed, how to define wellbeing remains largely unresolved among academics (Dodge, Daly, Huyton, & Sanders, 2012). Seedhouse (1995) contends that "wellbeing is essentially contested – its meaning and content fluctuate depending on who is using it, and why they are using it" (p. 65). In this research context, I refer to the term "wellbeing", in a general and broad sense, as a life going well in a variety of interrelated aspects, including physical, psychological, relational, social, spiritual and financial aspects, that makes a person feels contented and fulfilled. I use the terms "happiness" and "subjective wellbeing" interchangeably.

Although subjective wellbeing has not been paid attention in the conceptualisation of ageing well models, interestingly, it is often employed by researchers and policy markers as an indicator to assess the quality of life of a population (Binder & Broekel, 2012; Fry & Ikels, 2011). In fact, other than objective conditions such as financial security and good physical health, research has found that happiness is the most important component contributing to people's quality of life (King & Napa, 1998; Skevington, MacArthur, & Somerset, 1997). Poon and Cohen-Mansfield (2011) also claim that subjective wellbeing is a vital concept to "describing and comparing the quality of life of individuals and cohorts across social and cultural contexts as well as to evaluating the impact of policies and policy changes" (p. 5). This implies that how wellbeing and level of quality of life is experienced by individuals is primarily subjective and seen through the prism of the individual. In this way, qualitatively exploring older people's experiences and meanings of happiness could tell a more complete story of ageing well and provide invaluable insights and understandings for formulating more effective public policies, which, in turn, improve the quality of life of older population.

Ageing is generally understood as universal and inevitable, so there is a tendency to make generalisations about the ageing process and homogenise older people. Surely, people around the world share some universal features as they age. However, it is important to realise that the experience of later life is more complex and diverse (Lloyd-Sherlock, 2010). Older people are a heterogeneous group, who come from different social, cultural, political and economic backgrounds and live in different circumstances (Lloyd-Sherlock, 2004). As mentioned above, New Zealand is a multicultural society in which a distinctive feature of the older population is the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity. The cultural and ethnic diversity of older people in addition to their diverse needs and expectations have been clearly recognised in the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy (Ministry of Social Development, 2001). However, to date, there is relatively little research conducted targeting the ageing experiences of older ethnic people and, so, few culturally appropriate services and policies. The Strategy document, thus, states the importance and necessity of greater understanding of cultural diversity in ageing processes and the related issues and challenges facing older ethnic people.

Culture can be defined as “a relatively enduring *system* of meaning, a structured set of symbolic meanings that are shared by a group of people” (Kashima, 2002, p. 208). It includes “unstated assumptions, standard operating procedures, [and] ways of doing things that have been internalised to such an extent that people do not argue about them” (Triandis, 1994, p. 16). It orients us to life and provides us with a sense of reality that helps organise our thoughts, communicate with others, understand, manage and experience our everyday world (Kim & Park, 2006; Kim, Yang, & Hwang, 2006). As a repository of meanings, culture provides a wide variety of symbolic resources and conceptions that we can use to structure our lived experiences, to construct our self conceptions (Kashima, 2000; Kashima, Kashima, & Aldridge, 2001) and to know who we are (Yang, 2006). It provides not only some understanding of what a person is but also a blueprint of what it means to be a good person (Fry & Ikels, 2011) and for how to participate as a member in good standing of particular social and cultural contexts (Fuhrer, 2004). In other words, culture develops our sense of both what the self is and what the self should be. It defines what is of significant importance to the individual and what is valuable and meaningful in life. As such, our identities are shaped by culture through being immersed in a set of cultural values and assumptions, taking up our cultural perspectives on what constitutes a good person and what is worthy in living

and participating in various social practices and institutions within which the cultural ideals and aspirations are embodied. In sum, human living and our everyday experience are all culture bound and our self-identities are considerably shaped by the cultures in which we originate and live.

Similarly, culture plays an important role in informing the experience of ageing (Keith, Fry, & Ikels, 1990, as cited in Torres, 1999), leading to the diversity of perceptions and experiences of ageing. As Wray (2007) states, ageing experiences are indeed embedded within their historical, social and cultural contexts and cannot be separated from them. And so, the meanings attached to people's experiences of ageing are inevitably historically, socially and culturally constructed. As such, older Chinese migrants could have different cultural perspectives regarding the experience of ageing and different meanings attached to and ways of ageing well. Therefore, to understand how older Chinese people age well in New Zealand and their self-constructions, we must take into consideration the various contexts in which people live their lives and the cultural beliefs and value systems that shape them.

Kim and Park (2006) assert that the most crucial essence of culture is the people who have created the products of culture in terms of knowledge, beliefs, arts, literature, morals, laws, customs and so on. In this way, we, as human beings with self-reflectivity and creativity, are not simply a product of our cultures but have the capabilities of examining our created cultural values and beliefs and of changing ourselves and our cultures (Bandura, 1997). In fact, although the view of culture as a meaning system adopts a long-term perspective to strategically see culture as if it is stable for particular research purposes, culture is not fixed but is constantly changing with time and social conditions (Kashima, 2000; Kim & Park, 2006). As discussed above, our self-identities are largely shaped by culture. Hence, if the culture within which our lives are embedded is dynamic rather than static, the self inevitably involves constant changes.

Psychology has been increasingly recognising the complexity and multiplicity of self and identity. The long lasting Cartesian conceptualisation of self as static, core, contained and unchanging has been challenged, especially in the increasing flow of migrations and transnational migrations as well as its resulting moving and mixing cultures (Hermans, 2001a). Instead, the self, nowadays, is more considered as multiple,

fluid, dynamic, changeable and complex (Salgado & Hermans, 2005). Hermans and Kempen (1998) have challenged the long standing tradition of cultural dichotomies as internally homogeneous and externally distinctive, on which mainstream academic psychologists have been working. These cultural dichotomies have been formulated as contrasts between Western and non-Western cultures and between individualistic independent and collective interdependent selves. In doing so, cultural dichotomies neglect the important human essence in terms of interaction and interconnectedness and make invisible the influence of intercultural contacts and processes on cultures and individuals. They are dividing people rather than relating people as a result. Hermans and Kempen (1998) have argued against this over-simplified view of cultures and selves and asserted that the connection between two cultures such as through migration results in hybridisation or hybridity in which the existing cultural forms and practices are transformed into new ones. Through the process of hybridisation, migrants fluidly construct and reconstruct their multiple identities in a complex negotiation that entitles their ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds and various personal experiences. They bring these elements together with cultures, practices and lifestyles of the host societies to form a particular way of being (Dhingra, 2007, as cited in Brettell & Nibbs, 2009). The component of human agency in identity-construction and self-transformation has also been emphasised in the process of hybridisation (Brettell & Nibbs, 2009). The profound changes of the self take place as a consequence of migration through which the living contexts and the relationships embedded in these contexts change. In this fashion, self-culture relationship is inclusive and interrelated rather than exclusive in nature; self is within the culture and culture is also within the self (Hermans, 2001a). Culture and self are both moving and mixing (Hermans, 2001a; Hermans & Kempen, 1998) and they continually and mutually constitute each other (Markus & Kitayama, 2010).

Migration inevitably brings significant changes in people's lives. The structural and social constraints that have shaped the opportunities available to migrants following migration and resettlement in a host country would continue to have an effect on individuals, as they grow older. The significant changes in the structure of social networks affect their companionship, support and care received in old age from family members, relatives, friends and neighbours. Migration can also dramatically change the profile of the family and influence the traditional approach to ageing (Gelfand,

2003). Research has indicated that older Asian migrants in a Western host country face additional challenges and demands regarding the adjustment to being caught between two dissimilar value systems, different customs, living lifestyles, languages and the inevitable Westernisation of their children and grandchildren (Mackinnon, Gien, & Durst, 1996; Wong, Yoo, & Stewart, 2005). Hence, hybridity is particularly significant to older Chinese migrants as “it problematizes boundaries” (Pieterse, 2001, p. 220), which, in turn, facilitates the migrant adaptation and integration in the host society. Therefore, exploration of how older Chinese migrants’ multiple identities are negotiated, constructed and reconstructed in the process of hybridisation is of particular value to understanding their ageing experiences from an emerging Chinese-Western perspective. This exploration also allows us to understand the ways in which older Chinese migrants produce and maintain a sense of happiness and wellbeing, as they age in New Zealand.

Upon reviewing the literature for studies on Chinese migrants in old age, it became evident that this population has generally been neglected and under-studied. In addition, the studies that cover older Chinese migrants have been fragmented and circumstantial. For instance, some past research has examined social adjustment and health care utilisation of older Chinese migrants in New Zealand (Abbott, Wong, Williams, Au, & Young, 2000; Selvarajah, 2004). Recently, Li (2011) has offered some comprehensive research on examining the biographies, identities, practices of filial piety and, especially, experiences of ageing in place among older Chinese migrants. This study provides invaluable understandings of cultural practices and experiences around aged care and familial and social relationships of older Chinese migrants ageing in New Zealand. Despite that, to date, there is still limited knowledge on the *diverse* ageing experiences and processes of this older ethnic population. Surely, cultural knowledge, meanings and practices are to a certain extent shared, however, the degree of sharedness varies according to such as the cities of origin, geographical locations and socioeconomic backgrounds (Miller, 1997). More on-going research from various perspectives is still required to fill this knowledge gap and develop a broader understanding of the life experiences and wellbeing of this already under-studied population.

Given the principles of the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategies, if older people are included in the formulation and implementation of positive ageing strategies, the social and health policies and associated services developed could appropriately address the

real issues that ageing people are experiencing. Therefore, to be effective, it is crucial that positive ageing strategies incorporate the perspectives, ideas and experiences of older Chinese people from different sources. This is to ensure the development and implementation of culturally sensitive policies and services which properly address their circumstances, specific concerns, needs, expectations, challenges, struggles and demands facing people as they age. As discussed above, meanings associated with ageing well are subjected to cultural and ethnic variation. How to age well is also individually variable and subjective and is almost certainly affected by cultural and societal factors. The present study, therefore, looks into the under-researched aspects of ageing – subjective wellbeing and its relation to the self. That is, to explore the ways in which older Chinese migrants construct, reconstruct and grapple with multiple personal and social positions of the self and voices, as they negotiate a space in-between two different cultures in order to create and maintain a sense of happiness. It is hoped that, through the lens of subjective wellbeing in terms of happiness, the sources of life satisfaction and the barriers to ageing well would be systematically uncovered from the perspectives of older Chinese migrants. To achieve the research aim, three primary objectives are identified:

- (1) examining older Chinese migrants' experiences of happiness, struggles and challenges and their meanings through the stories they tell about their migration and ageing in New Zealand;
- (2) identifying key factors that facilitate or hinder older Chinese migrants' ability to live a happy and satisfactory life in New Zealand;
- (3) exploring the role that the self plays in the creation, restoration and preservation of a sense of happiness in old age.

Thesis overview: Orientation towards the self and happiness

This thesis comprises eight chapters. This chapter (Chapter 1) has provided the background of the research.

Chapter 2 discusses the philosophical assumptions underpinning this research. It details the way in which I decided my ontological and epistemological stances that inform the project. I argue for the appropriateness of adopting the critical realist ontology in conjunction with the social constructionist epistemology. These philosophical decisions

provide the foundation for considering the theoretical and methodological issues in this project. As such, I consider the self as a social entity that cannot be isolated from its social, cultural and historical contexts. The self is socially constructed through everyday social practices and human interactions. I also acknowledge the importance of the embodied nature of the self and the influences of the biological and physiological changes in old age on the older Chinese migrants' construction of selves and identities.

Chapter 3 offers a literature review on the Western and Chinese conceptions of the self and provides a theoretical notion of the self developed for this thesis. I critically examine the ideas of various scholars, including William James, Mikhail Bakhtin, Hubert Hermans, George Herbert Mead and Erving Goffman. These scholars orient me towards a dialogical, relational and social understanding of the self. I investigate and present the Chinese conceptions of the person and the self from the Confucian and the Chinese philosophical *yin/yang* perspectives. Following this extensive review of literature, I consider the value of incorporating these Western conceptions of the self, Hermans' theory of the dialogical self in particular, and the Chinese conceptions of the self and selfhood in providing an alternative window to understanding the self of older Chinese migrants and their experiences in this project. I finally illustrate that the theoretical notion of the self developed in this chapter has three key features. The first feature is that the self is dialogically and dynamically constructed through external dialogues between individuals in everyday social interactions and through internal dialogues between different *I*-positions within an individual. The second feature is that the self is social and embodied. The third feature is that the self is both multiple and unified.

Chapter 4 explores the Chinese conceptions of happiness from the perspectives of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. I consider the empirical evidence to support these three philosophical approaches to the conception of happiness among contemporary Chinese. The chapter also examines the Chinese cultural concept of harmony and its relation to happiness. Through critically investigating the current cultural models of happiness in relation to the self, I demonstrate the inadequacy of these models in understanding the phenomenon of interest in today's globalising and culturally interconnected world. I propose an alternative approach to understanding the self and human happiness.

Chapter 5 sets out the research methodology. It details the narrative approach – the dialogic analysis and the voice-centred relational method – adopted to investigate the research aims. I firstly review some key literature on narrative and its approach to qualitative research. Particular consideration is given to the dialogic nature of storytelling. Next, I describe the process of interviewing the older Chinese participants and briefly provide information about my personal and academic backgrounds that form the context for interpretative analysis. Then, I describe the ways in which I locate an approach for narrative analysis with a rationale for my decisions on the analytic approach and method selected. The chapter ends with delineating the analytic and interpretative process with an emphasis on both the dialogic nature of the interview and the socio-cultural context within which the participant’s story is located.

Chapter 6 is the first of two findings chapters. It examines the main factors that enhanced or hindered older Chinese migrants’ ability to live a happy and satisfactory life in New Zealand. Despite happiness having different meanings to different individuals, five factors contributing to happiness and four barriers to it are identified. The enhancing factors include: the natural environment, social welfare, health, wellbeing of the offspring, and support from family, ethnic community and wider society. The potential hindering factors are: language barriers, transportation problems, crimes, and inadequate healthcare services.

Chapter 7 explores and presents accounts of older Chinese migrants’ experiences of happiness and struggles within the migration and ageing contexts. It shows that three categories of narrative emerged from a review of all of the participants’ narrated stories, namely “the overall happy narrative”, “the resolved happy narrative” and “the unresolved sad narrative”. Despite the narratives being categorised as either happy or sad, the chapter demonstrates that both happiness and unhappiness appear in each narrative. I present a representative narrative of each category and examine in detail the complicated processes of being happy or not being happy in living a later life in a foreign land. The chapter shows the close connection between the self, happiness and wider socio-cultural and environmental contexts. The first narrative – the narrative of Au and Yu – illustrates how the couple negotiate the conflicting perspectives, resolve their sense of disharmony and achieve an ultimate sense of happiness. It offers insights into how the movements of the self among different self-positions, according to social

and situational demands, contribute to establishing a new, enjoyable later life in New Zealand. The second narrative – the narrative of Jiang – demonstrates that the capacity of the self to develop and adopt new and more adaptive self-positions is crucial to older Chinese migrants overcoming their adaptational difficulties arising from migration. It also highlights the intimate relationship between self-(re)organisation as well as self-transformation and the availability of personal, social and structural resources. The third narrative – the narrative of Shan – illustrates how the solidly developed self-positions could hinder older migrants in accommodating to their later lives in New Zealand, leading to a low level of happiness and wellbeing.

Chapter 8 takes up the key issues with connections to the analytic work presented in Chapter 6 and 7. In this chapter, I discuss in detail the emerging concept from the present research – harmonisation of the self in relation to happiness. I illustrate how the research contributes to the existing body of knowledge about human happiness and the self. I demonstrate how the inclusion of the moral and ethical dimensions of the self contribute to a better understanding of older Chinese migrants' experience of ageing and ageing well in particular in New Zealand. Moreover, I consider limitations of this research and suggest future research that could follow to overcome these limitations.

Chapter 2

Philosophical underpinnings of the project

Importance has been placed on social science research to start from properly articulated philosophical underpinnings if it is to be better and more successful (Potter & López, 2001; Trigg, 1985). That means understanding and making explicit the assumptions underpinning ontology and epistemology adopted in a particular research project. Guba and Lincoln (1994) have examined different research paradigms or theoretical perspectives to highlight the various assumptions and beliefs researchers bring to their research work in relation to ontological, epistemological and methodological questions. They have argued that all research is shaped by these fundamental and interrelated questions and that the answers made at each level constrain the next. In a similar vein, Crotty (1998) has introduced the notion of four-level scaffolding: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods. The decisions made at each level also constrain the next although it is recognised that the levels have no clear boundaries and overlap with one another to a certain extent. The ontological and epistemological issues tend to be intertwined with each other in a complicated manner (Danermark, Ekström, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002). As Crotty (1998) said, “to talk of the construction of meaning is to talk of the construction of meaningful reality” (p. 10). Thus, it is difficult, if not impossible, to discuss ontological and epistemological issues without reference to each other. Crotty (1998) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) have suggested that ontological and epistemological issues can be discussed together.

This chapter deals with the most fundamental and decisive questions regarding ontology and epistemology, on which I have to ground this research project. It provides philosophical context for the research strategy and method. It also reflects my views of the nature of the world and of knowledge.

Ontology

Ontology is about the study of being (Crotty, 1998). It seeks to answer the questions about the intrinsic nature of existence, the structure of reality and the essence of things as such (Crotty, 1998; Danermark et al., 2002; Potter & López, 2001). To be more precise, the fundamental question is whether there exists a real world and social reality

independent of human consciousness and interpretations (Danermark et al., 2002). These ontological questions necessarily form the foundation for other assumptions we make in research. Broadly speaking, there are two major ontological stances; one is realism and the other is idealism or relativism (Crotty, 1998, Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2005). Realism assumes that being driven by immutable natural laws and mechanisms, there exists an apprehendable reality which is independent of the human mind and beyond people's thoughts, beliefs, interpretations and impressions. On the contrary, idealism assumes that "what is real is somehow confined to what is in the mind" (Crotty, 1998, p. 64). Therefore, it denies the existence of a reality independent of human mind and regards reality as mental constructions which are socially and experientially based (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2005).

So which ontological stance should I adopt? The reflection upon my experience of stress and stress-related psychophysiological responses such as heart palpitations, chest pain and sleep problems from the "real" world will hopefully provide some resolutions to this point. If I consider that there exists a purely objective reality and an independent world "out there", I adopt the ontological position of realism. In this way, my sense-experience in terms of stress-related psychophysiological responses was regarded as real (Patomäki & Wight, 2000). However, it seemed that I could only conceive of myself as a mere automaton who was at the mercy of some innate biological and psychological mechanisms and, perhaps, of some societal ideologies and values such as success and productivity. I had to deny the potential of human agency and capacities to change the situation. If so, how could I explain, through attaining a mental state of peace and tranquillity, the effects of employing mindfulness meditation on stress reduction and associated mental and bodily functions (Bishop, 2004; Davidson et al., 2003; Manocha, 2000) such as fewer dreams, better quality of sleep, enhanced attention and reduction of chest pain? Apparently, this "reality", the experience of peace and tranquillity and the following observed effects could not be attained independently of my mind. Neither could my "stressful" world transform to a "less stressful" world without working with the mind in this case.

On the other hand, if I consider that there exists only a mind-dependent world, I adopt the ontological stance of idealism or relativism. In this respect, I suppose that any objects are constructed in mind. Anything that is not an object of discourse or

intersubjectivity is not real and would be simply said to not exist (Patomäki & Wight, 2000). However, if reality is merely constructed in mind without its considerable autonomy, why does it not always react according to our expectations? Why is it that a better situation with significantly reduced stress-related psychophysiological responses was not reinvented in the process of “talk therapy” if it was so easy? Why is it that I had still experienced substantial bad dreams, bad quality of sleep and heart palpitations that woke me up in the middle of sleep after frequently engaging in “positive, coping self-talk” constructed with the counsellor in the counselling sessions? Why is it that some Chinese herbal medicine worked to some extent to relieve my stress symptoms and promote better quality of sleep but others did not, given that all were prescribed by the same Chinese medicine practitioner? Apparently, those psychophysiological responses were not willed by me or simply decided by some discursive acts. It seems patently obvious to me that there must be something else behind this. There is a reality beyond discourse (New, 2003). There are some underlying and unrealised features of reality independent of our mind. Idealist perspective of reality is not able to realise and address the non-discursive aspects of reality of our social world (López & Potter, 2001).

Neither the realist nor the idealist perspective of the nature of social reality can completely convince me. Returning to the present research questions about the experiences of older Chinese people, I do believe that there is an existence of an external reality about what they recount, such as their bodily changes and physical deteriorations as a result of old age and illness. However, I do not regard that the reality is simply out there to be represented by them and I do accept the meaning-embedded nature of social reality (Potter & López, 2001). However, I doubt the ontological perspective that social reality is purely in our mind. I am not convinced that there is no social reality beyond recounted experiences. Thus, I am looking for an alternative ontological position which supports a reality independent of our knowledge of it; which is mediated by but not exhaustive of the mind itself. This position also acknowledges that not all aspects of reality can be revealed to human consciousness and are directly observable or accessible to us. In this case, critical realism is identified as my stance on ontology. I particularly draw on the work of the British philosopher, Roy Bhaskar who has a leading voice in the field of critical realism (1975, 1979, 1983, 1989a, 1989b, 1997, 1998a, 1998b). Next, I will turn my attention to presenting the general contours

of critical realism and sketch my conception of social constructionist epistemology in relation to this project.

The pertinence of critical realism

Critical realism was initially developed from an intellectual critique of the positivist understanding of natural science and its production of scientific knowledge (Potter & López, 2001, López & Potter, 2001). It is not a homogenous movement in social science and comprises a variety of different perspectives and developments (Danermark et al., 2002). Critical realists, nevertheless, share some core propositions of this ontological perspective.

Regarding the nature of reality, critical realism provides a powerful rebuttal to not only positivist but also postmodernist, poststructuralist and the like notions of reality. The fundamental concern is that positivism and postmodernism fail to explicitly distinguish ontology from epistemology and fall prey to what Bhaskar (1989a) terms the “*epistemic fallacy*” (p. 13). That is, reality is reduced to “empirical observation” and is understood and defined as “identical with empirically grounded conceptions” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 205). In this way, positivism reduces what “is” to what can be known and what is known is what can be observed and/or experienced by our sense. For postmodernism, what “is” is simply reduced to what can be constructed and known about it in discourse (Patomäki & Wight, 2000). They downplay ontological depth of reality as a result (Scott, 2010).

For critical realists, the key ontological questions that seek to answer are “what must the nature of reality be like in order for science to be intelligible?” and “what must social reality be like in order for human life to be possible at all?” (Potter & López, 2001, p. 12-13). The answers to those questions require that social reality must have ontological depth (Han & Davies, 2006; Potter & López, 2001). These influential aspects of social reality are beyond what is directly experienced, perceived or observed (Danermark et al., 2002).

From a critical realist perspective, social reality is assumed to consist of three ontological domains: the empirical, the actual and the real (Bhaskar, 1975, 1983, 1989a, 1998b). The empirical domain consists of what we observe or experience. However,

not all events are observable and experienced. The actual domain comprises all events that happen whether we experience them or not. That is, what happens in the world is not necessarily the same as what we can observe and/or experience. The final domain is what Bhaskar terms the real in which experiences, events and generative mechanisms can all occur. These mechanisms have their own relatively enduring properties and particular powers. They emerge from their own stratum of reality, including physical, chemical, biological, psychological and social strata, which are hierarchically organised. None of the mechanisms can be reduced to the other. Mechanisms within different strata interact with one another to generate concrete events (Danermark et al., 2002) and everyday experiences, even though they may not be detected, realised and perceived directly. This process of emergence makes it possible for new objects or phenomena to come into existence, each with its own emergent structures, properties, mechanisms and powers (Danermark et al., 2002; Sayer, 2000).

Moreover, Bhaskar (1997; Bhaskar & Lawson, 1998) states that generative mechanisms with their powers or tendencies may be possessed but unexercised, exercised but unactualised, or exercised and actualised independently of human cognition, perception and detection. Nevertheless, they are regarded as real because they cause events to occur. Thus, this domain of reality exists independently of our knowledge, concepts and sense perception of it (Williams, 2003). Actually, the real domain of reality is of particular importance in Bhaskar's work. Bhaskar (1997) insists that the real domain cannot be reduced to the actual domain and even less to the empirical domain. As he said, "the domain of the real is distinct from and greater than the domain of the empirical" (Bhaskar, 1998a, p. xii). As such, critical realism precludes the positivist and postmodernist collapse of the ontology into the epistemology (Williams, 1999). While positivists commit to the empirically observable world and postmodernists promise the constructed, discursive world, critical realists regard the natural and social world as stratified, differentiated, structured and changing (Danermark et al., 2002). Bhaskar has never denied the fact that the social world is concept-dependent (Harré, 2001); that is, the social world is made up of discursive structures. However, he contends that there are also non-discursive structures of the social world.

Further to these, the other key aspect of critical realism proposed by Bhaskar is related to the notions of social structure and human agency. In his disavowal of both

individualist voluntarism and collectivist reification of social entities, Bhaskar (1989a, 1989b) argues for a transformational concept of social activity to understand the relationship between social structure and human agency. Social structure and human agency, as parts of the ontological reality, are two distinct objects with qualitatively different properties and powers; however, they exist interdependently. As Bhaskar (1989a) states:

... the existence of social structure is a necessary condition for any human activity. Society provides the means, media, rules and resources for everything we do ... It is the unmotivated condition for all our motivated productions. We do not create society – the error of voluntarism. But these structures which pre-exist us are only reproduced or transformed in our everyday activities; thus society does not exist independently of human agency – the error of reification. The social world is reproduced and transformed in daily life (p. 3-4).

Here, explicitly, social structures are viewed as prerequisite conditions for people's lives and no social activity is possible without a pre-existing structure. However, they do not exist independently of the social activities of people. Neither is social structure independent of people's conceptions of what they are doing in their activities (Bhaskar, 1979; Mingers, 2004). The transformative potential of human agency is highlighted. It may be helpful to illustrate this notion with an example.

An older Chinese survivor of cancer, whom I know, had experienced a reoccurrence of his cancer. He was told that he would probably have a hundred more days to live and nothing could be done from the health professional point of view. He is a very skilled social actor and narrator. With his strong will to live, he eagerly asked his doctor to think and do something for his illness on one hand and he actively took actions to enhance his immune system and maintain his strength to fight against the illness on the other hand. For example, he insisted on practising *Taiji* almost everyday, even though he experienced severe pain because of his swollen legs, and to eat some so-called "anti-cancer" meals. Being touched by his insistence, the doctor agreed to offer him a new drug to try. However, day after day and week after week, for some unknown or unsaid reasons, he still could not receive the proposed treatment from his doctor. At that time, he had already survived for four months since the confirmation of his cancer

reoccurrence. He realised that he could not afford to wait any longer because of his progressively deteriorating health condition. He decided to make a dramatic move and went back to his home country to seek medical help. After five months of treatment in China, he returned, along with all his medical reports, to New Zealand to see his doctor. The doctor was astonished by his gradual recovery and agreed to continue the chemotherapy and provide follow-up treatments for him. He has survived for more than a year since his cancer reoccurrence. Now an account of this situation in terms of social structure and human agency would be that he had skills, initiatives and good intentions to change his health condition and continue his life. However, he was obstructed by the existence of social structures within which some individuals have particular powers to influence others' lives or ways of living. They are powerful because they occupy particular positions in the social system. Nevertheless, it is not the end of the story. Undoubtedly, his initial action of fighting cancer was constrained by some social structures. The consciousness and subsequent motivated actions of him as a human agency had, more or less, produced an effect on transforming those structures.

I regard that this concept is of relevance to the project. It is because, in order to obtain a fuller understanding of the phenomenon of ageing and ways to ageing well, I am not only simply looking at people's lived experiences but also critically considering the experiences in the social context which enables or constrains those experiences.

Social constructionism

Epistemology is concerned with how we can know about reality and how we acquire knowledge. Simply speaking, it is "a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know" (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). It is also about the nature, conditions, possibilities and limits of knowledge (Danermark et al., 2002). The epistemological position that I adopt in this research is social constructionism, which is considered as a vital epistemological stance for qualitative research. Social constructionism is a "broad church" and there is not a single social constructionist position (Stam, 2001). There are intellectual differences among the thinkers who might be identified by themselves as social constructionists, and, in turn, different versions of social constructionism have emerged (Burkitt, 1998; Schwandt, 2000). However, they share the primary concern with "explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live" (Gergen, 1985, p. 266).

It is to explore and understand meaningful social life, social action and practices of people. Social constructionists critically question the unproblematic perception of the world and challenge the objective, unbiased basis of conventional knowledge (Burr, 2003; Gergen, 1985). In particular, they reject empiricism to assume scientific knowledge as a copy of objects in the empirical world and as an internal representation of the state of world nature. Instead, social constructionism invites us to take a critical stance towards our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world, the commonly accepted concepts, understandings and categories. It also challenges the notion of total objectivity and argues that all scientific knowing unavoidably consists of the interpretations of observations and meanings (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1997).

Social constructionism states that the ways in which we understand the world and all forms of knowledge are historically, socially and culturally specific (Houston, 2001; Burr, 2003). All knowledge, and thus all meaningful reality, is derived from the participation of persons within their world (Crotty, 1998) and active interchanges among persons in relationships (Gergen, 1985). That is, people construct it from their perspectives of looking at the world through daily interactions in which they engage with each other. Hence, the world was without meaning before the existence of human beings; human beings are responsible for interpreting and constructing meanings about the world objects (Gergen, 1999a; Kukla, 2000). This highlights the subjective and multiple natures of individual realities.

In opposition to a radical constructivist notion that meaning-making activity resides in the individual mind, social constructionism considers meaning-making as a relational activity (McNamee, 2004) and meaning generation is shaped by conventions of language and other social processes (Schwandt, 1994). Thus, knowledge is the product of these relational and social processes and truth is regarded as multiple (Misra, 1993). With the acceptance of multiple views of reality, all knowledge claims about reality are intelligible and belong to particular times and social contexts (Stephens, 2008). For any situation or event, multiple descriptions and interpretations are possible. The particular forms of knowledge such as theories and explanations of psychology can change from time to time and culture to culture.

Social constructionism challenges the empiricist notions of language as a mirror of reality and of an independent world (Gergen, 1985, 1999b). By viewing language as a neutral, transparent medium between people and the world, empiricism regards that the objective meanings of the world can be simply carried by language. Indeed, for social constructionism, language is not only a means of expressing ourselves. When people talk with each other, the meanings of the world get constructed. The use of language is action-orientated and the role of language is performative (Wetherell & Potter, 1988), constructive (Burr, 1999, 2003) and productive rather than only reflective (Edley, 2001). It is through language, common concepts and meanings can be generated. People use language to achieve particular purposes and consequences. They do things with their discourse that is made out of pre-existing linguistic resources (Wetherell & Potter, 1988). In addition, social constructionism denies the concept of knowledge as mental representation (Gergen, 1985; Schwandt, 2000). Knowledge is something that we do together, rather than something that we possess (Burr, 2003). Hare-Mustin and Marecek (1988) state that “language and meaning-making are important resources held by those in power” (p. 455). Power allows those people to create the world from their viewpoints and desires and is blurred when language is viewed as description only. These underpinning assumptions of language, knowledge and knowledge production allow for the role of “human agency” in constituting the meaningful reality of our social world.

Reconciling a critical realist ontology with a social constructionist epistemology for the project

There is little doubt that social constructionism, with its vigorous challenges to essentialism and individualism, has a significant influence within psychology. It has opened an alternative door to research, moving away from explaining social phenomena in terms of individual properties of persons, to understanding such phenomena as constructed in the social realm with particular social structures and power relations. However, a social constructionist approach to research particularly focusing on language or discourse has its limitations and has received criticisms (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999).

In objection to the mainstream psychology’s notions of the self as unique, unitary, rational, isolated and as a self-contained individual, social constructionism provides an

alternative way to understanding the person and the self. Bringing back the self into the social sphere, social constructionism claims that the individual is shaped within social, cultural and historical processes. Thus, individual identity and sense of self are constructed in the process of human conversational interchange (Gergen, 1999c). Needless to say, social constructionism has made major contributions to advance the knowledge of the self. However, again, the social constructionist concepts of self and identity are not without problems. For example, Burr (1999) asserts that, with its over-concentration on the role of language and discourse in constructing the world and the person, social constructionism reduces not only the individual to a social, cultural and historical construction but also the self to a text. “No longer the originator or author of its own ideas, the self becomes turned into a text, a complex narrative accomplishment suffused with discourses” (p. 115). When the person is simply a product of society’s discourse, the status of human experience becomes questionable. Our personal agency would be neglected when our experience is dismissively reducible to subject positions in discourse. I do acknowledge the constructive role of language through which meanings, concepts and knowledge are generated. What is missing here is the practical use of language in which humans as active agents put their language into practice (Wittgenstein, 1953, as cited in Burkitt, 1994). In resolving this issue, some constructionists retain some sense of agency in terms of acknowledging people’s capacity to negotiate, accept or resist subject positions in discourse (Burr, 1999, 2002).

The other issue related to social construction of the self is a lack of attention to embodiment which also cannot be reduced to discourse. By ignoring the body and the fact that we, human beings, are also embodied beings, Cromby and Nightingale (1999) indicate that “social constructionism obscures and downplays the significance of its functional, physiological, hormonal, anatomical and phenomenological aspects” (p. 10). In so doing, our embodied experience is merely regarded as the outcome of performative discourse and social practices. The materiality of the body and the embodied self of the person have been disregarded as a result (Cromby, 2004). Burkitt (1994, 1998), in his rejection of treating the body as mere metaphor, argues for an embodied social self. While acknowledging the discursively constructed world is crucial for knowledge of the self, he asserts that there is an important aspect of the self grounded in the experience of the body. Referring to Bourdieu and Elias’ work on social relations and interdependencies, Burkitt (1994) acknowledges that the bodily

experience is inevitably shaped by social relations and practices. This experience is also interdependent with human cognition through which people orient themselves within their world and experience their own selves. Burkitt (1998) also asserts that we, as embodied beings, have socio-physical powers to transform our world and reformulate our bodies through mediated actions in social relations and practices.

In a similar fashion, Burr (1999) recognises the existence of extra-discursive aspects of our social world, which are very difficult, if not impossible, to access through language and discourse. In questioning the adequacy of discourse to define and produce bodily experience but without denying an effect of discourse, she argues for the body with its creative and expressive power as a site of meaning-making. It is through the body some personal experience that we know but hardly tell is assessable in the extra-discursive, lived world of embodiment. For example, when I reflect upon the experience of interviewing the older participants, a smile was like a welcome, in which bodies took their cues from each other and allowed for continuing an enthusiastic conversation. We both recognised with relative ease the meaning of each invitation and response. However, it is difficult to find words to translate these meanings into language.

With a special focus on language and a view of reality as constructed and multiple, is it possible to incorporate a social constructionist epistemology with a critical realist ontology to inform research? Edley (2001), drawing upon Derek Edwards' distinction between ontological and epistemic (epistemological) senses of social construction, notes that there is a conflation or confusion of these two different senses of social constructionism. It is from this confusion many disputes surrounding social constructionism have arisen. In refusing the notion that language corresponds or mirrors the reality, social constructionists often state that there is nothing outside the text or discourse. This statement is often challenged by people from an ontological point of view. However, Edley (2001) asserts that it is about epistemological rather than ontological issue. That is, how we know the world from the social constructionist viewpoint is through language or discourse with their constructive nature. It is an epistemological claim rather than an ontological claim about what the world is and what sorts of things exist. That is, "to say that meaningful reality is socially constructed is not to say that it is not real" (Crotty, 1998, p. 63). This argument resonates with what Bhaskar called "epistemic fallacy" as discussed above. In fact, in line with social

constructionism, critical realism acknowledges the socially constructed nature of knowledge. It also emphasises the constructive role of language in knowledge production and theory development (López, 2003). Our knowledge of social reality is conceptually mediated. All concepts are relative, contingent and subject to change according to time and space. However, as critical realists insist, facts are *theory-dependent* but not *theory-determined* (Danermark et al., 2002). Language constructs the interpretations of the reality instead of the reality itself. With this clarification, scholars such as Bhaskar (1989a), Crotty (1998) and Nightingale and Cromby (2002) argue for the compatibility of ontological realism and epistemological constructionism in informing research strategies and processes.

In summary, in deciding my philosophical stances which inform the project, I was looking for a position which assumes no fixed, essentialist foundations of the world, but maintains the possibility of understanding the self within a real but contingent physical, biological, social and cultural world (Martin & Sugarman, 2000). I regard the critical realist ontology in conjunction with the social constructionist epistemology as appropriate to form the foundation for the theoretical and methodological considerations which guide the project being undertaken. Critical realism assumes that there exists a reality, but which can only be imperfectly apprehended because of inevitable human intellectual fallibility. Therefore, our alleged knowledge is always fallible. Nonetheless, this fallibility is not necessarily considered as inadequacy or insufficiency of scientific research (Scott, 2010). In agreement with social constructionism, critical realism maintains that knowledge is a social product constructed in its particular time and space (social context). However, it simultaneously takes account of the effects of objective existence of reality in order to facilitate understanding social phenomena as closely as possible. In this respect, although what I take to be knowledge is socially constructed, it is not necessary that I deny that there exist “real” persons and “real” selves. While I place importance on language and discourse to understand the self and its construction, I also acknowledge that some aspects of the self are beyond the discursive domain.

By adopting the critical realist approach to social constructionist work for understanding the self in this project, I consider neither the self as an asocial entity separated from its social, cultural and historical contexts with a fixed identity, nor the self as reducible to the prevailing social norms (Archer, 2003; Cruickshank, 2003). Indeed, the self is to be

conceived as an ongoing process with transformative potential of human agency. I accept the full importance of the social aspect of the self that has been advocated by social constructionists. However, in keeping with the stratified and differentiated reality from critical realist ontological viewpoint, I also realise that this social aspect cannot be entirely isolated itself from the biological and physical aspects of the self and free from their constraints (Steinmetz, 1998). The self is socially mediated and constructed through social practices and human interactions but not completely socially determined. I agree with some social constructionists who state the necessity of including “some notion of the self as a process embodied within individuals” (Cromby & Standen, 1999, p. 144). Rather than ignoring their embodied origins, I consider the lives of older people for whom their embodied nature is a particular issue. Body does matter because the biological and physiological changes in old age are an influential factor in older people’s everyday experiences and relationships. These biological and physiological factors impose limitations upon and provide possibilities for what older people can do and say; together with other material factors, they, in turn, constrain the construction of selves and identities and what subject position people may plausibly take up (Cromby & Standen, 1999).

To conclude, I adopt the critical realist ontological and the social constructionist epistemological positions underlying my theoretical and methodological approaches to conducting this research. In the next chapter, I will provide a review of the dialogical theory of the self and Chinese conceptualisations of the self that are relevant to the research questions.

Chapter 3

Theoretical orientation: Dialogical perspectives of the self

No topic, perhaps, has ever received such excessive attention than self and identity in a broad spectrum of academic disciplines, particularly in psychology. This has resulted in a rich development of theory and research related to self and identity in the past decades (see e.g., Baumeister, 1999; Elliott, 2010; Leary & Tangney, 2003; Mansfield, 2000 for review). Given the diversity of theoretical perspectives and approaches to researching and understanding the complexities of selfhood and personal experience, the language used by social scientists to conceptualise selfhood appears noticeably different (Elliott, 2010). The terms “self” and “identity” are often used interchangeably without arriving at a definitional consensus (Côté & Levine, 2002; Smith & Sparkes, 2008), nor is there a clear distinction between these two terms.

In constructionist and dialogical psychology, there have been attempts to reach an understanding of the self. This chapter explores the ideas of James, Bakhtin, Hermans, Mead and Goffman to move towards a dialogical, relational and social understanding of the self. The Chinese conceptualisations of the person and the self are also examined. This move will provide a theoretical notion of the self developed for this thesis, which will be informed to analyse and understand older Chinese migrants’ self-identities in relation to their experience of ageing in New Zealand.

William James’ notion of the extended self

In 1890, William James (1842-1910), one of the early pragmatists, made an extensive discussion of the self by providing a comprehensive account of the nature of self-consciousness and the self in his influential book *Principles of Psychology*. In objecting to seeing the individual as free from all social bonds, pragmatists regard ideas as being socially produced through dialogue within everyday human interactions, and as being tools that allow us to actively participate in the world (Burkitt, 2008). Therefore, “human consciousness is not simply a mirror image of the environment”, nor belongs to some inner self; instead, it is a creative and imaginative part of the activity in which it evolves as “a means for humans to better adapt to the environment” (Burkitt, 2008, pp. 32-33). For James, self-consciousness is considered as an objective function in which

people are actively engaged in and adapt to their everyday conditions of existence. He proposed a well-known notion of “the stream of consciousness” or “the stream of thought”. Consciousness is temporal and spatial in nature, constantly changing in time and space of an individual’s life and experience. As the stream of thought is always changing, it is impossible to suppose some fixed entity beyond the stream itself (Barresi, 2002). Instead of jumping from one experience to the other, human consciousness does remember, accumulate and incorporate experiences in its flow from the past, through the present and into the future. It, in turn, can be attributed to not only the temporal and spatial nature of the self but also the continuity of the self (Burkitt, 2008).

While dealing with the self, James introduced two discriminated components of the self; the self as subject or the *I* and the self as object or the *Me* (James, 1999/1918). An alternative way to conceptualise this is that the *I* is equal to the self as knower and the *Me* is equal to the self as known. Three defining features that characterise the *I* are continuity, distinctness and volition (Hermans, 2001a; Hermans & Kempen, 1993). The continuity is featured by a sense of personal identity and of sameness through time. A feeling of distinctness manifests itself in which a person with his or her own identity feels himself or herself existing separately from others, that is, a sense of individuality. Finally, a sense of personal volition is expressed by the continuous appropriation and rejection of thoughts by which the self acts as an active processor of experience, continuously organising and subjectively interpreting experience. The experience of continuity, distinctness and volition implies that the *I* at any given moment is conscious and aware of self-reflectivity (Hermans, 1996a).

James realised that there is a gradual transition between *Me* and *mine* (Hermans, 2003; Hermans & Kempen, 1993). James describes the empirical self, that is, *Me*, as the sum total of all that a person feels and identifies as belonging to oneself. This *Me* not only includes the body and psychic powers but also is extended to consist of all things and people in the living environment that give the person same feelings and emotions. He further states that the *Me* is divided in three basic kinds of constituents; they are the material *Me*, the social *Me* and the spiritual *Me*. He asserts that the body which is identified by us and others is a vital part of the material *Me*. In this way, the *I* is intrinsically related to the (material) *Me* and is inevitably bound to the existence of one’s body (Hermans & Kempen, 1993). In accordance with the degree of intimacy,

what follow are the clothes, our family, our home and other material possessions with which we identify ourselves. Owing to our additive and accumulated consciousness, we feel the continuity of our self-identity by “being in the same body” and “surrounded by our possessions” (Burkitt, 2008, p. 35).

The social *Me*, according to James, is the recognition we receive from others. He contends that, as gregarious social beings, we have innate desire to be noticed favourably by others, particularly by those we know. So we take perspectives of others and care about their opinions to us. James considers that we all have as many social selves as there are others who know us and carry their own images of us. Others may see us in a different light and find different aspects of our disposition in different social contexts where we speak and act differently. In this respect, the social *Me* only provides some relative stability and continuity to identity as this aspect of the self changes over time and depending on different contexts (Burkitt, 2008). Hermans and Kempen (1993) argue that the intrinsic *I*-(material) *Me* relation has settled the question of the mind-body dualism; whereas the inclusion of the social *Me* has resolved the problem of self-other dualism. “The self is – as *I* – distinct from other people, but – as social *Me* – the perspective of the other is included in the self” (p. 45).

The spiritual *Me* is the whole collection of the stream of consciousness about the self up to the moment at which we live. It includes our psychic faculties, dispositions, capacities, abilities and habits through which we know ourselves. Generally speaking, the spiritual *Me* is “a certain totality of our experience” available to us at any given moment as an object of our most conscious reflection, from which certain emotions and feelings arise (Burkitt, 2008, p. 35). Although James does not say it, Burkitt (2008) believes that it would assume to include the stories we tell about our lives and the ways in which our experience and memory are organised. In short, the core of the spiritual *Me* is its capacity to reflect on one’s self and react to it.

Obviously, the self resides in the *Me* that is the object upon which consciousness reflects (Burkitt, 2008). This is the empirical self – *Me* – lived with others in everyday life. James further formulates the relationship between *I* and *Me* in that the empirical aspects of a person’s life are appropriated into, and thus constitute, *Me* through the activity of the *I* in terms of thinking in the stream of thought (Barresi, 2002). As a

result, according to James, several parts of the self are kept together by a distinct, volitional *I*, which guarantees a person's sense of identity develops over time and also constantly involves change. A unity of the self remains because past events are remembered and connected with the *Me* through the process of appropriation in a continuous stream of thought. This allows a person to consider life as a coherent narrative that "links events from the past to activities in the present and to plans for the future" (Barresi & Juckes, 1997, p. 697). Barresi and Juckes (1997) further regard that James' conceptualisation of the *Me* as an object of self-awareness and self-reflection can be seen as a basis for narrative self-construction. Inspired by James' conception of *I* and *Me*, Sarbin (1986) has translated the *I-Me* distinction into a narrative framework in the study and understanding of the self, in which the *I* represents the author or narrator and the *Me* the actor or narrative figure. In the process of self-reflection, *I* as author can organise his or her experience and imaginatively construct a story by reconstructing the experience from the past and imagining the future, in which the *Me* becomes the protagonist.

Although James (1999) considers that personal identity remains just the same through time based on "the resemblance in essential respects" or "the continuity of the phenomena" (p. 75), he asserts that there is generic difference which coexists with and is as real as generic sameness in the self. That is, from the one point of view, I see I am one self, but from the other point of view, I see I am quite as many selves. In fact, as Hermans (1987) argues, it is not very realistic to simply regard the self as a unified whole without tension and diversification. James has also been well aware that a person with diverse aspirations would have potential internal rivalry and conflict among alternative empirical selves. In this case, organisation is needed in which the person comes to choose among conflicting alternatives or to combine them together. It is obvious that, from James' developed argument, there is an existence of continuity of the self in the stream of thought and simultaneously a person as an active agent has capacity to create discontinuity, implying the multiplicity of the self (Hermans, 1999, 2001a).

Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of polyphony and the self

Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) was a Russian literary scholar, who provided enormous inspirations for modern psychology and for understanding of the human mind in terms of dialogicality and multiplicity in particular. He has made significant contributions to

advance the conception of the self from a dialogical perspective and this has led to a new, rich and innovative field in the study of self and identity (see e.g., Bhatia, 2002; Frank, 2005; Hermans, 1996a, 2001a, 2003; Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Hermans, Kempen, & van Loon, 1992; Hermans, Rijks, & Kempen, 1993; König, 2009; Richardson, Rogers, & McCarroll, 1998; Salgado & Hermans, 2005; Sullivan, 2007; Tappan, 1999). From reading and analysing Feodor Dostoevsky's works, Bakhtin has proposed the notion of the polyphonic novel and he published his ideas in the book *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics* in 1929. In his book, Bakhtin (1984) asserts that human consciousness is best understood as polyphonic resulting from ongoing dialogues between different voices, speaking from different positions. He argues that there is not a single author of Dostoevsky's novels at work; instead, several authors tell their own stories from their own perspectives, reflecting a multiplicity of consciousnesses and worlds that are heterogeneous and even opposed. Thus, as Hermans (2003) states, the distinct characteristic of the polyphonic novel is that "it is composed of a number of independent and mutually-opposing viewpoints embodied by characters involved in dialogical relationships" (p. 93). The characters are conceived of as independent authors with having the status of another *I* (Holquist, 1990) and with their own authoritative voices and perspectives of the world. This represents a plurality of differently located voices of the same Dostoevsky. In this sense, these characters, like the *Mes* in James' notion, illustrate the multiplicity of the self. Representing different voices from their spatially separated positions, the characters may enter into dialogical relationships in which they pose questions and give answers to each other, agree and disagree with each other and attempt to persuade and deride each other. New meanings arise within and also between persons as a result of these dialogues.

By applying Bakhtin's notion to understand the Chinese self, the self can be regarded as a polyphonic novel which allows for creating a more complex organisation of the self (Hermans et al., 1992; Hermans et al., 1993; Hermans, 1996a). It allows the "one and the same individual to live in a multiplicity of worlds, with each world having its own author who may tell a story relatively independent of the authors of the other worlds" (Hermans, 1996a, p.33). Moreover, the individual is assumed to consist of multiple authors who enter into dialogical relationships with each other. In this way, the self involves open and continuous dialogues among multiple voices and the self-identities of

older Chinese migrants are formed through the internalisation of a series of ongoing dialogues from their newly living worlds in New Zealand (Richardson et al., 1998).

Space and dialogue, as seen above, are intrinsic characteristics of the polyphonic novel. For Bakhtin (1984), dialogue makes it possible to study the inner world of the individual in terms of an interpersonal relationship. By transforming an interior thought of a particular character into an utterance, dialogical relations spontaneously develop between this utterance and the utterance of spatially separated real or imaginal others. In this sense, there is an intrinsic relatedness of self and other in Bakhtin's dialogism (Holquist, 1994). Bakhtin (1984) emphasises that "To be means to communicate" (p. 287) and Marková (2003) further expands that "to communicate means to be for another, and through the other, for oneself" (p. 257). This assumes a communicational as well as relational primacy for human existence. Bakhtin (1981) states that the words we use are "half-ours and half-someone else's" which are part of social languages, inevitably shaping what individual voices can say (p. 385). In this respect, our voices are saturated with those of others. What we speak is not just from our own positions but also from a ground given in our cultures through such as a genre of speech or role enactment (Bakhtin, 1984). Nevertheless, utterances are always created, recreated, embodied and performed by a particular person in a particular moment of relationship. Thus, all utterances are multivoiced and, simultaneously, dialogical (Skinner, Valsiner, & Holland, 2001). While being used in every meaning-making process, these utterances are always addressed towards both an object and an interlocutor. Correspondingly, the person is positioned towards both the object and other(s) (Salgado & Hermans, 2005). In this respect, selfhood is characterised as a highly dynamic process of dialogical becoming (Marková, 2003; Valsiner, 2002) and the self is created within the relational experiences of being-with or being-against others (Salgado & Hermans, 2005). Bakhtin's notion of polyphony and dialogism form the major philosophical origins of the dialogical self theory which will be discussed in the next section.

Hurbert Hermans' theory of the dialogical self

Inspired mainly by the distinction between *I* and *Me* devised by James (1918) and conceptions of dialogue and polyphonic novel as proposed by Bakhtin (1981, 1984), Hermans and colleagues proposed the notion of the self resulting from dialogue and relationships and introduced the theory of the dialogical self (Hermans et al., 1992;

Hermans & Kempen, 1993). Since then, this theory has been further elaborated, developed and expanded by Hermans, his collaborators and various psychologists over the past twenty years (see e.g., Bertau, 2004; Burkitt, 2010a, 2010b; Cunha & Gonçalves, 2009; Ellis & Stam, 2010; Fogel, de Koeber, Bellagamba, & Bell, 2002; Hermans, 1996a, 1996b, 1999, 2001a, 2001b, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2004; Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007; Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 2004; Hermans & Kempen, 1995; Hermans et al., 1993; Leiman, 2002; Raggatt, 2010a; Ribeiro & Gonçalves, 2010; Salgado & Hermans, 2005; Valsiner, 2002). In 2010, Hermans and Hermans-Konopka have provided us the most recent and comprehensive version of the dialogical self theory. What is particularly impressive about the dialogical self theory is that it provides alternative conceptions of the mind and of the self by skilfully incorporating a range of theoretical elaborations of the self from James to postmodernism but without falling in an individualistic or relativistic viewpoint. It also makes serious attempts to reconcile the many paradoxes of the self in terms of agency, subordination, unity, multiplicity, continuity and discontinuity (Raggatt, 2010b). Furthermore, the theory offers an innovative cultural account of the self. Instead of viewing self and culture as core and essential, Hermans (2001a) conceptualises self and culture in terms of “a multiplicity of positions among which dialogical relationships can be established”, which, in turn, allows for the study of the self as “culture-inclusive” and the study of culture as “self-inclusive” (p. 243).

The dialogical self as a multiplicity of I-positions

Viewing James’ extension of the self through the lens of a narrative framework and reformulating his *I-Me* relationship in terms of Bakhtin’s polyphonic novel, Hermans and colleagues portray the self as a dialogical narrator in their theorisation of the dialogical self theory (Hermans, 1996a, 1996b, 1999, 2001a, 2001b, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2004; Hermans et al., 1992; Hermans & Kempen, 1993). Specifically, Hermans and colleagues define the dialogical self as a multiplicity of dynamic but relatively autonomous *I*-positions that are intertwined with the minds of real, actual and imagined others and are in dialogue with them. In this conception, the *I* is not static but always positioned in time and space, being able to move from one spatial position to another. Each move depends on the exchanges that take place in internal dialogue within the individual and/or external dialogue between the individual and others. Hermans (2001a, 2002a) argues that the self is like a “society”, constituted from the various *I*-positions,

such as *I* as an older migrant, *I* as a burden of family and *I* as a considerate mother. The *I* fluctuates among these different and even opposed positions according to changes in time and circumstances, suggesting the temporal and spatial features of the dialogical self. Furthermore, the “agentlike qualities of the *I*” can imaginatively endow each position with a voice (Hermans, 1996a, p. 42). When the *I* moves between positions with their voices, dialogical relationships emerge. From this viewpoint, the dialogical self can be considered as an interaction between varying voices.

For Hermans (2001a, 2004; Hermans et al., 1992), the *I*-positions take turns in a dialogue and voices function as interacting characters in a story, being involved in dialogical processes such as question and answer, agreement and disagreement, understanding and misunderstanding and cooperation and opposition. Meanings of personal experience are created as a result of their conversational discussions. Hence, the *I*-positions not only have potential to speak but also to hear. By considering the others’ perspectives, they also have the capacities to change and transform. Hermans further maintains that we are always engaged in sometimes competing and sometimes collaborating dialogues between voices inside and outside the self. Taking a narrative stance, each *I*-position is assumed to have a story to tell about his or her experience from his or her own point of view, entertaining specific dialogical relationships. “As different voices, these characters exchange information about their respective *Me*’s, resulting in a complex, narratively structured self” (Hermans, 2001a, p. 248). Along these lines, a person is conceived of as a multivoiced active agent, with the power of imagination, who can act as if he or she were the other in terms of *I*-positions. The self is constantly in its dynamic movements of positioning, counter-positioning and re-positioning, possibly resulting in changes and self-innovation (Hermans, 1999). Self-narrative (re)construction, thus, results from the dynamic configurations of these varying *I*-positions (Ribeiro & Gonçalves, 2010) and self-identity is a result of a mutual, dialogical process.

The dialogical self as embodied and social

In relation to the notion of the material *Me*, James assumes that human existence is of embodied nature. Hermans (1996a) also claims that “voice assumes an embodied actor located in space” coordinating with other actors (p. 44). This implies not only embodied but also social nature of the dialogical self in which the concept of voice is

explicitly related to the perception of voices of others. Moreover, a position is always spatially located in relation or in opposition to other positions. These suggest the embodied self is always tied to a particular *I*-position in real or imagined space and time. Each embodied *I*-position has a unique psychological quality and spatial perspective, perhaps originating from previous experiences and the voices of others, particularly of significant others (Hermans & Kempen, 1993).

According to Hermans (2001a), the dialogical self is fundamentally social in the sense that other people occupy positions in a multivoiced self. That is, the other is considered as another person in the self. The self is “here” and “there”, and the person, engaging in imagination, can act as if she or he were the other and vice versa. Rather than seeing the self take the actual perspective of the other as expressed by Mead (1934), Hermans emphasises that “I’m able to construe another person or being as a position that I can occupy and as a position that creates an alternative perspective on the world and myself” (p. 250). Owing to the involvement of imagination, however, the constructed perspective may or may not be congruent with the perspective of the actual other. Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) further elaborate the relation between the self and others:

The self is riddled with the mysterious and alien otherness of others. That is, other beings exist within selves: through the language and tools that we use, through the interiorization of cultural and individual voices, through the multiple roles that we adopt, and through our ethical obligation to the other’s call. ... this otherness penetrates the self from the most explicitly “external” realms to the most seemingly “internal” ones, whether carried in the voices and positions of others-in-the-self or through the less obviously internal ones (pp. 131-132).

The dialogical self as multiplicity within unity

Another distinctive feature of the dialogical self is that it weaves together the ideas of multiplicity and unity, in other associated terms, discontinuity and continuity. As discussed above, James acknowledges both unity and multiplicity of the self through his elaboration on the notion of the stream of consciousness and the *I-Me* relationship. Bakhtin also views that there is multiplicity of characters by introducing the notion of multivoicedness. Following James and Bakhtin’s reasoning, Salgado and Hermans

(2005; Hermans, 2003) argues that unity and multiplicity of the self are two simultaneous by-products of a person's dialogical experience. They are complementary but contrasting poles of the self and bridged together in the concept of *I*-position. There are multiple voiced *I*-positions occupied by one and the same person while addressing different other(s) and invisible potential audiences in dialogues. The *I* emerges as "the centre of the here-and-now experience" in a mutually dependent relation with the other (Salgado & Hermans, 2005, p. 10). The *I* may occupy a different position from one moment to the next. Moving from one position to another, the *I* allows for multiple voices to speak and to be heard. This temporal shift between positionings and re-positionings creates a sense of self-discontinuity and multiplicity. However, despite the radically changing *I*-positions, the *I* as the person's experiential centre remains. Different positions are "diachronically and synchronically united by a continuous *I*" (Hermans, 2003). This enduring sense of "centredness" creates a sense of unity of the self.

The Chinese conception of a person

What does it mean to be a person in the Chinese conception? Yang (2006) has provided a comprehensive discussion and reconstruction of the Chinese personhood from a historical perspective. She has adopted and placed importance on the Chinese philosophical way of thinking in terms of *yin/yang* (陰/陽) in researching and understanding of the self. Based on the long-term observation of natural processes that operate in the constantly changing world, ancient Chinese scholars believed that *yin* and *yang* are the two fundamental, inseparable forces or aspects of *qi* (氣) (Zhang, 2002). Both *yin* and *yang* originate from the universal and creative power, the *Dao*¹ (道), from which everything is connected and related. All life and things are constituted and maintained in harmonious balance by the operation of *qi* (De Groot, 1912, as cited in Hwang & Chang, 2009). By adopting the *yin/yang* mode of thinking, every phenomenon can be viewed as *yin-yang* pairs, such as earth-sky, night-day, cold-hot, women-men, self-other, body-mind, ill-health, personal-communal, individual-society, individualism-collectivism and so on.

¹*Dao* is also written as "Tao" in English and "*Dao*" is used in this writing.

Situating the person in the social and moral contexts

By adopting the *yin/yang* mode of thinking, Yang (2006) has examined five pairs of terms to understand and reconstruct the Chinese personhood envisioned by the ancient Chinese intellectuals. The pairs of terms are *jun zi/xiao ren* (君子/小人, gentlemen/little people), external/internal, intention/action, body/mind and *tian/ren* (天/人, Heaven/human).

As recapitulated by Yang (2006), the rulers of the Zhou Dynasty established and made use of *li* (禮) and *yue* (樂) to educate and manage Yin people during the Yin-Zhou Transition Period. It aimed to stabilise the society and restore a sense of social order, harmony and collectivity. *Li* is defined as a set of role expectations, moral standards and social norms that guide and shape people's behaviours and actions appropriate to their social roles. Practising *li* allows people to live virtuously and together in harmony. *Yue*, which literally means music, functions as a vehicle to arouse delightful emotions to help people internalise and practise *li*. In order to convincingly and effectively implement *li* and *yue* in the society, *li* and *yue* were discursively positioned as messages from Heaven. The Yin people were situated in a web of interconnected social relationships and roles and encouraged to engage in collective activities. In this way, the person in the Chinese conception has been constructed as tied to the society and as a social and relational being defined in specific dyadic relationships such as father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother and so on.

Living in the period of social and political chaos, Confucius believed that the only way to achieve social order and develop a tranquil, harmonious and stable society was through restoring virtues of rulers and communal effort of every person's moral self-cultivation (Hwang, 2001; Yang, 2006). The full Chinese term of self-cultivation is *xin yang xing* (修心養性), which means "rectifying one's mind and nurturing one's character with a particular art or philosophy" (Hwang & Chang, 2009, p. 1011). Self-cultivation can be understood as a process of self-realisation in which a person actualises an innate sense of morality and ethical ideal (Yu, 1996). It involves a process of deliberation and practice of *li*, which is fundamentally social and collective in nature (Ivanhoe, 1993). That is, everyone living in the society should take responsibility and act towards others according to *li*. In doing so, social order will be established and

maintained, which, in turn, brings peace and harmony to all people. As such, the Confucian conception of a person affirms the importance and the strength of the person. It considers the person as capable of cultivating his or her inherent, true nature and sageliness through diligent learning and conscientious effort, which, in turn, of “having the virtue of *ren* (仁, benevolence)”, “becoming a moral being” and achieving sagehood (Canda & Furman, 2010; Yang, 2006, p. 336).

The *jun zi/xiao ren* pair created by Confucius further elaborates the Confucian conception of the person. *Jun zi* has been constructed as a man² of noble character or of virtue and with moral cultivation (Ho, 1995; Hwang, 2001). *Jun zi* makes every effort to actualise Confucian cardinal virtues in human relationships founded on the ethical system of *ren-yi-li* (仁-義-禮, benevolence-righteousness-propriety), to perfect himself or herself and aim at harmony. He or she accommodates the interests of all concerned in interpersonal relationships and social interactions. *Xiao ren* is not necessarily deformed, pathological or evil but just an ordinary person who follows the Confucian values superficially (Ahn, 2008). He or she is preoccupied with what is beneficial to him or her and choose to prioritise his or her own interest while interacting with others. The recognition of a person’s autonomy is reflected in the Confucian concept of self-cultivation (King & Bond, 1985).

It is manifested that the Confucian conception of personhood was mainly constructed around the idea of moral self-cultivation. Yang (2006) argues that the central focus on the Chinese personhood is not about what a person is, but what a person can become. To be a person, one needs to decide what kind of a person he or she wants to become and set up a goal to strive for through self-cultivation. The cultivation of the person proceeds from external teaching and learning prevailing moral codes and social norms to internalised moral motivation and intention. The person then externalises the internal virtues and puts these into action in everyday practical living.

² The term “man” is used to refer to the individual in accordance with Confucian terminology. Therefore, it should be understood as referring to both man and woman.

An embodied being

It is vital to realise that the lifetime project of self-cultivation is related to both one's mind and one's body (Ames, 1993a). In the Confucian conception, a person is constructed as the inherited body of one's parents in *Li Ji* (禮記, Record of Rituals) (Hwang, 1999). Tu (1994) states that the central emphasis of the body is not only on "the irreducibility of the vital energy and raw stuff for personal growth but also on the potentiality of the body to become an aesthetic expression of the self" (p. 178). As the physical body is a critical focus of the self, it is actually "one's "lived body" seen from within rather than "body as corpse" experienced from without" (Ames, 1993b, p.165).

Within the *yin/yang* mode of thinking, there is an underlying indispensable and correlative relationship between body and mind. Body and mind are not regarded as different kinds of existence in an essential, separated way. Indeed, the physical and the conscious are inevitably integrated. Ames (1993b) regards a "person" as a "psychosomatic process" in the Chinese conception (p. 158). The person is seen as associated with his or her thought processes and also with his or her bodily existence. The body is assumed as a proper place in which the human heart-mind³ and spirituality dwell; however, the body is also informed by the heart-mind (Tu, 1994). Therefore, the body provides the context and resources for us to cultivate ourselves and achieve ultimate self-transformation. This body-mind conception is in sharp contrast to the Cartesian dualistic notion of body and mind originated from the West (Johnson, 1985; Burkitt, 1998).

In the Chinese conception, a person is not only defined in anthropological terms but also understood in cosmological terms. The ancient Chinese believed that the universe is an ever-changing organic system, with all parts integrated into an ordered cosmic whole (Liu, 2006). The person is assumed as a part of this system and situated at the centre of the universe (Yang, 2006). The nature of human and that of the universe are fundamentally the same (Chan, 1967a; Mei, 1967). According to The Doctrine of the Mean, nature is what Heaven has conferred and human nature is what every individual has received from Heaven (Koller & Koller, 1991). Since there is the "justice of

³ The word "heart" in Chinese character is "心" (*xin*). It not only refers to the most important physical organ of human beings but also is related to the concept of intentionality in Chinese philosophy (Zhang, 2002). It is considered as the centre of human thought and feelings and so it is often translated as heart/mind or heart-mind rather than just heart.

Heaven” and *ren* is the “reality of the universe”, all persons are born equal with value, dignity and a seed of *ren* (benevolence) (Hsieh, 1967, p. 308). As considered by Confucius, what makes a human being a human being and distinguishes human beings from animals is that inherent possession of the seed of humanity. In this way, not only the value and dignity of the person are asserted but also the spiritual aspect of personhood is emphasised.

This belief affirms the possibility of human perfection through the process of self-cultivation by which a person as a spiritual being is capable of realising inherent natural goodness with moral attributes endowed by Heaven in our heart-minds (Tu, 1993, 1994). A fully cultivated and developed mind will embrace all *li*, which, in turn, embraces the whole universe. A person of well-cultivated *ren* “will form one body with Heaven and Earth”⁴ (Chan, 1967a, p. 140). By embodying the universe in the inner world, the person is able to achieve the highest goal of self-cultivation – *tian ren he yi* (天人合一, the unity of Heaven and Man) (Jiang, 1988).

The Chinese conception of the self

The conceptualisation of the Chinese self often centres on the Confucian view and definition of a person (Wu, 1994). Yang (2006) sensibly describes the interwoven relationship between the person and the self, considering the person as a vehicle and the self as a team player in the Confucian heritage. The self is demanded to “keep the person hollow and humble, always finding room for improvement, and that the self is also the person’s enemy when it becomes inflexible and insistent on acting according to raw impulses” (p. 341).

The social relational-oriented self

Yang (1991) considers six distinctive features of the Chinese self under the influence of Confucianism. First, the main journey of the one’s self-development is to gradually develop a moral self through the internalisation of moral standards and social norms. Secondly, under any social circumstances, the self has to act according to *li* at the aim of maintaining social order in a living society. Thirdly, in order to become a moral being,

⁴ Heaven is conceived of as a creative source of human nature and all things and as the determiner of human destiny; Earth is regarded as a generous and respectable nurturer for myriads of things’ growth and development (Canda & Furman, 2010).

the self has to fully commit in the complicated process of self-cultivation throughout an entire life and make every effort to overcome personal weakness, improve and transcend one's self. Fourthly, to make a constant moral improvement, the self is sensitive to personal mistakes as well as bad characteristics and to avoid social criticism and sanction through the psychological mechanisms of conscious self-reflection and self-criticism. Fifthly, the self is seen as flexible and so can psychologically contain one or several persons and one or several groups to constitute a *da wo* (大我, literally meaning the large self). Sixthly, the content of the private self and the public self could be very different; however, the Chinese habitually endure the conflict and contradiction between these two kinds of selves.

Characterising Confucian self-cultivation as a conscious process of self-development, the Chinese self is mainly depicted in relation to a moral self. However, looking closely, this moral being cannot be actualised without placing the self in the context of social relations where interaction with and participation of others as well as moral performance are made possible. As Yang (2006) argues, a person's value in Chinese context lies in one's capability to develop an innate social nature, that is, to love, to connect and to live harmoniously with others. Self-cultivation is proceeded through by which the person gradually relinquishes the private and individuated self (*xiao wo*, 小我, literally meaning the small self) to embrace a larger collectivity to which one belongs (*da wo*, 大我). Following this self-cultivating route, others are gradually included within the boundaries of the individuated self, initially including family members into one's large self, then gradually friends, associates, the community, the country and finally the world. When conflict arises, self-cultivation requires that the person sacrifices the goals of the small self in order to accomplish those of the large self. However, this sacrifice can represent a struggle and the person is constantly involved in self-debate regarding how to choose between the large self and the small self in the process of self-cultivation.

Yang (2006) further elaborates and portrays the Chinese self as a cobweb connected with many other people and each of those people is also a web. The cobweb self is placed in "the centre of a bundle of relationships that link a person's action with the environment and beyond" (p. 345). Within this interconnected and dynamic field of

web, what the person thinks and does influence not only the self but also others linked to the web. Similarly, any actions of these others also influence the person. These dynamic movements may result in reshaping the web and all other webs associated with it. As discussed above, the Chinese conception of personhood centres on the ethical system of social roles and obligations. Therefore, each person involved in the web has social obligations and commitments to particular others who are connected to his or her web (Liu, Li, & Yu, 2010). The actions of the self are then interactive activities as they are defined, established and organised socially and relationally. When older Chinese migrants move to New Zealand, they need to re-cobweb themselves and establish new networks of others in which they have to find ways to adjust to the new environment, to fit in with relevant others and to fulfil particular obligations. These obligations may be modified and newly defined in accordance with the introduction of social norms and values in the host society. Apparently, the cobweb self has an executive function enabling the person to make choices and take actions. This sense of agency and autonomy is considered as a fundamental aspect of the Western self, which is also acknowledged in the Chinese conception of the self. However, the underlying meanings would be different.

Autonomy is regarded as an essential condition for one's freedom and expression of the liberal democratic self in the Western world (Ames, 1994). While relating this notion to the Chinese selfhood, it is mainly understood and manifested in the process of self-cultivation and the gradual formation of a moral self (Lu & Yang, 2006) in a network of social roles and relationships. It is the freedom of moral choice, to choose what is good, follow it and do the good according to the cardinal Confucian value, *ren* (Hsieh, 1967). *Ren* is considered as the dynamic interconnected system of one's self with others in which one should demonstrate affection and concerns while interacting with related others (Chen, 2009, Liu et al., 2010). Obviously, this freedom is not unlimited but embedded in historical, social and cultural contexts. Thus, the emphasis on the autonomous character of the self does not imply that the self and identity is socially and culturally irrelevant. Self-control and self-regulation are primarily exerted with the purposes of restraining oneself from behaving on impulses and of becoming an all-around moral being. Moreover, the Chinese have no inclination to subdue and conquer the nature and the world as the Western people do (Lidin, 1974). Instead, the self

enables the person to seek for harmony with the world, society and others through self-cultivation.

The embodied action-oriented self

Ames (1993b) denotes that it might lead to conceptual impoverishment of the Chinese notions of person and of self if we reduce the discussion and interpretation of these notions in terms of the psychological at the expense of the physical. He states that ontologically, the Chinese tradition is committed to a process rather than a substance. Therefore, in contrast to the Western dominant metaphors for body as images of containers, the body in the Chinese tradition is formulated as a “process” rather than a “thing”, something “done” instead of something one “has” (p. 168).

Ti (體) is the Chinese word for body. As you may see, etymologically, the word, *ti* shares the same part of the Chinese character of *li* (禮). By exploring these two characters, Ames (1993b) has found that there is an intimate and correlative relationship between *ti* and *li*. He translated *li* as ritual actions or ritual practices and further elaborated it as “an inherited tradition of formalised human actions” which shapes and is shaped by the community (p. 169). This body of formalised actions embodies the accumulated meaning and value derived by one’s precursors in a cultural tradition. The continuity of the cultural tradition and its significance largely depend on ritual actions taken by persons. However, this tradition is not fixed; rather, it interacts with persons’ engagement of ritual practices and opens to refinement and reconstruction. As Ames (1993b) states,

A person engaged in the performance of a particular formal action, appropriating meaning from it while seeking himself to be appropriate to it, derives meaning and value from this embodiment, and further strengthens it by his contribution of novel meaning and value (pp. 169-170).

Ritual practices can never separate from the physical body through which they are expressed and performed (Ames, 1993a). In fact, Confucians place importance on the ritualisation of the body through which personal development initiates and self-transformation becomes possible (Tu, 1994). This ritualisation is not simply a passive socialisation process; instead, it involves “the active participation of the heart-mind to

help the body to become a fitting expression of the self in a social context” (Tu, 1994, p. 181). As discussed previously, the person and the self are fundamentally relational and social in the Chinese conception. It is ritual practice that enables persons to assume roles in a matrix of human relationships and define a proper place in relation to others (Ames, 1993a; Hall & Ames, 1998). It is the body which carries out appropriate courses of action to secure the quality of the interpersonal relationships and produce social harmony. Ritualisation of body is seen as a departure point in the personal growth and development. Therefore, body is critical and rich resources that a person employs to experience as well as express his or her own sense of self and social relational self in particular.

Developing one’s innate nature of goodness, improving oneself morally, becoming a moral being and displaying one’s own sense of moral self requires lifetime self-cultivation. The short term of self-cultivation in Chinese is *xiu shen* (修身). *Xiu* (修) means “cultivating” and *shen* (身) is the other Chinese word for body. This obviously reflects the inseparable relation between the Chinese notion of body and the project of self-cultivation (Hall & Ames, 1998). Self-cultivation does never merely stay at the level of theoretical learning and rational understanding of the truth of virtues, moral principles and ethical social norms. It requires both intellectual activity and actual bodily practice. Realisation of one’s self comes true only when one is persistently, genuinely and concretely practising and experiencing those virtues through the body in everyday human affairs.

Confucian scholars have asserted that there is a close relationship between knowledge and action and both are of equal importance. Confucius (1993) emphasised that words and actions should correspond and so what the superior man says should be carried out. Chu Hsi regarded that knowledge and action are always mutually involved and require each other. “As one knows clearly, he acts more earnestly, and as he acts more earnestly, he knows more clearly” (as cited in Chan, 1967b, p. 15). Therefore, we should make utmost and prolonged effort on both acquiring moral knowledge and carrying out the corresponding moral actions. Wang Yang-Ming developed a theoretical idea of the unity of knowledge and action as a distinctive aspect of his general theory of moral self-cultivation (Ivanhoe, 1993). He said, “Knowledge is the

crystallization of the will to act, and action is the task of carrying out that knowledge; knowledge is the beginning of action, and action is the completion of knowledge” (as cited in Chan, 1967b, p. 15).

Therefore, the process of self-cultivation is not simply knowing what a better person is but also acting as a better person and becoming a benevolent person. The ultimate focus is not on the discussion of what is good in morality, but on how to bring about inherent human nature which is good and moral in our daily life. If we go further, the Chinese conception of human being is not a kind of being, rather a “human doing or making” (Ames, 1993a, p. 154). In line with this conception of a person, Yang (2006) advocates a new approach to understanding the Chinese self – the person-making perspective of the self. She regards the self-cultivation process as a person-making process which makes the self both an observer and an embodied actor. As such, the self is considered as a process of action-taking. The self constantly observes, monitors and acts according to acquired moral knowledge and designated roles in particular social relationships. By doing so, the person can improve surrounding human relationships.

The conceptualisations of a social self in the West

Many scholars have argued that there is interplay between culture and self, leading to a considerable contrast between the Western and the Eastern conceptions of self and identity (e.g. Ho, 1995; Lu & Yang, 2006; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). This contrast manifests itself in terms of individualistic autonomous self in the West and collective social self in the East. However, this perspective appears to oversimplify human existence (Chaudhary, 2001). In fact, the social origins of the person and the notion of the social self are not a monopoly in the Eastern conception of the self. The emergence of discussions of the social self, as seen above, can be traced back to as early as James’ conceptualisation of the social *Me* in the nineteenth century. Incorporating these Western social self theories into the Chinese notions of the self can help to develop a richer understanding of the older Chinese migrants’ self.

George Herbert Mead’s interacting social self

In line with James, George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) initiated a great transcendence of a Cartesian dualism in which he connected the self with the other and offered a strong conceptual foundation for the study of the self with its social nature in his remarkable

work *Mind, self, and society* in 1934. Mead conceives the self much more of a social construct, which is produced in social interaction. Indeed, he placed social interaction centre-stage and insisted to study and to understand the self and human actions within its social, cultural and historical contexts. Thus, he places significance on community, institution, society and living environment in which social interactions occur in the development of the mind, self-consciousness and the self. In this regard, there are social forces that shape us and our actions in the course of daily social life (Denzin, 1995; Elliott, 2010).

Like James, Mead employed the pronouns *I* and *Me* in the elaboration of his self theory. The *Me* (generalised other) is the social *Me* in James' term, which is made up of the attitudes and perspectives of others (Elliott, 2010). Mead considers the *I* as "the attitude of the observer" and the *Me* "the object of observed" (Burkitt, 2008, p. 39). The *I* appears when it looks at *Me* from a position of an observer and has an objective sense of *Me*. The self is then the interaction of *I* and *Me*. Similar to the notion of the Chinese cobweb self, Mead maintains that others actively and continuously participate in the definition of the self through social interactions that constitute the cobweb. Our sense of self arises when we regard ourselves as and having become a social object within a web of interacting others. In this regard, older Chinese migrants experience themselves from the ways in which others respond to their actions or from the general standpoints, emerging from New Zealand society, taken towards them. This sense of self-identities is continually modified according to one's ongoing interpretations of the perceived attitudes, thoughts, feelings and actions of others in the changing environment. The self-identities also mediate the older migrants' actions to age and age well in New Zealand.

It is important to realise that those others are not only in the social world but also within the self in terms of voice. Our self-consciousness is always populated by our own voice and (imagined) voices of others (Burkitt, 2008, 2010a). Mead further highlights that, taking the conversational positions of *I* as a speaker (subject) and *Me* as a listener (object), there is similarity between the inner conversations we have with ourselves and the social conversations we have with others. In this way, the self-identity we act and speak to ourselves is the same as if we are acting or speaking to others. By using the pronoun *I* in either self-dialogue or social-dialogue, older Chinese migrants can

reflexively and retrospectively think of themselves, reflect upon and interpret their past experiences and organise their actions based on their interpretations. From Mead's point of view, the self is of a temporal nature because what is identified as *I* in one moment is the objective *Me* in the next moment (Burkitt, 2008). The nature of our lived experience is also embedded in temporality (Mead, 1980). The inherently temporal nature of the self and lived experiences allows the present study to be informed by the narrative methodology that will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Erving Goffman's socially situated self

Another scholar who provides innovative insight for understanding the social self and a conceptual framework for analysing the self of older Chinese migrants in this thesis is Erving Goffman (1922-1982). Giving attention to the social circumstances of interaction in the formation of the self, Goffman (1959) located the self in everyday social life and introduced the dramatising or performing self. He considers the self as a stage-manager of impression from a dramaturgical perspective by employing the metaphor of the theatre (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000; Elliott, 2010). The self as a situated performer or actor has the ability to play a multitude of roles in different social interactions. Rather than simply playing those roles, the individual has to perform self-identities in such a way that he or she feels appropriate and acceptable to a particular audience in a particular staged social circumstance or encounter. In achieving the good impressions of his or her self to others, the individual draws from and adheres to special roles, social norms and values according to particular contexts of interaction. Thus, the performance or presentation of the self, as Goffman states, is situated within people's interactions involving social conventions and ethical assumptions.

Referring to Randall Collins' argument, Elliott (2010) believes that there is a moral implication in Goffman's notions of the self as the presentation, in which the self is also portrayed as moral. Through engaging in routine interactional rituals geared towards moral order, people express and maintain respect for others, social tact and interpersonal trust. People's identities are formed and performed through the adoption of social roles associated with those rituals. In this sense, "morality is part of the process of the production of the self" (Elliott, 2010, p. 43). The presentation of the self to others undoubtedly forms a major part of our social life. To make this presentation possible, the individual agency needs to be acknowledged. The person with creativity and

reflectivity has agentic capacity to claim roles, define situations, decide how to carry out such roles, monitor and reflect upon his or her own and others' role performances (Burr, 2002; Holstein & Gubrium, 2000; Elliott, 2010). From this perspective, we have no difficulty in recognising that the Chinese self as an embodied action-taker towards cultivating moral life can be closely linked to Goffman's socially situated self as a moral performer.

Gathering the strands together to understanding the self

If we assume that there are multiple interpretations and understandings of our meaningful world and the self, we will accept the fact that no theory is perfect, being subject to evaluation and critique. The dialogical self theory appears as a promising account of a relational and dynamically unfolding, cultural self. It seriously takes the critique of dichotomous notions of the self into account, explicitly acknowledges the interface of culture and self, critically addresses the issues of and reconciles multiplicity and unity of the self. It provides alternatives to understanding of the self and other possibilities of self-construction. However, the theory has received criticisms including its overemphasis on the voiced and underplay of the unspeakable to understanding of the intersubjective constitution of the self (Adams, 2010), its inadequacy to consider the wider social situatedness of the individual (O'Sullivan-Lago, 2010) and its under-examination of the ethical dimensions of the self (Ellis & Stam, 2010).

Ellis and Stam (2010) believe that the dialogical self theory has overlooked the self's ethical orientation because of its narrow conception of agency. They consider that every action chosen by the self is in the light of its vision of the good and thus is necessarily an ethical decision. Turning to the work of Paul Ricoeur's ethical self that involves the dialectic of character and actor who keeps one's word, Ellis and Stam have made an attempt to enrich the dialogical self theory by extending the conception of agency from *I* to *I*-position as a whole. They argue that, in choosing its actions to deal with real practical situations, the self *I*-position takes its own and the other *I*-position's aims into account. The self *I*-position promises the other *I*-position to persist in its aims while the other *I*-position holds the self *I*-position accountable. This dynamic of accountability and responsibility as a conceptualised ethical dimension of the dialogical self would be particularly useful in the study of the Chinese self which is featured as a locus of responsibility centring on moral and ethical connotations of human actions.

Despite its limitations, I argue the dialogical self theory as an appropriate analytical framework to be principally adopted for understanding the self of older Chinese migrants and their experiences in this thesis. The notion of the dialogical self makes sense in the Chinese holistic worldview in terms of the *yin/yang* mode of thinking. In the construction of self-identities, the opposing *I*-positions can be understood in the *yin/yang* relationship. The Chinese *yin/yang* mode of thinking is fundamentally not of essentialist nor dualistic nature (Choi, 2000, as cited in Yang, 2006). Although *yin* and *yang* appear as a pair, they do not represent two discrete objects or material elements in their logical contradiction. Rather, they are in a dialectical relation. *Yin* and *yang* are terms delineating “two possible states or statuses of events or situations that are developing along a time dimension” (Yang, 2006, p. 331) (Fig 1). The ostensibly contrasting forces of *yin* and *yang* are indeed mutually dependent, facilitating, complementing and repressing (Hang, 1988; Lee, Ng, Leung, & Chan, 2009).

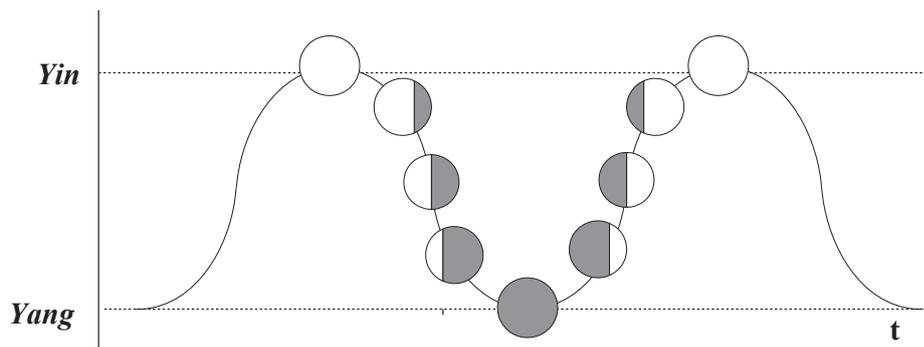


Figure 1: *Yin/yang* mode of thinking

(Source: Yang, C.-F. (2006). The Chinese conception of the self: Towards a person-making perspective. In U. Kim, K.-S. Yang & K.-K. Hwang (Eds.), *Indigenous and cultural psychology: Understanding people in context* (p. 331). New York: Springer.)

In this respect, resonating with the notion of the dialogical self, self and other derive its meaning from the coexistence of the other (the other also including another of oneself in terms of *I*-position in the dialogical self theory). The self can never be considered in isolation from the seemingly opposing other; indeed, the self is in the other and the other is in the self (Ho, Peng, Cheng, & Chan, 2001). When they come together, they symbolically represent a dynamic relationship of constant movement. This relationship is continuous, interconnected and complementary, leading to change (Lee et al., 2009), self-transformation and self-innovation (Hermans, 1999, 2002b). Ho, Chan and Peng (2001) also state that Hermans’ dialogical self theory which represents a current

construction of relational selfhood in the West echoes with Chinese construction of selfhood with an emphasis of self-in-relations. Both constructions highlight the sense of being a person is created through the *I*-others relations and assert that the *I* emerges with reference to the other.

In sum, by considering and incorporating the social self theories of Mead and Goffman as well as the Chinese conceptions of the self and selfhood with the notion of the dialogical self, the conceptualisation of the self developed in this thesis has several features. First of all, the self is dialogically and dynamically constructed through dialogues between interacting individuals in social relationships and between different *I*-positions within an individual. It is this multiplicity of voices out of those dialogues that shapes the self. The self is of spatial and temporal nature in the sense that the *I* can move through dialogues from one position to another, voicing memories from the past, experiences in the present and desires for and anxieties about the future.

Secondly, the self is social as well as embodied. If the self is assumed as a dialogical construction, it is self-evident that the self does not exist in isolation but is essentially shaped by interpersonal relationships through socially interacting with others. Indeed, the self is an important tool enabling the person to socially relate to, establish and maintain interpersonal relationships with others (Tice & Baumeister, 2001). For Confucian cultures, the social and relational contexts are of particular importance in the definition of the self. The Chinese self as an open centre of relationships is intimately connected with others through which a person is defined. Without others and their perspectives on us, our identities lose meaning and our life cannot be complete (Ho, 1995). The social and relational origins of the Chinese self are closely linked to its social roles and associated moral obligations and duties that are governed by the standards of Confucian ethics (Chen, 2009). The body is needed to make this moral performance possible.

As an embodied actor, the self has the ability to act in the light of the needs, demands and considerations of others, bringing about the innate human goodness in life whose meanings are nevertheless socially established. Yang (2006) considers the *yin/yang* mode of thinking as “actor-centered” in that various *yin/yang* relationships are the effects of actions taken by an actor (p. 331). She explains that there is a mobilising

force coming from an actor to connect movement between the two end-states represented by two terms. Different graduations of *yin* and *yang* produce different possible end-states which represent the results of the course of action taken by the actor, as shown in Figure 2. In order to achieve the most desirable result of a given event or situation, the self in different *I*-positions needs to examine various possible consequences in relation to the different actions taken. By directing the movement towards either of the two-end states, the self chooses the best course of action with and for others. The most desired course is the one that aims at fulfilling particular social roles and ethical obligations and maintaining inner, interpersonal and social harmony.

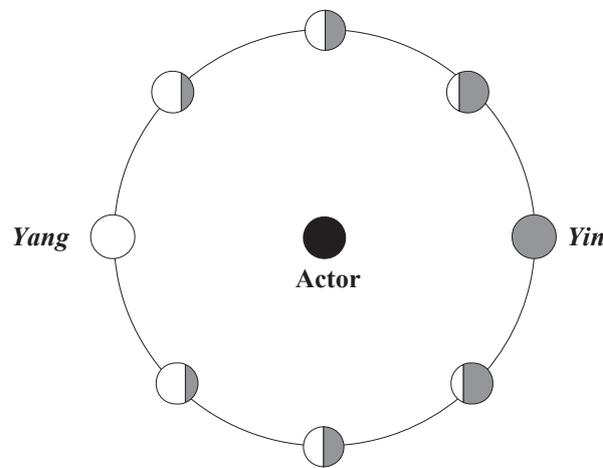


Figure 2: Actor-centered *yin/yang* thinking mode

(Source: Yang, C.-F. (2006). The Chinese conception of the self: Towards a person-making perspective. In U. Kim, K.-S. Yang & K.-K. Hwang (Eds.), *Indigenous and cultural psychology: Understanding people in context* (p. 331). New York: Springer.)

Thirdly, the self is both multiple and unified. For James, the multiple selves are configured within the relationship between a subject-*I* and an object-*Me* where the self is always experienced as the same *I* observing and organising different aspects of the object-*Me*. By incorporating the notion of multivoicedness, Hermans goes further to reconfigure the multiplicity of self which unfolds from the *I* moving among various spatial positions and the voices of a diversity of *I*-positions in dialogue with one another. These multivoiced *I*-positions are nevertheless united by the volitional, continuous *I*. In short, the self changes in time and yet remains the same, resulting in a sense of continuity and coherence in self-identity within experienced difference and discontinuity. Again, the ideas of the coexistence of multiplicity and unity of the self and the interconnectedness of discontinuity and continuity resonate well with and would

have not much difficulty in understanding from the Chinese philosophical perspective of *yin/yang*.

Chapter 4

Happiness and the self

Happiness is increasingly recognised as one of the important components of individuals' quality of life, which is often used interchangeably with subjective wellbeing by social researchers (Srivastava & Misra, 2012). Recognising its importance, the Government of Bhutan has declared itself to be concerned with gross national happiness, and “the pursuit of happiness” is also clearly stated in the US Declaration of Independence (Duncan, 2010). Research literature on subjective wellbeing has flourished over the last few decades and won legitimacy and recognition (see Argyle, 2001; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Easterlin, 2003; Frey & Stutzer, 2005; Veenhoven, 1984 for review). The extensive empirical investigations have mainly focused on determinants, predictors, correlates and consequences of happiness at an individual level. Going beyond this predominant examination of happiness to enrich the knowledge of subjective wellbeing, some social scientists have recently expanded their research interest to include investigating happiness at societal level and paid attention to the subjective wellbeing of nations (*cf.* Graham, 2009; Kroll, 2008; Layard, 2005; Oishi & Schimmack, 2010). Nevertheless, there has been a bias towards examining and understanding human happiness according to the Western conceptualisation based on individualistic values.

Happiness is often empirically defined with a general consensus in the academic community as positive affect, life satisfaction and absence of or infrequent negative affect (Argyle, 2001). Happiness as a state of mind is likely to be universal. However, the meaning of happiness is complex and ambiguous and can vary considerably across cultures and between individuals. Bruner (1990) asserts that human meanings and concepts are shaped by culture. It is through these shared meanings, concepts and values that a unique cultural tradition enters into human lives. Therefore, human lives are inevitably intertwined with their culture not only as a product and a carrier of the culture but also as a creator of it through active production, revision and modification of knowledge, beliefs and customs. As such, culture plays a critical role in the conception of happiness (Christopher, 1999; Kitayama & Markus, 2000; Lu, 2005, 2008a, 2010). The meaning of happiness is inevitably saturated with cultural assumptions and values

and its resulting subjective experience is necessarily situated and embedded in specific historical, socio-cultural contexts.

This chapter explores the notions of happiness in Chinese cultural and philosophical contexts, including Confucianism, Daoism⁵, and Buddhism. The extent to which these three Chinese philosophical thoughts influence the contemporary Chinese conception of happiness is examined. Harmony is considered as a crucial concept in Chinese philosophy and the foundation of Chinese culture (Li, 2008). It also plays a vital role in relation to the Chinese conception of happiness. Hence, the chapter discusses this unique cultural concept in more detail. Finally, it provides a critical review of the current cultural models of happiness in relation to the self and explores an alternative way of understanding.

Notions of happiness in the traditional Chinese culture

“Happiness” is a modern word in Chinese languages. The Chinese words often used to refer to happiness are *xing fu* (幸福). *Xing* means goodness and *fu* indicates luck and fortune. However, Lu (2001, 2010) states that the constituents of happiness were realised at the very beginning of Chinese civilisation. The words which are tantamount to happiness in the ancient Chinese are *fu* (福) or *fu qi* (福氣). The original meaning of *fu* is about worshipping a God and receiving blessings from Him. Human desires are expressed through their prayers to God in worship rituals. Lu (2001, 2010) further notes that the interpretations of bone inscriptions and the luxurious burial gifts reveal two fundamental conceptions of happiness in Chinese culture; they are blessings from the supernatural and pleasures in the human living world. The meaning of *fu* was then further evolved and expanded in terms of “*wu fu lin men*” (五福臨門, “May the five blessings come to your door”) in ancient Chinese literature, *Shang Shu* (尚書). The five blessings are explicitly defined in relation to human everyday existence, including longevity (長壽), prosperity (富貴), health and inner peace (康寧), virtue (好德) and a comfortable death (善終). All five blessings come together creating a sense of happiness and wellbeing. “*Wu fu lin men*” becomes one of the proper greetings among people while meeting with each other in Chinese New Year.

⁵ *Dao Jiao* (道教, Daoism) is also translated as “Taoism” in English and “Daoism” is used throughout this writing.

Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism are three main strands of Chinese philosophy, which have formed the backbone of traditional Chinese culture. Each of them has its own distinctive ways of thought. Correspondingly, each has its distinctive view on human happiness (Lu, 2001) and how one should live a good life⁶ (Zhang & Veenhoven, 2008).

Confucian view on happiness

Confucianism has exerted profound influences on developing Chinese civilisation, forming human relations as well as interactions (Tu, 1998; Yang, 2009) and shaping various conceptions and mentalities of Chinese people (Lu, Gilmour, & Kao, 2001). Its ideologies and values continue to have significant influences on various aspects of Chinese people's everyday lives in the contemporary age (Gong, 1989). Yum (1988) states that, owing to its pragmatic and present-oriented natures, the influences of Confucianism are even greater than those of Daoism and Buddhism.

Confucianism was founded by the original teachings of Confucius (551-472 BCE), an influential Chinese philosopher, about 2,500 years ago in China. Confucius lived in the time of pervasive social chaos (Billington, 1997) and demoralisation (Ni, 2002). His nation-state was experiencing numerous internal conflicts and frequent attacks from the other nation-states. Confucius noted that the traditional ritual system was disintegrating and the morals of the society were declining. With his hope of bettering the world, Confucius spent most of his life in learning, teaching, travelling around different nation-states and preaching his vision of political and social ideals in order to morally transform the rulers. He insisted that the ideal world that was simple, humanistic and harmonious (Park & Chesla, 2007) could only be established through the rulers governing their countries with virtues.

As such, for Confucians, morality is given more importance than mundane happiness. In fact, it is considered as a prerequisite for not only individual happiness and good life but also the wellbeing of society as a whole (Zhang & Veenhoven, 2008). The main

⁶ Lu (2010) notes that Chinese philosophical schools do not pay much attention to the nature of happiness. Instead, they consider "happiness as synonymous with optimal functioning and right living". As such, prescription for actions to attain happiness is actually a discourse which conveys the cultural notion of good life (p. 330).

concern of Confucianism is then to establish a set of moral ideals, ethical values and guidelines oriented towards proper human relationships and behaviours, which is considered as the basis of society (Liu, 2006; Yum, 1988). Practising those moral values, meeting moral tenets and living up to moral ideals are vital ways to achieve social harmony and harmony with Heaven and Earth, leading to ultimate happiness and wellbeing.

The central and interrelated elements which constitute Confucian ethics are *ren* (仁, benevolence)⁷, *yi* (義, righteousness) and *li* (禮, propriety). They define the morally acceptable activities in an individual's personal and social lives. These virtues together with the virtues of *zhi* (智, wisdom) and *xin* (信, trustworthiness) are regarded as the five cardinal virtues of humanity in traditional Chinese culture and contemporary Chinese society. These cardinal virtues guide as well as shape the daily living of Chinese with family, community, society, the wider world and all in Heaven and Earth.

Ren is considered as a crucial concept which features extensively and uniquely in the *Analects* (論語)⁸ (Chan, 2000; Tu, 1993). According to Chan (1975, 2000), *ren* is the general virtue which occupies the central position and is universal and fundamental on which all other cardinal Confucian virtues are rooted. In other words, all the other virtues can be interpreted as aspects of *ren* which “enrich its inner resourcefulness” (Tu, 1989, p. 57). It is the moral standard governing our life. Without *ren* – an essential quality of a human being (Ni, 2002), society would hardly be able to exist. Without *ren*, human perfection of the self would not be possible (Liu, 2006). Confucius (1983) frequently explained *ren* in the context of “men of *ren*” as recorded in the *Analects*: “The benevolent man is attracted to benevolence because he feels at home in it. The wise man is attracted to benevolence because he finds it to his advantage” (IV: 2, p. 29). Confucius (1983) also regarded men of *ren* as those who are strong, resolute, simple

⁷ *Jen* is also used interchangeably with *ren* in English. There is no single moral concept in Western ethics equivalent to the notion of *ren*. Besides “benevolence”, *ren* can also be understood as “altruism”, “goodness”, “co-humanity”, “humane-heartedness”, “a feeling of compassion to and loving others” (Tu, 1979; Yao, 2000; Zhang, 2002).

⁸ The classics of Confucianism are “Four Books” which deal with a number of topics, including politics, law, education, human nature, ethics and relationships. The *Analects* (論語) is one of them and the other three seminal works of Confucianism are the *Mencius* (孟子), *The Great Learning* (大學) and *The Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸).

and slow to speak (XIII: 27). They are able to practise respectfulness, tolerance, trustfulness, diligence and generosity (XVII: 6). They are steadfast in their purposes, can study extensively, inquire earnestly and reflect critically on what is at hand (XIX: 6). Obviously, Confucius meant that *ren* involves various moral attributes and men of *ren* are moral human beings in an ideal state. Mencius (1984a) described *ren* as “the heart [or mind] of man” (Mencius, 6A: 11, p. 235). This mind is naturally filled with compassion and commiseration, which is the beginning of *ren* (Mencius, 1984b).

The concepts of *zhong* (忠) and *shu* (恕) are a further extension of the idea of *ren*. They are “the essence[s] of the Confucian moral Way” (Nivison, 1996, p. 64) and appear to directly apply practical acts to the actualisation of *ren*. Liu (2006) considers the virtue of *zhong* as a moral obligation that applies to all people in their social roles. That is the self-devotion to one’s own duties to others as prescribed by *ren* and determined by one’s own conscience (Hsieh, 1967).

In Confucius’ moral philosophy, individuals are interrelated in a social and moral structure which is hierarchical in nature (Liu, 2006). Embedded within this moral hierarchy are five cardinal relationships (*wu lun*, 五倫); they are ruler and minister, father and son, husband and wife, older brother and younger brother, as well as friend and friend. Depending on how one relates to others in the moral hierarchy, he or she is assigned a moral role which defines his or her duties, responsibilities (Liu, 2006) and sense of identity. In life, one has several social roles and related moral duties and obligations which shift according to what role he or she adopts at a time. For example, when one relates to her older parents, she becomes a daughter of them and has to fulfil filial duties towards them, such as attending to their needs, providing care and support. When she relates to her husband, she becomes his wife and her main duty is to well-manage household affairs besides loving and being loyal to him. When she relates to her children, she becomes a mother of them and she has to sacrifice her self-interest and prioritise her children’s needs over her own needs, nurturing and guiding them to become good citizens in society. It is important to recognise that the moral social system developed was never intended to be a rigid justification of social hierarchy which is commonly found in contemporary Chinese societies (Liu, 2006). Although the relationships within the social structure are hierarchical, under the notion of *zhong* both

parties in a relationship are required to fulfil the moral duties appropriate to their roles. For instance, children should obey and show respect towards their parents as this is what the role one plays as a son or a daughter dictates. However, in order to gain respect from the children, parents should love and care them. As stated in *Li Ji* (禮記):

The father is to be compassionate, the son filial, the elder brother kind and the younger brother respectful, the husband just and the wife obedient, the older person gracious and the young compliant, the ruler benevolent and the minister loyal. These ten are called human norms (Xu, An, & Lao, 1999, as cited in Park & Chesla, 2007, p. 303).

From the Confucian point of view, the names of social roles pick out both social and moral assignments (Liu, 2006). Therefore, *zhong* can be understood as “being loyal to one’s role in relation to others” and the moral obligations associated with the social prescriptive role (Liu, 2006, p. 50). In other words, one has to do his or her best to fulfil the duties and responsibilities that come with particular social roles. *Zhong* involves one’s self-discipline (Nivison, 1996) to meet expectations and rules of conduct established to each name. Once the language of the “names” is imposed, it functions to regulate people’s relations and behaviours in the society. When the name of each role correctly corresponds with its actuality and everyone performs his or her roles within the prescriptive boundaries, the social order will prevail and the society as a whole will flourish in peace and harmony (Liu, 2006).

Shu means “to put oneself in the position of another and to look at the world from that perspective” (Zhang, 2002, p. 285). In other words, *shu* involves one’s empathetic understanding of others’ desires and wishes. Confucius (1983) considers *shu* as the guiding principle for people’s entire life, in that people should not do to others what they do not want others to do to them. This practical moral guideline for our actions towards others in interpersonal interactions is commonly regarded as the Confucian Golden Rule. In contrast with the Western Christian Golden Rule which requires people to do unto others as they desire others to do unto them, the Confucian Golden Rule focuses on what one ought not to do. *Zhong*, as discussed previously, is considered as being loyal to the various roles one plays in relation to others, whereas *shu* can be understood as the extension of oneself to appreciate what the others in the

opposite roles would desire (Liu, 2006). This is a fundamental principle for the relations between oneself and others. For example, a son might wish not to take responsibility for his parents in their ageing lives. But once he realises how distressed and heartbroken they would be as parents, he should understand that his duty is to love and take care of his aged parents. Moreover, one can further extend oneself to appreciate what people of similar roles would desire. For instance, if we do not want our older parents to feel socially isolated in a host country, we should financially support or volunteer in those social service agencies which run programmes for older migrants in the community. Liu (2006) argues that loyalty to one's role is not sufficient for securing social harmony unless it is accompanied by everyone's empathetic understanding of other people's wishes and awareness of not imposing personal preferences on others. Therefore, *zhong* has to synchronise with *shu* in order to prevent interpersonal conflicts and achieve social harmony, which, in turn, results in a sense of happiness.

Yi is literally translated as righteousness, justice and appropriateness. Confucius used the term “*yi*” as what is right, which generally refers to “the existence of moral norms” (Zhang, 2002, p. 291) and implies that people should act according to those norms. *Yi* has also been interpreted as preventing one from doing what is wrong in both the appendices of the *Yi Jing* (易經)⁹ and the *Xun Zi* (荀子) (Zhang, 2002). Therefore, *yi* involves a sense of moral rightness and people with *yi* should be able to distinguish appropriateness from inappropriateness in their acts, relationships and human affairs. They can recognise when non-righteous things or situations fall out of the boundary of proper social conduct (Cua, 2000) and determine what should not be done.

Ren is the root of *yi* whereas *yi* correctly determines the application of *ren* (Zhang, 2002). Although *ren* is universal in nature, being extended from members of a family to human beings in the entire world, its applications in different relations and circumstances show different expressions in our real world. For example, we have a

⁹ *Yi Jing* (易經), the *Book of Changes*, is also translated as “*I Ching*” in English. For the sake of convenience and consistence, “*Yi Jing*” is used in this thesis. *Yi Jing* is the most influential work in the history of Chinese philosophy, which concerns the cosmic patterns of change and how human beings can live in harmony with them. It is always considered as a foundational text of Confucianism. *Yi Jing* is not the work of a single author, instead it represents the accumulated wisdom of many generations, successfully shows its applicability and workability for more than 3000 years.

tendency to offer help to those who are closer to us than strangers. A parent tends to love his or her own child more than a neighbour's child. This is what Hwang (1988) stated "a hierarchical love tied to intimacy of relationship" (as cited in Gabrenya & Hwang, 1996, p. 311). Through practising *yi*, one can reach the side of the right and acts righteously. Therefore, *ren* and *yi* are not separate from each other. Instead they work together to define morality and guide the moral actions. When things or people are in their right positions and relationships with one another, they are being in order which brings a sense of harmony to the society (Lao, 1988).

Li, in its narrow sense, is literally known as rites, rituals, ceremonies, propriety and courtesy. However, in the broad sense, it refers to norms, rules and standards of proper behaviour in particular social, political and ethical contexts. As stated in the *Analects*: "Do not look at what is contrary to ritual, do not listen to what is contrary to ritual, do not speak what is contrary to ritual and make no movement which is contrary to ritual" (XII: 1, Confucius, 1993, p. 44). That is, all righteous and proper behaviours are guided by the principle of *li*. *Li* also involves inner feelings of respect and reverence (Chan, 1969). *Yi* is the foundation of *li* in the philosophy of Confucius (Lao, 1988) and so is *ren*. Therefore, the practice of *li* is never complete without the manifestation of *ren*. As Confucius (1983) said, "What can a man do with the rites[,] who is not benevolent?" (*Analects*, III: 3, p. 19).

Confucius (1993) particularly explained *li* in relation to *ren*. "To subdue oneself and return to ritual is to practise humaneness" – *ke ji fu li* (克己復禮) in Chinese terms (*Analects*, XII:1, p. 44). This clearly indicates that self-conquest or self-restraint (*ke ji*) and returning to ritual (*fu li*) are two important practical ways to the attainment of *ren*. It is important to note that the concept of *ke ji* does not imply the absolute restrictions of our corporeal desires; instead it suggests we should fulfil those desires in an ethical way (Tu, 1979). *Fu li* means to make conscious effort to behave ourselves according to *li*. It implies active participation rather than passive submission (Tu, 1979). In this way, *ren* is conceived of as the internal essence of *li* and *li* as the externally behavioural expression of *ren* (Shu & Peng, 2008). The harmonious unity of *ren* and *li* that was advocated by Confucius is attained through transforming the external *li* to inner self-consciousness of *ren*.

Lao (1988) asserts that the meaning of *li* in Confucius' philosophical thought is broader than the concrete rules of rituals which can be changed with time. He considers *li* as "the order of life", which is "a constant goal in human cultural life" (Lao, 1988, p. 190). In this respect, *li* does not simply involve proper behaviours in social and ritual sense but also social order. As stated in the *Analects*, genuine harmony can only be achieved in the order through the practice of *li* which is an essential principle of human conduct (Lao, 1988). Hence, the enactment of *li* is a basis for bringing social order, peace, stability and prosperity to the country. If everyone treats others with *li* and has respectfulness towards others, people will live in perfect harmony and happiness.

In sum, there is apparently a moral dimension involved in the Confucian notion of human happiness. Putting those moral virtues into practice leads to a meaningful life and, ultimately, happiness. Lu (2001) states that, for the Chinese social elite, happiness is achieved and progressively reaches its greater degree through subsequently fulfilling four major life goals: constant moral self-cultivation (*xiu shen*, 修身), regulating and maintaining a harmonious family (*qi jia*, 齊家), governing a country wisely with humanity (*ye guo*, 治國) and keeping peace in the world (*ping tian xia*, 平天下). In this regard, happiness in Confucianism goes beyond the individual sphere of life into the family, community, society and even far to the world. For the remaining majority of ordinary people, their life goals chiefly centre around self-cultivation, self-perfection as well as enhancement of the collective welfare of their families. Family, rather than the individual, is considered as the basic unit of society in Confucianism philosophy. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Chinese self is a cobweb placed in the centre of a bundle of relationships. Among these relationships, the family relationship is most central and crucial for an individual's life and everyday existence. Therefore, the individual should act for the good of the family, continuously striving to preserve and expand its prosperity and vitality.

As such, satisfaction of one's needs and desires and attainment of one's goals that lead to a sense of happiness are not simply a personal matter as manifested in the Western culture (see e.g., Diener & Lucas, 2000; Pflug, 2009; Uchida & Kitayama, 2009). For example, educational achievement in Chinese culture is often stressed as a social obligation, particularly to one's parents and family (Li, 2002; Tseng, 2004). It is more

than a personal success and explicitly involves a virtuous pursuit, fulfilling obligations to oneself, to the family and to society as a whole (Hau & Ho, 2010). To achieve this life goal, the individual needs to involve himself or herself in extensive learning, intellectual hard-work, passing examinations, obtaining certain qualifications to increase the chance of getting a job with good earning and respectable social status. Together with other self-cultivated values according to moral standards and social norms, such as frugality to accumulate material resources needed for the family and suppression of personal desires and selfishness to meet the family members' needs, the benefits, stability and harmony of the family can be secured. In so doing, the individual's ultimate happiness is attained. Thus, instead of simply viewing happiness as a set of material living conditions and transient sensual pleasures, Confucians consider happiness as a spiritual and moral world of a living individual (Lu, 2001), which is to be achieved by living virtuously.

Daoist view on happiness

Daoism focuses on the naturalness, eternity and spontaneity of Nature and asserts that human action should be taken according to the natural law and order of things (Chan, 1969). *Dao* is all-powerful, eternal, unchangeable and everywhere and rules everything. Compared to Confucianism, Daoism represents a more individualistic and mystical approach to human life (Nakamura, 1988). It is more about finding and maintaining harmonious balance between human beings and Nature, between individuals and society as well as between the self and others (Bergsma, 2008; Lee, 2003). For Daoists, the best possible way to attain happiness and a good life is to follow *Dao*. However, paradoxically, we cannot find *Dao* as *Dao* means nothing (Zhang & Veenhoven, 2008). Correspondingly, we cannot find happiness from real conditions of the outside world. The more we want to seize happiness, the more we depart from it. Happiness, according to Daoism, can be derived neither from material abundance nor achievement of moral greatness but only from our inner spiritual world. The ultimate happiness is “the personal liberation from all human desires”, achieving through following *Dao*, waiting for nothing, desiring nothing, taking no action intentionally, accepting fate calmly, facing life with ease and retreating to natural quietness (Lu, 2001, p. 411). *Lao-Tzu* (老子)¹⁰ (1989) in *Dao De Jing* (道德經)¹¹ emphasises that our mind would be clear

¹⁰ *Lao-Tzu* (老子) is also translated as “*Lao Zi*” in English.

and not be disturbed if we do not see any desirable things. Thus, happiness in Daoism is a cognitive insight and mindful transcendence instead of an elated emotional state of pleasure and joy (Lu, 2001). A simple life where people can be close to and harmonise with Nature is regarded as the best and happiest life. The ultimate happiness is achieving harmony among Heaven, Earth and People (Lu, 2005). As such, inner private life is more important than societal public life in Daoism (Zhang & Veenhoven, 2008). Being near to the natural and spiritual world and being away from the materialistic world promote not only inner peace and happiness but also health and longevity. As *Lao-Tzu* (1989) contends:

Fame or your health – which is [dearer]? Your health or possession – which is worth more? Gain or loss – in which is there harm? If your desires are great, you're bound to be extravagant; [if] you store much away, you're bound to lose a great deal. Therefore, if you know contentment, you'll not be disgraced. If you know when to stop, you'll suffer no harm. And in this way you can [live] a very long time (Chapter 44, p. 13).

Buddhist view on happiness

Buddhism is not an indigenous Chinese philosophy but was introduced to China from India about 2,000 years ago. Buddhism believes that the world is continually changing and nothing in life is permanent and desirable. Life is like the spinning wheel of birth and death in that all living creatures experience many lifetimes, coming into existence and passing away and then being reborn into another state after each death. Sharply contrasted with the general view of life as enjoyment in the Western world, Buddhism asserts that all life is featured by suffering which originates from unlimited human desires and self-centredness (Zhang & Veenhoven, 2008). The only way to escape from this suffering is to entirely eliminate all human desires and realise the truth of impermanence. It is the key to reaching a state of saintliness – Nirvana – within which people break free from the repeated cycle of birth, ageing, sickness and death and liberate themselves from a self-centred existence, leading to perfect inner peace, quietude and spiritual enlightenment (Zhang & Veenhoven, 2008).

¹¹ *Dao De Jing* (道德經) is also translated as “*Tao Te Ching*” in English and “*Dao De Jing*” is used throughout this writing. It is one of the most influential philosophical books in Chinese. The book mainly concerns about how we exist in harmony with Nature and other human beings.

In this sense, happiness in life is just an illusory desire. Buddhists deeply believe that happiness can only be found and attained in the “Paradise of the West” after reaching Nirvana. As such, similar to Daoism, Buddhism advocates that people focus on cultivating their inner spiritual world rather than striving for happiness from the outside world. Meditation and self-conscious reflection are regarded as the important ways to cultivate a peaceful state of mind and improve oneself. Through these inwardly oriented, personal practices, people can gradually eliminate their desires, nurture their souls and become closer to reaching Nirvana which promises eternal happiness. While Confucianism is characterised as humanistic and Daoism as naturalistic, Buddhism is generally featured as otherworldly (Chan, 1967b). However, Chan (1967) argues that Buddhism also has its humanistic aspects and Buddha is portrayed as a man of moral achievements, who aimed intensively at virtue. Virtues such as compassion, benevolence, kindness, mercy, empathy and tolerance are emphasised. Buddhism asserts that all phenomena are interrelated in that what happens in one moment will become a cause for what happens in the next moment. Hence, there is a chain of causes and effects. The force behind this chain is called Karma. It assumes that people create their own destiny by their actions with free will. If one sows goodness, one will reap goodness; if one sows evil, one will reap evil. The totality of one’s actions in current and previous lives will determine his or her future. The state into which one is reborn after each death is automatically determined by weighing the merits and demerits accumulated resulting from the good and bad deeds one has done (Zhang & Veenhoven, 2008). As such, doing good deeds, for example, charitable and voluntary work or simply helping others in need, is considered as a way to achieve eternal happiness. *Xing shan ji fu* (行善積福) – doing good deeds to accumulate blessings and happiness – becomes one of the main Buddhist teachings in the contemporary age.

Contemporary Chinese conception of happiness

Do the Chinese philosophical traditions still exert influences on the view and experience of happiness among the Chinese people nowadays? By employing a folk-psychological approach, Lu and Shih (1997) have made contributions to the understandings of the sources, nature and meanings of happiness in contemporary Chinese. They conducted qualitative research to explore the perceived sources of happiness among Chinese in Taiwan. They found nine major sources conducive to happiness; they were: gratification of the need for respect, harmony of interpersonal relationships, satisfaction

of material needs, achievement at work, being at ease with life, taking pleasure at others' expense, sense of self-control and self-actualisation, pleasure and positive affect and health. The empirical results indicated that there were some discrepancies between the traditional values that are stressed in the Chinese philosophical teachings and the contemporary conception of happiness, such as pursuing material abundance or taking pleasure at others' expense by means of downward social comparison. However, the results also showed that the Chinese conception of happiness, to a certain extent, was in line with its philosophical teachings, particularly Confucian values, and deeply embedded in the cultural milieu (Lu & Shih, 1997).

First, gratification of the need for respect from others through their positive recognition of one's conduct, achievement or success reflects the Confucian values which emphasise social relations and the social nature of the self. The conception of happiness as the harmony of interpersonal relationships conveys the Confucian placing importance on sustaining solidarity and loyalty woven in the five cardinal relationships and also reflects the Daoist idea of maintaining harmonious balance between one and others. Satisfaction of material needs and achievement at work go beyond personal matters and function in terms of enhancing the welfare of one's family and glorifying one's clan. This conception of happiness apparently stresses greater importance on interpersonal or external evaluation and satisfaction. Secondly, as discussed in Chapter 3, self-control and self-actualisation have different cultural implications. For Chinese, they are principally considered as practising moral virtues through regulating and monitoring the moral performance of the self. Being at ease with life corresponds well to the Daoist wisdom of accepting one's predetermined fate, submitting oneself to the environment, following Nature and cultivating a peaceful mind. It also mirrors Buddhist philosophy of self-introspection and self-transcendence. Furthermore, Lu and Shih (1997) found that sources of happiness varied as a function of age, with the source of being at ease with life more apparent for those aged older than 50. This is consistent with other research findings suggesting that the meaning of happiness is of a dynamic nature and its salient aspects, as well as how it is experienced, may vary and shift over one's lifetime (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Mogilner, Kamvar, & Aaker, 2011). Older people are more likely to associate happiness with peacefulness, compassion and having good social relationships. Thirdly, as mentioned above, longevity is regarded as one of

the five *fu* (blessings) in Chinese societies. Therefore, health as a source of happiness reflects this long-lasting Chinese value.

Later, Lu (2001) made a valuable attempt to explore the contemporary Chinese cultural construction of happiness. She proceeded with a thematic analysis of 142 Chinese students' spontaneous accounts of happiness in order to understand the ordinary Chinese people's beliefs and experiences of happiness. The results indicated that happiness was conceptualised in five major ways. First, as a mental state of satisfaction and contentment, happiness could be induced by actual fulfilment of one's needs, goals and desires or by facing and accepting with gratitude and thankfulness whatever fate brings in life. Secondly, coming with a sense of satisfaction and contentment, happiness included a variety of positive but not intense hedonic emotions as featured in the Western culture, such as warm, relaxed and heart-touching deep feelings. Thirdly, as a harmonious homeostasis, happiness involved intrapersonal, interpersonal and societal harmony. Fourthly, happiness was regarded as a sense of achievement and a positive outlook towards the future. Keeping faith and hope was important in maintaining one's psychological sense of control while submitting oneself to the environment. Fifthly, happiness was considered as freedom from ill-being, which indicated a dialectical relationship between happiness and unhappiness that will be further discussed as follows.

A unique feature of the Chinese respondents' accounts revealed by Lu (2001) and also found by Ji, Nisbett and Su (2001) was their emphasis on the dialectical relationship between happiness and unhappiness. Viewing from the Chinese philosophical perspective of *yin-yang*, happiness and unhappiness do not exist in isolation. Instead, they are locked in a relationship of interdependence and complementarity within which they derive meanings from the coexistence of the other. Without happiness, we hardly experience how distressed we would be in the face of adversity. Without unhappiness, we barely find the preciousness of happiness. Moreover, with a cyclical view of life, the relationship between happiness and unhappiness is intrinsically dynamic, which involves constant change and transformation. As stated in *Yi Jing*, good things will inevitably be followed by bad things and misfortune will be substituted for blessing. Echoing the *yin-yang* philosophical view, research findings showed that the Chinese respondents believed that happiness and unhappiness did inevitably coexist and

cyclically transform from one state to the other (Lu, 2001) while undergoing ups and downs in life. Maintaining a balance between them in life was considered to be important, leading to a sense of harmony and wellbeing. To reach this harmonious state of existence, the respondents further identified four essential conditions. First, the individual has to be satisfied or content. Secondly, the individual is the agent of his or her own happiness; this individual agency is, nevertheless, governed by moral principles and predetermined by fate. Thirdly, spiritual enrichment in terms of cultivating oneself and one's mind should have more emphasis than material satisfaction. Fourthly, the individual has to maintain a positive outlook for the future.

Again, Lu's (2001) analysis showed that the contemporary Chinese conception of happiness was closely linked to the traditional Chinese philosophies of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism although there was coexistence of traditional Chinese values and modern values which have mainly been brought in with Western influences in the process of societal modernisation. She further claimed that, in ordinary everyday life, people have merged, synthesised, reinterpreted, applied and acted in accordance with each of these three schools of thought to different realms and different living circumstances in order to attain a sense of happiness and promote a good life.

The Chinese conception of harmony

As seen above, happiness and harmony are intimately interrelated in the Chinese culture. In fact, the value of harmony has long been recognised and emphasised. Chinese are inspired to live in harmony with family, to get along well with neighbours, to maintain good relationships with relatives, friends and colleagues, to achieve unity with the surrounding environment and to make peace with other nations. Harmony is also stressed in various Chinese art productions such as painting, calligraphy, poetry, music and gardening. "Harmony creates beauty" (和則生美) is one particular aesthetic principle of the appreciation of beauty in Chinese arts (Wang, 2008, p. 13). The significance of harmony can also be reflected by the fact that constructing and advocating a harmonious society has become the central theme among Chinese societies. Social harmony is considered a critical basis for wealth and prosperity of the country, development of the nation and enhanced wellbeing of people (Sun, 2008). Therefore, Chinese people hold "harmony" as a precious possession, whose benefits are essential to their wellbeing and society as a whole.

The term “harmony” originally comes from Greek word *harmonia* which means “the agreement of musical notes which create a perception of internal togetherness and mutual support among the individual notes” (Cheng, 1988, p. 225). The Chinese character that conveys the concept of harmony is “和” (*he*) which is one of the frequently used words in Chinese everyday language. When it is combined with other Chinese words to form common proverbs and phrases, they always carry positive meanings such as *jia he wan shi xing* (家和萬事興, harmony in the family is the basis for prosperity of all affairs and success in any undertaking), *he qi sheng cai* (和氣生財, good-naturedness is a source of wealth) and *he qi zhi xiang* (和氣致祥, good-naturedness leads to propitiousness). These attest to the vital role of harmony in producing positive life experience and a sense of happiness among Chinese people.

Similar to *harmonia*, the original meaning of the term “harmony” in Chinese is related to the sense of musical harmony. Musical harmony is the harmony of sound produced from the relation of one element to the other elements in a mutually supportive way. Even though the elements can be of different kinds and of different characters, they can constructively complement each other rather than destructively overcome and compete with one another. This is a state of balance among various elements. When different elements are related in an appropriate way, the totality in the sense of wholeness is formed, and in turn, “leads to the experience of agreement and unity” (Cheng, 1988, p. 228). Harmony is created as a result. Thus, the existence of differences among individuals does not necessarily bring disharmony. The creation of social harmony depends on how appropriately individuals interact with each other according to their designated social roles and obligations in particular social relations and circumstances.

A pre-Confucian scholar-minister *Yan Ying* (晏嬰) further expanded the concept of harmony in terms of the dynamic relationship between external and internal harmony (Cheng, 1988). He asserted that harmony produced in a good piece of music (external harmony) functioned to regulate the emotions and pacify the inner mind and temperament of the superior man¹². The superior man with a peaceful and harmonious heart/mind (internal harmony) would act virtuously and so conduct a government in a

¹² In ancient China, the superior man referred to the emperor of the state.

harmonious and trustworthy way. Consequently, it would lead to peace, harmony and good life of all people in the nation. Apparently, social harmony is intimately related to individual inner peace of mind and also individual moral actions by which human happiness and sense of wellbeing are produced.

As mentioned above, Confucius lived in a chaotic world with extended wars and social conflicts. Therefore, it is not surprising that, in Confucius' teaching, peace, harmony, social ordering of human affairs and unity between people were considered as the most significant essences in human living and wellbeing. Confucius believed that there is the *Dao* of life and *Dao* provides people with a full, fulfilling and tranquil life in a peaceful and harmonious society (Koller & Koller, 1991). *Dao* is conceived as the fundamental principle of moral behaviour (Zhang, 2002). The reason the world becomes chaotic is because *Dao* does not prevail over people's hearts/minds temporarily. However, once it is brought to its presence, harmony and order of the world resume (Cheng, 1988). Obviously, there are intimately interrelated relationships among human happiness, harmony and morality in Confucius' philosophy. As noted in the *Analects*, adapting and practising the doctrine of *li* is an approach to turn a chaotic, disordered world into a harmonious, ordered world.

Among the functions of *li*, harmony is the most essential one. It is the gist of the classical principles. All things, great or small, must conform to it. But bare harmony is not a working principle. When you know the meaning of harmony and pursue it without *li* as the regulative principle, it is still untenable (*Analects*, I: 12, Lao, 1988, p. 191).

Therefore, harmony is a core essence for human relations and everyday interactions, which is also a basis for social order and solidarity. Happiness and good life are to be sought in the harmony within an individual, among people in various interpersonal and social relations and with Nature.

Cultural models of happiness in relation to the self

The major concern of cultural and cross-cultural psychologies is to systematically analyse culture in order to reveal the ways in which culture interacts with the human psyche and affects psychological functions and behaviours (Bond, 1998, as cited in Lu,

Gilmour, & Kao, 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1998). Models of culture have mainly been operationalised as individualism and collectivism in most cross-cultural research (Schimmack, Oishi, & Diener, 2005; Triandis, 1995). Generally speaking, individualism is conceptualised as a worldview that emphasises the personal, such as personal goals, interests, uniqueness, autonomy, control, fulfilments and achievements, and peripheralises the social; whereas a collectivistic worldview centralises the social, such as common goals, welfare, needs, desires, fate, values, mutual expectations, obligations and commitments, and marginalises the personal (Hofstede, 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002; Triandis, 1995). With regard to the self, individualism implies that personal accomplishments are a central aspect of one's identity, whereas collectivism considers group membership as the basis of one's identity. In subjective wellbeing research, scholars in cross-cultural studies have also conceptualised and explicated differences in the nature, meanings, levels, sources and consequences of happiness in terms of individualism and collectivism (Ahuvia, 2002; Argyle, 2001; Chiasson, Dube, & Blondin, 1996; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008; Diener & Suh, 1999; Oishi, 2000; Pflug, 2009).

In 1991, Markus and Kitayama published an influential paper in which they translated the primary dimension of cultural difference identified by cross-cultural psychology – individualism-collectivism – into their findings of social cognition. Rejecting the objects that mainstream psychology has presumed as universal and ahistorical psychological truths, Markus and Kitayama (1991, 1994) claimed that people from different cultures can hold significantly different construals of the self, of others and of the relation and interaction between the self and others. They further argued, with a comprehensive review of empirical evidence, that almost every nature of human experience and every aspect of psychological processes, including cognition, emotion and motivation are, in fact, a culture-specific manifestation of a particular construal of the self. Maintaining the individualism-collectivism dichotomy, they term the Western view of the self as “independent self” and the Eastern view as “interdependent self”. The independent self is construed as a self-contained, bounded, coherent, stable, autonomous and free entity that comprises a unique configuration of internal attributes such as personality attributes, attitudes, subjective feeling states and preferences. Behaviour is basically rooted in those unique internal attributes or processes of the self. With this independent-oriented nature, individuals are motivated to seek separation

from others as well as the situational context and move towards self-expression, self-realisation, self-actualisation and independence. Individuals' capacities, potentialities and rights are emphasised. Self-representations are thus located *within the individual* (Lu, 2008a, emphasis in original). In contrast, the interdependent construal of the self is contingent on the individual's connectedness and interdependence with others. The interdependent self is conceived as a connected, fluid and flexible entity and individuals are socially embedded, bound and committed to others. As such, they are motivated towards strengthening the fundamental relatedness to others, fulfilling obligations, fitting in and developing harmonious interdependence. Crucial self-representations are located within the individual's various social *relationships* rather than within unique individual attributes (Lu, 2008a, emphasis in original).

Succeeding this conceptual logic, Kitayama and Markus (2000) contend that the very nature of what it means to be well, experience wellbeing or live a good life takes cultural-specific forms. The experience of happiness requires one being able to realise culturally sanctioned ways of being and engaging in a system of consensual understandings and cultural practices. Suh (2000) also notes that there is an interrelated relationship between self, culture and subjective wellbeing by skilfully using a metaphor of the self as "the hyphen between culture and subjective wellbeing" (p. 63). Culture gives form and shape of the self, which, in turn, influences not only how individuals define the content and the meaning of happiness but also the very processes that individuals create, attain and maintain a sense of happiness. Given the two different construals of the self, cross-cultural scholars have proposed and argued with empirical evidence that there are, broadly speaking, two distinct cultural models of happiness, interpreting substantial cultural variations in nature, meanings, sources, ways, motivations and consequences of underlying happiness (Kitayama & Markus, 2000; Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000; Lu, 2005, 2008a, 2010; Lu & Gilmour, 2004; Lu et al., 2001; Suh, 2000; Schyns, 1998; Uchida & Kitayama, 2009; Uchida, Norasakkunkit, & Kitayama, 2004). Borrowing Lu's (2005, 2008a, 2010) terms, they are individual-oriented and social-oriented conceptions of subjective wellbeing that are exemplified in Western European-American cultures and East-Asian cultures, particularly those with a Confucian heritage, respectively.

In the Western cultures attached to liberal individualism, happiness is seen as desirable and worthy of personal pursuit (Christopher, 1999). With a highly individualistic self view prevalent in these cultures, a person as an active and independent agent is encouraged as well as responsible to strive for his or her own happiness. As happiness is construed as one of the positive attributes of the self and an ultimate life goal, the person is highly motivated to exercise his or her right to pursue and affirm this attribute (Uchida et al., 2004). Being happy is regarded not only as a personal achievement in a journey of explicit pursuit of happiness but also as a proof of one living out an independent personhood according to individualistic cultural mandates (Lu, 2008a, 2010). This allows the person to experience himself or herself as influencing, mastering and being in control of the external environment and to identify and realise his or her potential. In contrast, the societal institutions and social systems within East-Asian cultures emphasise and foreground interdependence with others and collective welfare. With a highly collectivistic self view, the self is assumed to be inherently connected and interdependent with others in social relationships. As discussed in Chapter 3, the conceptualisation of the Chinese self goes further beyond interdependence and relatedness to encompass and emphasise self-cultivation, moral duties, relational obligations and social harmony. As such, instead of actively and explicitly pursuing happiness, a person, through self-cultivation, is motivated to diligently carry out moral duties, to fulfill designated role obligations, to strive to promote the welfare and prosperity of the collective, such as family, and to create and maintain interpersonal harmony (Lu, 2005, 2008a, 2010). Social norms and expectations are finely integrated into the person's sense of happiness (Lu & Gilmour, 2004). Moreover, maintaining a dialectical balance between happiness and unhappiness, leading to a sense of inner peace and harmony, is also a unique way of achieving happiness in Chinese. Through doing all these, happiness is presumed to be achieved not simply within an individual but also within a web of harmonious social relations with others. This mirrors Kitayama and Markus' (2000) view that pursuit of happiness is indeed a collaborative and communal project. Attaining a sense of happiness via the fulfilment of role obligations and the maintenance of dialectical balance also implies that the person successfully lives up a morally cultivated and interdependent personhood according to Chinese cultural mandates.

An alternative view on happiness and the self

The individualism-collectivism distinction and the following derived independent-interdependent self-construal distinction have largely facilitated cross-cultural comparisons and provided an alternative approach of exploring, studying and understanding human happiness outside the Western cultural perspective and conceptual framework. However, these all-or-nothing approaches to research are not without problems. Oyserman et al. (2002) have observed that there is no consensus in the definitions of individualism and collectivism, which results in the overly broad, diffuse and idiosyncratic ways researchers define, assess and operationalise these constructs. The concept of collectivism has particularly raised concern (Schimmack et al., 2005). Brewer and Chen (2007) argue that collectivism should be considered as a relational orientation across the domains of identity, agency beliefs, obligations and values rather than as group-based categorisation. This approach to collectivism would better fit the East-Asian cultures, especially those with a Confucianism heritage. What is worse is the pressure to interpret specific findings within this broad conceptualisation of individualism-collectivism has led to uncritical acceptance of any psychological differences among cultures as corroborative evidence. However, based on a meta-analysis, Oyserman et al. (2002) concluded that cultural differences in individualism and collectivism “were neither as large nor as systematic as often perceived” (p. 40). The ambiguities in defining individualistic and collectivistic cultures would also have an impact on the formulation of independent and interdependent views of self and their manifestation of self-representations, beliefs and values. Fiske (2002) has also provided a comprehensive and thoughtful critique of the use of individualism and collectivism to compare cultures and explain their variations. He concluded that research conducted within the individualism-collectivism paradigm is full of limitations, such as reducing culture to abstract, continuous quantitative variables, conflating all kinds of social relations and autonomy, paying no attention to contextual specificity in cultural norms and values and raising measurement issues. He urged the need to go beyond this conceptual framework in understanding cultural differences.

Problematic for another reason is that, underlying this research approach, culture is generally assumed as homogeneous and static in a national population and as bounded by geographical boundaries (Tam, Lau, & Jiang, 2010). As such, human experience, psychological processes and functioning are assumed to reflect some rather static core

elements of a specific culture such as values and norms. However, the notion of culture as a static entity has been called into question (Kitayama, 2002), particularly in the present situation of globalisation. With globalisation, the human world is converging and cultural boundaries become increasingly permeable. Owing to the popularity of internet usage, availability of a range of media communication and technology and affordable costs of international travel, information exchange and transmission of cultural ideas, forms and practices are no longer restricted by national boundaries. The prolonged, direct intercultural contacts through migrations and transnational migrations also take a vital role in cultural transmission and exchange. All of these factors result in the emergence of cultural mixtures (Hermans & Kempen, 1998). Maintaining the view of self-culture relationship as inclusive, interrelated and dynamic as discussed in Chapter 1, the resulting fusing and flowing culture inevitably challenges individuals to extend their selves and identities beyond the traditional cultural self-construals. It continually affects how one's self is constructed, reconstructed and enacted, which, in turn, influences his or her psychological processes and personal experiences, such as happiness. However, as an active agent, individuals may adopt, resist, approve and disapprove of the ideologies, values and norms of their own culture as well as those of newly known and acquired from the other cultures in accordance with particular time, circumstances and social relationships. Running around within a circle of individualism-collectivism distinction and dichotomy implies that a person's self is always either independent or interdependent regardless of the time and space in which the person is embedded and the circumstances in which the person is situated. This approach to research unavoidably undermines the malleable, multiple and dynamic nature of the self and the social, interactive and contextual-dependent nature of human experience and psychological functioning.

Examining whether the constructs of individualism, collectivism, independent and interdependent self-construals are valid to be measured and employed in researching and interpreting the reality of human happiness is not my intent here. What I am arguing is consistent with the *yin/yang* philosophical perspective from which phenomena in the world are dynamic and interconnected rather than static and disconnected. That is, individualism and collectivism as dimensions of culture do not exist alone by themselves but stand in relation to each other on a continuum of time. Similarly, the independent self anchors at one end and the interdependent self at the

other end in the continuum of individualism-collectivism coexist and should not be seen as mutually exclusive. Indeed, scholars have increasingly recognised the coexistence of seemingly contrasting independent and interdependent selves in contemporary Chinese societies at both conceptual and empirical levels (Lu, 2005, 2008b; Lu et al., 2001; Lu, Kao, Chang, Wu, & Jin, 2008; Lu & Yang, 2006). With societal modernisation and Western cultural immersion, the traditional-modern bicultural self has emerged, which integrates the traditional Chinese construct of interdependent self emphasising self-in-relation and the Western construct of independent self stressing individuality and autonomy.

Returning to the relation between happiness and the self, if the attainment of happiness is linked to the way we achieve a sense of self as good and live out an ideal personhood and moral visions according to some cultural mandates, the stand-alone notion of independent and interdependent selves may not be sufficient to understand and explain people's experience of happiness in nowadays globalising and culturally interconnected world. There is a diversity of "what is good" in every society and these "goods" are weighted differently by individuals and across cultures (Christopher, 1999). The increasing cultural interconnections and contacts challenge and expose people with different normative ideas of "what is good", which may be particularly salient for those who migrate to and live in a host country with different cultures. Migrants are, more or less, introduced with normative and moral goodness which is specifically embedded in the respective cultural context. The newly introduced goodness to individual psychological and interpersonal systems is mediated by the availability of the socially constructed and accumulated scripts in the individual's living socio-cultural context. These normative prescriptions of the good or ideal person would probably challenge individuals to redefine happiness and revise the ways to achieve a good, fulfilling life. Nonetheless, it cannot deny the continuous involvement of the already existing and dominantly activating self-system in encountering everyday life and maintaining a sense of happiness. Recalling the view of the self developed and informed for this thesis, the self is of dialogical, relational and dynamically unfolding nature and of capacity to move along different *I*-positions. This approach to self may serve as a potential lens for understanding the complex dynamism of how individuals experience their social, interactive environment, leading to a sense of happiness and wellbeing in a current situation of cultural fusion. It not only allows the coexistence of independent and

interdependent selves but also captures the dynamic movements between the *I*-position as independent and the *I*-position as interdependent and among the other *I*-positions in the pursuit of a more harmonious and happier life.

Chapter 5

Narrative methodology: A dialogic analysis

This chapter discusses the methodological approach taken and the methods used to investigate the research aims. Narrative was chosen as a primary tool through which the older Chinese migrants' lives and their migration and ageing experiences were understood. As such, a series of narrative interviews with the participants was conducted, which was deemed the most appropriate method of data collection in this qualitative study. A narrative approach – the dialogic analysis and the voice-centred relational method – was then located and employed for data analysis and interpretation in this research.

The narrative approach to qualitative research

Moving away from the past two decades of positivist and realist approaches to inquiry and shifting towards the interpretive and constructive modes of inquiry, the human and social sciences have been increasingly employing narratives or stories in studying human life and experience and social phenomenon. This remarkable rise of narrative research interest and inquiry has been seen as a “narrative turn” in the human and social sciences (Riessman, 2002, 2008; Riessman & Speedy, 2007). Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) have further elaborated this “narrative turn” by locating a particular historical movement to narrative inquiry and arguing that there are indeed four key narrative turns. The four turns are a change in understanding the relationship between the researcher and the researched, and thus a change in the research relationship per se; a move from the use of numbers towards the use of words as data and analysis; a change from a focus on the general towards the particular; and the recognition and acceptance of alternative, multiple ways of knowing.

Narrative scholars consider that we, human beings, live in a story-shaped world and are fundamentally storytellers and storylisteners (Bruner, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988; Sarbin, 1986). We think and speak in a storied way. Storytelling is a primary form of human communication through which we make use of the stories we tell to express and negotiate our experiences. It is also essentially a meaning-making process (Seidman, 2006). In the dynamic process of narrating and listening, our lives are organised,

shaped, structured and understood in a storylike manner, our experiences are given meaning and communicated to others and our self-identities are constructed (Bruner, 1991; Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; McAdams, 1993, 1996; Mishler, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988; Ricoeur, 1981; Riessman, 1993, 2008). As such, narratives provide a promising and effective means for researchers to examine the meanings people ascribe to life experiences (Barresi & Juckes, 1997; Eastmond, 2007). The study of narratives, then, can be instrumental in helping us explore and understand the details of people's lives and the particularities and complexities of their experiences (Polkinghorne, 1995). It also helps to gain knowledge about how individuals as social actors, who both act in the world and reflect on their actions, make sense of their lives and the world from a particular position in life and cultural vantage point. Therefore, anchoring the idea that narrative construction is a significant means of people making sense of and bringing meaning to their lives and the world (Murray, 2000), the narrative approach is relevant to the current study to make sense of the older Chinese migrants' ageing lives and their self-constructions.

Narrative inquiry is based on the ontological premise of the storied nature of human existence; we are storied beings (Atkinson, 1998, 2002, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Kenyon & Randall, 2001; Ruth & Kenyon, 1996; Sarbin, 1986). As Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont (2003) state, "People do things with words, and they do things with narratives" (p. 117). The self is constructed and becomes visible to ourselves and to others through narratives. Life, in narrative research, is viewed as experienced and constructed through the telling and re-telling of the story (Bruner, 1991, 2004). Simply speaking, narrative analysis can be considered as a method that takes the story itself as its research object of enquiry (Phoenix, Smith, & Sparkes, 2010). Based on Bruner's (1986) proposal of two modes of thought or two ways of knowing – paradigmatic and narrative – Polkinghorne (1995) has made a distinction between analysis of narratives and narrative analysis. Paradigmatic knowing involves a logical-scientific process through which the particular factual information or item is classified as belonging to the formal concept or category based on their shared similarities. Analysis of narratives is considered as a paradigmatic type of analysis and as a more general form of qualitative inquiry, in which stories as data are analysed into themes and categories out of common elements across stories. The accounts of stories are fractured into thematic categories by the use of some coding systems. On the other hand, narrative knowing involves the

connection of diverse elements into an emplotted, meaningful story. Narrative analysis is operated on the basis of narrative knowing in which events and happenings are collected and configured temporally by means of a plot into a unified story, which gives meaning to an individual's life. The final product of narrative analysis is a story.

Defining a narrative

The definition of narrative adopted ultimately affects the unit(s) or aspects of data analysis and also defines the theoretical perspective from which the meanings of narrative are understood. Therefore, it was useful to explore the concept and constituents of narrative, within which I located a definition of narrative for this research.

Narrative is ubiquitous, which is present in every age, place, society and culture. As Riessman (2008) referring to Barthes (1977) claims narrative is “international, transhistorical, [and] transcultural: It is simply there, like life itself” (p. 4). The terms “narrative” and “story” are often used interchangeably in research (Chase, 2005; Riessman, 2008; Sarbin, 1986). However, some narrative researchers have made a distinction between these terms and used them separately. Clandinin and Connelly (1994) define story as the accounts of experiences told by the research participants to the researcher and narrative as the researcher's accounts of participants' experiences through some form of research inquiry. Although there are overlapping features between narrative and story, I adopt Clandinin and Connelly's definition, which indicates different levels of narrative, to use story for what the research participants tell and narrative as a constructive research format for analysing the participants' stories in this project. In addition, being informed by critical realism, I regard that the personal stories recounted by the older Chinese participants are not simply mental constructions and resident in their minds. Neither do they merely exist outside of the participants who construct and hold them. While I acknowledge that storytelling within research interviews is a joint production (as discussed below), I regard those stories recounted as being “real” in some sense. They are existentially intransitive facts¹³ and cannot be reducible to conceptuality (Harré, 2001).

¹³ Critical realism contends that there are two dimensions to reality and to science (Danermark et al., 2002; Patomäki & Wight, 2000; Potter & López, 2001; Williams, 2003). The intransitive dimension is that which comprises all that exists in the world and that which is primarily the object of scientific

A review of the narrative literature reveals that there is no consensus about a definition of narrative. Mishler (1999) argues that narrative is an umbrella term, which covers a large and diverse range of approaches. There is no “singular or best way to define and study narrative” (Mishler, 1995, p. 117). Depending on traditions within individual disciplines and particular research contexts, the definition of narrative and the way in which narrative is operationalised vary.

Riessman and Speedy (2007) argue that *sequence* and *consequence* are two defining elements which distinguish narrative from other forms of discourse. One event or action is viewed as consequential of the next. Riessman (2008) refers to this fundamental criterion of narrative as “contingent sequences” (p. 5). Thus, essentially, a narrative is set within a temporal framework and has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Conventionally, the beginning introduces the characters and settings, the middle recounts the event or action sequences and the end delineates the outcomes. There is an assumption that all stories recounted have endings. However, this need not always be the case. Riessman and Speedy (2007) further note that narrative is made up of not only actions and events but also characters, which draws together all these elements into the concordant unity of a story through temporality. The involvement of a multiplicity of characters also implies multiple viewpoints on the actions and/or events. Taking the illness story of the older Chinese migrant illustrated in Chapter 2 as an example, the event of the confirmation of cancer reoccurrence presented different meanings to the doctor and the older migrant (the patient). For the doctor, it was the end of the story, stating that nothing could be done for the older migrant’s illness from the medical viewpoints. For the older migrant, he was reluctant to accept this ending and sought for a second opinion by consulting with the medical experts in his home country. The advice given by the medical experts transformed the ending from being feeling hopelessness, originally instilled into by the doctor who announced his “death-sentence”, to having a sense of hopefulness although he was simultaneously experiencing uncertainties. In this sense, the end of a story is not closed. Instead, it is always open

knowledge. This dimension to the world includes not only events and their observable patterns but also their underlying structures, powers and tendencies which work independently of whatever meaning and significance we assign to them. In other words, things are simply however they are. Thus, knowledge possesses intransitive objects which exist and act independently of our beliefs, perceptions and conceptions of it (Bhaskar, 1989a). The transitive dimension is “our conceptions of that which exists” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 206). This dimension to science is needed to make sense of knowledge production.

and changing as the story is evolved and the consequences will be altered in the light of new experience and information. Moreover, the persons as characters and active agents involved in a story can approve, disapprove, accept, reject, create and re(create) the end of that story and choose whatever ending they prefer. Maintaining the notion of the self as multiple, dialogical and relational, I regard that characters in a story are not restricted to different individuals but can be expanded to include different *I*-positions in the same person. Each *I*-position, such as *I* as hopeless and *I* as hopeful, has its own voice and viewpoint on the event and voices function as interacting characters in a story.

Plot is an important feature of narrative; it is through plots that events are organised and sequenced into narratives (Gergen & Gergen, 1986, 1988; Kirkman, 2002; Polkinghorne, 1995, 1996; Ricoeur, 1987). By using plots to link events and relate them to one another in a sequence, in a pattern, through cause and effect or simply by coincidence, people attempt to interpret, explain and make sense of those events. Polkinghorne (1995) defines this integrative process of plotting as *emplotment*. It is a crucial narrative device and serves as a central organising element. In sum, the plot gives significance and meaning to human experience, through the process of *emplotment*, by connecting separate and discontinuous events together and integrating them into a coherent story.

Riessman and Speedy's (2007) perspective on narrative emphasising sequence and consequence and the notions of plot and *emplotment* contributed by other narrative scholars have broadly shaped my understanding of the nature of narrative. However, what is missing here is the explicit acknowledgement that human experience including self-construction is inherently social, which has been discussed and emphasised in previous chapters, and so is narrative (Elliott, 2005). Narratives do not occur in a vacuum. They are produced through social interaction and in a social context for a particular, either present or imagined, audience (Wallace, 1994). In this way, I consider narratives as collaborative performances in which selves and one another – the narrator and the listener, the narrator and the present or imagined other, the researcher and the participant – connect in a particular social context of joint meaning-making (Langellier, 2001, as cited in Bell, 2004; Ochs & Capps, 2001). In this joint meaning-making process, the narrator make an effort to connect events in a meaningful way for the listener, offering insights about the world and his or her experience of it.

Participants

To ensure and maintain high ethical standards of research, the present research was conducted according to the principles of the Code of ethical conduct for research, teaching and evaluations involving human participants (Massey University, 2006). After receiving ethical approval from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, I began to recruit participants mainly through word-of-mouth referrals. I directly approached the Chinese migrants including older people with whom I was acquainted, the Chinese community coordinators and people who volunteered in the community services for older Chinese people. I introduced the research to them and asked them to distribute to potential participants an Information Sheet (See Appendix A, Appendices B and C for Chinese translations), which detailed the background of the research and the rights of the participants, a Consent to be Contacted Form (See Appendix D, Appendices E and F for Chinese translations) and a pre-paid, pre-addressed envelope. All materials given to the participants were written in English and in traditional and simplified Chinese to ensure that they received the materials in their preferred form. I conducted presentations to introduce the research and provide information to the older Chinese people in two Chinese churches and a Chinese organisation which provided elderly services for Chinese people.

Participants sought for this study were Chinese migrants, aged 60 or above, coming from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. They had to have migrated to New Zealand in or after 1987 and been living in New Zealand for at least five years at the time of interview. That is, participants who migrated to New Zealand between 1987 and 2002 were included. This inclusion criteria were based on the consideration that the statutory retirement age in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan is 60, with the exception of 55 for women in China, and that a significant proportion of Chinese New Zealanders were part of the “new wave” of migrants coming after 1987 as a result of the introduction of the Business Immigrants Policy in 1987 and the Points System in 1991. Moreover, people who migrated during their childhood might have different experiences of migration and settlement from those who migrated in their adulthood, and in turn, this might affect their experiences of living and ageing in New Zealand. The inclusion of participants who had been living in New Zealand for at least five years was based on the understanding that migratory adjustment is a rather long-term process for non-Western migrants in Western cultures. The research aim was to gain a better understanding of

older Chinese migrants' experience of ageing, rather than their here-and-now experience of migration adjustment. Auckland was selected as a research site because of its relatively high Chinese population.

Seidmen (2006) has argued that there is no absolute necessity to predetermine the number of participants in an emerging research design. I had planned to interview ten to fifteen participants, as I regarded this would be a reasonable number given the time and resource limitations. The number of participants involved would be sufficient to provide substantial contributions for data analysis and a potentially deep and valuable understanding of the experience under investigation. However, I remained flexible on whether there would be a need to increase or reduce the number of participants.

Fourteen people replied indicating their interest in taking part in the project. I made initial contact with them by phone after receiving their Consent to be Contacted Form. The research relationship with mutual respect began to develop from that moment. The initial phone contact aimed at introducing myself to the participants, thanking them for their expression of interest in participating, briefly explaining the nature of the interview study and arranging the time and place for the first interview. I also informed the participants that two interviews of about an hour to one and a half hours each would be conducted at their convenience between June and December 2008. However, I did not check if the interested people met all the research criteria as the criteria had been stated clearly in the Information Sheet. As a result, I found one participant who actually came to New Zealand in the early 1970's in the first interview and did not meet the criteria of migrating to New Zealand between 1987 and 2002. As the interview had already been started, I continued it; but the interview material was not included in the analysis. One participant's wife joined with her husband to take part in the project when I interviewed with him. Thus, a total of fourteen participants took part in interviews, 9 females and 5 males, aged from 60 to 79. All participants migrated to New Zealand after having attained the age of 50 and having already retired. Twelve participants migrated from the mainland China; all of them came under the family reunion scheme, except one who was granted permanent residency on humanitarian grounds. The remaining two participants came from Hong Kong under the investment category. The participants had lived in New Zealand for between six and thirteen years. Five participants lived alone, six lived with their spouse and three lived with their children and/or grandchildren at the

time of the interview. Half of the participants lived either in their own property or children's property and the other half lived in rental property.

Narrative interview

Narrative interviewing was employed for data collection. According to Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000), narrative interview is a qualitative research method which is an effective tool for gathering information on the subjective aspects of an individual's life experience. I regarded this approach as suitable as it provides a conversational environment for conducting an in-depth interview through which details and complexities about individual lives and the ways in which individuals make sense of their lives can be explored and understood. It also allows more space for participants to openly address issues from their own vantage point, using their own words and language. Thirteen participants chose to be interviewed at their home. One participant was interviewed at my working place at Massey University. Most of the participants were alone at their own home during the interview and the others were able to arrange a private place for the interview. The personal space created for interviewing allowed the participants to be more open and feel more comfortable to tell their stories, particularly those in which their family members were involved. The interviews normally took one to two hours, with an exception of a few interviews lasting for more than two and a half hours. The interview terminated when the participant and I felt that we had already said what we wanted to say and/or ask. My native spoken language is Cantonese. For those participants who spoke Cantonese (nine out of fourteen participants), I carried out the interviews. For Mandarin speaking participants, a translator who spoke both Cantonese and Mandarin accompanied me to conduct the interviews to ensure that the participants and I could fully understand the conversation content. I can generally understand Mandarin, but I would have difficulties if the participants spoke with a heavy accent. Therefore, to prevent unnecessary interruptions during the interview, the translator helped in translation only when requested. The Translator Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix G) was signed by the translator before conducting the interviews.

At the beginning of the first interview, a consent form (Appendix H, Appendices I and J for Chinese translations) was given to the participant to read and sign. For those who had difficulties in reading, I read out the consent form to them. Before recording the interview, I spent about ten to fifteen minutes on establishing rapport, informing the

participant how the interview would proceed, addressing any concerns and answering any questions raised. I assured all participants that their identity could be kept highly confidential and pseudonyms would be used to ensure anonymity in my thesis or other publications. I also reiterated the participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time. I found the time spent on establishing rapport was invaluable, in that it helped to create not only a more open, friendly but also safe and confidential conversational environment. Being identified as an "insider" – a Chinese, the participants often showed interest to know more about me. The first question they often asked was "Did you come here for study?" When I clarified that I came with my husband as he found a job in New Zealand and we had been living here for seven years, they often gave me an astonished look. "You are married? You look so young." In addition to being a student, the first impression that I unintentionally gave to the participants was that I was in my twenties studying alone overseas. The mutual sharing of my background and migration experience through which my personal status and approximate age were disclosed apparently helped me to become closer to the participants. Hence, I found the way in which some of the participants interacted with me had subtly changed, from treating me somewhat like a young girl without much life experience, and the interview was simply helping me in completing my school work, to interacting with me more like a mature adult. They would ask me how to apply for the SuperGold Card (a discounts and concessions card for seniors and veterans in New Zealand) and raise questions regarding medical and social services and issues about living in New Zealand, rather than simply asking "What would help you in your work?" I became a "more insider" to them – a Chinese migrant living in New Zealand. I was then perceived as a person, with migration experience and a certain degree of maturity, who was more likely to understand and appreciate others' migration experiences and everyday lives. This self-disclosure, sharing and clarification could encourage a sense of collaboration (Josselson, 2007), reduce the hierarchical gap between the participant and me, help the participants feel more comfortable and confident sharing life experience (Ellis & Berger, 2002) and facilitate the storytelling of the participants afterwards. It is worth noting that the hierarchical relationship in research does not essentially imply that the researcher is always in a superior position and the participant in a subordinate position, as traditional research interviewing suggests and encourages. There would be the opposite case. As mentioned, I was initially positioned in rather distancing and unequal relationships with some of the participants because of the perceived relatively young age which might

suggest a lack of life experience. Nevertheless, both types of the hierarchical research relationship may have an effect on the scope of information elicited and collected.

I conducted two interviews with each participant. The first interview focused on the migration and settlement history of the participant, who was asked to provide an account of his or her past life leading up to the topic of interest – ageing in New Zealand. The second interview focused on the concrete aspects of the participant’s present ageing experiences. Mishler (1986) has stated that research participants are likely to naturally provide narratives about their experiences in the context of in-depth interviews, unless the structure of the interview itself, the questioning style of the researcher or the imbalanced power relationship between the researcher and the participant suppresses such stories. In order to encourage the participant to tell stories as a way of eliciting detailed information, I did not plan to ask specific questions about the participants’ migration experiences and ageing lives. I preferred to allow the participant’s story to develop spontaneously by itself. I believed that if there were events or incidents of importance to the participant’s life and to that story in that particular interview at that particular time, then they would become parts of the storytelling. As such, I planned to start with a general, broad question at the beginning of each interview. My aim was to use this opening question as a way of initiating a research conversation that reflected dynamic and dialogical processes. The question allowed the participants to take any directions they wanted within the established territories. In the first interview, I asked: “Can you tell me about your experiences of migration and settlement in New Zealand? Begin where you like and include whatever you want.” In the second interview: I asked: “Can you tell me about your life as an older Chinese migrant living in New Zealand? Begin where you like and include whatever you want.”

However, I had realised that although the primary aim of the interview was to elicit participants’ stories, there would be situations in which I failed to obtain them from the participants (Elliott, 2005). Therefore, I also prepared a series of prompted questions specifically about what it is like to be an older Chinese migrant migrating to and ageing in New Zealand (see Appendix K). The questions were structured as open-ended, straightforward, simple and framed using everyday language. Nonetheless, most of the time in the interview, the questions raised would follow from what the participant had said. I only raised those prompted questions if the participant had difficulties in starting

or continuing to tell his or her story, or if there were some occasions in which I needed to create conversational opportunities to explore the participant's experiences and bring up the areas of interest more directly. For example, one participant had experience of a structured interviewing survey, in which the researcher asked many direct, closed questions. He found himself unfamiliar with the present interviewing approach which went beyond the question-answer type of the interview. Overall, I found the prompted questions were helpful to make the participants feel more comfortable and build up confidence to tell stories about their lives.

Keeping in mind that the importance of actively and empathically listening to (Elliott, 2005), rather than suppressing participants' stories through such as interruptions, I offered space for the participants to set their own agenda. In this way, although the first and the second interviews had different focuses, the interviews were not supposed to proceed rigidly. I flexibly adopted some changes in order to facilitate, sustain and support the participants in narrating their own stories. Indeed, rather than a distinct, separate experience, the experiences of migration and ageing were often intertwined as most of the participants migrated to New Zealand at their age of 60 or after. Also, although all participants were older Chinese migrants, they were definitely not homogenous. They brought along with them a diversity of experiences with different focuses and concerns into the interviews.

Besides voice-recording the interview, I also took short notes. These working notes allowed me to keep track of things that the participant had mentioned so that those subjects could be revisited when necessary and when the timing was right. It prevented me from interrupting the participant's chain of thought during his or her storytelling in order to pursue the interesting points. By the end of each interview, after the digital voice recorder was switched off, I tried to create a more relaxed conversational environment and engaged the participant in small-talk to facilitate potential interesting discussions (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). I used the working notes to help summarise what the participant had said in the interview and provided the participant time and space to think, reflect, discuss and add to what he or she had said. I wrote down as much as possible the contents of the small-talk immediately after the interview.

The use of two interviews allowed not only sufficient time to establish a trustful research relationship between the researcher and the participant and obtain detailed information from the participant but also space to construct further narrative questions to ask in the second interview (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Between the two interviews, I listened carefully to the recording of the first interview and took notes. I paid attention to the areas that I might need to follow up, to clarify and to seek further details from the participant. The note-taking process contributed to developing further questions to be asked in the second interview when necessary. This preliminary engagement with and understanding of the participant's narrated stories could also help to capture any significant issues that the participant would mention in the second interview. Before starting the second interview, I summarised to the participant the main points he or she had made in the first interview, which provided the contextual background for the second interview. I then asked if there were any misunderstandings of what the participant had said in the first interview, any missing information he or she would have liked to add and feedback to give. At the end of the second interview, as stated previously, I created an opportunity for small-talk and made a summary of what the participant had said from the working notes, using these to do some reflections and discussions with the participant. I also shared my feelings of interviewing with the participant and asked him or her to share his or her reflections with the research project and with me.

With a desire to allow flexibility in the production of narrative data, this qualitative inquiry ineluctably involved uncertainty and risk, together with an excitement intrinsic to the research process (Morse, 1997). In this way, I did not see the necessity of using a pilot study to the pre-testing of an interview guide. As Morse (1997) argues, a pilot study does not necessarily help the researcher to address the unclear nature of initial research questions. This is because there is often little known about the proposed topic when the researcher is deciding to use a qualitative study. In addition, as a social worker and a counsellor, I had experience in interviewing. This sensitised me to pay particular attention to the participant's energy level, any verbal and non-verbal cues and I used those hints to progress the interview. As a Chinese migrant, I had similar personal experience to the participants. I felt confident, with the acquired interviewing skills, in conducting research interviews with the older Chinese migrants. Indeed, besides meeting the participants in the formal interviews, I also informally met with

some of them in community events, such as in English classes for older Chinese migrants in which I volunteered as a bilingual teacher and community *Taiji* practice. Such social involvements and interactions provided me with the opportunities to observe and understand more about their everyday lives.

Researcher reflexivity

Reflexivity has long been placed to have value and importance in qualitative research inquiry, particularly in feminist research, participatory action research, ethnography and hermeneutic research. Recently, increasing recognition has been given to the inclusion of reflexivity in doing narrative research (Elliott, 2005; Ellis & Berger, 2002). Narrative data generation involves engaging with the stories people tell through language and their experiences. The main task of narrative researchers is to make sense of these stories and the ways in which the participants make sense of their experiences and the world in a meaningful manner. It is through this that, we hope that we can understand more about the nature of various human experiences and phenomena being studied. This, in turn, may contribute to some influences on individual everyday practice and societal policy making towards bettering our lives. Shaw (2010) strongly asserts that “with this task comes responsibility and for some that alone is sufficient to necessitate reflexivity” (p. 233).

Depending on the philosophical stance or pragmatic approach to research, qualitative researchers have defined reflexivity in different ways. Simply speaking, in the context of research, reflexivity can be understood as a heightened awareness of the researcher’s self within every stage of the research process (Elliott, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Fook (1999) argues that reflexivity is about acknowledging and valuing the use of subjectivity in order to conduct more rich and meaningful research. The researcher actively involves himself or herself in and becomes part of the research process and knowledge production, bringing along his or her own values, beliefs, presuppositions, personal history, social and cultural contexts, prior experiences and theoretical perspectives. Reflexivity provides an opportunity for researchers to explicitly scrutinise and critically reflect upon how these personal positions, biographies, standpoints and theoretical assumptions might affect every decision made in research as well as the development of research relationships and interactions with the participants and how these might fashion the ways they analyse and interpret the collected research material

(Chamberlain, 2004; Henwood, 2008). It, in turn, allows researchers to convey critical aspects of the process of knowledge production to their readers and audiences (Reed, Miller, Nnawulezi, & Valenti, 2012). Apart from considering reflexivity as the subjectivity of the researcher, reflexivity can also be understood in terms of interaction in the conduct of research (Fook, 1999). Particularly, from the social constructionist perspective, it generally acknowledges that researchers and research participants jointly shape the context of the research and that research context would have influences on both the nature of research and the construction of knowledge. In this sense, reflexivity is situated and enacted by both the researcher and the participant involved in research interaction. Hence, it is necessary for researchers to critically reflect on the ways in which they affect the interview processes by which the talk is produced (Pezalla, Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012).

What follows is an attempt to briefly provide a context about my social locations, academic backgrounds, personal values, theoretical stances and assumptions that form the backdrop to interpretative analysis, which, in turn, influence the attainment and production of knowledge. This is my hope that readers of different backgrounds could appreciate how my work may be interpreted, leaving room for them to make diverse interpretations.

Since high school, I had gradually developed a passion and commitment to promote people's welfare, wellbeing and rights. Therefore, after completing high school, I decided to pursue a career in a helping profession – social work. I was then trained and worked as a social worker for almost ten years, specially working with children and their families including those new migrants' families coming from China to Hong Kong. Since then, the notions such as social justice, social equality, egalitarianism, human rights, empowerment, acceptance, freedom from bias and prejudice, dignity and worth of the person, non-judgmentalism and self-determination had been imprinted in my mind and became part of my personal values. I was taught to believe that each person has an inherent capacity to understand and help himself or herself and drive towards change which can make life more fulfilling. Being a social worker has often involved attending to the experiences, lives and cultural worlds of deprived groups. The knowledge gained about these groups would better help them improve their social conditions and lives. With an emphasis on an egalitarian and collaborative working

relationship, social work also advocates the idea that understanding how difficulties of and constraints on people's lives are viewed from their own perspectives is a crucial means to develop and provide better services for them. All of these sowed the seeds of my desire for extending knowledge about humankind at individual, societal and cultural levels, which led to a decision on pursuing my study in psychology.

Like most of the psychology faculties, the Psychology School in Massey University is more or less dominated by positivist and quantitative approaches to research. During my undergraduate psychology study, I learned and was trained, at least implicitly, to use the realist perspective to see and understand the world and human experience. However, I sometimes queried about singular causal processes within the complexity of naturally occurring human experiences and commonly single, clear and tidy interpretations to the questions raised produced by positivist research. The postgraduate study of health psychology, which mainly adopted critical health psychology perspectives, provided me an opportunity to critically think about the individualism and rationalism of mainstream psychology and the related assumptions and values hidden in those psychological researches. The course advocated expanding the scope of health psychology beyond the level of individual health to an understanding of how the social, structural, cultural and political issues influence health and illness. In this respect, like social workers, critical health psychologists play a role in making society more equitable and just. The course also promoted discussion about qualitative research methodologies informed by the paradigms alternative to positivism for investigating health experience and behaviour. I became increasingly attracted to the notions such as social constructionism, multiple meanings of reality, multiple identities and the research methodologies that allow not only to explore and retain the complexities of people's lives and experiences but also to understand these from people's own perspectives. All of this ongoing learning and discussion inevitably stimulated and shaped my thoughts and approaches of doing research and interpreting research material.

Hong Kong is a city with an extraordinary cultural exchange between the East and the West. While collective interests, interpersonal and social harmony are emphasised, individual, social and economic freedoms are also cherished. Growing up in a city of East-West cross culture together with being influenced by the Western ways of thinking through learning Western social work models and psychological theories, I became a

hybrid from the Chinese collective, traditional culture and the Western individual, liberal values. Perhaps, owing to this personal background, I did not find many difficulties in adjusting to the differences between the old and new cultures. I did not experience the so-called “culture shock” when I migrated to New Zealand in 2001. Also, because of that, I have found the theoretical idea of culture and self as mixing and moving fascinating. I acknowledge that I bring this personal knowledge and migration experience to this research. I realise that I have different experiences and feelings of moving to and living in New Zealand from those who came from a country which is dominated by one cultural perspective, such as mainland China.

Locating an approach for narrative analysis

Narrative research does not have a single theoretical orientation. It represents a number of approaches or methods for interpreting and understanding texts in a storied form, which describe human experience and action (Chamberlain, Stephens, & Lyons, 1997; Phoenix et al., 2010; Riessman, 2008). Nevertheless, Kirkman (1999, 2002) claims that there are four features typical of the narrative psychology approach to research. First, the individual person is recognised; understanding individual lives and experiences as well as narrative explanation of them are of central importance in the research processes. Secondly, the subjective dimension of lives is acknowledged and meaning-making is emphasised. Thirdly, explicit recognition is also given to the contribution of a wider historical and socio-cultural context within which the individual’s life is lived and meaning is made. Fourthly, the collaborative construction of narrative accounts between individuals in everyday social interactions and between the researcher and the participant in the research context is acknowledged.

Working around the notions of plot and emplotment, narrative researchers have attempted to develop some ways of doing narrative analysis. For example, Labov and Waletzky (1967; Labov, 1997) have argued that a fully formed narrative consists of certain structural elements in accordance with the temporal sequence of the events; they are: Abstract, Orientation, Complicating Action, Evaluation, Result or Resolution and Coda. Analysis of interview data involves identifying sequences and structural components of the core narratives, examining the relationship of each component to one another, investigating the function of each particular clause in the overall narrative structure and specifying common structural elements or recurrent clauses across stories.

In agreement with the notion that plot functions to organise the stories people live and tell, Frye (1957) has proposed that there are four classic and mythic forms of plot in Western literature, which structure events and shape people's experiences, including the romance, the comedy, the tragedy and the satire. In romance, a person overcomes a series of challenges and successfully accomplishes a mission towards a desired goal. In comedy, the person reinstates a sense of order and peace through harmonising conflicts. In tragedy, the person is thwarted by some unfulfillable desires and the inevitable force of fate is vindicated. In satire, the person is ultimately overwhelmed by events and captive of the world. Murray (1985) proclaims that these four forms of plot as interpretive frames can also be applied to understanding stories in our everyday life. In a similar fashion, Gergen and Gergen (1986, 1988), focusing on the plot development over time, have systematically identified three basic forms of narrative reflecting human life-course patterns, through which narrative analysis can be proceeded. They are the progressive narrative, the regressive narrative and the stable narrative. Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zelber (1998) further elaborated the progressive narrative where the story is on steady advancement and achievement, the regressive narrative where there is a course of deterioration or decline and the stable narrative where there is no change. Different plots are developed when these narrative forms are employed and combined in different ways (Gergen & Gergen, 1986, 1988).

Attention to narrative forms and structures may provide some clear "rules" or "boundaries" helping the researcher to do data analysis and interpretation. It may also yield different understandings and provide additional insights beyond what can be learned from the content of narrative alone (Riessman, 2008). However, there is a potential danger of manipulating the narrative data obtained to fit the predetermined set of narrative structures, forms or plots. There is also a risk of producing another "general unifying view" which individual stories are fit into (Frank, 1995, as cited in Phoenix et al., 2010). In so doing, the individuals' distinctive experiences would easily be ignored and lost. Indeed, not every story contains all the narrative elements described in the Labovian model and they do occur in varying sequences (Riessman, 2008). Stories and their plots are always organised in many ways rather than according to the "exemplar type". As Polkinghorne (1988) argues, "plots are enlarged and varied by eliminating some elements and adding others, the stories produced become increasingly dissimilar to the exemplar" (p. 167). Moreover, although storytelling

practices are in every culture, narrative forms, structures and the related linguistic features through which stories are conveyed are culturally embedded. For example, in English, the tense of verb used in a particular content of the story may convey particular meanings. However, there are no past, present and future forms of verbs in the Chinese language. The use of active or passive verbs in English may imply and underscore the agency of a character perceived in the story, which reflects the dominant Western values of independence and autonomy. However, it is not necessarily the way in which stories narrated by Chinese people are understood. Li (2011), referring to Andrew Plaks' work, states that Chinese narratives tend to be holistically, episodically structured. That is, stories would move along from one episode to the next in no particular order, lacking some coherent sense of having a beginning, a middle and an end. The main plot indeed emerges from the entire narrative. As such, I regarded that it was not appropriate to use a predetermined, limited set of narrative plots or structures for this research analysis.

As mentioned previously, there is a diversity of approaches to narrative analysis. Some scholars have attempted to clarify the differences among approaches and put some order to the narrative research field. For instance, Mishler (1995) has attempted to untangle some of the analytical threads of narrative analysis. He proposed a useful typology of approaches to narrative analysis which focuses on three alternative tasks to analyse and understand narratives in research. The first task focuses on reference and temporal order in which the relationship between the temporal sequence of actual events and the ordering of these events in its narrative representation is examined. The classic model of this category is the Labovian sociolinguistic model as stated above (Labov, 1997; Labov & Waletzky, 1967). The second task pays particular attention to how textual coherence and structure are achieved through linguistic and narrative strategies. That is, the main focus is on "how narratives are constructed, on ways in which different resources of language are used to create a form that carries meaning" (Mishler, 1995, p. 102). This approach assumes coherence of narrative accounts is achieved from socially and culturally grounded linguistic resources and practices, for example, Gee's (1991) linguistic approach to narrative analysis. The third task concentrates on cultural, social and psychological contexts in which narratives occur and on narrative functions in relation to these wider contexts. This approach asserts that human experiences do not exist independent of the social and cultural contexts. Without taking these contextual

aspects of narrative into consideration, the accounts derived from this inquiry would have insufficient interpretive power.

Lieblich et al. (1998) provided the other concise and systematic model for classification of approaches to narrative analysis. They have proposed four modes of reading, analysing and interpreting narrative data, based upon the two independent, underlying dimensions – holistic versus categorical and content versus form. The holistic-categorical dimension is mainly concerned with the units of analysis. Holistic analysis seeks to preserve and understand the story as a whole, whereas categorical analysis involves extracting, selecting words or short sections from the entire text and placing them into themes or categories for interpretation. The content-form dimension finds its explicit expression in focusing on either the content or the form of narratives. Analyses which focus on the content attempt to explore and understand what happened in the story and why. That is, the primary attention is “what” is said. On the contrary, analyses which focus on the form aim to understand how the story is (re)told through examining various narrative features and forms, such as plot development, narrative coherence and the genre of the narrative. By intersecting these two dimensions, Lieblich et al. (1998) have gone further to derive four types of narrative analysis: Holistic-Content, Holistic-Form, Categorical-Content and Categorical-Form.

Reviewing Mishler’s (1995) and Lieblich et al.’s (1998) classifications or typologies helped me to make sense of different approaches and techniques currently operating in the narrative research field and expanded my understanding of narrative analysis. However, I found that none of these narrative approaches were entirely appropriate for this project. As discussed above, there are several limitations and drawbacks for those analytical approaches that mainly focus on examining (preset) narrative structures, forms or plots of people’s narrated stories. For those narrative approaches focusing on categorical analysis, they are useful in summarising key features of a large amount of data and help in highlighting similarities and differences across the data set through recombining coded segments across stories into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Nevertheless, those narrative approaches would fragment people’s experiences. The context of the experiences would also be lost as the coded themes separate participants’ words from their spoken and heard context (McCormack, 2000).

What was the missing feature in those narrative approaches for this project was the attention paid to the local context of narrative production. That is, the context in which narrative and its meanings are interactively produced through the social interaction between a narrator and a particular listener (the participant and the researcher in the research context). Recalling that the discussions and arguments made from previous chapters have centred around the notions that human experience is made meaningful and human sense of the self is constructed through the dialogical interchanges between and among individuals in social interactions and relations, the self is constantly involved in the social construction of identities through the process of narrating his or her life to and with actual or imagined others. These highlight that meaning-making and self-construction are intrinsically social and relational activities.

Dialogic analysis

Recently, Riessman (2008) has proposed the alternative typology of four broad approaches to narrative analysis based on the organisation of candidate exemplars of various analytic narrative approaches. Although her proposed typology overlaps somewhat with the previous two typologies discussed, its own distinctive characteristics can still be found. This, in turn, provided me with an additional resource to draw on in making a strategic decision on the selection of a particular approach to data analysis and interpretation. The four approaches identified by Riessman (2008) are thematic narrative analysis, structural analysis, dialogic or performance analysis and emerging visual analysis. The last two approaches to narrative analysis have not been included in either Mishler's (1995) or Lieblich et al.'s (1998) typology. Thematic narrative analysis presented by Riessman (2008) echoes Lieblich et al.'s (1998) Holistic-Content analysis, whereas structural analysis echoes analyses focusing on reference and structure in Mishler's (1995) typology and analyses concentrating on the form of narratives discussed by Lieblich et al. (1998). Visual analysis incorporates images as data that are interpreted alongside the words of the image-makers.

Dialogic analysis described by Riessman (2008) as a broad and varied interpretive approach to oral narrative that draws on particular features of thematic and structural approaches and incorporates them with other dimensions for understanding and interpreting narratives. This kind of analysis acknowledges that making sense of stories is as much about *how* things are said as about *what* things are said, in which the *hows* of

narrative are placed central in analysis and the *whats* are placed in the background (Smith & Sparkes, 2012). As such, dialogic analysis expands beyond analysing the contents of stories to emphasising the importance on the social, dynamic and interactional aspects of storytelling. It pays close attention to “how talk among speakers is interactively (dialogically) produced and performed as narrative” (Riessman, 2008, p. 105), rather than merely focusing on the content and/or the form of narrative. The underlying assumption is that stories are viewed as social constructions which are constituted within the local interactional context as well as broader historical, social and cultural contexts. In this way, dialogic analysis places considerable importance on the contexts in which stories are produced. Identities in the performance approach are “dynamically constituted in relationships” and situated and performed with and/or for audiences (Riessman, 2008, p. 137). The meaning of a narrator’s experience in the dialogic approach does not reside in his or her narrative. Rather, it emerges in a dialogical relationship between narrator and listener(s), researcher and transcript as well as text and reader. In this respect, multiple readings are always possible. Every narrative text can be read and interpreted in many different ways.

The dialogic analysis draws attention to the relational aspects of the research and the interactional construction of meaning. Researchers are no longer invisible and absent in the research context. Instead, they are an active presence in the research processes of interviewing, transcribing, reading, interpreting and reporting. Researchers bring their identities, cultural and personal backgrounds into the research context. Therefore, it is crucial to reflexively interrogate their influences on the construction and interpretation of narrative material. That is, researchers’ subjectivities, reflections, thoughts and feelings about participants’ stories are made explicit in the process of introducing their interpretive meanings into the narrative texts. Rather than viewing language as a neutral medium through which information is conveyed, the role of language is performative (Wetherell & Potter, 1988) and constructive (Burr, 2003) in dialogic analysis. There is intricate interplay between the researcher and the researched in making use of language to co-construct the research story in the process of interviewing.

There were several reasons for which I considered the dialogic analysis would be most suitable for this project. First and foremost, this narrative approach to analysis does not primarily focus on specific structures, forms and/or linguistic aspects of narrative of

Western cultural storytelling. As such, it could be suitably employed for the older Chinese migrants who participated in this project. Secondly, all human experiences are essentially embedded in contexts and so are the people's narrated stories and their narrative meaning-making. In addition to analysing the content of stories, this approach allows one to have a close reading of the dialogical and performative aspects, the local contexts, such as of dialogic environment, the influence of the researcher and social circumstances, and wider historical, socio-cultural contexts through which narratives are produced and interpreted. Attention to the contexts in which older Chinese people lived and experienced enabled us to delve in depth into the complexities and multifaceted nature of their migration and ageing lives. Through foregrounding my analytic lens on the fine details of talk, the contradictions and tensions within the stories told would also be noticed (Smith & Sparkes, 2012). Thirdly, moving away from the sole analysis of the product of narrative towards the dialogically communicative act in which narrative was produced, the dialogic analysis could also facilitate understanding into how different *I*-positions of participants voiced their perspectives and performed particular identities within the relational dynamics of storytelling. Last but not least, the dialogic analysis, apparently, accommodates a more relational, collaborative and reflexive research process. It sensitised me to respectfully listen to the diverse stories being told (Phoenix et al., 2010) and to work towards more collaborative and egalitarian research relationships. This approach could open up greater degrees of freedom for the voices of participants via telling their own stories. It also acknowledged that they had the power of knowing their own experiences and that their own accounts of stories were equally valid. Simultaneously, it also recognised the voice and the power of the researcher were working in concert to shape the interview dialogue, to construct and make sense of narratives, rather than "romanticising" people's voices.

Voice-centred relational method

The analytic method I was searching for was the one that could acknowledge both the co-construction of the personal narrative and the dialogical and relational nature of meaning-making within the interview. According to Mauthner and Doucet (2003), the voice-centred relational method (VCRM) remains its core idea of a relational ontology:

[the] conceptions of the separate, self-sufficient, independent, rational 'self' or 'individual' are rejected in favour of notions of 'selves-in-relation' or 'relational

beings'. Human beings are viewed as interdependent rather than independent and as embedded in a complex web of intimate and larger social relations (p. 422).

The ontological view of human beings underlying this method appears to better describe people in Chinese culture. As discussed in Chapter 3, Chinese people always regard themselves as connected to others. Their sense of self is embedded in a web of relationships with others and in the cultures within which they live. The existence of the *I* becomes explicit within self-other relationships and interactions. The particular emphasis on the social and relational aspects of human beings made the VCRM appropriate as an analytical method for the project.

The VCRM is originally rooted in the work of Carol Gilligan studying identity and moral development (Gilligan, 1982) from a feminist perspective. Based on her empirical findings, Carol Gilligan developed her theory of moral development in which she distinguished two moral orientations – a care orientation and a justice orientation – which people used to resolve their moral conflicts. Gilligan (1982) named these moral orientations as “voice of justice” and “voice of care”, and so the concept of “voice” was first introduced. This concept of “voice” was further expanded by Brown, Tappan, Gilligan, Miller and Argyris (1989) in their project about moral conflict and choice. They introduced a guide to reading and interpreting narratives of conflict and choice for self and relational voices. As an interpretive research method, Brown et al. (1989) emphasised that this reading guide was not a “Coding Manual” for researcher matching participants’ responses to a predetermined set of categories (p. 146). Instead, it was a more complex way of reading interview text and of examining narrative data that highlighted the interpretive nature of reading and research processes. They stressed that multiple readings were essential to bring the researcher to focus on different aspects of the narrative, beginning with establishing and understanding the story from the narrator’s perspective and following with subsequent readings to locate self and different voices.

The method was further developed and named as the voice-centred relational method by Brown and Gilligan (1992). It is “voice-centred” in the sense that it allows exploration of individuals’ narrative accounts of experience (Fairtlough, 2007) based on the assumption that narrative plays a crucial role in organising human experience. It is

“relational” because it acknowledges that these individuals’ accounts are fundamentally situated within a web of personal and social relationships as well as broader social and cultural contexts; in addition, the accounts are generated within a research relationship between the researcher and the researched (Fairtlough, 2007). In fact, the VCRM requires researchers to pay particular attention to the power issues within the research relationship (Way, 1997). It also emphasises the need for researchers to be reflexive about the ontological, epistemological, theoretical, institutional and interpersonal influences on research practice and their contributions to the processes of data generation and analysis (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, 2003). Therefore, the VCRM is a method sensitive to the collaborative, relational and interpretive nature of research.

The VCRM is also referred to as the “*Listening Guide*” which “draws on voice, resonance, and relationship” as entry points into people’s psychological world, exploring their feelings and thoughts about themselves, their relationships and life experiences (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2003, p. 157). Brown and Gilligan (1992) assert that people’s voices as well as the researcher’s voice are at the heart of psychological inquiry. Voice is fundamentally relational as well as embodied, which connects psych and body and in language links psyche and culture. The Listening Guide provides a pathway to bring the researcher into a relationship with a research participant’s multilayered, complex voices of his or her expressed experience (Gilligan et al., 2003). Through a series of sequential listenings, the distinct aspects of the participant’s experience can be heard within a particular relational context. The researcher’s voice is also explicitly brought into the analytic and interpretive processes. Brown and Gilligan (1992) suggest some basic questions to guide researchers for their multiple listenings of voice: who is speaking and to whom, telling what story about relationship, from whose perspective and in what societal and cultural frameworks?

Analysing the stories

Besides taking interview notes, transcribing the recorded interviews was the other preliminary task towards the data analysis. For those interviews that involved Cantonese speaking participants, I transcribed the entire recordings by myself in Chinese. In addition to transcribing the content, I also made note of all the nonverbal signs, such as laughs, pauses, sighs, background sounds and interruptions that were recorded on the voice recording files. For those interviews with Mandarin speaking

participants, I hired a transcriber, who signed the Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix L), to transcribe the recorded interviews in Chinese. I also listened to the recordings and carefully checked the transcriptions done by the transcriber to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the transcribing process.

Mauthner and Doucet (1998) argue that the voice-centred relational method provides a guide rather than a rigid set of procedures for qualitative data analysis and interpretation. Applying the VCRM of narrative analysis to migration and ageing contexts, I mainly drew on a number of sources and categories of readings that some writers had used in their research as a base to develop a specific analytic approach for addressing the needs of this project (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan et al., 2003; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). That is, narrative accounts of experiences from the older Chinese migrants were read through four different lenses: the plot and the researcher's responses to the narrative; the voice of the *I*; others and relationships; and placing the participants and their experiences within cultural context and social structures. However, I felt the analysis was incomplete if the dimension of meaning co-construction was missed out, as this project was fundamentally relational in nature and placed considerable emphasis on joint production of narratives and their meanings. Therefore, I considered one further step of listening in this project – listening for the process of meaning co-construction. In spite of being conceptually separated, each reading or listening indeed built upon and was related with each other. As Gilligan et al. (2003) state, “No single step, or listening, is intended to stand alone” (p. 159). I found that McCormack's (2000) approach to viewing the narrative transcript and Fraser's (2004) approach to analysing personal stories line by line were particularly helpful in guiding me to analyse the data systematically. They are both in common suggesting researchers make use of some guiding questions and/or bullet points to guide themselves through the process of analysis. Hence, I also incorporated their ideas of working with narrative data in my analysis approach. I developed five steps of listening around guiding questions which drew out how the readings of transcripts were operationalised.

Step 1: Listening for the story being told

This step of listening involved two sub-steps: (1) listening for the plot and (2) the researcher's responses to the narrative interview.

Step 1.1: Listening for the plot

The first part of this step was to listen for the overall plot and story. This step incorporated procedures borrowed from the other narrative sources (Polkinghorne, 1995; Riessman, 1993). I first read the interview transcript while listening to the voice recording for the purpose of reconnecting with the participant's story. Then I re-read the transcript several times to become familiar with the narrative data and to deepen my understanding of the participant's meanings inherent in the story. I paid particular attention to the content of the stories being told within particular contexts and attended to any devices the participant used to articulate his or her experience. I also looked for what was unsaid or taken-for-granted. A story is essentially set within a temporal framework and therefore, I arranged the participant's events and experiences chronologically (Polkinghorne, 1995). I looked for connections of cause and influence among the events and identified actions that contributed to the outcome by means of emplotment (Polkinghorne, 1995). The final emplotted whole narrative provided meaning and understanding to the narrative data.

- What are the stories the participant is telling?
- What are the contexts of the stories being told?
- What are the main events? When and where do they occur?
- Who are the characters?
- What are the subplots?
- Are there any dominant themes, recurrent images, metaphors and words?
- What kinds of meanings might be applied to these themes, images, metaphors and words?
- Are there any contradictions?
- Are there absences or things not being expressed?
- Are there silences, hesitations or gaps and what do they signify?
- What are the emotions experienced through the telling?
- What are the vocal inflections and what do they signify?
- What are the larger social and cultural contexts within which the stories are experienced?

Step 1.2: Listening for the researcher's responses to the narrative

The second part involved reading for myself in the interview transcript. I actively attended to my responses to narrative interview by exploring and identifying my own thoughts and feelings and by making explicit the meaning of those thoughts and feelings about the participant and his or her story. This reading also required me to be reflexive about my social and theoretical locations with regard to the participant. In this respect, I could “retain some grasp over the blurred boundary” between the participant’s narrative and my interpretation of it (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998, p. 127). I kept a diary and made comments on the interview transcripts to reflect on my emotional, intellectual, social and experiential influences on understanding and interpreting what the participant was saying.

- What is my position?
- What power do I bring with me?
- What is my social location (such as age, gender, class) in relation to the participant?
- In what ways are we similar?
- Do I feel close to the participant because of our similarities?
- In what ways are we different?
- Do I make a distance from the participant because of our differences?
- Where do I feel resonated with the participant’s experiences?
- Where do I feel confused and bewildered?
- What are my emotional responses to the participant and his or her narrative?
- What are my intellectual responses to the participant and his or her narrative?
- How might my assumptions, thoughts and feelings affect my understanding and interpretation of the participant and of his or her narrative?

As a standard practice of the VCRM suggested by Brown and Gilligan (1992), I used different coloured highlighters to trace the older Chinese migrants’ voices through the typed transcripts of the digital voice records. This helped me to follow each participant’s multi-layered voices and provided a visual orchestration of the following four listenings. I documented each listening on worksheets, recording in one column

the participants' voices and in another my interpretation of what they were narrating. From the interpretation of the worksheets, I generated my findings.

Step 2: Listening for the voice of the I

This step focused on listening for the participant's "self" and attended to the way in which the participant experienced, felt and talked about himself or herself. Brown and Gilligan (1992) and Gilligan et al. (2003) stress that this listening is important as it brings the researcher into responsive relationship with each participant through tuning into his or her personal voice and listening to what he or she knows of himself or herself before the researcher speaks of him or her. In this way, I gained an entry to and began to establish a connection with the participant's life, rather than keeping a distance from the participant in a detached, objective position. I used a blue highlighter to trace through the first-person voice and other personal pronoun statements in the interview transcripts by identifying the use of "I", "we" and "you". This allowed me to get a sense of how the participant presented himself or herself as an older Chinese migrant as well as his or her perspectives, accounts and emotional responses to his or her migration and ageing experiences. I was also interested in the identities associated with the participant's personal experience of such as being a husband, a wife, a parent or a grandparent that the participant claimed for himself or herself and the connections he or she made between these identities and his or her migration and ageing experiences.

- How does the participant speak of himself or herself?
- How does the participant experience himself or herself?
- How does the participant feel himself or herself?
- How does the participant position *I* in his or her story?
- Where does the participant employ *I* to tell his or her story?
- Where does the participant shift between "I", "we" and "you"?
- What is the social location of the *I* ?

Step 3: Listening for others and relationships

This listening focused on exploring how the participant spoke of and experienced interpersonal and social relationships which I highlighted in green. I also decided to

look at the ways in which these relationships affected the participant's migration and ageing experiences.

- Who does the participant speak of: his or her family, spouse, partner, relatives, children, grandchildren, friends, neighbours or colleagues?
- What does the participant speak about the others?
- How does the participant speak of these relationships?
- What are the feelings the participant associated these people and relationships with?
- Are there personal, social or cultural aspects that facilitate such relationships?
- Are there personal, social or cultural constraints to such relationships?
- How does the migration experience impact on relationships with others?
- How does the ageing experience impact on relationships with others?
- How do these relationships affect the participant's migration experience?
- How do these relationships affect the participant's ageing experience?

Step 4.1: Listening for migration within social and cultural contexts

This step paid attention to the participant's accounts of migration experience within broader social, cultural, political and structural contexts. Using a pink highlighter, I traced the participant's words as he or she spoke about migration within these contexts.

- What stories are told about migration?
- What does the participant tell about his or her experience of migration?
- How does the participant describe the social, cultural and structural forces (e.g., class, gender, culture, ethnicity and geographical location) as constraining and/or enabling in the context of migration?
- How do these forces impact on the participant's migration process?
- How is migration experience mediated by the material conditions in which the participant is living?
- How does migration manifest itself in our conversations?
- How do I talk about migration?

Step 4.2: Listening for ageing within social and cultural contexts

This step was similar to step 4.1, however, the focus was on the participant's experience of ageing within broader social, cultural, political and structural contexts, which I highlighted in purple.

- What stories are told about ageing?
- What does the participant tell about his or her experience of ageing?
- How does the participant describe the social, cultural and structural forces (e.g., class, gender, culture, ethnicity and geographical location) as constraining and/or enabling in the context of ageing?
- How do these forces impact on the participant's ageing process?
- How is ageing experience mediated by the material conditions in which the participant is living?
- How does ageing manifest itself in our conversations?
- How do I talk about ageing?
- How might migration and ageing experiences be linked?

Step 5: Listening for the process of meaning co-construction

The VCRM involves at least four sequential readings or listenings as I outlined above. However, in reflecting on the relational nature of this research and knowledge as a joint production between the researcher and the researched, I was interested to see how the participant's voice and my voice worked in concert to co-construct the meaning of the participant's narrative. I included a further step attending to how I spoke about issues within the interviews and traced these by an orange highlighter.

- How does the interview narrative tend to start, unfold and end?
- How do I talk in such a way to guide the participant to tell about certain stories?
- What issues I choose to follow up?
- How do I talk in such a way that encourages the participant to tell more about these issues?
- What issues I choose to ignore or minimise?
- How do I talk in such a way that disrupts the participant to continue his or her story being told?

- What assumptions am I making?
- Where does the participant provide me responses that apparently follow my questions or issues intended?
- Where does the participant provide me responses that disregard my questions or issues intended?

The findings I obtained through this analytic process not only drew my attention to the factors that enhanced or hindered older Chinese participants' ability to settle into a satisfactory ageing life in New Zealand but also raised my awareness of a multitude of *I*-positions that were dynamically constituted in relationships and interactions embedded in wider historical and socio-cultural contexts. These various *I*-positions of the participants voiced their own perspectives and performed particular identities according to particular relationships, time and circumstances. One of the most interesting findings was that the capacity of the self for constructing different *I*-positions and flexibly moving among these *I*-positions according to situational demands contributed to the participants' sense of happiness and wellbeing. The following two chapters will discuss the findings in more detail.

Chapter 6

Exploring participants' stories

Use curiosity to explore the world.

Use heart-mind to listen to people.

Use wisdom to contemplate the meaning of life.

The research findings comprise two chapters – Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 – which present accounts of older Chinese migrants' experiences of happiness and struggles within the migration and ageing contexts through exploring and analysing participants' narrated stories. This chapter is an overview of the primary findings, which focuses on identifying key factors that enhanced or hindered older Chinese participants' ability to live a happy and satisfactory life in New Zealand. The next chapter presents the core findings of this research, which attempts to further the analyses and interpretations to a more theoretical level in relation to happiness and the self.

Overview of the primary findings

The preliminary analysis of the participants' narrated stories reveals that like all other human experience, happiness experience is subjective, context bound and individualised. There is no standard way of living a happy later life. Some participants were happy to live with their adult children, satisfying the need of family warmth and affection, whereas other participants enjoyed living separately from their adult children, with them having a sense of independence and freedom. Two of the participants decided to live alone in New Zealand after their spouse had passed away and all their adult children had moved back to China. This was because living in the hometown dwelling in China brought them memories of their deceased spouse, which, in turn, induced tremendous grief and sadness. Some found it meaningful to take care of their grandchildren, enjoying the interaction and emotional attachment with them and experiencing a sense of worth, usefulness and happiness, whereas others refused to continue taking on the childcare provider role, enjoying a relaxing retirement life with an opportunity of developing their own interests. Some actively engaged in a variety of social activities through which they could enjoy connectedness with others and eliminate their feelings of boredom and loneliness, whereas others felt tired of the racket of modern life and preferred living a serene life, doing housework, gardening, reading, watching television and occasionally meeting and chatting with friends.

Although the participants varied considerably in their experiences of living a happy and satisfactory ageing life in the context of migration, there were some preconditions, factors and sources identified that could contribute to create and promote the participants' sense of happiness and wellbeing. These general themes included: the natural environment, social welfare, health, wellbeing of the offspring as well as family, ethnic community and social supports.

The natural environment

The natural environment was stated as a common precondition of the participants feeling satisfied with living in New Zealand. With its distinguishing characteristics of clean, green, minimal hazardous environmental pollutants and moderate climate, the participants constructed New Zealand as a paradise for older people. They closely linked human health and wellbeing with the health of the natural environment. Unpolluted, healthy natural environment was regarded as the foundation to the quality of life and individual wellbeing. In 2008, a poison milk powder scandal hit China, raising concerns about food safety and political corruption in China. Therefore, besides speaking of the good quality of air and water, the participants frequently expressed confidence with the food they ate in New Zealand. Although they realised that there were more varieties of Chinese food and dishes available in food markets and restaurants in China and Hong Kong, they indicated that healthy eating with light, low-fat food was more suitable for them and beneficial to their health, particularly, at their age. Together with the view that food safety was more emphasised and thus better regulated in New Zealand, the participants justified their satisfactory living in New Zealand.

Social welfare

The participants praised the New Zealand social security and welfare systems. New Zealand currently provides a universal superannuation pension for eligible citizens and permanent residents aged over 65. This social security pension can financially support the ageing people to meet their basic needs. Neither Hong Kong nor China has social security pension systems, implying a limited number of older people who have pensions and indicating inadequate retirement protection and income support to the older population. For example, before the implementation of the Mandatory Provident Fund, a mandatory retirement protection scheme, in 2000, only about 30% of workers in Hong

Kong who were working in organisations such as the Government, subsidised agencies and large commercial firms received pensions or retirement funds after their retirement (Siu, 2002). None of the research participants had pensions from the China or Hong Kong Government. A majority of the participants from China had retirement incomes. However, the amount was limited, ranging from NZ\$2,000-6,000 per annum, owing to the low wages they received in their working lives. At the time of the first interview, six participants were receiving New Zealand Superannuation (NZS), two were living on their own savings and investments and one on his retirement incomes from China with some financial support from the adult children. The remaining five who had financial difficulties were depending on the means-tested emergency grants, a form of social benefit in New Zealand, for a living. For those who received retirement incomes from the Chinese Government, the amount needed to be deducted from emergency grants they received in New Zealand. In general, the participants expressed satisfaction with the financial support from the New Zealand Government. As their financial expectations were modest, the money and the other benefits they received could be sufficient to fulfil the basic necessities of life: food, clothing, housing and transportation. A comparatively stable and adequate source of income could also help them to live a financially independent life with a sense of autonomy, freedom and dignity, particularly for those who would like to live independently from their children. As all participants had spent their youth and adulthood living in an era of socio-political instability and poverty of public resources, especially for those who originally came from China, the social security and welfare systems in New Zealand, particularly in terms of financial support, provided them with a sense of security in living. Compared with their past experiences of suffering from poverty or deprivation, most participants felt contented and grateful for the care and support they received and for the ordinary but stable life with a mind free of the worries they had in New Zealand, leading to a sense of being at ease with life, happiness and wellbeing.

Health

All participants considered health as the most important issue in old age and an essential factor for living a happy life. Some participants employed a Chinese saying – *jiu bing chuang qian wu xiao zi* (久病床前無孝子, there is no filial son to stay beside the bed for a long period of time to take care of his sick parent) – to illustrate the importance of health. “*It doesn't really matter how wealthy you are and how many children you have.*

If you are not healthy, your child(ren) will get fed up with you after taking care of you day after day.” Being chronically ill might also have negative moral implications in the sense that it, more or less, harms family interests, which, in turn, would disrupt the family relationships. This would have a negative impact on the older parents’ identities in terms of becoming a burden to the family. Indeed, according to an ancient Chinese law, a man can divorce his wife if she is suffering from serious disease. The findings reveal that most participants had a plan to go to a nursing home when they became very ill and could no longer take care of themselves. One of the main reasons was that they did not want to burden their adult children with time, energy and finance for providing them with extensive care.

Obviously, reaching their later stage of life, the participants were more conscious of the value of health. They frequently regarded being healthy and capable of functionally managing everyday life and remaining self-care as blessings. Maintaining good health and self-care then became the participants’ life focus, which was not only for the participants’ self-interest but also for the interest of the family and younger generations:

As an older person, I think the most important thing is to keep myself healthy, promoting my happiness. Being healthy, I am able to help the younger generations. ... If you are not healthy, you need your children to take care of you. So, keeping yourself healthy means helping your children.

In order to minimise the potential disabilities induced by illness that hindered their abilities to live and perform daily tasks independently, the participants actively adopted a healthy lifestyle in a disciplined manner, such as going to bed and waking up early, exercising regularly, eating healthily, maintaining optimism and a peaceful mind through focusing on the present and being free themselves from worrying about what might happen in the future. They also scrutinised their bodily conditions, adjusting their activities and finding the right balance between maintaining normal activities and modifying daily routines to suit their diminished physical capacities. Maintaining oneself as healthy was constructed as more than an individual choice. This was also a moral act of expression of love and concern to the children by preventing a potential drain on family resources for care and medical treatments. Nevertheless, almost all participants had experienced or were experiencing different health problems, such as

high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, arthritis and so on. Most of them coped with their health problems, by accepting them through drawing on discourse that the processes of birth, ageing, sickness and death are a natural life cycle and becoming and being ill is an inevitable part of older people's everyday lives. Letting nature take its course functioned to help the participants face the negative changes of ageing and eliminate anxieties and worries about the expected poorer health in older age.

Wellbeing of the offspring

In narrating their migration and ageing stories, the participants frequently spoke of their happiness in relation to being free from worrying about their offspring:

At our age, we don't need to dress too well. For food, now we don't need to worry as well. As human beings, the most balanced psychological state is to see our offspring living a happy life without problems. Great! Our historical mission (bringing up children) has been accomplished.

The findings show that, besides their physical health and abilities, the participants were mostly concerned about the welfare and wellbeing of their children and grandchildren, particularly for those whose children faced with work-related, financial and marital difficulties. *“As a parent, we always want our offspring to have a life that is better than ours.”* In fact, a majority of the participants mentioned that their children and families, in general, were living well and so they did not need to worry about them. They were often happy to share with pride and consolation in the interviews about their children's success in work and family, living a life with financial adequacy and happiness, through which they identified themselves as parents who successfully completed their *“missions”*:

My elder son is so bright. He went to take an electrician course and got a professional licence after arriving here (New Zealand). He earns good money and bought a big house. His wife doesn't need to go to work and they are living a very good life with two children.

I think my success is that I had raised and cultivated my two daughters very well. After that, they were able to give me a chance to come here (New Zealand) ... They are parents now and also live a very good life.

Although not all adult children with good financial conditions are willing to take care of their aged parents and not all who endure financial hardships make excuses of not fulfilling their filial responsibilities, the findings reveal that the life circumstances of adult children, their financial situations in particular, would have an impact on their willingness to take responsibility for looking after their parents not only financially but also physically and emotionally. For example, the adult children with good financial capabilities were able to afford to promote their parents' quality of life through such as sponsoring their parents to learn driving, paying for the travelling expenses, paying for medical expenses when their parents needed to have medical treatments in China and securing their parents a place to live in New Zealand when they subsequently re-migrated to China or another country. With better family finances, the adult children appeared to experience less life stress. The daughter(s) or the daughter(s)-in-law of some participants did not need to work. They, therefore, were more readily, both physically and psychologically, available for providing care and emotional support for their parents or parents-in-law.

Family, ethnic community and social supports

Although social services and welfare play critical roles in the Chinese aged care in New Zealand, being well supported by family, friends, neighbours and volunteers in the Chinese community would also be important for helping the older Chinese migrants to make a quick adaptation to the new environment and maintain their quality ageing life. Other migrants who had already settled in the country could often act as mentors, sharing their own migration experiences, providing useful information and advice as well as offering practical and emotional support to the newly arrived migrants. The stories of being helped were frequently told by the participants in the interviews. Besides resolving their various daily problems and meeting their needs, the participants felt good about themselves for being included, loved, cared for, cared about and respected through receiving help and eliminating a sense of isolation and loneliness. The friendship between the helper and the helped could also be established and their interpersonal networks could be expanded. Good family and social relationships were,

indeed, a vital source of participants' happiness. *"I feel really good, it's like a family. We treat each other with mutual respect and concern. Having the church people to help us, especially to older people like us who don't speak English, I feel really warm."* *"My friend introduced a volunteer to me. I don't know English and he helped me to apply for benefits and public housing. I feel very grateful to him. We don't have volunteers in China."* The availability of support in social and community networks could also function to eliminate potential strains in family relations, which would be probably created in the situations where the older parents sought help from their adult children to get things done urgently, but the children were not available for various reasons. The older parents' requests were then ignored or ultimately forgotten. Whether the parents reiterated their requests or not, complaints, grumbles, resentment, feelings of being ignored and disrespected and of powerlessness might be induced. Receiving help breeds giving help. Besides speaking of being helped by others, the participants also recounted their stories of offering help to others. For example, a participant who was a medical professional expressed great appreciation and gratitude to the nurses taking extensive care of her dying husband. While she was visiting and accompanying her husband in the hospital, she offered help to feed and wash the other patients. In fact, being able to help or care for others appeared to make the participants live a more fulfilling and happier life, drawing much joy and meaningfulness out of it. *"I feel being able to help others is happier than being helped by others."*

Besides the five enhancing factors identified above, the research findings indicate that there were several factors that could potentially hinder the participants' ability to live a happy and satisfactory ageing life in New Zealand. The general themes included: language barriers, transportation problems, crimes, and healthcare services.

Language barriers

Consistent with previous migration research (Ip, Lui, & Chui, 2007; Selvarajah, 2004; Wang, 2001), language barriers, transportation problems and the resulting feelings of social isolation and confinement were the major struggles experienced by the older Chinese participants, particularly during the initial settlement in New Zealand and when there were fewer Chinese living in the country. However, to what extent these difficulties impacted on their everyday life and wellbeing greatly depended on the availability of instrumental support from families, friends, neighbours and Chinese

community organisations, the availability of social and medical services offered by Chinese professionals (all participants were seeing a Mandarin/Cantonese-speaking general practitioner (GP)), the availability of language support or translation services at public services, the availability of local amenities and whether they lived in or in close proximity to the Chinese community¹⁴. For instance, the participants indicated that they did not experience many language difficulties in public hospitals where the translation services could be pre-arranged. However, language would become a problem when they needed to communicate with the case managers at the Work and Income¹⁵ offices where interpreters were not readily available.

As time went by, the participants apparently started to get used to the language difficulties and improvised their own ways of communication. As a problem solver rather than a sufferer, they developed various strategies to overcome their difficulties encountered in everyday life. For example, if they needed to take a bus to a destination, they would ask their adult children to write down the destination name in English on a piece of paper. They then showed the paper to the bus driver and sat near to the driver, so the driver could remind them when they arrived at their destination. They would bring along their English letters to the libraries, the pharmacies run by Chinese or the Chinese churches to find someone who could translate the letters for them. When they needed to call emergency services, they learned that if they simply said the word, “*Chinese*”, the line would be transferred to someone who could speak Chinese. Unlike the younger migrants who need good English for better job opportunities and career advancement, the older participants in their retirement age had less pressing needs to master the language. Their lives, in fact, mostly involved their families, Chinese friends, Chinese organisations and Chinese service providers. Consequently, their language deficiencies did not significantly affect their daily lives. Most participants had attended English classes in which they not only learned English but also established their new social networks and developed friendships. However, they recognised and accepted the reality that it was difficult for them to master a new language at their age because of their deteriorating memory. For some participants, they did not worry about their

¹⁴ The Chinese community here refers to the local districts which are comparatively highly populated by Chinese people and which have relatively numerous Chinese shops and services, such as Northcote, Howick and Pakuranga in Auckland.

¹⁵ Work and Income is a governmental agency, which provides financial assistance and employment services throughout New Zealand.

ability to speak fluent English and they were happy to be able to manage a few words for simple social conversations with the local people, like “*Hi*”, “*Good morning*”, “*Thanks*”, “*Sorry*” and some simple sentences for indicating that they did not speak English when they were answering a phone call, such as “*I don’t know*” and “*No English.*”

Transportation problems

Similarly, the influence of a lack of and an inconvenience of transportation on older participants’ everyday activities was situational rather than universal. Obviously, living nearby or in the Chinese community would partly address the transportation problems. With good health conditions, most of the participants walked to shops (some with a little trolley), English schools and community centres to participate in social activities. Although they often had to walk more than thirty minutes from their home to their destinations, they considered this as an exercise opportunity, claiming that it would ultimately benefit their health. For those who lived with their adult children, they would rely on their children to buy and carry the heavy groceries. It is reasonable to assume that older migrants are not confident enough to venture out on their own using public transport because of their incompetent language skills. However, the findings show that it was not always the case. Most of the participants, with the initial help of others or being accompanied by others, made attempts to use public transport. Some would share their success in public transport ventures with other older Chinese people and encouraged them to follow suit. Particularly, with the introduction of the SuperGold Card by the New Zealand Government in 2008, older New Zealand residents could ride free on public transport through which their mobility and participation in the community could be enhanced. For those who regularly attended church or other religious organisation activities, they would likely get help with transportation from the church or organisation members. So, when would transportation be likely to become a critical problem? The findings reveal that the transportation difficulties were greatly experienced when the participants had to visit designated places for various purposes, such as assessing medical services, visiting their ill spouse in the hospital, applying for benefits or a visa but there was no-one available to help with the transportation and no direct bus services between their home and the destinations. It was particularly difficult for those who suffered from illness that required regular visits to medical providers.

Crimes

In 2008, at the time of conducting interviews for this project, three Asian people had died in homicides within a month. A shop owner was fatally shot in his shop. An eighty-year-old lady died three days after having been attacked by an intruder in her home. A middle-aged woman died after her handbag was snatched and she was run down by a stolen vehicle in a shopping mall carpark. The incidents evoked concerns and discussions among the Chinese and other Asian communities. A protest was organised by the Asian Anti-Crime Group, demanding tougher sentences and promoting a safer place for people to live. With extensive media coverage on crime and violence, safety from crime became an ad hoc issue in the interviews. In fact, four out of the fourteen participants had experienced household burglary. One had been a victim of theft. She expressed that her purse being stolen was the unhappiest incident she had experienced in New Zealand so far. In addition, some participants had been harassed by rowdy teenagers on the street.

As discussed, New Zealand had been constructed as a paradise on earth for older people. However, some participants stated that this reputation was blemished by an escalating crime rate. They described the present-day New Zealand as an increasingly unsafe place. When it came to the crime problem, the older participants, in general, felt more socially vulnerable because of their ethnicity and more physically vulnerable because of their age. With their perceived weaker bodies, the participants expressed that they could not protect themselves from an attack and criminal victimisation, which, in turn, induced a sense of fear and insecurity and also affected their quality of life and wellbeing. The induced fear of and/or experience of crime generally restricted their daily lives. For example, some participants gave up evening walks because of safety concerns. For those who themselves, or someone they knew of, were the victims of crime they became more cautious. Instead of playing a passive role of being victims of crime, they took measures to minimise the fear and the risk by installing security devices, such as locks and/or security systems and arranging neighbourhood watch while they were away from home. Some participants emphasised that crime was a major social problem in New Zealand and could happen to anyone. Positioning themselves as responsible citizens, some participants took part in the anti-crime protest in order to raise public awareness of criminal justice issues, such as punitive sentencing and correctional policies and practices. Speaking of human rights and justice, the

participants constructed the New Zealand criminal justice system as the one that overemphasised the human rights of the offenders while it ignored those of the law-abiding citizens. They frequently expressed doubt about the ability of the justice system to deal with criminals fairly in terms of light sentencing and the parole system. They voiced with objection that not every New Zealand family could afford to enjoy the “*luxurious*” living conditions, such as air-conditioning and under-floor heating, provided for the offenders in prisons. They also portrayed imprisonment in New Zealand as enjoyment rather than punishment; for instance, the prisoners were allowed to freely smoke and watch television. They regarded that the justice system consequently bred criminals instead of reducing crime and thus questioned the ability of the system to protect citizens and treat them fairly.

Healthcare services

Being old is commonly associated with biological decline and physical illness. The adequacy of healthcare services to meet older people’s health needs would have a direct impact on their physical as well as subjective wellbeing. The findings indicate that participants’ satisfaction with the New Zealand healthcare system and services varied depending on what kind of illness the participants (or their spouse) had suffered or were suffering from, whether the illness was acute or chronic and whether the participants originally lived in an urban city or a rural village in their home country. For those who had experienced minor health problems (e.g., flu, a high cholesterol level) or acute illness (e.g., heart attack, gallstone colic), they expressed a high level of satisfaction with the healthcare services they received. For those who were experiencing chronic disease (e.g., chronic back pain, arthritis) or health problems that were not life-threatening and thus did not warrant immediate treatments (e.g., lacrimal duct obstruction, colonic cyst), they expressed concerns about the long waits for appointments and treatments. The participants generally used both Western and traditional Chinese medicines in China, depending on the nature of the health problem. For example, traditional Chinese medicine such as acupuncture and therapeutic massage were preferred while dealing with illness such as arthritis and chronic pain. However, in New Zealand, the cost of traditional Chinese medicine was a concern as the treatments were not subsidised by the Government. A few participants also expressed concerns about the limited choice of quality traditional treatments in New Zealand and

they sometimes needed to return back to China seeking appropriate traditional treatments for their illness.

Nevertheless, the participants generally appreciated the New Zealand public healthcare system. Some participants commented that social equality was actualised in New Zealand in the sense that regardless of their socioeconomic status, everyone has equal rights to access free or subsidised medical care. This induced their sense of being valued, respected and cared for. In China, medical treatment and healthcare were generally provided free of charge or at a low cost in the pre-reform era. However, after the economic reforms in the 1980s, medical care was no longer free of charge, except for the current and retired employees of the state-owned enterprises and the government and Party officials (Dillon, 2009). This situation continues today. For the general public, particularly for those who live in rural areas with lower socioeconomic status, they may struggle to afford their medical expenses as a result of the collapse of the old state-funded health system. As the participants frequently commented: *“People in China cannot afford to be sick.”* Similarly, in Hong Kong, there are no government subsidies for general practitioner visits and prescriptions in private settings. Public hospital treatments are also partially subsidised. Recognising that medical expenses would often be the major financial burden in older age, a well-established government funded healthcare system could free the participants from worries about the unaffordable medical expenses and the resulting unattainable treatments, making them feel pleased and at ease with ageing in New Zealand.

In the following chapter, I will present three in-depth case studies to illustrate how the dynamic interplay of a multitude of self-positions contributed to people’s experience of happiness in the migration and ageing contexts.

Chapter 7

Three case studies

This chapter presents the core findings of this thesis. In Chapter 6, I have positioned myself as a central person who used psychological knowledge and concepts to understand and interpret the participants' lives. In this chapter, I pay special attention to the participants' voices and make them more explicit as part of my interpretations. That is, while I acknowledge that the interpretations are from me as a researcher, I hope that the utterances of the participants talking about their experiences and reflecting on some relevant and significant aspects of their lives will not be concealed by my interpretations and use of psychological concepts. The participants are (co-)authors of their own stories and capable of giving meanings to the events in their own lives. Therefore, their words, concepts and interpretations resulting from the dialogical exchanges between the participants and me will be reported as much as possible as they wanted to be heard. A case study approach will be employed in presenting the findings in this chapter. In this case, similar to Merriam (1998), I define a case study as the final product of the inquiry, which is characterised by an intensive description and an extensive analysis of a single case or multiple cases. I regard the case study approach as best suited to complementing the fragmenting of the participants' stories by categorising their experiences through thematic coding in Chapter 6. This approach, I believe, is the most appropriate to grasp and demonstrate the complexities of the dynamic movement of the self within its unique real-life context. The self with its spatial and temporal nature can be fully acknowledged and the self and its experience of happiness can be meaningfully understood.

Although each participant in this research had his or her detailed story to tell, three categories of narratives emerged from the narrative data set, namely "the overall happy narrative", "the resolved happy narrative" and "the unresolved sad narrative". Among the thirteen stories told by the participants, five were recounted as "overall happy narratives", six as "resolved happy narratives" and two as "unresolved sad narratives". However, even though the narratives were categorised as either happy or sad, it is important to realise that each narrative involved both happiness and unhappiness. This resonates with the Chinese *yin-yang* perspective that happiness is dialectical in nature.

Happiness and unhappiness do not exist in isolation. They are in a relationship of interdependence and complementarity within which they derive meanings from the coexistence of the other.

In the overall happy narratives, the participants expressed high levels of happiness and life satisfaction after migrating to and ageing in New Zealand. The current experience of happiness and its meaning were constructed in relation to the past life adversities they had experienced in their home country when they were young. Compared with the past hardships, the changes and their associated difficulties induced by migration appeared slight. In fact, the caring families and supportive social networks that they had developed often played a crucial role in facilitating a smooth life and maintaining a positive outlook for the future. With their developed resilience, critical life reflection and capacity for the self flexibly moving among different *I*-positions according to situational, interpersonal, intergenerational and social demands, they were able to create a new, enjoyable later life in New Zealand. The Chinese cultural notion that contentment brings happiness functioned to reinforce their sense of inner harmony, happiness and wellbeing.

In the resolved happy narratives, the participants initially experienced their decreased levels of happiness and wellbeing in the settlement process mainly because of adaptational difficulties. These difficulties were further exacerbated by circumstances including a lack of personal resources, a loss of spouse, a lack of (expected) adult children filial care and a lack of support from other family members. Triggered by events, such as a conversation with a friend, an introduction to a religion, help from a community volunteer and advice from a Chinese community member, which enabled the participants to access some external resources, such as means-tested emergency grants, student allowances, disability assistance, residential care subsidies, public housing, emotional support and assistance from religious groups and the Chinese community, they regained hope and began actively undertaking actions to resolve their problems. They overcame a series of life challenges through developing and adopting some new and more adaptive self-positions to deal with the situation in hand. They ultimately made a successful transition, leading to enhanced levels of happiness and wellbeing. They also reinstated a sense of inner peace through re-negotiating the cultural ideals and new social circumstances, and through exercising forgiveness and

harmonising interpersonal and intergenerational conflicts. In narrating their stories, the participants constructed difficult life experiences as transformative experiences, in which they demonstrated their capacity for positive growth and openness to change and adaptation, enriching their life and retaining a positive sense of self.

In the unresolved sad narratives, the participants expressed low levels of happiness and wellbeing in living a later life in New Zealand. They were overwhelmed by a series of struggles and misfortunes and thwarted by having needs and desires that could not be fulfilled. Being locked in by some solidly developed self-positions, the self was allowed relatively limited space to create and adopt new positions that might be more appropriate to deal with the changing life circumstances. This hindered the participants from moving from suffering to an enhanced state of wellbeing.

What follows is a representative narrative of each category. The three stories, involving four participants, were selected because they provided a set of diverse and rich data that allowed the obtaining of a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. What is most important is that the selected stories not only contributed their own particular vantage points but these points were also repeatedly expressed in the other ten older Chinese participants' stories, reflecting their shared experiences and realities.

The narrative of Au and Yu

This narrative is about a couple, Au aged 72 and Yu aged 60. They were granted permanent residency under the investment immigration stream and had lived in New Zealand for seven years at the time of interview. They had three sons, two living in Hong Kong and one living with his family in New Zealand. Overall, it is a happy story. However, the story shows that the experience of happiness is interrelated with, rather than isolated from, that of unhappiness. Au and Yu co-constructed the meanings of living a satisfactory migration life and of ageing well in New Zealand through narrating a series of stories about their experiences of present enjoyment and gratification as well as of past hardship and misery. Without the past misery, the present happiness would not have been so precious. Moreover, the story demonstrates that the relationship between happiness and unhappiness is dynamic and constantly changing. The transformation of happiness from unhappiness and their ultimate integration require the capability of the self to create new favourable *I*-positions, to organise and reorganise various newly formed and existing *I*-positions and to move among these positions in harmony.

Seeking for security

The reversion of sovereignty over Hong Kong as a British colony from the United Kingdom to China took place on 1 July 1997. From the start of the settlement of the negotiation between the Chinese and British Governments, which led to the signing of Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984, many people in Hong Kong began to develop a sense of insecurity. They were apprehensive and pessimistic towards the future of Hong Kong and the transfer of the region's sovereignty to the founding political party of the Chinese Government – the Communist Party. Migration was constructed as a way to “buy” some security for the future. A tide of migration occurred. The move accelerated after the Tiananmen Square protests and massacre in 1989, which unavoidably served as a massive blow to the confidence in Hong Kong (Ley & Kobayashi, 2005). For Yu, her distrust of the Chinese Government was due to not only its past history of intensely fluctuating internal policies (Asia Pacific Migration Research Network (APMRN), n.d.) but also the violent death of her father during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, also known as the Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution was a social-political movement that took place in China between

1966 and 1976 (Clark, 2008). It aimed at enforcing communist ideology by removing capitalist, or “bourgeois”, influences as well as traditional and cultural elements from the society. The new society created through the Revolution was believed to have no gap between urban and rural and between intellectuals and labourers. People with particular political identities including landlords, rich farmers, anti-revolutionists, bad-influences and right-wingers were labelled as the Five Black Categories and subject to fierce public criticism and punishment, including arbitrary imprisonment and seizure of property. Consequently, millions of people were forced into manual labour and tens of thousand were executed. Yu’s father was one of them. I had deep sympathy for Yu and her family not only because of her father’s guiltless death but the incident also reminded me of my grandfather:

Yu: We, those who had endured hardships in mainland China were really miserable. Why must I have come [to New Zealand]? Why did we feel so scared when we heard about the 1997 handover? It’s because we were classified as landlords when we were living in China. My father, I had no chance to see my father. My father was executed at that time. It was horrible and pathetic.

Cannis: My grandad was also a landlord and he had attempted suicide three times. (Says in low voice)

Yu: Yes, how miserable it was! My mother then brought up four children by herself. She was more miserable. She carried my little brother on her back and went to visit my father. He was in prison. She was told that she didn’t need to come to visit him anymore. She asked why. It’s because my father had already been executed. Then she walked home, carrying my little brother, walked several hours to home. When my mother told us about this, she was still very upset. That’s why she was so scared when she heard things about the Communist Party. That’s why I always say, “We must come, we must come [to New Zealand].”

In the excerpt, Yu felt and positioned herself as vulnerable when she faced with fear the socio-political changes in Hong Kong as a result of handing over its sovereignty to the Chinese Communist Party. This induced a sense of tension and disharmony within

herself. The internal position of “I as vulnerable” was constructed in relation to four external positions in the self of Yu: the lost father, the miserable mother, the Communist Party that ruled China when Yu was young, and the Communist Party that was going to govern Hong Kong in the future. The external positions of the past Communist Party and the (imagined) future Communist Party were experienced by Yu as untrustworthy. They functioned in the same way that they triggered, consciously or unconsciously, the same vulnerable *I*-position in the self of Yu. Occupying her mother’s position, taking her perspective and following what she did for the family – seeking for a secure life, Yu felt a persistent need of migration, or at least, of securing a migration opportunity. It was a way through which her internal harmony could be resumed.

A miserable life, a resilient self

After the unexpected loss of her father, Yu stepped into the bumpy road of her childhood. She was two years old when her father died and was the third among her four siblings. To protect her children and secure their living as well as their future, Yu’s mother was forced to temporarily leave her three eldest children in a turbulent and unstable society and go to Hong Kong in the hope of earning a living. The three children including Yu lived separately in their relatives’ homes and depended on the relatives for a living. Although Yu’s youngest brother went with her mother to Hong Kong, he was ultimately left in an orphanage as the mother worked as a 24-hour-maid and stayed in her employer’s house. Depending on the support of other families was not at all easy and this could not imply any security of good living, particularly at the time when wretched poverty was present all over China with desperate shortages of food and social resources. Yu had to learn to tolerate the difficult environment at a very young age. She constructed herself as a self-reliant child while she was narrating her story:

Cannis: When did you go to Hong Kong to meet your mother?

Yu: Me. I was around 11, 12 years old.

Cannis: You reunited with your mother when you were 11.

Yu: Yes, but she came to visit us every year, bringing canned food, preserved meat, oil. She wore seven pants and left six for us. The life was very difficult at that time. ... My mother brought us lot of flour and

she sometimes sent food to us. We really had nothing good to eat, we had no breakfast. I remember I had no shoes to wear at all. I relied on nobody, I needed to do everything by myself. I went to my auntie's house during the day and walked to my other uncle's house to sleep at night. There was no streetlight on the road and I walked in the dark. When your foot¹⁶ was cut by some broken glass on the road, you pulled it out by yourself and continued to walk even though your foot was covered with blood. So I think people of this generation are so lucky.

Reuniting with the mother could not give the self-reliant child a sigh of relief and a chance of tasting a moment of worry-free childhood. For Yu, receiving her mother's full care and support for her daily life was just an unrealisable desire. When Yu moved to Hong Kong, it was arranged for her to live with her auntie's family. It was a shared flat and Yu's auntie's family only occupied one tiny room. Yu needed to sleep on a makeshift bed on a desk without any proper private space. In the 1960s and 1970s, the living conditions in Hong Kong were, by and large, poor. The living area was in general small and it was not uncommon that the kitchen and the toilet were in the same room. There were also no flush toilets and the stairs were unlit. Yu grew up in such a harsh living environment:

Yu: ... There wasn't any private space. What a misery! There was no flush toilet, people used a cuspidor. When I was sitting on the cuspidor to poo, there was a person cooking, there was a person bathing. I experienced (saw) three different things happening on the same time. (Chuckles). I saw my pregnant auntie bathe. ... So, you see, how much I had experienced? So, why shouldn't you be grateful? So, there are no problems at all living in here (New Zealand). I feel it's very interesting. That's different.

Cannis: That's why you value your present life in here.

Yu: Yes, yes, you can say that. It's pretty true except I am still worrying about my son I think. But as a human being, we should have something to worry about, isn't it?

Au: Ah, what you have said can give Cannis some inspiration. (Yu giggles).

¹⁶ It refers to Yu's foot.

Cannis: Yes, it can.

Au: Yes, you're young and so you haven't got heard of this kind of experience.

Yu: What a miserable life! I needed to walk in the dark. Those manure pits¹⁷ were placed in front of the doors. There was no lighting and I had to walk carefully step by step to the fourth floor. There was no government public housing, no social security, nothing at all. I sometimes accidentally touched those pits and thought those excrement collectors were more miserable [than me], weren't they? I needed to think that way. I walked step by step in the dark, so I am very independent. (Chuckles).

Yu's migration story was initially about gaining a security for the future but it was also about her miserable childhood and transformation of the self. Soon after Yu moved to Hong Kong, her elder brother and sister followed and the whole family was ultimately reunited. The mother rented a room for the family, in which there was no window and it was infested with mice. There were another seven to eight households sharing the flat and every household needed to take turns to use the kitchen. Hong Kong had a water crisis because of serious droughts in 1963 and 1967. The Government introduced a water restriction policy and the water supply was restricted to four hours every four days during some critical periods. Sharing the kitchen to cook for the family became more frustrating and induced a lot of conflicts amongst the families in the shared flat. Yu was responsible for cooking for the family. Although she was only a teenage girl, she needed to "fight" for the water with other adults. While recounting a time of adversity, the voice of misery was always dominant. However, it had never been a sole voice. Yu was miserable as she described but she also positioned herself as an independent life-adaptor who had the courage to confront difficulties. The seemingly opposing positions – "I as a miserable child" and "I as an independent life-adaptor" – coexisted. Depending on the dialogical exchanges between Yu and me in the interview, the *I* fluctuated between these *I*-positions and among the other *I*-positions, voicing their own perspectives to give meanings to Yu's personal experience.

¹⁷ In the old days when they were without flush toilets, people used cuspidors and poured filthy excrement into a manure pit which was shared by all households of the flat. Every flat placed their pit in front of the door for the excrement collector to collect the excrement in the evening.

The Hong Kong Government introduced the 6-year free compulsory primary school education in 1971. As such, Yu could benefit from this education policy. She felt particularly grateful and appreciated that she had an opportunity to receive an education through which she believed she would be able to change her living circumstances and improve her quality of life. Being grateful of having the opportunity and considering herself as luckier than her brother, Yu would endure anything:

... I really have a fear of mice. Why? My brother worked as an office assistant and my mother asked me to tolerate him even when he was in a bad temper. She said it's because I had a chance to go to school but he hadn't. One time he lost his company keys, he asked me to look for them. I stretched out my hand for the keys under the bed and I caught a dead mouse. I sat on the floor and cried. Nobody came to help me. After a while, I stopped crying and put the dead mouse in the rubbish bin. Why was I so miserable? ... I feel miserable when I recalled it. So that's why I love here (New Zealand). (Laughs).

Only by undergoing life challenges and difficulties do we become strong and resilient. Only by practising diligence and persistence do we achieve success. These reflect not only Yu's personal values but also her family and Chinese cultural values at large. During the interview, the participants and I moved from a collective narrative to co-constructing a story about how adverse circumstances could function as a catalyst to pushing one to grow and succeed, through which various *I*-positions in the self of Yu – “*I* as resilient”, “*I* as diligent” and “*I* as not pity” – were recognised. These positive *I*-positions were prominent in relation to two external positions: her elder and younger brothers, who were experienced by Yu as industrious, responsible and self-motivated. These external positions were included because they shared a similar part of Yu's life and could serve to reinforce her own positioning while she was narrating her story. Moreover, there was a relational aspect of the self in the sense there was a gradual transition between *I* and *You*. Yu's brothers were part of the self of Yu. The personal *I*-positions of Yu were transformed to the collective *I*-positions in family. As resilient persons, the three siblings had to passively accept and resign themselves to adversity on one hand, and actively sought for changing their fate and created a brighter future on the other hand:

Yu: ... *But my brother's life was even more difficult. He started working as an office assistant, studying at an evening school after work. I prepared a bowl of rice for him when he came home around midnight. He was very hard-working. Can you imagine it? Life was so hard, so hard at that time. But he did it and he became a director at a US telecommunication company. He learned everything by himself, he learned his English by himself.*

Cannis: *He had never gone to school.*

Yu: *Yes. But he died much earlier [than we normally expect]. It's very sad, don't you agree? He didn't want to burden others, so he self-studied everything instead of going to school. He studied in the evening and worked in a bank during the day. He started as an office assistant and gradually was promoted to a manager position. To me, he was very smart, really. (Smiles). My younger brother ... he too worked very hard and became very successful in his career ... and enjoys a good life after he retired. (Smiles). ... It's all because of his self-motivation. It is different now, people of this generation are not that good, I think. ... Everything can be copied from the internet now, people copy each other[']s works]. We did things differently. I had to memorise things for my public examination. I saw mice running around in my bed, I cried. ... "Why had I to live in such deprived environment?" So I really had to improve my living conditions. Yes, because I even didn't know the English letters. ... I passed the examination, at least I was able to get a government job.*

Following this episode of conversation, Yu and I had a discussion about the younger generations and we concluded that adverse environments could serve to force people to become "*tough and determinant*". After the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1945, the Nationalist-Communist Civil War was renewed in China. The political instability prompted many enterprises and businessmen to relocate their assets and capital from China, particularly from Shanghai, to Hong Kong. Simultaneously, it also boosted a large influx of refugees from China, who provided a major cheap labour force for dramatic economic growth in Hong Kong. With the development and expansion of the manufacturing industry, the economic progress continued in the 1960s. In the 1970s, Hong Kong transformed itself from a manufacturing base into a financial centre,

resulting in its being known internationally for its prosperity and wealth in the 1980s. The post-80s¹⁸ and post-90s generations have been seen as the major beneficiaries of the decades of economic development and of the higher education expansion in the 1990s. The younger generations, in general, have enjoyed a better quality of living conditions, a higher living standard and more educational opportunities than those of the same age group in earlier generations. However, these generations have often been depicted as spoiled generations, particularly in the media, being associated with such as self-centred, ignorant, excess consumption, lacking in responsibility and crisis awareness. This is in great contrast with the adversity experienced by the older generations.

This is consistent with my intellectual perspective that social structure and environment are prerequisite conditions for people's lives and activities (Bhaskar, 1989a). Living in an era of general poverty, nothing, such as attending school, having breakfast everyday and having a hygienic place to live, could be taken for granted. Growing up in an era of relative wealth, enjoyment of good living conditions tends to be regarded as a matter of course. Nevertheless, as a human being, we have agentic capacities to transform our lives as well as ourselves as demonstrated in the co-constructed story. Paradoxically, these capacities would more likely be developed, exercised and actualised while we are experiencing some difficult times and circumstances. At the end of the discussion, Yu also made a moral point. Although life was hard and loaded with duties, such as studying and taking care of the family physically and financially, she commented that it was her obligation to do whatever was in the best interests of the family as this was the role she played as a responsible family member.

As discussed in Chapter 3, our consciousness functions to remember, accumulate and incorporate experiences in its flow from the past, through the present and into the future. This gives us a sense of continuity in our personal identity. In this way, the “*I as resilient*” that was experienced by Yu in her childhood could move across time and space to engage in everyday conditions of existence and to better adapt to a new environment and to difficult circumstances. In fact, “*I as resilient*” remained the dominant *I*-position permeating Yu's stories when she talked about the challenges and

¹⁸ The post-80s is a colloquial term which refers to the generation whose members were born between 1980 and 1989. It was originally created in mainland China after the introduction of the one-child policy and is commonly used in Hong Kong nowadays.

difficulties experienced throughout her life. She was capable of adapting to changing circumstances and of acting accordingly. In recounting a story of Au suffering from a sudden heart attack at the time when they were living alone in New Zealand, the “I as resilient” moved to the fore again to inform Yu of the need to take immediate action and seek help from her neighbour to drive Au to the hospital. This *I*-position was also expected to move and engage in the anticipated difficult situation – the loss of an old companion¹⁹:

Cannis: You said about having a companion in later life is important. What did you feel when Au was suffering from the heart attack?

Yu: Wow ... I didn't know how to drive at that time and I needed to take bus to the hospital. ... stayed with him at the hospital for two nights. The nurses and doctors were very nice. It was quite common at his age, I thought it was not a big problem. I was at his bed side, kept looking at the machines. He was getting better and better. I am very independent indeed, because when he was working onboard a ship, I looked after three kids all by myself. I made all the decisions. (Speaks softly). I am not afraid of everything, this is okay for me.

Au: She didn't need me. (Yu laughs).

Yu: It's the environment that forced me [to be independent]. I have three kids, let me tell you, he was not in Hong Kong while I was giving birth to my kids. No one from his family came to visit me. Other people have their husband to look after. I was trained to be independent, how can you not be independent? And now, I have been through everything, now I think there is no big deal. I didn't mention this to my family and friends in Hong Kong. I didn't want them to worry about this. ... I am quite ok, no big deal really ... (Smiles).

Cannis: It's because you had experienced a lot in the past.

Yu: Right. I can manage everything. I have been through the most difficult time, all those were not big problems to me.

Cannis: So you can enjoy your time living here.

Yu: Yes.

Au: You knew that I did not die, so you weren't scared. (Laughs).

¹⁹ In Chinese, an old companion (老伴) represents a spouse in old age.

Yu: *One day we will die. Either you or I will die first. (Au laughs). It doesn't matter who dies first. Like entry into a race, sooner or later you will finish it. You have to accept it when the time comes, right? I rarely cry, I am ok no matter what happens. (Laughs)*

Forgive others, release the self

The feelings and attitudes towards past experienced adversities vary across individuals. While Yu was recounting her family history of suffering from cancer, she expressed the view that the attitude and perspective towards past life upheavals would have impacts on health. Yu's sister died from cancer in her forties. Yu believed that one of the reasons causing her sister's illness and early death was that she was not able to let go of the perceived negative treatments and incidents that caused her intense unhappiness in her childhood and the resulting resentment, hatred and anger. Adopting the *yin-yang* life philosophy and maintaining the Chinese view of health as holistic, she stressed the importance of maintaining a harmonious balance between the human mind and body in order to promote one's health and wellness (Lu, 2002). She stated: "*Many people said that it's obstructed qi, untied node, so it interferes the flow of qi. I am not such that kind of person, I don't remember those unhappy things.*" In relation to the sister who was experienced as angry, annoyed and short-tempered, Yu defined herself as the opposite to her sister and as gentle and meek with a peace of mind. She described herself as the one who had a sweet temper and would not easily lose her temper and get angry with others. Positioning herself in this way, Yu was able to forget and forgive the persons she felt committed the wrong:

I always practise forgiveness, ... Even though they are bad friends, you should forgive and contain them. If you can learn this, you will have good health. What is the point for being angry with others? Will you live longer? You are going to die earlier indeed.

Instead of having resentful feelings towards her uncle and auntie owing to some unfair treatments she had received (e.g., she had no breakfast at all, whereas her cousins had it every morning) while she was living with them, Yu put herself in their positions and looked at the things from their perspectives: "*I am not angry with people. In that difficult situation, it had been pretty good that someone was willing to take you in [to*

their house], you need to think in this way.” She mentioned that she was able to maintain good relationships with her uncle and auntie and always felt thankful that the past adversity was over and that now she lived in a satisfactory life. Unfortunately, she had also been diagnosed with cancer following her sister, mother and brother. However, maintaining the “*I-position as resilient*”, Yu passively accepted whatever happened to her: “*God asks me to be obedient*” but actively kept an optimistic outlook on life: “... *It finally happened, but I am still living. I live longer than my elder brother.*”

Appreciation brings compromise

There appeared to be a pressing need to “buy an insurance” and gain an overseas passport for neutralising the political anxieties in Hong Kong and securing the future. However, for Au and Yu, permanent stay in New Zealand was not considered as a great urgency or necessity. Indeed, Au had never aspired to a migration life. I remembered a popular Cantonese song which aimed to resume a sense of confidence in Hong Kong and touched many people in the 1990s when migration was at a peak: *tong zhou gong ji* (同舟共濟, showing the mutual concern of people in the same boat). “Hong Kong is my heart, a heart never changes. Really don’t want to migrate overseas to become a second-class citizen ... Hong Kong is my home, don’t want to leave her. Really don’t want to migrate overseas to serve food and drinks ...” This song clearly reflected what Au thought and felt about migration:

I saw many older Chinese migrants in different countries when I was working onboard ships. They were wearing a cap, holding a newspaper, sitting in the park, without a sense of vitality. For those who worked, they just worked in restaurants, laundries or casinos. It’s not like these days, there are Chinese lawyers and doctors.

Au again:

Yes, I don’t like it (migration). It’s because I had been in so many places. Hong Kong is a place where I belong to. I had never thought about migration. What’s the point of migration for? I was a captain and I don’t think I would get a captain job here even if there are vacancies, right?

Similar to the migrants being constructed in the song, the external position of Chinese migrants, older migrants in particular, was experienced by Au as poor and despairing. They were perceived as second-class citizens who had limited social and economic opportunities. The external position evoked the internal *I*-position of Au as a Hong Kong citizen with a heart deeply attached to the place where he had grown up and lived. This also threatened the *I*-position as a captain, a well-developed career that he valued and felt proud of.

In the interviews, I did not ask Au about his previous occupation and work life. However, his identity as a captain was evident in the life events he recounted. For instance, when I asked whether he worried about the 1997 Hong Kong handover, he responded by recounting a story about how he as a captain negotiated with the military officers in Vietnam to make sure that the cargos his ship carried could successfully enter into the country when his company resumed its shipping business in Vietnam after the end of the Vietnam War. When he recounted an incident of a sudden bodily discomfort he experienced and he made a decision on going to a hospital, he explained: *“because I, more or less, have medical knowledge, because I was a captain and people would come to see me to seek for advice if they were sick.”* Apparently, his previous occupation continued to play a vital role in defining himself even after his retirement. While Au positively positioned the *“I as a captain”* in his narrated stories, another corresponding position of that *I*-position: an *“absent”* husband was constructed during the interview. As discussed, Yu’s position as a resilient mother moved to the fore in relation to the external position of the *“absent”* husband and became prominent in the mother-child relationships. In this way, Yu participated in the definition of the self of Au through dialogical interchanges in the interview. The *“absent”* husband inevitably connoted a negative meaning of uncaring. Au counter-positioned himself to alleviate this negative impression of the self by introducing the other character which moved together with the social position of a husband – the caring:

Cannis: *You were away most of the time those days, did you miss your family?*

Au: *Quite missed the family. When I was a captain, the first thing after arriving at a port was to contact the local agent. Then we found out from the agent if there were any telegraphs from the shipping company, any letters for us. We gathered all requests from the crews and dealt with*

them together through the agent. That included phone calls to home. Really missed the family. I was so happy to receive a family letter. I am lying if I told you I did not miss the family. That's why I soon retired.

Au acknowledged that working as a captain always kept the couple separated. Listening to Yu narrating a story about herself as a pseudo-single mother running the household and taking care of three children alone, Au implicitly expressed his appreciation of what Yu had done for the family in his absence: *"She had worked really hard."* Although Au had never had a motivation to migrate, the "physically absent" but "emotionally tied" husband was willing to make compensation for his wife:

Cannis: You did not plan to migrate, but do you have things that surprised you after you have migrated here?

Au: Not really. I don't have any surprises. All I would say is God is fair, He realised that we were apart for a long time, and now He is making it up for us. (All laugh).

Indeed, it was noticed that the interdependent positions of the husband and wife gradually grew stronger than the independent positions which were dominant in both the husband's career life and in the wife's domestic life. This apparently corresponded to the changes of life stage and circumstances. Au and Yu both regarded that having a companion was very important in later life, which was a source of happiness:

Au: Living alone is so miserable. I see some people can put up with it. When you lose your spouse, there is nothing you can do. It's very important, you should cherish [your spouse]. (Yu laughs). It doesn't matter if your spouse doesn't drive. ... Even though having arguments, it's fine.

Yu: It's true. We think that we have no major conflicts between us in our life here, only minor ones. ... At our age, why don't we cherish the opportunities [of being together]? If we visit Hong Kong, there will be a lot of appointments and we don't have time to enjoy life together. It is only in New Zealand, we have so much time together. We are trapped [to be together] and can't get out of it. (All laugh).

Basic resources for independence

While I was wondering if the transition from a captain with designated authority, presumed higher social status associated with the career and respect gained from that profession, to a retired person living a life in the host country, induced any adaptive difficulties for Au, he positioned himself as relaxed:

Cannis: How do you describe your retirement life?

Au: Describe? Nothing special, it's very relaxing.

Cannis: Very relaxing.

Au: Why? You do not have to worry about much. You live in this environment, you feel very stable, very "steady" (Au's own English word) to be here. Sunset is followed by sunrise. If you are not retired, you will be anxious, you need to find a job, you worry about your job, there are a lot of things to worry about. Now there is nothing to worry about, ... it is retirement, retired life is like this. ... Besides these, there is nothing else in particular. I will go whenever someone invites me out for yum cha²⁰, I can do things I like at any moment. There is no pressure to stop you doing things, I feel very relaxed.

There is a popular saying in Hong Kong that in order to secure quality of life with a sense of happiness and wellbeing in old age, older people need to possess four essentials, namely old companion, own savings, own house²¹ and old friends (老伴, 老本, 老巢, 老友). In this respect, ideal ageing life is constructed in relation to the older person as financially independent and embedded within companion and age-peer relationships. As discussed in Chapter 3, the *I* is intrinsically related to the material *Me* and we identify ourselves with things we possess and people we connect to in the living surroundings that give us particular feelings and emotions. For Au, feelings of a sense of relaxation and freedom from worries were stimulated under the conditions that he lived his retirement life with a certain degree of financial security, having his own house

²⁰ *Yum cha* (飲茶) which literally means "drink tea" is a common Cantonese dining style involving drinking Chinese teas and eating *dim sum* dishes.

²¹ Literally, having one's own house means having one's own mortgage-free apartment. However, the meaning of "own house" would be more properly considered as having financial capabilities to choose to live independently rather than co-residing with the adult, particularly married, children. This might be felt more necessary in the situations where intergenerational conflicts and contradictions frequently occur when multiple generations are living under the same roof.

and savings, which allowed him to live independently. In the interview, Yu also told a specific story from the perspective of the independent position in terms of not only finance but also mobility and communication, through which she constructed the meanings of ageing well. Being able to spatially localise in the independent position gave her a sense of life satisfaction and happiness instead of helplessness and powerlessness:

Cannis: In your view, what are the conditions or factors contribute to your good and comfortable life in New Zealand?

Yu: Financial situation is a main factor, like owning your house. I know not everyone has the same condition like us, so I feel very satisfied. My nephew lives with us, I have some rental income. ... Our living environment is better than that in Hong Kong, very comfortable, so I feel very good. Not everyone can afford this, really.

Cannis: In other words, financial conditions are important.

Yu: Yes, quite important. I have a friend who lives with her daughter and grandson. It's really disrespectful that her grandson had asked her to move out of their house. My friend said [to her grandson], "It's not your house, I pay rent for my room." You can guess what her grandson replied, "You pay the rent to my mum not me." It's terrible, he is only 9 year-old! I've suggested to her that she should move out of her daughter's place. She can't because she doesn't speak English. So it is an important factor too. If she doesn't speak English and can't drive, she has to rely on her daughter and has to bear all these. She is not happy anymore.

Cannis: Mm...

Yu: My friend wants to move out but her husband refused. Her husband is scared because their daughter warned them that if they moved out, she would not look after them, she would not drive them to visit their GPs or to go anywhere. ... There are many cases like this, it happens only because they don't speak English.

While I was considering the migration stories of biographical disruption and of its resulting repair presented in research (Li, 2012; Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000), Au and Yu offered me a different story that they very well adapted to a new life without

many difficulties and enjoyed the retired life in New Zealand. Rather than invoking disruption, migration provided the couple an opportunity to spend more time together, being closer to each other and feeling a sense of intimacy and harmony. They went together shopping, attending English classes, attending church services, watching Chinese television programmes, walking along the beaches, visiting friends, taking inter-city bus tours, travelling around New Zealand and so on. Particularly, as Yu did not drive, the husband became her private driver. Au described that he and Yu “*were like the right and left arms*”; wherever Yu went, he followed. It was obvious that living a quiet family life and spending time with the spouse was preferred after achieving success and accumulating wealth at work. For Au, the “*I as a captain*” had never disappeared but the position of the “*absent*” husband gradually faded out in favour of another position to come forward: “*I as a loving husband*”.

Experiencing harmony within differences

The gain from the loss

More often, migration scholars have focused on the difficulties and challenges that migrants are facing and understood them in terms of loss that chiefly arises from changes and differences. It is true that migrants would experience loss of home, social networks, social ties, familiarity of daily routines, living speech, continuity of familiar self and identity, employment, social status and also domestic power and status in the family owing to a different language, cultures, values, beliefs, customs, rituals, societal norms and lifestyles in a host country. However, difference does not essentially and solely bring losses and negative life changes. It also involves gains and positive changes, promoting a sense of wellbeing and happiness. Au and Yu’s migration is one of the cases. Living in a place with different societal values and lifestyles provided Yu with an opportunity to learn different things, giving her a sense of excitement, enjoyment and success. Obviously, the differences allowed Yu to position herself as “*I as gain*” rather than “*I as loss*”:

... I did something that I had never thought about of doing in Hong Kong. How could I bake cakes? How could I make sushi? ... I feel satisfied, I feel happy that I could make a lot of things by myself. ... Now I am learning to drive, I didn't expect that I can drive. ... I grow vegetables in my garden. It's great that there are harvests. ... I have never had those feelings in Hong Kong, I feel really happy.

Sometimes I pick me a piece of aloe to clean my face. ... I didn't experience such an enjoyment in Hong Kong and I don't need to pay for this enjoyment. ...

“Satisfied” and “happy” were two words that Yu often used when she depicted her ageing life in New Zealand. When she described and experienced herself with others within the social environment, one more word was particularly employed; that was “nice”. In the interview, Yu frequently spoke of and made sense of her experience of living in New Zealand in relation to other people: *“I found those people I met really treated me well, so I feel [New Zealand] is much better than Hong Kong.”* Indeed, before Yu decided to apply to migrate to New Zealand, she had already had a positive impression of New Zealanders who were felt as nice and friendly people during her trip to New Zealand and Australia: *“If you stood still on the road for a while and looked around, somebody would come forward and ask if you needed help. Australians are relatively arrogant and not so friendly.”*

Like most of the migrants, Au and Yu came to New Zealand without a single friend and like many older migrants, they started rebuilding their new social networks through attending English classes. The English teacher was experienced by Yu as more than a teacher. The teacher defined and performed himself as a host to the newcomers in New Zealand, introducing his students to New Zealand cultures, customs, lifestyles and public facilities (such as public transportation and recreation) and organising various visits (such as bank, supermarket, garden centre and other tourist attractions) through which the students could experience daily activities and practices in New Zealand and develop a sense of belonging to the host country. He also hosted parties for and did baking together with the students. Yu commented: *“You see how nice the teacher is.”* As such, in relation to the external position of the teacher, Yu was positioned as a welcomed newcomer who was well treated hospitably and cared for. Au and Yu actively took part in the class activities in return for their teacher’s kindness. They expressed that they could feel the teacher also liked them. In the class, Yu was also positioned as a “star” by both her teacher and her classmates because of her relatively higher level of English proficiency. Being dominant by a social position as a housewife with relatively low social status for most of her life, this unexpected self-positioning, nevertheless, boosted her sense of pride and nurtured her self-confidence, feeling herself as useful and worthy through helping other older people with English:

Yu: *I feel very happy, I can help others.*

Cannis: *Do you mean that you are [helping people] in English class?*

Yu: *Yes, I had no idea whom I met were lawyers, doctors. (Au and Cannis laugh). I am just a “small potato”, they said they were a judge, a pilot, they were highly-educated professionals in mainland China, but their English (pauses)*

Au: *There were also professors.*

Yu: *is worse than mine. (All laugh). They always said my English is good. It's very funny, ... In fact, I'm still scared to speak English after I arrived here for a year, even when I went shopping. It is not that I don't know any English. ... I can read English, ... A few of them are university professors, but their English is not as good as mine. And now a few of them even become good friends of mine. I've never dreamed of that will happen to me.*

Research has found that interpersonal relationships and social networks are highly correlated with happiness and life satisfaction (Camfield, Choudhury, & Devine, 2009; Diener & Seligman, 2002). *Renqing* (人情) is an important element in Chinese interpersonal relationships, which literally refers to the affect or sentiment a person has towards another person. *Renqing* also involves a Confucian notion of reciprocity. Through the enactment of *renqing* in terms of showing care and concern as well as expressing positive emotions and giving favours between one and another, harmonious relationships are created and maintained (Leung & Au, 2010). As discussed, there appears to be an intertwined relationship between the larger living environment and the sense of self, which, in turn, may have influence on the quality of interpersonal relationships. As Yu stated:

... in here, people have more time, so [we become to have] more renqing. I was always in hurry when I was in Hong Kong. But after I came here, I became happier, I became more considerate. I also feel that many people are really concerned about me. I didn't feel that in Hong Kong. Everyday was just unbelievably busy, ... coming to here, people would call you and ask, “Why didn't you go to gym?” I feel good and I love here (New Zealand).

The excerpt demonstrates that *renqing* requires time to actualise and that mutual caring social relationships promote a sense of happiness and wellbeing. In relation to others in New Zealand, Yu always experienced herself as “*xing fu*”. The pastor and his wife of the church where Yu and Au attended were experienced as benevolent and generous. They visited Au in the hospital after he had a heart attack and bought Yu a meal once they knew that Yu accompanied Au in the hospital. Knowing that Au had heart disease, the pastor organised members from his church to help them moving house. Yu felt “*warm*” in relation to her Korean neighbours; they shared garden vegetables and food and Yu also helped them with English. She also considered her family doctor, the doctors and nurses with whom she interacted in the hospital to be kind-hearted, approachable and helpful. They treated her with respect and in a good professional manner. The position of “*I as well-treated*” within various social and interpersonal relationships was further signified through Yu narrating a story about her sister’s experience with the medical professionals in Hong Kong. At the time of her breast cancer recurrence, Yu’s sister was physically hurt after the nurse made several attempts, with a bad attitude, to draw blood samples from her. This incident destroyed her trust in Western medical professionals and treatments. She then turned to the Chinese medicine. Unfortunately, the so-called Chinese medicine practitioner simply asked her to bath in some herbal medicine to “dissolve” the lumps in her armpits. It did not work; she was bleeding badly and was finally taken to the hospital. Yu mentioned that the paramedics who attended to her sister were shocked by what they saw and also felt sorry for Yu’s sister being treated rudely and indifferently and the resulting delayed hospital admission and treatments.

Shifting between different perspectives

Recognising that their responsibilities and obligations of raising their children had been completed, Au and Yu decided to leave their three adult children in Hong Kong and started a new life in New Zealand. They regarded retirement as a time for enjoyment and relaxation, doing whatever they would like to do. They accepted the traditional Chinese conception about parenthood that parents should sacrifice their self-interest, prioritise children’s welfare and provide for their needs. However, they had reservations that these obligations should be continued after the children had grown up. They co-narrated a story about a visit they paid to their friend’s mother who was 90 years old. They were startled by what they had seen: a dilapidated and filthy home

infested with flies, the shabby clothes she wore, the stale bread she ate and so on. While describing such a deprived life as this old lady was living, she was experienced by Au and Yu as foolish and terrible rather than forlorn:

Yu: She lives alone, ... She is not poor but she saves all her money for her grandsons. It is so shocking ...

Au: (Laughs). That's true.

Yu: I saw the food that she ate. She kept eating the leftovers, don't know for how many days. Can't imagine there are people here living like that.

Au: She is a traditional woman. The traditional Chinese are like that they live a whole life but don't know what it's for.

Yu: True. I don't want to be like that. I said to myself I will not follow what she does, especially when I saw my mother [what she did]. I want to be happy, I am willing to spend my money.

Cannis: Your mum is also frugal.

Yu: Yes, she even ate the "soup residues"²². She thought they were nutritional (Au and Yu laugh). ... But I don't think she enjoyed it. She ate those things which no-one wanted. In those days, maybe everyone was like that.

Au: No, the older generation is like that.

Yu: She (the 90 year-old lady) still patched up her shabby clothes. When her clothes were worn, she patched them up. That's funny. I wouldn't live that way, I want to ...

Cannis: That's, enjoy life whenever possible.

Yu: It is not I am over-indulgent myself. No, I don't want to live a life like hers.

Cannis: That's, enjoy yourself if you can afford it.

Yu: You got to treat yourself well.

Au: Yes, yes, Why not.

Yu: Don't be too hard on yourself.

²² "Soup residues" (湯渣) means simmered soup base. In Cantonese culture, it is considered to have no nutritional value as all the nutrients have dissolved into the soup during the long-simmer cooking process.

- Au: Sometimes your grandkids say something to you, like the one I told you before, you feel heartbroken, why do you still care?*
- Yu: You don't need to take care of your kids, why worry about your grandkids.*
- Au: So they are really foolish. (Yu laughs).*

Adopting an individualist perspective, Au and Yu redefined themselves as older persons of a new generation, who were reflective enough to recognise that old age was a time of unloading the “long-carried-parental-baggage”, particularly, in terms of economic provisions, and of shifting the focus on oneself and pursuing one’s personal interests. However, this positioning of the self was not unproblematic. In the excerpt, it is noted that as a parent, emphasising self-enjoyment and expressing less concern about children’s welfare might induce a negative moral connotation. Countering my voice that seemingly spoke of parents’ enjoyment in relation to (or at the expense of) children’s welfare, Yu stated that it was a matter of treating herself well in old age. These motives, attitude and way of living were supported by her sons. Again, the external position of filial sons functioned to make Yu feel herself as a good mother instead of a self-centred enjoyer of life. Yu was positioned as a deserving mother, who deserved to treat herself well and spend her savings on a quality living in old age. Being positioned in such a way and taking perspectives from her sons, Yu was able to maintain a balance between caring for herself and her children as well as between a smart, non-traditional older person and a good mother self-positions, leading to a sense of harmony and happiness:

- Yu: My sons said, “Mum, you don't need to leave any of your savings to us, you spend them all, it's your savings, you earned them, you have to spend them all.”*
- Cannis: I think so.*
- Yu: Yes, do you agree? Will you be unhappy if your parents are stingy? It's true sometimes. They are stingy because they want to leave their savings to you. (Smiles). But it depends, if your savings are not sufficient, how can you save for others?*
- Au: Can't save for others if you are not self-sufficient.*
- Yu: If I have money, I certainly would like to see my sons live a better life*

than ours. I will not be able to do anything if I have no money. I do want my sons to own his house. He is renting a small place but I can't help. It would be nice if I have extra savings. Our parents did not leave any savings to us, we all relied on ourselves.

Au: Yes, we all started from scratch.

The embodied self within different environments

The way the environment is perceived greatly depends on the experience of the body. We see through our eyes, hear through our ears, smell through our noses, taste through our tongues and feel through our skin. Rather than simply receiving information from the physical world and transmitting it to the mind for interpretation, these sensory organs of the body dynamically interact with our mind where we make sense of what we have experienced in relation to the external world, creating our perception of the world around us and also feeling a sense of self within the world. In the interview, Yu recounted her embodied experiences in relation to two different living environments. Living in a metropolitan city which is crowded, polluted, noisy, hot and humid, the environment was felt as threatening to the body with which the self was identified and Yu experienced herself as uneasy, discomforted and disturbed:

Hong Kong is really noisy, I can hear the conversation of my next door neighbours, ... my bedroom is right next to the front door, when people (neighbours lived next door to her) opened their door, my heart jumped to my throat. I couldn't sleep when I went back to Hong Kong, ... it's very hot there, so hot that you lost your appetite to eat. ... I didn't want to do anything when I went back ...

Migrating to a quieter place with moderate climate and clean air, the environment was felt as protective to the self, giving her a sense of bodily comfort, relaxation, satisfaction and wellbeing:

... the air, the living environment is perfect here ... here, when I came back, I felt very comfortable, it's different. Another thing I like is that here is good for drying clothes. ... They have no idea there is no space to hang up the clothes to dry when you live in (a small apartment of) a multi-storey building. ... I also like to sit in the sunroom, putting a mat on the floor, doing some reading, listening to the radio,

listening to those old songs. Whoa! I feel really good, perfect, but you actually don't need to pay a penny.

In response to my question of how she felt her ageing life in New Zealand, Yu stated:

I would use "satisfied" to describe it. It's because I don't get out of my bed immediately when I wake up. I like to lie on the bed, looking at the sky, I feel myself as being lucky and happy, I feel comfortable. Sometimes, really, thank God, yes, I really feel good and happy. I really didn't expect it. If I did not come here, I would rush to finish things all the time. But in here, there is no rush, no hurry to go home for doing things, only we both are in here.

Turning away from the faster pace of city life in a post-industrial society with increasing materialism and consumerism, Yu appeared to find a harmonious balance between herself and an intimate environment, increasing contact with a loving Nature, participating and immersing herself in some larger whole, feeling herself as being part of it and as being protected and cared for by God.

It is noted that stress now concerns us more than it used to and is regarded as a significant cause of unhappiness and life dissatisfaction. One of our everyday scripts associated with stress is that busy life and stressful work is hazardous to both our physical and psychological health. In 2003, there was an outbreak of SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) in Hong Kong, which almost became a pandemic. This inevitably led to negative economic impacts mainly in the form of the drop in local consumption and the reducing demand of the export of services related to tourism, which further worsened the already-weak labour market in Hong Kong (Siu & Wong, 2004). Many shops and companies had closed down and laid off workers. Others underwent massive downsizing and undertook work-sharing schemes in the face of lower demand. This resulted in not only rising unemployment and underemployment rates but also job insecurity, heavier workloads and work-life imbalance. Working overtime and working late into the evening on a regular basis have been identified as common working practices in Hong Kong, leading to employees suffering from stress and negative health consequences (Au, Li, & Ng, 2005; Welford, 2008).

In the interview, Yu explained that she felt good about ageing and living in New Zealand through recounting her experiences with her brother and son. After the SARS outbreak in Hong Kong, Yu's brother, who had already migrated to New Zealand, was requested by his old business partner to return to Hong Kong to re-establish the business in order to create jobs for their previous employees. Soon after Yu's brother returned to Hong Kong, he suffered from cancer and passed away. In the hospital, the brother was experienced by Yu as responsible and kind-hearted but also being under tremendous stress:

When I visited him, [I felt] how terrible the stress was. He didn't recognise me, his appearance had completely changed. When he saw people come, he asked if he needed to sign [any documents]. I really felt sorry for him, ... if he hadn't gone back [to Hong Kong], he would have a very good life [in New Zealand], he experienced lot of stress after he went back.

In 2005, Yu's second son and his family moved and settled in New Zealand. He was experienced by Yu as becoming less stressed and healthier: *“Working in here is more relaxing and comfortable, my son was extremely thin when he was in Hong Kong, he has gained weight after coming to New Zealand ... so it's preferred to live longer than earn more.”*

A historically dominant social position for women

Yu: I am really completely devoted to my sons. When people asked me in the church who was the most important person in my life, I told them that my sons were the most important persons in my life. Because I do not think it is Jesus, people told me that I was risking my future [by saying that]. My sons, until now they are the most important persons to me. People told me that I would be miserable one day if my sons did not love me, but Jesus would love me forever. He Jesus, I understand this. But it is me, I raised my sons with my own hands, we are connected. So if you ask me to give up everything [and follows Jesus], I really can't, honestly. (Laughs).

I have occasionally wondered why the popular idea of “ideal” ageing has been constructed without comprising the component of adult children. Does it reflect

people's recognition that the traditional values and practices of filial piety have been changed resulting from the changes and pressures of modern life (Li, Hodgetts, & Ho, 2010)? Thus, people have to accept the societal trend that it is no longer a must for adult children to take care of and support their parents in old age. To prevent any disappointments caused by the expected but unfulfilled child's obligations and live a happier life as suggested by some Christians in the excerpt, parents have to prepare for their old age and live independently without expecting to receive material and emotional support from their adult children. Or does it reflect that the traditional Chinese views on a parent-child relationship and what it means to be a good parent and a filial child have changed? For example, adding either financial or emotional burdens on children, particularly, in the time of economic recession, insecurity of jobs and long working hours, may have negative implications for the parents' self-identities. Regardless of how the four essential ingredients of "ideal" ageing (i.e., old companion, own savings, own house and old friends) were constructed, from reviewing research literature to reflecting on my own life experiences, I have found that children and parent-child relationships have, nevertheless, played a significant role in older Chinese people's ageing lives. Children remain the lead characters entering the stage while older people are telling their stories, organising and making sense of their lives.

To be a good Christian, who puts Jesus at the centre of life and accepts that He is of the utmost importance, or to be a good mother who never gives up her obligations to her children, Yu explicitly chose the mother position with which she mostly identified herself. She maintained that she was duty-bound to care and nurture her children without any doubts. As a mother, Yu primarily related to her children and this position appeared to play the most influential role in her past, present and anticipated future life: *"They are the most important persons in my life."* Speaking from the miserable child position, Yu found that she was unable to feel familial warmth during her childhood owing to the adverse living conditions. Taking turns in a collaborating dialogue, the caring mother expressed her desire to create a family where her children could be able to experience a sense of parental warmth and compassion. However, the caring mother could not be actualised without working in conjunction with the other *I*-position: the sacrificing. This was the embodied sacrificing mother who carried out courses of action according to the assumed duties and obligations associated with the social position of a mother, through which Yu could practise and experience a virtue of care. Positioning

herself as a sacrificing mother, Yu was required to put children's needs ahead of hers as a way of retaining responsibility for ensuring care and securing children's proper development on the one hand, and suppressing her own needs and desires as a way of avoiding the loss of intimate mother-child relationships on the other hand. She gave up her bank job and became a stay-at-home mother, having no entertainments and no time to socialise with friends. She was far too busy to dress up and had low self-esteem. Indeed, Yu's personal position of sacrificing had been combined with two different social positions – a (liberal) woman and a (traditional) mother, resulting in speaking two different voices associated with two different feelings. When combined with a woman position, which was situated in an individualistic ideology context, self-sacrifice might be seen as the source of Yu's oppression. While combined with a mother position, which was situated in a relational context, self-sacrifice could become the source of Yu's pride and success. The three sons, whom Yu was proud of, existed within the self of Yu through the motherhood role that she adopted and through fulfilling ethical obligations to her sons: “... *I lost my self-confident. I completely devoted myself to my three sons. My sense of success comes from my three sons. I myself am completely involved in there.*”

The beauty of distance

Yu commented that her investment of sentiment and time to her children promoted an intense bond with each other and that it would be different if she passed the child rearing responsibility on to someone else. Recognising the close relationships between Yu and her children, I assumed that the separation from her children owing to migration might have impacts on Yu's ageing experiences. However, instead of reducing intimacy between family members, geographical distance as a result of migration brought them closer together and they became more concerned with each other, creating a sense of family harmony. Yu talked about her children who became “*more filial*”. The children phoned their parents from overseas almost everyday. For Yu, distance stimulated her to create a new life philosophy: “*Coming to here, maybe due to the change of environment, I have learned to cherish the people we love before we lose them, otherwise I will regret.*” One way to cherish someone we love is to prevent conflicts and arguments in everyday interpersonal interactions, in which the persons involved inadvertently hurt each other's feelings and negatively influence their

relationships. To avoid intergenerational conflicts and maintain harmonious family relationships, Au and Yu talked of the necessity of living separately from the children:

- Au: ... my daughter-in-law doesn't like other people to look after her kid.*
- Cannis: That means she wants to look after her kid by herself.*
- Au: She prefers to look after her own kid. Her lifestyle is different from ours. She doesn't like the kid to be taken care of using the old traditional way. So to avoid somethings (conflicts) to happen, she [only] stayed with us for six months after they migrated here.*
- Cannis: Mm. They stayed with you for six months.*
- Au: Yes. We cleared out our master bedroom and let them use it when they migrated here. We moved to a smaller room. We are not bad in-laws!*
- Cannis: Yes, very nice in-laws indeed!*
- Au: That's right. There was no major issue between us when we lived together. We all did things for the interests of the kid. Our lifestyles are different, it's not good for us.*
- Yu: So older people should live in their own ways! I think it is best to live separately from the children. We all have more room.*
- Au: ... our lifestyles are different in many ways, we should not live together. ...*

For Yu, living separately from her adult children had another implication. Acknowledging her mother's sacrifice to the family, Yu situated herself in a filial position and obeyed whatever her mother asked her to do: *"I am a filial daughter, I didn't do things that my mother didn't like. I did my best to make my mother happy because I know her life was very difficult."* Yu mentioned that she was short because she listened to her mother and sat to read all day without doing much exercise when she was young. Reflecting on her past experience, Yu repositioned herself as an open-minded mother in relation to her filial sons and commented that the traditional filial piety ideals and practices, such as absolute obedience and intergenerational co-residence, might be problematic:

- Yu: When we lived together, my opinions sometimes hindered their (adult children's) decisions. I think what the mother says does not always*

suit them. I rather went away and left them to make their own decisions. Do you agree?

Au: What an open-minded view!

Yu: The children listen to you and do what you say because they are filial. They may do things they don't like. I would rather leave them free to develop themselves and do things they like.

As such, distance created by migration and living separately from the adult children served to promote not only the intergenerational harmony but also the adult children's development. It was also through this that, Yu's identity as a considerate and caring mother was reinforced.

Regret breeds reflection

Although Yu enjoyed her ageing life in New Zealand, migration did bring her some regret. Yu narrated a story of regret about her eldest son. At the time when Au and Yu applied for immigration to New Zealand, their eldest son was already over 21 years old. Therefore, he was the only one in the family who was not granted permanent residency. The feeling of regret was complicated by the fact that the son was under a lot of stress at work, facing the possibility of job loss. Yu mentioned that her eldest son did not do well in school when he was young although she had hired a private tutor to help him with his schoolwork. After finishing secondary school, Yu suggested that he enrol on an aircraft mechanic apprenticeship – a career Yu believed that it would have good prospects. The son had been working in the field for over ten years. However, the good circumstances did not last long. Working towards the trend of professionalism, the son's company required all the relevant staff to pass a series of professional examinations in order to demonstrate their proficiency in knowledge and skills and obtain professional licences. The son had already made four attempts on the professional licence examinations but had failed and he had been given one last chance.

The social position of the mother was situation-specific, which could be combined with different, even opposed, personal positions: the resilient and the worried according to particular time and circumstances. Yu's sense of being a resilient mother was prominent in the context where her children were young and she needed to fulfil motherhood as well as part of fatherhood obligations, to meet the challenges and

demands of raising children and to guide them to be successful at work and in life without much support from the husband. However, in relation to the eldest son, the worried mother became dominant. The son was experienced by Yu as stressed and unhappy, which, in turn, stimulated the inclusion of the worried position associated with feelings of poignancy:

... he is under great pressure, I can feel how hard he works. You see, my second son is one year younger than him, but he looks much younger. It makes you feel heartbroken. He has lost a lot of hair, it makes me feel worried. That he is not happy.

And of regret:

... because he cannot come [to New Zealand]. ... I feel so sorry for him, his two younger brothers could come here to study. It's difficult in Hong Kong [because of less accessible opportunities of universities]. Maybe in here, it would be easier [for him to go to university], but he did not have the opportunities, so I feel regret for it. ... Sometimes I blamed myself for it, why I suggested him to do that job, I, many things, I feel regret what I did.

While the worried position with its own voice moved to the fore, it did not exclude a well-developed sense of self as resilient. Indeed, the seemingly conflicting positions were reconciled and unified by a third position: “I as a good mother”, signifying the self as unity-in-multiplicity (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). The resilient mother took responsibility to do whatever she could to care, nurture and protect her children in the hope of ensuring their wellbeing. So did the worried mother. Speaking from the imagined filial son position, Yu expressed: “*He worries that I worry about him. We love each other so much and he knows I love him, so he appears not to tell me many things about himself. I feel he is very filial.*”

In response to the filial son, the foregrounded worried mother with the resilient at the background suppressed her expression of worry and only prayed for him:

... so I always pray to God, ask Him to be mercy and help my son. It's great even if he just passes [the professional licence examination]. Putting myself in his shoes, I felt stressed when I needed to take the driving test the second time, let alone this young man, he took the examination a few times. So he didn't tell me about it and I don't dare to ask him. I worry about hurting his feelings while talking about it.

Migration also exposed Yu to the Western parenting approaches that led her to rethink her past experiences of child rearing and parenting and to reflect on her past mistakes. Through interacting with her granddaughter who was born and living in New Zealand, Yu observed that the Western parenting and educational approaches which emphasise encouragement, responsiveness, warmth and active parent-child communication could greatly enhance children's self-confidence and facilitate their development. This observation challenged her identity as a good mother, who mainly focused on the academic achievements of the children when they were young. Accepting the newly known practice of being a good parent, Yu redefined her identity as a good mother who placed importance on parent-child communication and acted accordingly in order to maintain intimate and harmonious relationships with her children.

Case summary

The migration story started with Yu facing the impending socio-political changes at her original living place, inducing an internal state of tension and fear and activating the self-position of "I as vulnerable" which was dominant in her childhood. Seeking for security through migration was a way to resume a sense of internal harmony. If we have a choice, a majority of us, I believe, do not want to live in any hardship. Paradoxically, personal resilience often develops through experiencing life adversities and hardships. Yu proceeded with her story about her miserable life in which two opposing I-positions: "I as miserable" and "I as resilient" coexisted and interplayed to guide the self's actions and give meaning to her life. The developed resilience then became Yu's personal resource, allowing "I as resilient" to move forward when encountering difficult life circumstances throughout her life. Although the resilient position gave Yu strengths to overcome her life difficulties, it is obvious in her narrated story that without co-working with the other position: "I as forgiving", happiness and wellbeing could hardly be achieved.

Unlike Yu, Au did not want to migrate to another country. Therefore, the idea and practice of migration would raise tensions within Au himself and between him and his wife. To resolve these tensions, the “*I as an authoritative captain*” had to retreat and allow space for the other self-positions. Through his recognition and appreciation of his wife for what she had done for the family, the “*I as a loving and caring husband*” came to the fore and made a compromise in harmony. Nevertheless, the wealth gained and accumulated from his work as a captain served as material resources, allowing the couple to position themselves as independent, at least financially, and live a life with independence, autonomy and enjoyment.

Difference does not necessarily lead to disharmony. Loss and gain do not essentially exist in isolation. To Au and Yu, migration and ageing in a place with different cultures, values, norms and lifestyles provided them an opportunity to experience different ways of life, through which the new aspects and transformation of the self were made possible. The loss of old social relationships and networks facilitated them to establish the new different ones which were characterised by rich *renqing*, through which the self could experience a sense of connectedness, love and care. Living in a new society with a different dominant ideology – individualism, Au and Yu could more readily shift away from the traditional ageing parent positions, within which they were required to continue their parenthood role as if their children were still young, and reposition themselves. Redefining themselves as older persons of a new generation, they were allowed to live a life according to their own needs and wishes. A different but perceived healthier physical environment could also lead the bodily self to be more in harmony with the environment.

Historically, no social position other than the position of a mother is so dominantly associated with women. Striving to be a good mother according to some cultural values and societal norms may induce tensions for both the working mothers, who try hard to maintain a work-family balance, and the stay-at-home mothers, whose social status is perceived relatively lower than that of the liberal women with a career. As a stay-at-home mother for most of her life, the social position of the mother became manifestly dominant in the self of Yu. Migration did bring Yu some regret regarding her eldest son, which inevitably impacted on her position of “*I as a good mother*”. Exposure to the Western approaches of parenting as a result of migration also challenged Yu’s idea and

practice of being a good parent. It was apparent that Yu involved herself in self-negotiation while narrating her stories. Through flexibly moving around different personal positions with their different voices, such as “*I as resilient*”, “*I as worried*” and “*I as open-minded*” in combination with the social position of the mother, Yu was able to resolve some tensions and restore a sense of harmony and happiness.

The narrative of Jiang

This is a narrative with a resolved positive ending in which Jiang at her age of 69 years narrated her difficult migration experiences. These experiences represented challenges to Jiang's self-identities but simultaneously offered opportunities for the development and transformation of the self. Originating from her daughter's expression of filial piety, Jiang was granted permanent residency under the sponsored parent category. She had lived in New Zealand for seven years at the time of interview. However, with an unanticipated filial practice initiated by her daughter, the culturally expected position of a well-cared-for mother was soon challenged, inducing a field of tension and disrupting the harmonious intergenerational relationship. Instead of narrating a sufferer's story, Jiang proceeded with her story in which two dominant self-positions: "*I as independent*" and "*I as an older English learner*" co-worked and interplayed to give meaning to her ageing well in New Zealand. The story demonstrates that Jiang's efforts to reposition herself and flexibly move among the existing and newly formed self-positions were important not only to the continuous self-discovery and self-development but also to interpersonal and intergenerational harmony, leading to her ultimate sense of happiness.

Immigration application as an act of filial care

Filial piety in traditional Chinese culture generally refers to providing physical care, financial, instrumental and emotional support and respect from the young generation to show obedience to and concern for their older parents (Ng, Loong, Liu, & Weatherall, 2000). Jiang mentioned that her daughter's application for herself and her husband to migrate to New Zealand was an act of fulfilling filial obligation. On one hand, Jiang's daughter would like to be united with her parents. On the other hand, she hoped that living in New Zealand with its fresh and clean air could improve Jiang's health condition. Jiang was suffering from heart problems. With a deteriorating body partly as a result of ageing, her capacity to tolerate the polluted air in China had diminished. In the days of high air pollution levels, Jiang could hardly breathe and needed to pay more than ¥200 (NZ\$50) to sit in an oxygen bar at hospitals for an hour in order to ease her breathing and the loading of her heart. In the interview, she constructed New Zealand as "*a natural oxygen bar*", which promoted a sense of harmony in her bodily self and gave meaning to ageing well in New Zealand: "*I consider New Zealand is a natural oxygen bar, so my health condition improved. This is the best thing since I have*

come here. It benefits my health and my heart [function] is better than before.” She also regarded New Zealand, with its relatively comprehensive welfare and support for older people, as a country in which to age well.

In relation to the New Zealand Government, Jiang, as an older migrant, felt contented and grateful to have governmental concern and support and experienced herself as being well treated with respect. Jiang reflectively commented: *“Frankly, I have not contributed to this country, but it looks after me. It has given me a lot of benefits. ... The New Zealand Government is really good.”* The position of “I as well cared for” was further recognised through Jiang narrating a story about her request to defer the payment for ambulance services being granted because of the financial difficulty she was facing. Feeling understood and trusted, Jiang positioned herself as the one who kept a promise and honoured the payment after saving for five months. She also commented that the late payment would never be conceded in China. In fact, it is not uncommon to hear stories about sick people in China, who could not afford to pay for the medical expenses, being left untreated. Jiang appreciated the ways in which the New Zealand Government supported and cared for older people and expressed that these should be followed by the Chinese Government. This was because the older people in China had made enormous contributions to the country, particularly over the several decades of socio-political instability and poverty. In fact, the ideal society depicted in the Confucian classic – *Li Ji* – was the one in which the old were cared for until their ends, the adults were employed and made contributions to the society and the children were nurtured. However, as discussed previously, the elderly welfare and care, retirement protection and income support are generally inadequate in China. This would not only contribute to older people’s sense of insecurity but also induce feelings that their past contributions to the society were under-valued or unrecognised, leading to inner tensions and disharmony. It was through all these life experiences in both China and New Zealand that Jiang defined herself as a “*lucky*” mother in relation to the external position of the daughter. She was lucky because she had a filial daughter who had arranged for her to migrate to New Zealand in which her quality of life in old age was potentially promoted. Being positioned as a “cared-for” older person that aligned with the cultural ideals led Jiang to experience some sense of harmony and happiness.

Becoming independent as self-fulfilment

Although Jiang's migration story started with her daughter's expression of filial piety, her worries and uncertainties of living a migration life soon surfaced in the story. The position of "I as a lucky mother", who expected to receive filial care, was also challenged, leading to transformation of the self.

On the first day Jiang and her husband arrived in New Zealand, their daughter brought them to a rental property after having a quick meal at her home. Jiang's daughter told Jiang: "*I have already rented this place and bought the things (basic household goods and furniture) for you. You have to learn to live independently [in New Zealand].*" Jiang had expected her daughter to live with her in New Zealand but being organised to live separately in a rental property made Jiang feel shocked, angry, neglected and helpless, inducing immense conflicts and disrupting the harmonious mother-daughter relationship. The I-position in the self of Jiang as a lucky mother immediately moved backstage and, instead, "I as a disheartened mother" who felt a lack of support, care and respect came to the fore:

I was really upset at that time. ... We did not live together for a single minute. It was really hard for me to accept that, in fact many people cannot accept that. I had no friends. People around me only speak English. My English was very poor, besides "good morning, goodbye, how are you", I could not speak any English. I did not know what to do.

Obviously, Jiang and her daughter held the similar cultural ideal of filial piety in terms of providing care to ageing parents. However, there appeared to be some discrepancies in the expectations of actual practice of the concept between Jiang and her daughter. For Jiang, co-residence was regarded as part of cultural practice to demonstrate the children's willingness to fulfil filial obligations: "*Parents stay with their children is the Chinese way of life.*" She expected the daughter to be the primary source of subsistence-income in terms of providing accommodation by co-residence while living in New Zealand. She also expected to receive continuing instrumental help and emotional support from the daughter, particularly, in the adaptation process of the migration life and in times of illness or distress. Through living with the daughter, these kinds of caregiving could be more accessible. Jiang's daughter, who had for many

years lived within and experienced the environment of individualism that emphasises personal goals, interests, fulfilments, autonomy and independence, might have reshaped her ideas of filial piety and redefined her caregiving responsibilities to her parents. It appeared that arranging for New Zealand residency for her ageing parents that allowed them to live close to her and to have a perceived better ageing life might be felt as her primary responsibilities. Jiang's daughter appeared to have reservations in regard to providing continuing financial support to her parents and offering assistance to their daily life.

Independent living requires financial independence and knowledge of the host language. Therefore, there were anticipated difficulties for Jiang and her husband to live independently, particularly in the initial adaptation to the host country with different language, cultures and social systems. While I was expecting a story about an unfilial daughter who was unwilling to meet the expected filial obligations and a vulnerable mother who was experiencing difficulties in adapting to a new life to emerge, the other character in the self of Jiang came forward and spoke to the disheartened mother, giving the mutually-opposing views:

I know what God prepares and arranges for me is the best. ... I feel I have God in my heart. For most of the time I know I need God to lead me. I don't know what will happen tomorrow. I just leave it to God. I don't think about the past and I don't think about the future. I just like living in the present."

Having consulted with her devoted Christian position, which offered her a different view from that of the traditional parent position, Jiang persuaded herself and her husband to stay in New Zealand and redirected her energy to focus on resolving the problems arising from living in the new environment. Agreeing (or agreeing without a choice) with her daughter's voice of independence, the newly introduced independent position started to germinate in the self of Jiang. This embodied *I*-position actively took actions to facilitate her independent living in New Zealand. In the interview, Jiang narrated a success story in detail about how she, with the strengths given by God, explored the unfamiliar territory, found her way to Chinese grocery stores, local supermarkets and other local facilities. Using her very limited English, she tried her very best to communicate with the English-speakers to manage her daily living matters:

“Sorry, because my English is not good. So I’m just try, ... (She speaks in English).”

With polite responses, sincere help and the encouragement she often received from people in places, such as the bank and bus station, Jiang gradually established new daily routines and transformed the unfamiliar environment to the familiar one. These progressive accomplishments allowed the position of the disheartened mother to gently fade out and further developed the independent position, leading to a sense of success and self-sufficiency.

In the interview, Jiang’s story of independence proceeded initially from “being forced to become independent” to “learning to become independent” and eventually to “being grateful to become independent”. Having lived in New Zealand for several years, Jiang had developed a clearer picture of what a migration life was like both for herself and the younger generations. She particularly recounted a story about a younger migrant who was a doctor in China but ended up working as a cleaner in New Zealand. This migration story, and many others, functioned to promote a better understanding of the daughter’s life struggles and difficulties. It was through this understanding that “I as an independent mother” in the self of Jiang was reinforced:

I like to be independent, I don’t like to depend on my children. Because they have to deal with many things in their life. They are busy on their job, they are under a lot of pressure. Now I understand the younger generation. I was angry with my daughter in the past, I thought she was not good to me at all. It is very different now, I know her life is difficult. ... I think long-term jobs are not guaranteed for the Chinese here. ... So besides the job pressure, you have pressure on the family expenses, you become stressed. As a mother, I certainly hope my children have a good life, I will not only think of myself because I think my life is ok. I should say the Government here care about me.

Kim (2004) states that learning in Confucian cultures goes beyond theoretical learning from books and formal schooling and emphasises an orientation towards the concrete, actual life itself. He further explains that learning is continuous efforts made throughout one’s life span to develop a morally excellent life and to become a good person within society through constituting and performing goodness within various interdependent relationships. As discussed in Chapter 3, the notion of Chinese self,

particularly from a Confucian perspective, is ethical, social and embodied. As part of interdependent relationships engaging in various social contexts, the embodied self is required to creatively develop and carry out appropriate, proper and righteous actions within particular contexts defined by social roles and functions and according to the uniqueness of the persons involved (Hall & Ames, 1998). In so doing, a person can live in harmony with others in family and in community, leading to a sense of social connectedness and happiness.

In the above excerpt, Jiang involved herself in negotiating her social position of a “good” mother with her new responsibilities for living in the host country. This “good” mother was able to take into account the daughter’s changing life circumstances and her work demands originating from migration. Learning to live independently and taking care of themselves in order to lessen the burden on children were regarded as appropriate actions for the ageing parents within the migration context. Repositioning herself as an independent and considerate mother, Jiang was able to relieve her anger against the daughter, reconcile with her daughter and repair the mother-daughter relationship. Drawing on the Confucian conceptualisation of family as one body in the sense that children’s lives are the continuation of their parents’ physical lives and their bodies are given by their parents (Hwang, 1999), Jiang claimed that her heart was connected with her daughter’s. Through this intimate connection, Jiang was always concerned with her daughter’s wellbeing and “I as an unselfish and devoted mother” was defined. Keeping her promise to be a “good” mother, Jiang continued to fulfil her parenthood obligations to promote the daughter’s wellbeing through sharing her worries and workload, which, in turn, lessened her life stress:

Jiang: It is because she is a manager, she doesn't have the time to do many things. So we help her to do some paper work on payroll. ... So our life becomes more fulfilling ...

Cannis: What do you feel when you are able to help your daughter?

Jiang: I think I am able to fulfil my responsibility as a mother when I am able to help her. She is very busy. She has just rung me, telling me that her springs are broken²³.

²³ It means that Jiang’s daughter was extremely exhausted.

As seen in the excerpt, being able to offer help to her daughter contributed to enriching Jiang's ageing life and character, promoting a positive sense of self.

Negotiating among multiple *I*-positions and balancing multiple needs

One of the dominant themes that ran throughout Jiang's narrative account was the positioning and presentation of herself as a considerate mother who was able to live independently and continue to care for the daughter's needs. However, the parental voice of care had never been a sole voice in the self of Jiang. The other self-positions – “*I as self-care*”, “*I as a beloved wife*” and “*I as a responsible wife*” – coexisted and interplayed to voice their own perspectives, pushing Jiang into different or even conflicting directions.

In the interview, Jiang mentioned that the daughter had moved to live with her for a year because of marital problems. Positioning herself as a considerate mother with a voice of care, Jiang felt duty-bound to take care of her daughter especially at the time when the daughter was experiencing a family crisis. However, the seemingly opposing position: “*I as self-care*” who would like to avoid the stress arising from fulfilling parental obligations in old age also came forward, speaking in its own perspective and expressing its own desires and needs. When asked about the experience of living together with her daughter, Jiang stated:

I am happy to live alone, I have no pressure. When she stayed with me, I needed to worry if she liked the food I made, if the food was enough for us, I needed to worry all these. ... I have had to do a lot more. I felt more relaxed after she left. (Laughs). I am happy.

To legitimate her position of self-care with its voice of righteousness, Jiang recounted a story about a friend who lived with her adult children:

One of my friends told me that she was now more than a nanny, her children did nothing at home and she had to do everything for them. My friend even had to use her own savings to support her children. That never happens in our family. When she (Jiang's daughter) stayed with me, she paid for her expenses. I told her, “I am not able to support you.” She understood it.

Speaking from the considerate mother position, Jiang maintained that helping adult children when they were in need was her duty. However, she refused to offer help indiscriminately, especially when the children took their parents' help for granted, disregarded their parents' needs and did not share their responsibilities appropriate to their roles in the family. Moving away from the traditional mother position and localising in the "I as self-care" position, Jiang was allowed to invest more time, energy and resources for herself and her husband, attending to their health needs and promoting their wellbeing:

Some older people are frugal with their money. Because they have children in China, they want to give their savings to them. We do not intend to do that. We buy whatever food we need. We care about the food that benefits to our health. I insist my husband has tomato and yoghurt everyday, ... one avocado. People have told me these fruits are expensive. But these fruits are good for health. Sometimes I think that we have no problem to live to the age of 90 if we continue with our lifestyle. ... So I don't want [to live with my children]. Maybe we are not so traditional. [I found] to live separately is more flexible and easier for me. Other people want to look after their grandchildren, but I'm okay not to. I am happy if I am healthy and I am not putting any burden on my children.

Although the positions of "I as a considerate mother" and "I as self-care" with their voices appeared to be incompatible, these two positions could form a coalition and co-work with each other to serve the same purpose in promoting her daughter's wellbeing. It is seen from the end of the excerpt that maintaining health through self-care was considered as a way to lessen the daughter's burden of potentially providing extensive care when her parents were sick. Rather than being conceived as a selfish act, self-care appeared to be a moral duty appropriate to Jiang's social role as a mother. Thus, Jiang's positive sense of self was retained.

Balancing the positions of "I as a considerate mother" and "I as self-care", Jiang concluded that she was willing to help the daughter provided that her needs were not compromised and the help was within her abilities and resources: "*She can ring me if there is anything she wants me to help. If I can help, I will. I will say no if I can't.*" While offering help to the daughter, Jiang also involved herself in negotiating between

the social positions of a mother and of a wife and took into account the needs of her husband. In her decision to refuse to provide daily care for her grandchild, the responsible wife position with its associated moral obligations to attend to her husband's health needs came to the fore, justifying the considerate mother position to retreat to the backstage: *"When she (Jiang's daughter) got married, I told her I would not help her to look after her kid. Because I need to look after my husband, he is not in good health."*

Indeed, although the social role of a mother often occupies a central position in the self of women as discussed in the previous case, in relation to the husband, Jiang's sense of being a beloved wife was prominent especially when both the husband and wife reached their old age. Jiang stated: *"... We are now old, I think I can't call the love between us tender love, but it's genuine love."* This I-position in the self of Jiang did not appear out of thin air but gradually developed over time, created and re-created within the relational experiences of being with her husband across years of marriage. The position could never be possible without a corresponding external position of the husband who was loyal to his role and continuously fulfilled his moral duties to love, support and care for Jiang in everyday life. In the interview, Jiang reflectively and touchingly narrated stories about a past incident in which she was seriously injured from a fall and her current experience of sciatica. She also spoke of the love and care shown by her husband:

Thank God. God gives me a good husband. He is very kind, he makes me a priority in his life. I decided to continue to work [at the time of not fully recovering from a serious fall], he then dropped me and picked me up from work everyday. He said he worried about me because I was not able to move around at the office. Those are simple words, but I can feel that I am very important to him. (Smiles).

When I finished a bath, he would tell me: "It's ok, it's ok. You go to bed. I will look after it." He would clean the bath tub for me. I went straight to bed and fell asleep in a minute. He is a really nice person. (Laughs). ... I feel blessed, I think I have a good life. I have a good family.

The excerpts demonstrate that the beloved wife position resulted from the external dialogues between Jiang and her husband and its voice was saturated with the husband's voice of care. Apparently, what Jiang spoke of was not just from her position of the beloved wife but also from a ground given in what the embodied "good" husband had done for her. Being positioned as a beloved wife who was embedded in love, care and respect facilitated Jiang's sense of happiness and wellbeing. However, the "I as committed" also coexisted, moved forward and combined with the social position of a wife to whole-heartedly take care of the husband and meet his needs, such as in her narration of a car accident in which her husband was seriously injured and almost died. This sense of self took place within the responsibilities she held towards her husband. It was through all these life's ups and downs with mutual support and care that the positions of the beloved husband and wife with a sense of "genuine love" were developed, reinforced and consolidated:

Very often I hear stories about couples who do not treat each other well. I think husband and wife should take care of each other, it is a life time commitment, it is not easy. Some people take the others' care and devotion for granted. I don't agree. He devotes to you and you should do the same to him. ... Like a balance, it should be balanced on both sides, none of the sides is heavier, both sides should be the same.

Apparently, the external position of the "good" husband occupied a predominant and significant position in the organisation of Jiang's self. Jiang's affiliation to the beloved and committed wife position acted as a vital anchor for her positive sense of self, providing a framework through which she constructed meanings and purposes to her life. She always felt grateful to have her husband accompany her to reach that point in her life. The couple cherished each other in their remaining life, creating a sense of intimacy. This harmonious interdependence was based on reciprocity, equality, empathetic understanding and sincere consideration as Jiang made her final comments in the excerpt. It was this harmonious interdependence within the husband and wife relationship that facilitated Jiang to live a happier and more fulfilling ageing life in New Zealand.

Learning English as self-betterment: “One is never too old to learn”

When asked about the happiest experience in New Zealand, Jiang responded without hesitation: *“I feel the happiest thing that happened to me is that for people in our age the Government still gave us the opportunities to learn English, it was free and I even received student allowances.”* Although Jiang and her husband had saved up money for their living in New Zealand, without obtaining continuous accommodation and financial support from their daughter, they spent almost all their savings within the first two months. While Jiang was taking a walk and intensely worried about her future in New Zealand, she met an older Chinese on the street and started chatting. With common language, they soon shared their migration stories and the difficulties experienced. Jiang’s self-identity as an older English learner was created and emerged from this causal conversation. This self-position was crucial to her migration and ageing life and also presented dominantly in her narrated stories during the interviews.

Adopting that Chinese person’s suggestion, Jiang and her husband enrolled in an English school and started learning English. It was through this strategic move that they acquired the essential language skills necessary for them to adapt to their new life in New Zealand and to facilitate their integration into the local culture. It was through this move that they were able to sustain their basic living expenses by obtaining student allowances. Learning English not only liberated Jiang from potential deprivation and poverty but also allowed her to positively reconstruct herself and give meaning to her migration life, facilitating positive changes in her quality of life in old age. However, studying for the explicit purpose of gaining financial benefits through receiving student allowances might imply an immoral act and negatively impact on the self. While Jiang was narrating her story about learning English, she emphasised that she was not one of the students who studied England merely for financial gain and she was not utilitarian:

There are some people don’t really want to learn English, they just want the student allowances. But me and my husband are really different from them, we learned English not for our financial gain. We really wanted to learn the language although we needed the student allowances to support our living.

She also positioned herself as a serious and diligent older learner who fully engaged in the learning process with passion and perseverance and actively scheduled learning in

her daily life: *“We came home to have our lunch after the English class. Then we revised our lessons for at least two hours in the afternoon and at least one and half hours in the evening.”* In so doing, instead of simply being a welfare dependant, her identity as a responsible Chinese migrant who made appropriate use of social welfare provision for living a positive ageing life, as promoted by the New Zealand Government, was also constructed.

For Jiang, learning English was an important part of her migration life and enhancing English proficiency became a major goal of her ageing life. This had provided her with something purposeful that structured her everyday ageing life and engaged her in continuous self-improvement, giving meaning to ageing well in New Zealand. It was through being given those learning opportunities, her self-position of a lifelong learner who was steadfast in purpose and willing to study extensively was signified:

We had to leave home at 7:20 in the morning. ... We walked an hour to the school everyday, wind and rain did not stop us and we were never late. Even after I had the cardiac stents operations, I only rested for a few days and continued my study. I am almost 70 years old, time is precious for me and I want to learn more.

Being spatially localised in the self-position of an English learner also connected the past life in China to the present one in New Zealand. Jiang mentioned that her interactions with the English-speakers in the church when she was young laid the foundation of her interest in learning English as an older Chinese migrant. She stated that she enjoyed starting afresh and living a disciplined student life. In her late 60s, Jiang realised that her declining memory and slow response could make her English learning more difficult. Despite those difficulties, she expressed her strong motivation to learn and insisted: *“It is better to learn something rather than nothing. So I think, as in the old saying that one is never too old to learn. So I learn whatever I can.”* Indeed, being trusted and positioned by her teacher as a *“real student”*, who had the potential and abilities to learn regardless of her age, greatly sustained Jiang’s learning motivation and developed her strengths as an older learner. Accepting this position, Jiang felt responsible to study well. Successfully meeting the challenges in the learning process and obtaining good examination results gave Jiang a great sense of achievement in old

age, resulting in positive self-esteem and promoting her feelings of happiness and life-fulfilment.

Consistent with the Confucian idea that self-improvement is a lifetime project, Jiang stated the importance of learning in old age: *“I am old now. Life becomes boring if I do not learn anything. So learning English is self-advancement, also, keeping the brain active can avoid dementia.”* She constructed English learning as an intrinsically valuable activity that was good in and of itself, not only giving purpose to her ageing life in New Zealand but also significantly benefitting her cognitive functioning and even physical health by walking two hours to and from the school. She claimed that maintaining mental stimulation was an important strategy in minimising the risk of dementia. Body, as discussed in Chapter 3, is essentially an aesthetic expression of the self, which provides the context and resources for self-cultivation. Jiang spoke of self-improvement in relation to dementia. She actively took actions to maintain and promote her own bodily and mental health in old age for further self-improvement. As such, Jiang’s efforts to position herself as the English learner were crucial to constitute her self and her moral self in particular.

The English learner position facilitated the sense of moral self in terms of not only self-development but also enhancing independence. She recounted a story about how she successfully claimed a refund from a supermarket. After Jiang found the nuts that she bought from the supermarket had gone bad, she purposely brought them to her English class and asked the teacher to try them. The teacher told Jiang that the nuts had “gone bad” and encouraged her to ask for a refund from the supermarket. With the teacher’s encouragement and equipped with the key words – “gone bad”, she returned to the supermarket and told the staff: *“goes bad, check”, “No, I just change to money”* (originally spoke in English). The supermarket staff offered Jiang a refund for the spoiled nuts. Apparently, Jiang’s spoken English was not perfect, but her success in claiming the refund by using her limited English gave her a great sense of personal fulfilment and happiness: *“I feel good not to be dependent on my children. I am very happy when I feel there is nothing I can’t deal with. I can do things by myself.”* Indeed, through trial and error in communicating with the local people, Jiang developed a strategy of better communication through which she constructed herself as a problem solver who was capable of resolving her life issues despite the language difficulties:

You say one key word, if you use the right word, they will understand what you want to say. Now I simply follow this approach. Know the main subject, say the right key word, then you can solve many problems.

Besides being a coping strategy which helped Jiang to adjust to and live a migration life in old age, learning English had its moral implications. Learning English became one of the moral duties for Jiang living in NZ. Mastering better English allowed her to live more independently and be more capable to cope with the everyday demands and challenges arising from language difficulties. Thus, Jiang was able to live out a relatively independent personhood according to individualistic cultural mandates as well as her daughter's expectations of what a good parent should be in the host country – to live independently and free the adult child(ren) from extra burdens, allowing Jiang to define herself as a “good” mother. This could enhance not only Jiang's personal growth and good life but also harmonious intergenerational relationships, leading to her ultimate happiness and the wellbeing of the family as a whole.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2002) states that education in early life, together with opportunities to engage in lifelong learning can help people to develop the confidence and skills that will help them to adapt and remain independent as they grow older, promoting their quality of life, health and wellbeing. The benefits of continued learning in old age are well-documented in the literature. For example, Glanz and Neikrug (1997) state that learning in later life can facilitate creativity, intellectual growth, personal development and combating ageism. Weinstein (2004) contends that lifelong learning activities can benefit older people through providing socialisation and mind-stimulating experiences, which, in turn, contribute to healthy ageing, improved quality of daily life and mental ability. Hammond (2004) and Narushima (2008) argue that the process of learning cultivates positive self-concept, psychological and mental health states. Ardel (2000) also emphasises the crucial role of lifelong learning in maintaining the quality of life in old age through enhancing self-reliance, self-sufficiency and coping strategies to deal with the challenges associated with changing health and social relationships and through decreasing the rate of mental decline. For Jiang, lifelong learning in terms of English learning was an enduring resource for her in achieving ageing well, positively influencing her self-concept, confidence, life satisfaction, health, sense of happiness and wellbeing (see Boulton-Lewis, Buys, &

Lovie-Kitchin, 2006; Davey, 2002; Meeks & Murrell, 2001; Mehta & Cheang, 2008). It also positively affected Jiang's ability to adapt to and cope with changes arising from migration. As such, Jiang's engaging in learning English functioned to promote a better transition to a new life and facilitate her integration into New Zealand society.

Intercultural interaction, support and care

It is reasonably assumed that migrants' lack of language skills is a major barrier to their involvement in the host country. However, having language difficulties had not hindered Jiang from interacting with the local people and engaging with the local community. Regarding New Zealand as a suitable place for living her ageing life, Jiang was highly motivated to learn English in order to better adapt to a new life and maintain an active connection with the host society. She stated: "*Because I like this place, I would like to be able to communicate more with other people. Because my English language is not good, I need to make use of opportunities to learn more.*" As such, neighbours were not simply defined as people who lived nearby, they were also positioned by Jiang as friends and potential English tutors who could help her in learning English through everyday conversations and tutoring her school work:

My neighbours, now we are also friends. ... They are very friendly. They are really nice, they help us a lot. ... Once I needed to use English to perform a programme. ... I asked them to have a look. They helped me to correct my English. ... When I finished the programme, they even asked me how it went.

In fact, Jiang's enthusiasm to learn often elicited the neighbours' willingness to teach. Learning English became a social exchange process emerging from the interactions between Jiang and her neighbours. In this social exchange process, Jiang not only could have more opportunities of socialising but also could develop and maintain new friendships. It was through this that, Jiang was able to extend a set of supportive social networks beyond her family, to generate psychosocial resources to cope with problems in her daily life and to decrease vulnerability to helplessness, loneliness and social isolation. This also would facilitate the exchange of cultural knowledge and trustful relationships based on mutual understanding. For example, Jiang and her Māori neighbours were able to share their cultural knowledge of herbal medicine.

In the interview, Jiang remarked that she had made more local Kiwi friends than Chinese friends. In relation to the local New Zealanders who were often felt by Jiang to be courteous, gentle, considerate, willing to help and having rich *renqing*, Jiang defined herself as “*lucky*”. She was lucky that she could often receive sincere help from the local people with whom she met when she was in need. For example, the bus driver was experienced as kind-hearted and generous. He consoled Jiang with a free bus-ride when she was terribly upset by her purse being stolen. When she experienced searing pain in her legs, she always remembered and felt grateful to one of her Māori friends who had driven over every weekend and helped Jiang to relieve the pain by employing some traditional Māori healing methods. Jiang also experienced people’s concern, kindness and affection through receiving garden roses, caught fishes, used furniture and household items for her simple and crude flat and being invited to dinner and Christmas parties. Through all these social contacts and interpersonal interactions, the supportive and caring positions of the local others were included as part of the external domain of the self. This resulted in Jiang feeling more involved and valued, harmonising herself within an unfamiliar social environment. Feeling that she was part of the community also promoted her sense of belonging and ageing well in New Zealand. Indeed, having rewarding social interactions and relationships in the living community was a major theme among the participants in their narrated stories. This was also a source of happiness, leading to inner peace and harmony. But what made this factor become particularly obvious in the migration context? Perhaps the “seldom-spoken” voice from Jiang could give us some hints.

Reflection of cultural identity in a foreign land

Exposure to different cultures could make people become more aware of their own cultural identity. It may also invoke critical reflection about their culture of origin which is historically evolving. While narrating her personal stories in the interviews, Jiang occasionally commented on Chinese people in general. For example, “*“If you need help, you can come anytime.” I believe they (the local Kiwi people) really mean that when they say it. It is not like the Chinese who may tell you that it is too much trouble.” “The local Kiwi with whom I have met are very simple, it is not like the Chinese who tend to think in a complicated manner.”* In the interview, Jiang mentioned the greatest drawback nowadays of Chinese people whom she disliked were their selfishness. She narrated a story about her friend who betrayed and disowned her son

for a “counter-revolutionary crime” during the Cultural Revolution and the son was sent to prison for more than ten years as a result. She further explained that it was due to the massive and enduring destruction of traditional Chinese values and practices as a result of the Cultural Revolution:

In the past, Chinese people did care for others, it's the Confucius' teaching. ... But the Cultural Revolution has destroyed all this. People have become self-centred. It was because of the political struggles within the Government at that time, people became not trusting of each other, people fought for their own survival. So the relationships between people become very bad.

In her study of the impacts on the Chinese Culture Revolution, Lu (2004) found that there were two observed impacts of the Cultural Revolution on culture: “the disappearance of civilised behaviour” and “the disappearance of humane and well-rounded individuals” (p. 195). She claimed that these phenomena mainly resulted from the replacement of the traditional Confucian education system that emphasised the cultivation of moral being with humane character beyond acquiring knowledge. People who grew up during the Cultural Revolution engaged fully in learning Mao’s directives, revolutionary songs and poetics as well as participated in writing wall posters and political rituals. Consequently, the traditionally stressed qualities of an individual, such as kindness, gentleness, courteousness, generosity, trustworthiness, loyalty (except to Mao Zedong), willingness to help and so on, were not given the proper environment and opportunities to develop well in the younger Cultural Revolution generation. The valuable aspects of traditional Chinese culture, such as harmony, balance and compromise, were also eradicated from mainland China (Lu, 2004).

After decades of catastrophic political turmoil and radical cultural and social changes in China, the Chinese Government redirected its focus on the country’s economic development. This resulted in the start of the economic reforms at the late 1970s. In addition to promoting the two considerably contradictory goals established for its citizens to attain in the pre-reforms era – the establishment of a classless socialist society and the material betterment of society, the Chinese Government has propagated a new, officially mandated goal of individual economic advancement (Deng & Cordilia, 1999). Deng and Cordilia (1999) contend that promoting economic development has

become a way for the Chinese Government to maintain its legitimacy and that attaining wealth has gradually emerged as the dominant ethos of contemporary China. Material pursuit and enjoying life by spending more money have become the distinctive features of people's lives. They further argue that with the undue emphasis on the importance of getting rich, people would not only be inflated with unlimited desire for wealth but also justify themselves to achieve their goal of personal economic success regardless of the means, whether legal or not and normative or not. This has resulted in an increasing economic crime rate in China, in which official corruption is often involved. The well-reported tainted milk scandal in 2008 has demonstrated that personal integrity and conscientiousness as well as public benefits, health and the safety of people's lives were compromised in the reckless pursuit of wealth by individuals.

Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) assert that "I can be meaningfully understood as *emerging* from individual development" (p. 144). The self is emerging from being positioned under the influence of culture and society. It gradually reaches a point at which it becomes aware of itself and is finally able to define itself through appropriating some parts of itself and the environment and rejecting other parts. Jiang (and the other participants in this project) was born in the pre-Cultural Revolution era. She received education that was fundamentally anchored with Confucian ideology. In this respect, she was provided with an environment to learn Confucian moral ideals, ethical values and guidelines to proper human relationships and behaviours as well as what it meant to be a good person. These Confucian values and traditions were likely to naturally and gradually take root in and be incorporated into the self of Jiang. As such, some Confucian related *I*-positions such as "*I* as mutually trust", "*I* as unselfish", "*I* as frugal", "*I* as honest" and "*I* as not material-minded" were appropriated and eventually became "owned" and accepted as parts of the self. Nevertheless, the post-Cultural Revolution or the economic reforms era in China presented to Jiang changing ideologies that were different from the traditional Confucian values. This discrepancy would create a certain degree of stress in the self of Jiang, because those "natural", developed *I*-positions were felt "unnatural" in the wider changing social environment and had to be suppressed, at least, in some situations. For example, the traditional virtue of trustworthiness appears to be undervalued, whereas materialistic and selfish practices proliferate in contemporary China (Cheng et al., 2010). With a powerful desire for economic success, people, Chinese officials and business executives in particular, may be more concerned

with what advantage they have over the others when they relate to each other in social relationships. Furthermore, when economic advancement becomes the only puffed-up goal in an individual's life, those who lack access to the means, either legal or illegal, to economic success would inevitably become a failure in the society. Those who are not able to continue accumulating wealth and enjoying consumption, such as older people, would also feel undervalued, inducing a certain degree of inner conflict and negatively impacting on their sense of self.

Paradoxically, migrating to New Zealand had offered Jiang the opportunities to (re)experience the trustworthy, caring and supportive interpersonal relationships within the wider social environment. The local people who were felt by Jiang as benevolent and being full of *renqing* were gradually included in the self and were experienced as accepted and valued aspects of the extended *I* although the distinction between Jiang and the local people remained (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Apparently, some of the owned Confucian related *I*-positions that “worked” in the pre-Cultural Revolution China were also adaptive in New Zealand. For Jiang, intercultural contact had the pleasant implication that newly accepted positions were in line with her existing *I*-positions that she would like to continually identify with, rather than disown, according to the change in core cultural values and societal norms in mainland China.

To develop, maintain and reinforce a cultural identity, others in the same culture are necessarily included in the self and defined as “mine”. Particularly in the context of migration cultural others are significant parts of an extended self. These cultural others are not only restricted to those who are living in the same host country but also extended to the Chinese collectivity in the country of origin. As such, any significant social and political events happening in China, either positive or negative, and their associated news commentaries would be likely to have an impact on Jiang's cultural identity. Previously, I have regarded what Jiang mentioned about the negative aspects of Chinese people and her motherland – mainland China – as a “seldom-spoken” voice. This voice was rather unspeakable because it would inevitably elicit an inner conflict between being proud of one's Chinese cultural identity and being uncomfortable with, if not ashamed of, it.

Worldwide, to most Chinese, the year of 2008 may be exceptional and unforgettable. After thirty years of economic reforms, China successfully emerged as the second-largest economy in the world after the United States in 2008 (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2009, as cited in Cheng et al., 2010). The unprecedented economic growth has contributed to not only the improved quality of life for the people in general but also the elevation of the country's international status. The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and the successful launch of the Shenzhou 7 spacecraft shortly after the Olympic Games have further marked significant milestones for China's efforts for modernisation and globalisation, promoting China's international image and presenting her potential competence and influence to the world. With rich media coverage, these significant social events have conferred opportunities for the Chinese people to raise their confidence in their country (Cheng et al., 2010) and take pride in their cultural and national identities. Similarly, in relation to her cultural identity, the Beijing Olympic Games and the Shenzhou 7 spacecraft mission made Jiang feel proud of herself as a Chinese in the host country. However, the notorious 2008 milk scandal also made her feel uncomfortable with (or even embarrassed by) her cultural identity. The position ("I as proud") and the counter-position ("I as uncomfortable (or embarrassed)") engaged in a dialogical relationship:

China will be great in the future. China will become very powerful in the future. But China lacks quality education. You see, we held the Olympic Games, we launched the Shenzhou spacecraft, it is great. But we had the tainted milk power scandal.

In resolving this cultural identity dilemma, a broader position: "I as critical" moved forward and engaged in the dialogue, which distanced itself from the two conflicting cultural positions (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). She blamed the lack of quality education, which aimed at cultivating individuals' moral character and conscience, as the main cause of the immoral acts and crimes including economic crimes:

I think now China must let the citizens know that [we] need to have conscience. China, in the future, definitely needs to reinforce the cultivation of personal [moral] character. In the past, it seemed that everything was abandoned except for Mao

Zedong's thoughts. ... But the present Government is good, it improves bit by bit. Those old leaders have passed away, now the younger leaders are in power. Young people's thinking is more connected to the modern society, better integrated into this world. I believe China has a good future. ... Some Chinese people had suffered [in political turmoil]. But I think even if you dislike the Communist Party, you should not dislike China, because China is your motherland. These two are different.

Positioning herself in such a way, Jiang was able to make an evaluation. While she was asserting her own cultural identity, she was also aware of the limitations of her own evolving culture in which she was raised. She also distinguished China – the country – from the Communist Party in the sense that this external political position received no place as an accepted cultural position in the self. With a positive hope that China would continually make progress and succeed in the future under the governance of a new generation of leaders, Jiang would be likely to maintain a positive cultural identity while living in New Zealand and receiving negative comments about China.

Case summary

Jiang commenced the interview with a story about her daughter's expression of filial piety in which her culturally expected position: "I as a well-cared-for mother" was allowed to move forward. An unanticipated filial practice initiated by her daughter, nevertheless, challenged this existing self-position, inducing inner conflicts in the self of Jiang and disrupting the harmonious mother-daughter relationship. After some intensive interchange between the disheartened mother position and the devoted Christian (consultant) position, Jiang accepted her daughter's voice of independence in the process of self-consultation. She transformed herself from predominantly situated in a traditional, dependent mother position to a non-traditional independent one. A new structure of the open, dynamic and multivoiced self began to emerge, which incorporated the original mother position of Jiang (*I as dependent*), the rejecting position of her daughter (mother as dependent) and the re-positioning of Jiang (*I as independent*). Nevertheless, the independent position appeared to be well accepted, replacing the original dependent position and dominantly functioning in the migration context, resulting in a sense of self-fulfilment and success. Moreover, being embedded in a social context dominated by an individualistic ideology and re-positioning herself

as independent facilitated and legitimated the other related position to come forward: “*I as self-care*”. Positioning herself in this way, Jiang was able to negotiate and balance multiple needs among herself, her husband and her daughter, leading to a more harmonious life.

Knowledge of the English language is an important resource for facilitating an independent living in New Zealand. Therefore, besides the independent position, the self-position of an older English learner was formed. These two newly emerging self-positions became predominant in Jiang’s migration life. They always co-worked to promote an initial adaptation to the new environment and quality of ageing life in New Zealand. They also played a crucial role in the Confucian lifetime project of self-improvement. As such, the interaction and interdependence of learning English and learning to live independently could function to foster Jiang’s personal growth and self-betterment. This could also shape her efforts to retain a positive sense of self and become a morally excellent person.

Previous research presents language difficulties as a hindering factor associated with social isolation. However, Jiang’s narrated story illustrates that learning English to overcome language difficulties could be a social exchange process emerging from the interactions between Jiang and the local people, in which Jiang could experience a sense of social inclusion, intercultural support and care. The local others were gradually included as parts of the extended *I* of Jiang. Indeed, living in a new society filled with her treasured values that appeared to be under threat of erosion in mainland China, Jiang was able to re-experience some “suppressed” aspects of the self. However, this also manifested the negative aspects of her culture, inducing a sense of inner disharmony while living in a foreign land. In order to resume a positive sense of cultural identity and inner harmony, Jiang engaged in self-negotiation through making a critical reflection and evaluation of her evolving culture of origin.

The narrative of Shan

This is a sad and unresolved narrative about the leading character, Shan who was 67 years old and firstly came to New Zealand from China in 1997. She was granted permanent residency under the sponsored parent category and had lived in New Zealand for four years. At her daughter's request for help in taking care of her young grandchildren, Shan then migrated to and stayed in Australia for another seven years. In 2008, she returned to and lived alone in New Zealand. It was supposed to be a story about migration and ageing but, ultimately, most of Shan's narrative was devoted to the subject of family tragedies in the migration context. These resulted in intense inner conflicts and disharmony in the self of Shan. Being trapped in the self-positions that were formed and solidly developed under the influence of Chinese feudal and “*ai mian zi*” (愛面子, keeping up face) cultures made it difficult for Shan to appropriate and accept other new positions in the (re)organisation of the self, which would be more adaptive to her changing life circumstances. Restricted movement among few self-positions also hindered Shan from adequately resolving tensions and experiencing happiness and wellbeing in her ageing life.

Sacrifice within unequal relationships undermines experiencing happiness

The first interview with Shan was by coincidence the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival. In the old days, the married Chinese woman would take this occasion to pay a visit to her parents before returning to celebrate with her husband and parents-in-law. Hence, the Festival also carries its meaning of family reunion and gathering. On the special festivals, people often think of their families and relatives who are far away. Before coming to the interview, Shan could not successfully make contact with her husband who was in China. “*He must have gone to see that woman, I feel very angry. ... Those unhappy things surface in every festival*”, she spoke in anguish. She then narrated a long story about her devotion to the family through which she constructed herself as being loyal to her roles as a daughter-in-law, a wife and a mother, and through which her moral self was signified.

Shan and her husband have known each other since they were young. They were described as “*qing mei zhu ma*” (青梅竹馬) in their village, meaning that they were

childhood sweethearts. In their twenties, Shan and her husband got married and started their family in a city. Although their marriage was not arranged by their parents and took place after the implementation of the Marriage Law of 1950 that promoted equality in marital relationships (Evans, 1995, as cited in Zheng, Zhou, Zhou, Liu, Li, & Hesketh, 2011), their married life remained extremely traditional with Shan becoming part of her husband's household with few rights and little freedom. She had to be subordinate and submissive to not only her husband, who held inherent power in a feudal family, but also her mother-in-law, who was even more powerful than her husband in the family. In relation to her husband and mother-in-law, Shan always experienced herself as powerless and helpless:

He is very authoritative; he says what he means only and nobody dares to change him. My mother-in-law was the same. [She said,] "Women do not have the right [even] to go to visit their own family. When a woman marries to a man, she belongs to that man." ... She always said, "I am a single mother and endured hardships to raise my son. You have to do whatever I ask you to do, even kneel before me." She always treated me badly.

According to Shan, her husband had a career in science and was gradually promoted to one of the leaders in a *dan wei* (單位)²⁴. He was always away from home on business, leaving Shan to take care of the whole family physically and financially. Shan's mother-in-law did not offer any help in childcare and housework; instead Shan had to care for her, fulfilling her needs and satisfying her demands. These were the filial obligations of the daughters-in-law to their parents-in-law in the old Chinese tradition (Ikels, 2006). Before the Chinese economic reforms in 1980s, a majority of the population lived in poverty and hardships. Shan was not an exception. Taking the dual roles as a carer and a provider for the family, she worked from early morning until late at night every day. It was hard and exhausting for Shan with her ill body to do long hours of work, particularly for those household chores that required certain physical

²⁴ *Dan wei* (單位) literally means work unit, which often refers to state-owned enterprise in mainland China. Work units were established as a crucial way of implementing Communist Party and Government policies. Each work unit was like a small community, having its own social facilities and services, such as housing, schools, clinics, child care, shops, post offices, centralised dining halls in which food was provided and so on. Moreover, workers were assigned with living quarters according to their work experience and position.

strength, such as washing clothes by hand. When financial difficulties struck, Shan had to sell her blood for extra income so that the family was able to survive. While recounting her contributions to the family, Shan described herself as “a cow”:

I worked like a cow. I used to carry my two kids on my 28-inches-wheel bike. ... It was really hard for my body because I have arthritis since I was very young. ... I did everything all by myself because my husband was always away on business.

In Chinese culture, “a cow” is commonly used to describe a person who is hardworking and dedicated. Nonetheless, it also carries a negative connotation by the fact that the cow cannot escape from a fate of being slaughtered after a life-time of work for the farmer. As such, this also implies an unfortunate person who is suffering from a hard lot. In relation to the family, Shan experienced herself positively as a persevering, dedicated and self-reliant family member but, simultaneously, she constructed herself as a miserable person. The miserable position was manifested when Shan’s sacrifice and devotion to the family was not recognised and appreciated. Worse still her sacrifice was deliberately misinterpreted by her husband:

... I had no money and my best friend said, “Both of us are married to bad husbands, we both are poor, we both are not supported by our husbands. You come with me to join in the Blood donor group.” (Speaks in affliction). My husband once told our kids that I sold my blood to earn money to look after my mother. It was so sad that he accused me of that. ... My mother was not that poor, why would I sell my blood to earn money for her?

Through positioning Shan as a hypocrite whose sacrifice was only a disguise for the interests of her own mother, the husband could conceal his irresponsibility and disloyalty in his role as a husband and a father and also his unfulfilled moral obligations associated with those prescribed social roles. This imposed positioning threatened Shan’s sense of self, stirring up immense inner conflicts, grievances and unhappiness. In order to eliminate the negative impression of the self and mitigate some sense of inner disharmony arising from discrepancies between her defined positive self-positions and the negative position imposed by the husband, Shan countered the husband’s unfair

voice to her through positioning him as a “real” selfish person who was good at the workplace but bad at home:

I did not belong to his dan wei. He didn't arrange for his son to work for his dan wei, not his daughter and not even me. Others made use of guan xi (interpersonal connections) to arrange people to join the dan wei because the dan wei was very good, the pay and benefits were very good. He was the only one not to do that, so the dan wei considered him to be very good. ... So he had a successful career in his dan wei. ... He was a high flyer in his dan wei but at home he treated me badly. ... All he cared about was his career, he did not care about our family, only care about himself.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the Chinese moral system, within which various social roles with their social and moral assignments were defined, was not intended to be a rigid justification of social hierarchy, which would lead to relationship inequalities. In fact, under the Confucian ethic of *zhong*, if the parties (e.g., husband and wife) involved in a dyadic relationship are loyal to their social roles and fulfil the moral duties appropriate to those roles with mutual respect, interpersonal harmony and personal happiness would flourish. The Chinese tradition of male dominance within family practices is partly related to a gendered division of labour. That is, the husband acts as a primary provider who is mainly responsible for providing for the family financially and the wife performs as a home carer who is required to take care of the elders, nurture the young and manage household chores. However, this expected gendered division of labour had never been fully exercised in Shan's family. While Shan was practising those moral duties aligned with her role as a wife, the husband appeared to be disloyal to his social role in relation to Shan, not fulfilling his social role obligations. Recalling the moral human norms stated in *Li Ji*: “the husband just and the wife obedient, the older person gracious and the young compliant”; it is through this reciprocal fulfilment of moral duties, social harmony is created and human happiness and wellbeing are enhanced. Shan's narrated stories illustrate that Shan's taken-for-granted and unappreciated sacrifice to the family and her one-sided fulfilment of moral assignments within unequal, non-reciprocal relationships resulted in intense conflicts, disrupting her inner and interpersonal harmony and undermining her happiness and wellbeing.

Emancipating the self through migration

Shan had no intention to migrate. She visited New Zealand simply to temporarily take care of her pregnant daughter, who was almost due to give birth at that time, and the then newly born grandchild. During the third month of her stay in New Zealand, Shan received a call from her son disclosing that her husband had had an extramarital affair in China. The disclosure triggered a shock wave in the family that not only destroyed Shan's marital relationship and the father-child relationships but also threatened the family completeness. Shan's daughter then suggested that Shan immigrate to, and stay with her in, New Zealand because she needed Shan's help to care for her new born son on one hand, and she believed the welfare system was more developed and benefits for older people were better in New Zealand than those in China on the other hand.

Shan had already retired at that time and did not have any post-retirement plans. *"I myself alone, I think, have nothing to do."* With a broken heart filled with shock, disappointment, anger and sense of betrayal, Shan decided to apply for residency in New Zealand. The husband, to whom Shan was married for almost forty years, was experienced by Shan as manipulative, despotic and bad-tempered. Thus, the predominant positions: *"I as powerless", "I as obedient", "I as oppressed" and "I as miserable"* in the self of Shan were always at the fore. She stated: *"It's the male dominance, it's the bad temper. (Sighs). People always say the worst thing happens to women is a bad marriage. You have to stick with your husband, you have to follow what he says."* Shan's husband always took a high-handed approach to dealing with family issues. He always spoke to Shan in an imperious voice. The disclosure of the extramarital affair promptly activated the manipulative and authoritative self-positions of the husband:

Shan: He does not love me anymore, but he hid this from me. Since my residency was granted, I have not returned home. He told me, insisted me that, if I did not return home in 7 days, he would divorce me. ... He knew I would not divorce him, because he knew I was concerned for my face (ai mian zi, 愛面子). ... He warned me and asked me to take it seriously. When I didn't return after 7 days, he rang me and warned me that he was not joking and gave me another 20 days. He told me he would definitely divorce me if I did not return

within 20 days. Well, I did not return. He threatened me twice, ... He always treated me in a disrespectful way. I do not need to bear with this when I am in New Zealand. I have let go all this. I am not seeing him anymore, he cannot do anything he wants.

Cannis: So you don't need to bear with his bad temper when you are here.

Shan: That's right. He complained a lot, ... I feel happy when I don't see him, so I have not returned home.

The experience of infidelity constituted a fundamental threat to Shan's identity. However, as seen in the excerpt, this experience also evoked a very different response from Shan. Instead of continually engaging in her obedient wife position, Shan repositioned herself as an "emancipated wife" who was unwilling to let the husband perpetually take centre stage of her life. She exercised her own rights to voice and act for her needs and according to her wishes. She refused to follow her husband's instruction of sending him her identity documents for the divorce process: "... *I am very angry because he often insults me. He has asked me to post my identity documents to him. I will not do that. ... If I send him the documents, he can use the documents and sign the divorce papers for me.*"

The influence of tenacious cultural positions on self-(re)organisation and self-movement

The ancient Chinese cultural norms of *san cong* (三從, three obediences) and *si de* (四德, four virtues) are a set of moral and behavioural standards imposed on women in a feudal society. The three obediences require a Chinese woman to obey her father before marriage, to obey her husband during married life and to obey her son in widowhood. The four virtues that a Chinese woman had to practise are *fu de* (婦²⁵德, proper virtue), *fu rong* (婦容, proper countenance and modest manner), *fu yan* (婦言, proper speech) and *fu gong* (婦功, proper needlework and also refers to proper management of the household through diligent work). The moral discourse of *san cong si de* defines what constitutes a "good" woman in the traditional cultural context and the roles of a "good" daughter (and a "good" daughter-in-law after marriage), a "good" wife and a "good" mother in a feudal family.

²⁵ Fu (婦) literally means a married woman.

Having lived in a traditional feudal family for almost all her life, Shan abided by the cultural norms of *san cong si de*, engaging in the enduring and sacrificing positions for the benefits and demands of every member in the family. Particularly to her husband, Shan had to adopt his preferences, comply with his demands, follow his instructions and fulfil his desires without disagreements and antagonisms. Even though women's status has greatly been promoted and improved in China over the past few decades, resulting in equal opportunities for women in education and workplace participation, for Shan to recognise, understand and develop the concepts and ideas of gender equality could be difficult, if not impossible. Particularly in terms of having equal rights to voice and negotiate according to her needs, desires, wishes and expectations in the husband-wife relationship. Indeed, the authority of the husband remained a "thought" rope with which the feudal system bound Shan as a woman and a wife. The subordinate and the submissive positions were solidly developed and ingrained in the self of Shan. Nevertheless, engaging in all these self-positions allowed Shan to anchor herself as a "good" woman, a "good" wife and a "good" mother according to the traditional Chinese cultural mandates.

Given the migration opportunity with available resources, such as accommodation provided by her daughter, financial support from the New Zealand Government and exposure to more egalitarian gender norms, Shan was more ready to stand up for herself, move away from the subordinate and submissive self-positions, reposition herself, make decisions and behave from the perspective of the new position: "I as emancipated". However, compared with the long dominant *I*-position of a "good" woman that was defined in Shan's living cultural and social context, this newly formed position would remain brittle, giving it a weak voice. Furthermore, accepting the emancipated position would challenge Shan's existing self-identity as a "good" woman, inevitably inducing inner conflicts and disharmony. While the emancipated position was appropriated, it might not have been accepted to the extent that it became "owned" as part of the self. It might be more readily accepted in particular time and circumstances, such as in the emotionally intense moments of learning the husband's infidelity and being instructed to provide identity documents for divorce proceedings. The husband's infidelity might, to a certain extent, serve to legitimate Shan to emancipate herself from the traditional "good" wife position. Nevertheless, being bounded by the norms of *san cong si de*, the

sacrificing mother position in the self of Shan had hardly retreated at all. This will be discussed in a later section.

To retain self-identities as a “good” wife and a “good” woman in both the family and the society, Shan had never chosen to divorce:

To our generation there is a saying: “If you marry to a rooster, you must stay with the rooster; if you marry to a dog, you must obey the dog; if you marry to a monkey, you must follow the monkey to run around in the mountains.” I said to myself. I do not want to divorce. Divorce is shameful, I rather bear all these.

As stated previously, there was an ordinance endowing men with power to divorce their wives in ancient China. Contrarily, women had no right to divorce their husbands. In this respect, divorce was historically and culturally constructed as wrongdoing and misconduct of the wife within marriage, which, nevertheless, would have negative implications for the wife’s self-identity. Shan had been suffering from arthritis and heart disease since a young age. She also had glaucoma, depression and insomnia at the time of interview. Under the ancient divorce ordinance in China, a man was able to divorce his wife if she suffered from serious disease(s). With ill health, Shan was positioned as an incompetent wife in relation to the husband. This also implied that Shan was doing harm to the collective welfare of the family, the husband in particular, in terms of draining family resources for treating her illness:

I have never wanted to divorce him. But he doesn’t want me to return home, he has asked me to stay here. He said that he would bankrupt if I returned. He always told me that he didn’t have money to pay for my medical bills. He has asked me not to return, so I haven’t returned so far.

There are close relationships between evaluation, emotion, desire and speech (Burkitt, 2010a). The above excerpt demonstrates that a verbal rejection from the husband was filled with moral evaluation as well as emotions. This rejection not only made Shan feel bitterly hurt and abandoned but also provoked feelings of shame, guilt and worthlessness.

To eliminate the potentially negative or wrong impression of the self as an incompetent wife, Shan restated her contributions to the family through which she was able to reconfirm her defined internal position of a “good” wife. She also spoke of her marriage in relation to her own family in the interview. In contrast to her husband, whose father died when he was three and whose mother raised him alone in poverty, Shan came from a relatively well-to-do family. Shan’s grandparents had migrated to Canada before the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, followed by her parents, uncles, aunties and siblings. According to Shan, all were doing very well and living a stable and financially secure life. With sound family financial positions, her siblings had sponsored Shan to visit their mother in Canada twice. Shan stated the reason for her not to migrate to Canada to unite with her family was that she had already married. In this respect, she constructed and presented herself as the one who was committed to the marriage and loyal to her social role as a wife in the family. Shan also defined herself as the most unfortunate one among her six siblings, she “*married to a bad husband and has a daughter whose life is so miserable.*” Through describing the unequal standing between the husband’s and her own families and positioning herself as an unfortunate but committed wife, Shan was able to reinforce her innocence defence. Nevertheless, being embodied in an ill body, the imposed culturally defined incompetent wife position was not easy to be disowned from the self of Shan.

The nature of fidelity in marital relationships was gender-specific in the old days of China. While conjugal infidelity in women was, and is generally, regarded as immoral and unacceptable, men could be polygamous and have concubines. Although concubines are no longer a formal part of modern Chinese society, their historical connection is comparatively recent in the Chinese collective cultural memory and their historical influence arising from the “gendered double standard” remains to a certain extent. In fact, extramarital affairs that are initiated by husbands are still prevalent in the Chinese setting, with new terms such as “second wives” or “girlfriends” (Fung, Wong, & Tam, 2009). Recent research found that both men and women were still more tolerant of male than female infidelity nowadays (Zheng et al., 2011). In addition, women appeared to be more accepting than men if their spouse was unfaithful, reflecting the historical influence on normative expectations about what is acceptable for married men and women. Just like concubines in old China, having the “second wife” and extramarital affairs often symbolises a status of power and success for well-

to-do men. This implies that they have excess wealth to spend on the women involved through providing them with accommodation, salaries, expensive gifts and perhaps luxurious entertainments, such as travelling and fine dining, in an exchange of sexual and other “wifely” services.

For those who position themselves as liberated women, emphasising human rights and gender equalities, the double standard of infidelity is often seen to serve to bolster the gender inequalities in a marital relationship. Shan’s self was dominated by the “good” wife position that conformed to the Chinese cultural norms of *san cong si de*. She was obliged to keep family scandals in the family and to avoid ruining the family’s reputation. The common phenomenon of infidelity and extramarital affairs functioned to justify Shan’s acceptance of the husband’s infidelity, rather than to raise her awareness of gender inequalities. It became obvious at the time when Shan re-migrated to live alone in New Zealand:

His dan wei may not know what happened between us. There is an old saying: “Family scandals should be kept within the family.” I haven’t told anyone about this. I keep all these to myself. (Sighs). ... I so used to see all this in TV drama. It is very common now. It happens in Hong Kong, happens in Guangzhou, happens in other provinces. Well, it’s all up to him, I am getting old now. I hope one day if he is not with the other woman anymore, then I will apply for his residency here. I would like to apply for his residency, so I have a company here, I feel alone here.

In her hope and need of having her husband, who was dominant and powerful, back to accompany her to live an interdependent ageing life, the emancipated position had to retreat to the background. This, in turn, allowed the position of “I as accepting” to come to the fore. Positioning the woman involved as the one who lured her husband into the extramarital affair, Shan was able to legitimately engage in the forgiving position.

The price of *ai mian zi* (愛面子, keeping up face)

Mian zi is an indigenous Chinese conception of face, which is a rather complicated concept with abundant cultural connotations (He & Zhang, 2011). Generally speaking, *mian zi* stands for the kind of social reputation or prestige that is greatly valued by

Chinese (Ho, 1976; Hwang & Han, 2010). Ho (1976) indicates that *mian zi* can be attained in several different ways. It can be gained by having socially approved personal qualities, such as benevolence, righteousness, expertise, trustworthiness, capability and so on. It can also be directly derived from factors, such as wealth and authority obtained and accumulated through personal effort and achievement, and indirectly from a socially ascribed status determined by such as family background and the individual's social connections. Nevertheless, *mian zi* as a product of a social and relational-oriented culture is never "a purely individual thing" (Ho, 1976, p. 882). Similar to the conception of the Chinese self, there are social and relational aspects of *mian zi*. That is, the attainment of *mian zi* requires the participation of others in terms of recognition and respect (Bond & Hwang, 1986; Bond, 1996). An individual's *mian zi* not only is influenced by his or her own actions but also may be affected by the actions of others, particularly those who are intimately related. For instance, a Chinese wife would likely earn *mian zi* if her husband had attained a great achievement with the accompanying status at work which was publicly acknowledged and respectable. Her *mian zi* could be gained through being regarded as "a woman behind a successful man", implying that she had performed well in her role as a wife, taking good care of the husband and family and thus allowing the husband to concentrate on and develop his career. This positive public image is induced by the harmony of her moral conduct and performance according to the obligations prescribed to a wife with the views and judgements of the larger community (Mao, 1994). Therefore, in order to gain *mian zi*, an individual has to "rely on the social environment to secure affirmation from other people" (Hwang & Han, 2010, p. 481). On the other side of the coin, losing *mian zi* occurs when an individual suffers a loss of his or her reputation or prestige because of a certain failure or misfortune (Ho, 1975). An individual may also lose *mian zi* when his or her family member fails to fulfil obligations and duties designated by the family ethics of Confucianism (Hwang & Han, 2010).

The issues of *mian zi* occupy a critical role in Chinese people's lives (King & Bond, 1985) and are embedded in Chinese everyday discourse (Gao, 1998). Divorce is an issue of enormous shame and stigma, not only for both husband and wife but also for their families. As seen in the previous excerpt, the first thing that Shan mentioned about her unwillingness to divorce with her unfaithful husband was not about how much she loved him, not about how lonely she would be and not about the financial or practical

difficulties she would experience, but instead it was “*ai mian zi*”. This reason was repeatedly stated, in different forms, while Shan was narrating her stories, for instance “*Our generation does not like divorce*”, “*Divorce is not an honourable thing.*” Apparently, Shan acted largely in compliance with the anticipated expectations of cultural and social norms rather than reflectively on her own needs. Defining herself as a person of an older generation, she considered divorce as socially distasteful, leading to losing *mian zi*, stirring up an intense sense of disharmony and threatening her sense of self.

There is a popular Chinese saying to express the different life priorities and importance given to men and women: “For men, the worst thing is choosing a wrong career; for women, getting married with a wrong man.” In this respect, men’s success is constructed in association with their career development and achievements in addition to the consequent social status, wealth and pride; whereas, women’s value mainly builds upon their marriage and established family. For Shan as a woman, her *mian zi*, to a degree, could be attained by obtaining recognition and admiration for marrying a successful man with certain power and status in his *dan wei*. Obviously, Shan’s *mian zi* would be lost if the husband’s extramarital affair was made public, which was generally considered as violating social ethics and moral standards and also implied her marital failure. Shan’s *mian zi* would also be lost by stripping her title of the wife of the leader of the *dan wei* if her husband divorced her. Although Shan positioned herself as “a woman behind a successful man”: “*It’s me. He had such a successful career in his dan wei, it was all because of me. Without me, he could not be so successful. I worked very hard, like a cow*”, she was the one who refused to unite with her husband in China. In addition to her husband’s established good reputation in both the *dan wei* and the community, this might leave room for others to suspect Shan’s moral performance as a wife:

The other day I bumped into an ex-colleague of my husband who also migrated here [New Zealand]. He said that he knew my husband well and he said my husband was a very nice person. Because of that, I didn’t say anything bad about him. If I say something bad about him, people will think I am a bad person instead.

While I was listening to Shan recounting her husband's infidelity with an anguished look on her face, the "suppressed" counsellor position in the self of me could not help but move forward from the background, express empathy and offer consolation to relieve her psychological distress. In response to my consolation, Shan not only re-raised the voice of innocence but also introduced the other apparently contradictory voice – the voice of a "good" husband:

Cannis: Shan, even though your husband does not treat you well, it seems that your children are good to you, they have supported you all along and they are always on your side.

Shan: That's right. But I haven't done anything wrong. I love my children very much. Once my children were late coming home after school, ... I was scared and started crying. ... He then scolded me, ... "You go to hell, you are over worried." ... He also scolded my children, ... warned them that they had to come home immediately after school, otherwise their mother would have died from nervous breakdown. In the past, he was good to me. He just didn't want me to visit my parent's home. He asked me to go shopping, buy some nice designer clothing. When I did my haircut, I would go to any barber shops, ... he scolded me. ... I was only allowed to go to the good ones, ... so he treated me well. ... When he was away, his dan wei would send someone to visit me. When he was at home, he swept and mopped the floor, ... because I was not able to do much physical work when I was young, he knew me well. ... He is not too bad.

Cannis: Mm.

Shan: When he treats me badly, I think of the good side of him. In fact, I don't always hate him, he is very bad on that thing (having an extramarital affair), I let him do whatever he likes. ...

Cannis: It seems it's hard for you to let go.

Shan: Yes, I let him do whatever he likes, my health is not good. ... No one is perfect, ... so I bear with him. ... He is bad to have another woman, but he looked after my bike, he was good. He checked on my bike each time after returning home from his business trip. People said he worked very hard, ... [He said,] "You know, her bike carries 3 lives", my two children and me. ... I did not ask him to do it for me. ... Also,

when I first arrived in New Zealand, he was very nice to me, perhaps he knew he did something wrong. ... He told me I was fat and asked me to reduce weight, he bought lot of weight loss pills for me. ... He also said he would buy another flat, so that I would not have to walk up the stairs when I was in my 70s. ... I think he is not that bad after all.

Speaking from the dominant position of a traditional “good” wife with an emphasis on obedience and submission to the husband, Shan found the husband’s willingness to help in household chores, which was not expected from a husband, was exceptional. The husband’s demands, such as asking Shan to go to his designated barbershops for her hair cut and to take the weight-loss pills he bought, served to reinforce the “good” husband positioning rather than being considered as a lack of basic respect to her personal preferences and wishes. Nevertheless, in order to prevent the loss of her *mian zi* and, more importantly, temporarily relieve some sense of intense disharmony, the inclusion of the external position of a “good” husband was necessary. Without this inclusion, Shan as a failure in terms of choosing and marrying a wrong man would be signified. Without this inclusion, the forgiving wife in the self of Shan could hardly be justified and actualised. Only through positioning herself as forgiving was Shan allowed to legitimise her thoughts of reconciliation and reunion with her husband.

Illusion of forgiveness and imagined positioning

Forgiveness, as one of the virtues possessed by a cultivated person, is highly praised in most religions and cultures. In relation to the husband who had never acknowledged that he had wilfully violated the loyalty of marriage and accepted responsibility for the infidelity, Shan experienced him not only as dishonest, undependable, unreliable and mistrustful but also as unpredictable. While she positioned herself as a committed and caring wife who expressed willingness to reconcile, desire to remain in the marriage and an empathetic capacity for forgiving the husband’s acts of infidelity, she also experienced herself as vulnerable to being hurt by the husband’s potentially repeated incidents of infidelity in the future. “I as doubtful” and “I as uncertain” were manifested while Shan was populated by the others’ voices of widespread infidelity, leading to inner tensions and disharmony:

Sometimes I feel pity for him to be alone. I was thinking of sending in an immigration application for him. My housemates warned me not to do that. They have seen a university professor in his 70s, once his PR (permanent residency) was granted, he divorced his wife. Here in New Zealand, once you have the PR status, you will end up in divorce after you move out and live separately for two years. My housemate warned me that if my husband became a permanent resident in New Zealand, he would be able to bring his other woman over to New Zealand, I would be very upset. Then I told my housemates I needed to re-consider it, ... it's hard to say, it's a long story. (Sighs).

As discussed in Chapter 3, *I*-positions are intertwined with the minds of real, actual and imagined others and are in dialogue with them. The views originating from the dialogue need not to be “objective”; that is, they are based on things that we have actually heard others say. But they can be what we think others might say to us in an imaginary dialogue we hold for ourselves. In fact, we can construct some scenarios and assign certain self-positions to ourselves and others in order to fulfil some psychological needs, such as instilling hope and resuming some sense of security. In response to the imagined husband who was lonely and wanted to migrate, Shan positioned herself as kind and forgiving. Returning to the reality, the position of “*I* as forgiving” became invalid as what the husband actually wanted and expressed was divorce rather than migration, reconciliation and maintenance of a marital relationship with Shan. Indeed, once Shan repositioned herself as an emancipated wife, refusing the husband’s demands and insisting on staying in New Zealand, the authoritative husband gave her a cold shoulder and almost completely ignored her. He did not make contact with Shan and also refused to talk with her. “*I made calls to him, [he said,] “you dialled a wrong number.” We have been married for forty years, how can I not recognise his voice?”* The husband had not made any promise to discontinue his extramarital relationship and bring the marital crisis to an end. While Shan positioned herself as forgiving and the unfaithful husband as forgiven, from various telltale signs, she believed that the husband was still continuing the extramarital affair. Trapped in her self-positioning of forgiving with the hope that her husband would eventually change his mind and rectify his moral wrongdoing, Shan could hardly emerge with a better integrated narrative of what had actually happened as well as what was currently happening. This would lead

to the inner conflicts remaining unresolved, preventing her from experiencing a sense of harmony and happiness.

Inexorable obligations bring compromised wellbeing

Despite the distress caused by the infidelity, Shan, to a certain extent, was able to enjoy the initial years of migration life in New Zealand. She found that New Zealand with its amicable living environment, fresh air and moderate weather was particularly suitable for older people to live in and that her health condition had improved. The daughter's family was also doing well. The young couple were running a small business and living a financially secure life. As the daughter was self-employed with flexible work hours, she was more able to take care of Shan, helping her to resolve the problems that older Chinese migrants commonly have experienced, such as transportation and language problems. Consequently, Shan had not experienced many settlement difficulties. Instead, she could quickly make adjustment in a new life and establish new friendships and social networks beyond her family through attending English classes and engaging within the local Chinese community. Being taken care of by her daughter, free from the control of her husband and with financial support from the New Zealand Government, Shan could taste some sense of financial autonomy, freedom and happiness:

When I first arrived in NZ, I adapted well and lived here quite happily. I went to study English in the city with a few friends who lived in Northcote. It's nice here, people are nice. We (the whole family) went to yum cha on Sunday. ... Their business was good, everything went well, I was happy. He then gambled, ...

Unfortunately, the stable and tranquil life only lasted for a few years. In 2000, the daughter discovered that her husband was experiencing a gambling problem. He had already gambled away a large portion of their savings and their business, resulting in severe family financial difficulties that significantly impacted upon his family's and Shan's lives. In an attempt to break her husband's gambling addiction, the daughter decided to move to Australia to re-establish the business and re-start a new family life. While she was in Australia preparing for the family to move there, her husband's gambling problem continued, draining all the family resources as the debts mounted. Realising that he was unable to pay off his debts, he fled from the family and vanished. Ultimately, Shan's family house was forcibly sold by the bank to meet the debts.

In relation to the daughter who was experiencing a family crisis, Shan as a mother was much disturbed about her daughter's life difficulties and her family's wellbeing. With a lack of family resources, the being-taken-care-of mother position was hardly maintained and had to retreat to the background. Instead, the other two positions: "I as worried" and "I as caring" moved forward and worked together to stimulate Shan to make decisions based on the wellbeing of the daughter and her family:

He was addicted to gambling, he lost the shop, the car, the house, he lost everything. It was so miserable and so I didn't go [to Australia]. I thought if I stayed here, the Government would look after me, care about me.

Similar to Yu in the first case study, the social position of a mother was predominant in the self of Shan. Shan always felt duty-bound to protect the welfare and to ensure the wellbeing of both her daughter and grandchildren even at the expense of her own. After the daughter's husband disappeared, the daughter re-married in Australia and gave birth to her second son. However, misfortunes never came singly to Shan's daughter. The first husband was a problem gambler, whereas the second one was an alcoholic. The second husband did not support the family financially but, according to Shan, even cheated the daughter of her money:

Shan: ... My daughter is so unfortunate to be together with that Australian man. They have a kid but the man is jobless, he's drunk at home everyday. My daughter is so angry with him. ... He doesn't support the family financially. My daughter left some money for him to buy food for their kids but he spent the money on alcohol. ... My daughter's life is so miserable.

Cannis: So now have they separated?

Shan: Yes. The court in Australia realised that he was jobless, he even didn't have income to feed himself, how could he support his own kid? He wanted to have a kid with my daughter only because he planned to run away with the kid and claim social benefits from the Government. Everyone can see his cunning plan.

Cannis: The court has awarded child custody to your daughter.

Shan: Yes, ... so my daughter has to support the family. He often wants

money from my daughter. He said he wanted to visit his kid. He has the right to do this because he is the father. But he told my daughter, because she had income, and so she should pay for whatever he spent when he visited his kid. It is so unfair.

Confronted with the daughter's life hardships, Shan as a sacrificing mother felt helpless, unfair and vulnerable with the unfamiliar policies and laws of a foreign land. Indeed, there was stark contrast between Shan's migration to New Zealand and to Australia. While Shan had adapted well to the new environment and lived a rather satisfying ageing life in New Zealand, she experienced many settlement difficulties in her migration from New Zealand to Australia. A lack of language skills, unfamiliarity with the new country, a change in personal territory, a loss of familiar social networks and of daily routines and transportation became significant problems for Shan when her daughter had to invest almost all of her time, energy and money to encounter her own life difficulties. All these resulted in Shan's deteriorating physical health, depression, feelings of helplessness and social isolation. What was worse was that besides limited medical support, Shan was not eligible for any social benefits from the Australian Government. Although Shan was requested by her daughter to go to Australia to help her with taking care of the grandchildren and household chores, in relation to the daughter who was striving hard for her own life, the positions of "I as harmful" and "I as a burden" coexisted with the opposing position of "I as contributing" in the self of Shan, speaking two extremely incompatible voices:

I don't want to burden my daughter, taking care of me, paying for my medical bills. ... My daughter has to raise her two kids, she is the only source of the family income. It is very difficult for her to support four people including me. That's why I returned to NZ. I need medical treatments, I need food, I relied on her to provide everything. I don't know why I was doing such harm to her. So I returned.

I lived in Australia for 7 years. I was looking after my two grandkids while I was there. I cooked for the family, I helped with the housework. Now they have grown up, my daughter asked me to come back to NZ. So I left and returned to NZ. She said I could stay in NZ or Australia as long as I felt happy.

These two voices always struggled for priority, leading to unsettled inner tensions, a sense of continuing disharmony and different actions according to the particular time and circumstances. When the second grandson started schooling, the already weak voice of contribution was further minimised, leading to the positions of “*I as harmful*” and “*I as a burden*” becoming predominant over “*I as contributing*” position. Adhering to the traditional sacrificing mother position, Shan always had an urge to fulfil the motherhood obligations, prioritise the daughter’s desires and meet her family’s demands regardless of her own needs and wellbeing at any time and in any circumstances. In so doing, Shan adopted the daughter’s suggestion to return to New Zealand although she ended up living alone.

A thread of happiness in unresolved bitterness: a balance between giving and receiving

I feel happy here, ... I don't need to worry about being sick. The hospital gave me free medication and even free meals, ... MRI [to examine the body]. ... All these are very expensive in China. They have fixed my health problems, it is so good. We have come to a paradise for older people.

Different from the first interview which was filled with sorrow, sadness, worry and helplessness, I was able to see some smiles on Shan’s face in the second interview, one and a half months later. In the beginning of the interview, Shan spent more than fifteen minutes recounting a success story about how she overcame language difficulties and found her way to get to the hospital for medical appointments by bus. The SuperGold Card was introduced by the New Zealand Government at the time between the two interviews. With the Card, Shan did not have to worry about transportation fees and was able to take free buses, as many as she needed to, to navigate her way to the hospital for appointments. Through the provision of those resources, Shan was allowed to reposition herself as self-reliant instead of a burden, experiencing a sense of confidence and eliminating some worries in her daily life:

I went there [the hospital] again the next day. ... I was so scared the first time, but it was very different the second time. I managed to go there and I am not worried

anymore. Fortunately, this Government is good to the older people, really. Free transportation, I can afford to catch another bus if I get on the wrong ones.

In fact, in relation to the New Zealand Government, Shan always experienced herself as fortunate, contented and grateful. The case officers in Work and Income were experienced by Shan as kind-hearted, generous and helpful, providing Shan with regular as well as emergency financial assistance, such as doctor consultation and prescription fees and also emotional support. Shan stated: *“The staff of Work and Income treat me very well. They said, “Don’t worry, don’t be afraid, we will take care of you and give you money.”* Being positioned as a well-cared-for older migrant, the Government was even experienced by Shan as a better substitute for her children, through which the traditional Chinese cultural norm of *yang er fang lao* (養兒防老, to bring up children for the purpose of being looked after in old age) was challenged:

The Government is very good to the older people, treating you even better than your own children. ... Every month, it pays for your food, pays for your living expenses and pays for your medical bills. ... [although] we have not contributed much to this country. (Smiles).

Besides the formal support from the Government, the informal support, concern and comfort received from her developed social networks also provided Shan with the strength to encounter her difficulties, especially during the initial few months of returning to New Zealand. Drawing on the Chinese view of health as holistic in that mind and body are intrinsically related, other older people explained the importance of being happy to Shan: *“Don’t be angry with the past incidents, you need to live your life happily, happiness let you live longer.”* Including these external voices within the self, Shan was allowed to gradually move the position of “I as angry” to the background, promoting some sense of inner peace and calmness. In the interview, Shan particularly narrated a story about unforgettable help she received from a person whom she met in library:

It was all because of Xiao Li, otherwise I would not realise how serious it was. ... I asked him to translate a letter for me. ... He looked at me and said, “Ayi²⁶, why are your hands and feet like that?” I told him it was only arthritis but he said it wasn’t. He said, “My mother had the same symptoms before, it’s the early sign of stroke. It’s not good. I’ll drive you to see a doctor.” I refused, I hadn’t received the Community Services Card²⁷ and visiting a doctor was expensive. ... He said he would take me to some place where it’s free to see a doctor. ... He told me that I could see a doctor if I had a NZ passport. He took me to the hospital and the doctor confirmed that I suffered from a stroke.

Research has frequently indicated that social support has positive effects on health and wellbeing (Li & Liang, 2007; Lubben & Lee, 2001; Seeman, Lusignolo, Albert, & Berkman, 2001). Obviously, for Shan, the availability of social support from the Government and the community made the self-transformation possible. The positive self-positions such as “I as not alone”, “I as being cared for” and “I as capable” were able to activate and gradually move to the fore, easing her anxieties, reducing her distress and feelings of helplessness as well as promoting some sense of happiness and wellbeing.

While Shan’s contributions to the family were unrecognised or even downplayed, her altruistic behaviours were remembered and appreciated by the people who had received help from her. Shan was a nurse in China. Before she moved to Australia, she often took blood pressure readings for her elderly neighbours to save them the money for visiting a doctor for the service. When she returned to New Zealand, the children of the elderly neighbours came to visit her and expressed care and concerns:

Both their son and daughter-in-law are very good to me. They said to me, “Ayi, we have lots of Chinese melon, I will bring you some if you like.” ... I was good to them and they are good to me in return, so I feel happy. ... There was a young lady in my neighbourhood, I am very happy that she came to visit me once I returned to NZ.

²⁶ In Chinese polite naming practice, people usually address the lady who is apparently older than them as “Ayi” (亞姨).

²⁷ The Community Services Card is issued to the New Zealand citizens or permanent residents who are on a low to middle income or on a benefit. The Card can help them and their families with the costs of health care.

She said, "Ayi, you are such a nice person, how can I forget about you?" She has not forgotten about me. (Smiles). ... "Ayi, now you are back, ... you will need a lot of things. I give you a rice cooker." ... I used to take blood pressure for her parents, and they still remember me, it's very nice.

Shan also recounted a story about a lonely elderly neighbour who would have liked to go out but had no family members who had the time to accompany her. *"She said to me, "You are so nice, ... I could go to the city all because of you." She said she was very happy when she saw big ships. She still remembers that I accompanied her to the city."* Through narrating these two stories about reciprocal help and care in detail, Shan was able to redefine herself as kind-hearted and helpful and she deserved to be well treated in return. Being positioned as a good person with love, care and compassion, Shan could experience some sense of respect, worth, inner harmony and happiness. Although Shan's self-position of a devoted and sacrificing mother had not been explicitly affirmed in the family, resulting in a negative impact on Shan's sense of self, the sacrificing position and the associated moral acts were endorsed and appreciated while she was interacting with others:

There is a couple next door. They are good to me and have a good impression of me. "Ayi, you are such a nice person", they said to me. "You see, you don't rely on your children, you deal with all these difficulties by yourself and live a frugal life, you are really great", they said to me.

Being re-positioned by others in this long unrecognised position, Shan was able to maintain a more balanced perspective between a burdened mother with ill health and a morally virtuous mother who was willing to sacrifice.

Case summary

Sacrifice can be regarded as a moral act arising out of love, which is often glorified in various cultures and religions. For women in traditional Chinese culture, they are often expected to make sacrifices for their entire family irrespective of circumstances and without much emphasis on reciprocity. However, this one-way sacrifice, which often operates within unequal relationships, can be problematic. As expressed in Shan's narrative, her devotion to the family was taken for granted and did not receive any

recognition, appreciation and sufficient reciprocal care and support. This resulted in her sense of disharmony, oppression and unfairness and undermined her wellbeing and happiness.

The disclosure of the husband's infidelity became a catalyst, facilitating Shan to emancipate herself from the control of the manipulative and authoritative husband through migration to New Zealand. As discussed in Chapter 2, the self is an ongoing process with transformative potential of human agency. While exposure to different cultural and societal values, beliefs and norms with available resources allowed Shan to reconstruct herself from a subordinate and submissive wife to the emancipated one, this newly formed self-position, speaking its weak voice, remained delicate. Moreover, Shan's self-identities as a "good" woman, a "good" wife and a "good" mother, that were culturally and socially defined, would likely be challenged when she accepted the emancipated ones that would potentially allow her to negotiate her needs and balance between self-sacrifice and self-care. This inevitably stirred up some inner conflicts, restraining the inclusion of self-positions that would be more adaptive to the changing life circumstances, hindering the process of self-(re)organisation and the movement among different *I*-positions.

Owing to the Chinese propensity of *ai mian zi*, the marital crisis had never been actively and fully resolved, resulting in Shan's experience of poor health and subjective wellbeing. In fact, Shan's narrative demonstrates that the level of tolerance of infidelity and the related self-positioning are situational-specific and change according to particular time, space and circumstances. While Shan expressed a low level of acceptance of her husband's marital betrayal at the time of its disclosure, leading to redefining herself as an emancipated woman, she came to accept this immoral act more when she was facing the fact that she needed to live alone in New Zealand. To resolve the tensions arising from the acceptance of the husband's wrongdoing and the perceived loneliness, the position of "*I* as forgiving" had to come to the fore. However, without the successful and actual inclusion of the corresponding position of the "forgiven" husband, the forgiving position in the self of Shan could hardly be valid.

Migration studies have generally indicated that migration would have negative impacts on people's lives. However, in Shan's case, the lack of family and social support, rather

than migration itself, contributed mainly to the negative influences on Shan's life. In fact, migration appeared to be largely beneficial to Shan's wellbeing because Shan could receive better physical and social support as a result of migrating to New Zealand. The importance and centrality of family in Chinese culture is well acknowledged. Family is commonly constructed as a place of safety, comfort, mutual love and trust as well as a source of help, support and happiness, reflecting some cultural values and expectations for Chinese families (Rosenblatt & Li, 2011). However, it is not essential that everyone living in a culture would experience the same cultural ideals. The traditional Chinese cultural value of filial piety requires adult children to provide care and support for their parents in old age. But the reality is that, with the restrained family resources, the caring and supporting positions of children are often excused. Facing the daughter's life hardships, Shan constructed herself as a burden and felt that she was doing harm to the daughter, experiencing immense inner conflicts and a feeling of guilt. Trapped in a traditional sacrificing mother position, Shan was always willing to fulfil inexorable motherhood obligations and acted according to the daughter's requests and her family's needs at the expense of her own health and wellbeing. With a lack of family support, social support from the Government and the community, including financial, instrumental and emotional support, became exceptionally important. It was through these external resources and by drawing upon a balanced experience of receiving and giving help scattered across time and space that Shan was able to restore some positive sense of self, experiencing some moments of happiness.

Chapter summary

Using the theory of dialogical self as a starting point, this chapter demonstrates the dynamic movement of the self within its unique real-life context and its relationships and implications on human experience of happiness by describing three individual cases in detail. The case studies illustrate that the availability of resources for the self to create, organise and reorganise different self-positions (*I*-positions), the flexibility of the self moving across a multitude of self-positions and the subjective experience of oneself as happy are closely related. The attainment of happiness is a dynamic, complex and ongoing process of dialogical negotiation, involving the continuing interplay of different aspects of the self. Happiness occurs when the self successfully makes appropriate moves among different self-positions within the field of tension created by the constantly changing personal life circumstances, interpersonal relationships which

involve multiple expectations, desires and needs as well as physical and social environments. In so doing, an individual can achieve harmony within himself or herself, with others in interpersonal relations and with larger surrounding environments, which are all interrelated, ultimately leading to a sense of happiness and wellbeing. The chapter also shows that the key value of studying cases in depth was obtaining experiential, concrete and context-dependent knowledge through deeply exploring the narrative accounts of individual participant's experiences and of paying close attention to the influence of the historical, social, cultural and political contexts. Studying cases was particularly useful for grasping and understanding the complexities of self-movement, self-organisation and self-transformation.

Chapter 8

Discussion: Harmonisation of the self and subjective wellbeing

Ageing is a natural and global phenomenon. In New Zealand, the population is not only ageing but also increasingly culturally and ethnically diverse. In Chapter 1, I discussed the prevalent conceptual frameworks of ageing, such as successful ageing and positive ageing, derived based on Western values and concerns and their limitations of applying these to the other cultures. This study has moved away from employing those conceptual frameworks, to understand older Chinese migrants' ageing lives, to focusing on their first-person viewpoints and their experiential perspectives of ageing and ageing well in particular. It set out to explore older Chinese migrants' experiences of their ageing lives and the meanings they gave to those experiences. It aimed to develop an understanding of their ageing process in the context of migration, which might be useful for the formulation of policies and services to promote their wellbeing and quality of life.

The research was advanced by an interest in narrative-dialogic inquiry, the theory of dialogical self, the Chinese philosophy of *yin/yang* and the Chinese cultural concept of harmony. The process of examining and integrating all these theoretical concepts has enabled me to ponder on the relationship between the self and subjective wellbeing. In so doing, the research has extended beyond the common focus of cultural and ethnic identities in migration research to incorporate the moral and ethical dimensions of the self in order to understand older participants' experience of ageing within personal and social changing circumstances and relationships. In order to keep the research anchored as closely as possible to older Chinese migrants' life experiences, a narrative interview approach was employed to elicit the participants' own stories of ageing and migration. The meanings of ageing well were understood through the lens of their subjective wellbeing based on their experiences of happiness, struggles and challenges.

The main contribution of the present research is to provide an alternative way of understanding human happiness and its relationship with the self. This research reveals that happiness is a function of the harmonious interplay and balance of different aspects (*I*-positions) of the self within a dynamic, complex and ongoing process of dialogical

negotiation. Three prominent pairs of *I*-positions, including the independent and the interdependent positions, *xiao wo* and *da wo* positions and the devoted and the affirmed positions, have been identified in the context of ageing and migration. Happiness can be attained when these positions interact with each other in harmony. The way in which the self creates, organises and reorganises various *I*-positions for its movements, to deal with the situation in hand, is closely related to the availability and accessibility of resources, including personal, relational, social, structural and natural resources. This chapter discusses these findings in more detail.

Happiness as a balanced state of self-positions

A harmonious balance between independence and interdependence

The present research shows that older Chinese migrants are not homogeneous although they are bounded by the same culture. They do not essentially think and act alike, rather they approach their personal problems and social demands from different perspectives. In contrast to the general proposition that independence and interdependence are dichotomous, this research suggests that they can be complementary and facilitating. Indeed, the ability of the self to flexibly shift between the independent and the interdependent self-positions among the older Chinese participants did contribute to their subjective wellbeing.

The limitations of employing dichotomies to characterise cultures (individualism-collectivism distinction) and the individuals within these cultures (independent-interdependent self-construal distinction) in exploring and understanding human happiness were discussed in Chapter 4. This individualism-collectivism dichotomy obscures the reality of intracultural diversity and masks intragroup and intraindividual variations. Indeed, these dichotomies would become more problematic within a globalised and increasingly deterritorialised world with its resulting mixing and flowing of cultures. The current research supports older Chinese migrants' heterogeneity. They are not simply passive recipients of cultural messages. The participants in this research, to varying degrees, actively interpreted, constructed and transformed the messages, gave meanings to the cultural norms and altered cultural practices, such as the traditional filial practice of intergenerational co-residence, based on their changing life circumstances, personal needs, social demands and relationships. This is consistent with Killen's (1997) argument that there exists diversity within culture and

heterogeneity represents the more precise characterisation. As such, while cultural values and norms are influential in shaping people's behaviours, their judgments and attitudes towards personal and social issues, their lives and experiences are never to be culturally determined. From the detailed analysis of the cases, it is noted that the individual's capability to creatively reinterpret and renegotiate the cultural messages and construct new meanings to them can, indeed, serve to prevent the self from being rigidly situated in certain culturally defined positions that may prevent the individual from being able to adequately respond to his or her present situation.

The present research shows that independence and interdependence are dynamic and interconnected, rather than fixed, static and mutually exclusive entities. They stand in relation to each other on a continuum of time and the independence/interdependence dialectic relationship is the effect of action taken by social actors. The independence and interdependence orientations coexist not only within cultures but also within individuals (Killen, 1997). The findings reveal that not only the individualistic and collectivistic values but also independent and interdependent selves developed and coexisted among the older Chinese participants. The participants valued both individual rights and fairness (main features of individualism) and also interpersonal obligations and social responsibilities (core characteristics of collectivism). They concerned both individual needs and collective welfare. How these perspectives were prominent depended on the specific context, interpersonal and social relationships, physical, psychological and social demands.

The findings demonstrate that the capacity of the self to move flexibly and appropriately between the independent and the interdependent self-positions (and among the other *I*-positions), in order to respond to the situational demands, contributed to older Chinese migrants' better subjective wellbeing. These two self-positions appeared to be mutually complementary and necessarily coordinated in the promotion of their good old age. By directing the movement towards either of the independent or the interdependent *I*-positions, the self chose the desired course of action with and for others as well as for itself. It is noted that fostering independence was one of the desired courses for the older migrants to strengthen inner, interpersonal and intergenerational harmony, to maintain harmonious interdependence and to enhance a sense of happiness. Through this, they were also allowed to continually cultivate their moral self and maintain a

positive sense of self, particularly in terms of fulfilling a caring and considerate parental role in old age even though they might have diminished personal resources, such as physical strengths, health, social connections and incomes, owing to retirement, ageing and migration.

A harmonious balance between xiao wo and da wo

The research findings illustrate *xiao wo* and *da wo* are in a dialectical, interconnected relationship and the boundary between them is blurred. They are also context-dependent in nature. The older participants' capability to flexibly move between these two positions allowed them to balance between self-care and care for others, between pursuing their own interests and helping out their children when needed, and between unloading some heavy parental obligations and taking on other family and social responsibilities that were felt more suited to them, such as responding to an ageing spouse's needs, helping others with English and visiting older people with illness. This promoted their inner peace of mind and sense of harmony and was beneficial to their health and wellbeing.

As discussed throughout this thesis, the Chinese conception of the self centres on moral self-cultivation and the *ren-yi-li* (benevolence-righteousness propriety) ethical system of social roles and obligations. Morality is a vital part of the formation and experience of the self as well as being intimately interrelated with human harmony and happiness. In the process of self-cultivation, a person is required to gradually relinquish *xiao wo* (the private and individuated self) to embrace others from a larger collectivity to constitute *da wo* (the large self). The large self embodies *ren* (benevolence) which firstly starts from one's own family and extends to relatives, friends, community members and all people in the world. The present research shows that morality continued to play a crucial role in the experience and expression of the self among the older Chinese participants. The self and the large self in particular arose when the participant became not only a social but also a moral object within the practice of Confucian cardinal virtues. However, the findings also indicate that the linear relationship between *xiao wo* and *da wo* is problematic in the attainment of harmony and happiness.

Confucius (1983) explains *ren* as to “love your fellow men” (Analects, XII: 22, p. 117). To love others is to show affection and compassion to one’s counterparts in social relationships and interactions and also to express altruistic concern for their wellbeing. While considering *li* in relation to *ren*, *li* is an externalisation of *ren* in our everyday social relationships and interactions (Tu, 1979). That is, *li* is conveyed by rituals or moral acts through which *ren* can be enacted for the good of others. It is assumed that if everyone on the same path of self-cultivation performs *li* with a mind of *ren* and treats others with respect and care, we can live in perfect harmony and happiness. However, the reality is always more complicated than the ideal. This research demonstrates that self-cultivation is not homogeneously distributed in all Chinese and subscription to it varies considerably across individuals. Even within a given family, we could probably identify individuals who are more preoccupied with what is beneficial to themselves and those who can more accommodate others’ interests, not to mention the people in a wider society. It is further complicated by the fact that the degree to which people accept or negate the cultural values and ethical ideals varies, possibly, under a varying degree of influence of modernisation, urbanisation, exposure to Western cultures, work and financial demands. The ways in which people understand, interpret and actualise those values and ideals are also different. The differences in interpretation and practice of cultural values can be found in the participants’ stories. For example, Jiang felt entitled to her daughter’s care and support on a regular basis as a condition of old age. However, the daughter appeared to regard an immigration application for her ageing parents living in New Zealand as her fulfilment of filial piety.

If the reality is that not everyone takes on the same path of self-cultivation, how can an older person possibly resolve the tension and disharmony arising from the perceived and/or experienced non-reciprocity over time and space in terms of imbalanced support, care and respect, particularly within family relationships? The findings suggest that one’s inner, interpersonal and intergenerational harmony is not a function of unlimited sacrifices of *xiao wo*, rather a balanced, flexible, dynamic way of positioning with open boundaries between *xiao wo* and *da wo*. This requires the person’s sensitivity to situations that involve familial and social others and that the person responds differentially to a variety of familial and social circumstances depending on the availability of personal resources and a sense of appropriateness. For instance, by considering their age, health conditions, personal interests and preferred lifestyles in old

age, Yu, Jiang and several older participants in this research chose to situate themselves in *xiao wo* position and resisted taking up a child-caring role to provide daily childcare for their grandchildren and/or to continue economic provision for their adult children. Nevertheless, *da wo* in the parent-child relationship would never disappear and would readily move to the fore again when the children were in need. The older participants were often willing to offer help that was within their abilities without significantly compromising their health and wellbeing. They continued to express their love and affection through doing things for the welfare of their offspring, such as cooking nutritious food for them, picking up grandchildren from school and providing some household support.

In narrating their stories, the older Chinese participants frequently negotiated and reconstructed the meaning of their parental roles and their responsibilities in old age. Several participants expressed the attainment of happiness in relation to the importance of unloading the “long-carried-parental-baggage”. They commented that it was beneficial to let go of those parental roles that they had played and of those obligations that they had to fulfil when their children were young. Refocusing on and taking good care of oneself were considered a proper way of living an old age. This finding highlights the relationship between the attainment of happiness and moral performance within *ren* and *yi*. As Shu and Peng (2008) argue, *ren* is rational and love within *ren* is not without principle. Everyone with *ren* is assumed to be able to rationally justify what is right – *yi* – and what is wrong as well as distinguish between good and evil. As such, to cultivate one’s moral self requires a person not simply to love others but to love others in a right way and refuse to tolerate things that are unjust (Tu, 1993). Actualising *ren* needs to be in the context of *yi*. In so doing, the person should be able to distinguish appropriateness from inappropriateness and recognise when non-righteous things or situations fall out of the boundary of proper social conduct (Cua, 2000).

The findings also reveal that the relationship between *xiao wo* and *da wo* is highly dynamic and intertwined. To negotiate and determine what was appropriate and inappropriate in old age, the older Chinese participants (re)defined the roles of adult children. They maintained that it was morally appropriate for the adult children to take responsibility for their own lives and families. In this way, situating oneself in a *xiao wo* position in terms of letting go parental obligations could serve to help the adult

children to develop morally and become better persons. It is consistent with the practice of *ren*, which is far from providing support and care for others. The practice is not only about a solitary cultivation of our own morality but also about a perfection of both self and others (Liu, 2006). Through developing their adult children's sense of responsibility, the older participants' *da wo* was also cultivated. Similarly, taking good care of themselves in old age was not simply an act of *xiao wo*. It also functioned to free their adult children from the potential burden caused by their parents' illness, as discussed in Chapter 6. In so doing, the participants' *da wo* was manifested. In sum, the findings indicate that the balanced moves between *da wo* and *xiao wo* positions functioned to promote the participants' health, sense of harmony and happiness.

A harmonious balance between self-devotion and Other-recognition

In Confucian culture, it is believed that being born with a seed of *ren* (benevolence), the self is capable of devotion to others, committing the most ethical of human acts and displaying empathy. The act of taking responsibility for another within particular social roles and relationships is the essence of self-devotion (the virtue of *zhong*). This research supports that self-devotion is an important ingredient not only in the "making" of an all-around moral being but also in the expression of the self and moral self in particular. Through the acts and narrations of their self-devotions, the older Chinese participants could experience a positive sense of their selves, resulting in feelings of self-worth, self-fulfilment and happiness. However, the research also reveals that without the inclusion of others' voices of recognition and affirmation which emerged from the everyday dialogical interchanges, the participants' positive sense of moral self could be undermined.

The narrative interviews were imbued with participants' stories of self-devotion – their desires to live out moral values and enact morality in relation to their empathetic sentiments towards others. As embodied action-takers and moral performers, the older Chinese participants demonstrated their initiative and acted in response to the needs, demands and considerations of others within specific relationships according to some socio-cultural norms and visions of human goodness in life. These might be trivial things, such as preserving the freshness of caught fishes in order to promote family's health, or crucial things that led to major changes in their lives, such as becoming stay-at-home mothers to take care of children and giving up their career development. These

stories nevertheless evoked powerful moral and emotional evaluations of personal actions, giving meaning to life and creating a connection with something larger than the individual participant.

However, the findings also reveal that being loyal to their social roles towards others and fulfilling moral duties and obligations associated with those roles were not sufficient to secure participants' positive sense of self that led to inner harmony and happiness, unless it was accompanied by recognition and affirmation of others, particularly of those to whom the participants were devoted. As discussed in Chapter 3, the moral aspect of the Chinese personhood is of particular importance. Nevertheless, the self is also fundamentally embodied, social, relational and dialogical in nature. The moral being is necessarily situated in a web of interconnected social relationships and roles, in which the moral performance is made possible. In his work on the moral self, Tappan (1999) argues that the moral self is situated dialogically, rather than a function solely of internal cognitive processes or solely of communicative interactions and interpersonal relationships. The development of the moral self occurs in a relational and social context, mediated by a multitude of voices that an individual encounters in everyday life. Tappan (1999) maintains that moral functioning – responsibility and accountability for one's action to others – develops in the processes of appropriation and assimilation as the words, language and forms of moral discourse of others become one's own, as social speech becomes inner speech. However, the individual has agentic capacity to selectively adopt, resist, affirm, negate, modify, develop and apply the available ideological points of view, moral approaches and values to various contexts. As such, moral selfhood-identity (one's sense of oneself as a moral person) essentially emerges from the ongoing dialogical interchanges between oneself and others in social relationships and between different *I*-positions within the individual self.

The current findings indicate that the dialogical process that gives rise to one's moral sense of the self goes beyond the appropriation and assimilation processes of others' voices to include the recognition of others. Recalling James' (1999/1918) conception of the social *Me* and Mead's (1934) conception of the *Me*, we, as gregarious social beings, always take perspectives and attitudes of others in defining ourselves. We have innate desire not only to be noticed favourably by others but also to receive positive affirmations regarding our actions towards them, particularly for those with whom we

are intimately related. These affirmations convince us that we are a morally good person who is capable of acting according to role expectations, moral standards and social norms in relation to specific social roles through which we can feel good about our self. Without others' recognition of our moral performances, our self-devotions and moral commitments lose meaning and our positive moral self-identities are hardly to be complete. It is apparent in the participants' narrated stories that it was the balance between the voices of "I as devoted" and "I as affirmed" that confirmed their efforts into cultivating and becoming a virtuous person, leading to a sense of harmony and happiness. In addition, the findings suggest that recognition of others to one's self-devotion and moral commitment can go beyond a verbal expression of gratitude to consist of displaying reciprocal treatments with respect and care. Indeed, this latter form of recognition appeared to be of particular importance in the definition of older participants' selves. As shown in Yu's story, the reciprocal treatments Yu received from her husband and sons in old age in response to her contributions to the family gave her a tremendous sense of fulfilment, accomplishment and happiness. The external positions of a considerate husband and filial sons constituted the most positive parts of the extended domain of the self of Yu. As such, the coexistence of and the balanced interplay between the devoted and the affirmed self-positions played a crucial role in promoting the older Chinese migrants' happiness and wellbeing.

Happiness as a harmonious balance among mind, body and environment

The research results indicate that natural and social environments are interrelated to individual mind and body. The results also suggest that a favourable natural environment and an enabling social environment were beneficial to the older Chinese participants' health and promoted their sense of happiness.

One of the foundations of this thesis lies in the Chinese philosophical perspective of *yin/yang*. The polarity of *yin* and *yang* is fundamental to Daoism which largely shapes the Chinese conception of health and the practice of traditional Chinese medicine (Ai, 2006; Guo & Powell, 2002). Daoism considers *yin* and *yang* are inseparable wherever life is to be found. As such, it defines health as the maintenance of *yin/yang* dynamic balance. The balance generates a continuous, smooth flow of the vital energy, *qi*, which is considered as the biological energy for all physiological activities. For Daoists, the best possible way to achieve this balance and cultivate *qi* is to live a life that is close to,

harmonises with and follows Nature. To follow Nature, one has to respect, accept and live in accordance with Nature's rhythms and natural laws of life. Being embedded in the serene environment gives rise to the calm and peaceful mind. When the mind is peaceful, the *qi* is flowing smoothly and freely within the body, which, in turn, promotes health and longevity (Guo & Powell, 2002).

Although the importance of living in a state of harmony between the mind and the body is historically implanted in Chinese people, the concept commonly moves into the background, being perturbed and ignored, when an individual becomes overwhelmed by everyday life stresses and demands in a hustle and bustle city. Living in a country which chiefly emphasises economic development at the expense of environmental protection further disconnects people from Nature. The findings illustrate that migration to New Zealand had provided the older Chinese participants opportunities to re-engage with the natural world, through which they regained a sense of embodied self-awareness and their embodied selves were cultivated. The favourable ecological living environment not only nurtured the participants' mind but also enabled their working bodies to function in a more harmonious manner. They frequently attributed their perceived and/or experienced improved health in New Zealand to its fresh air, clean water, non-contaminated food and tranquillity.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the Chinese self is embodied action-oriented. Moral practice is intimately related to the physical body through which it is expressed and performed. It is the physically capable body that allows a person to experience and express his or her positive sense of self and moral self in particular. In this regard, it is not surprising that the older participants placed great importance on their physical health and derived satisfaction from ageing in the place that could potentially promote and maintain their health and wellbeing.

Besides that, the findings demonstrate that the supportive, caring and friendly social environment in New Zealand could play a role in fostering a peaceful mind of the participants, in which they would probably get help from someone when needed. This supportive social environment also functioned to enhance older Chinese migrants' health and wellbeing directly. The experience of Shan is a good example. Shan received immediate treatment for her stroke, hence avoiding living with any stroke

aftermath, because of the sincere help from an unknown community member. In this sense, the present findings support that the wellbeing is a function of harmony between the human mind and the body as well as the individual and his or her spiritual, natural and social environment.

Happiness as the balanced interplay between enabling and constraining structures and individual agency

Migration inevitably involves experience of social and structural differences among migrants, including socioeconomic status, social relationships and networks, religious beliefs, societal norms, family and cultural values. All these could easily tip the balance away from ageing well and represent challenges to migrants' self-identities. However, the findings show that the older Chinese migrants were not simply passive, helpless victims of changing circumstances owing to migration and ageing over which they had no control. They were able to develop and demonstrate their agentic capacities to negotiate strategies for coping with their everyday lives. While they could encounter difficulties and failures due to some structural changes, they could also experience accomplishments under the influences of other enabling social structures, which facilitated their exercise of individual agency. As such, the interplay between structures and individual agency is complex.

Being informed by critical realism, this work moves beyond the theoretical approaches based only on the actions of individual agents and those which emphasise solely structural influences. It conceptualises structure and agency as both interdependent and co-constitutive and places importance on the interplay of structure and agency. This conceptualisation is in line with Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration which emphasises the duality of structure and agency. As such, structures are neither independent of actors nor determining of their behaviour. They are sets of rules, resources and competencies upon which social actors draw when they act. It is the repetition of the acts of individual agents stretched across time and space that reproduces the structure. It is through reflexive monitoring and rationalisation of actions the agents transform the structure. Nevertheless, agents are bounded in structure and so actions are constrained by not only agents' inherent capabilities and their knowledge of available actions but also external limitations imposed by society. For example, healthcare practices and the provision of healthcare services in New Zealand

are predominantly based on Western medical models, which are funded by the state. Treatment modalities other than Western medicine are placed in relatively marginal positions and most of them are not being granted any funding. Such a structure for healthcare provision limited the older Chinese participants' choices of treatments for their health problems in New Zealand, particularly for those who were of low socioeconomic status. When resources became available, some participants exercised their choices to seek their preferred traditional Chinese treatments in their home country.

Besides conceiving structures as constraining, Giddens (1984) contends that they can also be enabling. Structural enablements function to increase the range of options from which individual agents can choose to respond to their life circumstances and social demands, making choices conducive to health and wellbeing. The findings reveal that the Chinese community as a social structure played a crucial role in older Chinese migrants' lives. The participants in this research generally showed preferences of living in or in close proximity to the Chinese community. They also actively engaged in the community and maintained close contact with other Chinese community members through attending various social and cultural activities. The Chinese community had been developed and pre-existed before the participants' arrival. The repeated activities containing cultural elements of both New Zealand-born and migrant Chinese reproduce the Chinese community. The findings have supported that this reproduction is of particular significance to promote older Chinese migrants' good old age because the maintenance of a certain degree of predictability in conventional behaviour and social interaction sustains their sense of ontological security (Giddens, 1991). The current research also reveals that the caring and helping acts among the existing Chinese community members further transformed the community into a vital structural enablement which was essential for enhancing older participants' ability to move on and act differently according to situational demands, particularly during the initial stage of arriving in New Zealand. The ones being helped were also likely to help others, thereby spreading the cycle of support throughout the community.

As discussed, migration brings about structural changes that probably affect migrants' lives. However, the findings show that the degree of these structural changes and their impact on participants' lives varied according to their personal backgrounds, time and circumstances. Au and Yu, for example, who had advantaged economic backgrounds

would less likely experience differences in economic status after migration than Shan and Jiang, who had low income jobs prior to retirement. The financial hardships induced on Shan and Jiang were mainly due to their small savings, high New Zealand currency value and high cost of living in New Zealand. The economic stress was particularly manifested when the adult children did not fulfil their responsibilities to provide the sponsored parents with accommodation and financial support during the designated period of sponsorship and when the parents were not eligible for any financial support and benefits under migration and social policies.

In fact, structural changes due to migration are not necessarily negative. The findings indicate that structural changes could also provide opportunities for the development and transformation of the self. Some older Chinese migrants pointed out that migration allowed them to enjoy a more solitary life and develop the spiritual aspect of their self as a result of a natural decrease in social networks and relationships. Exposure to different social and cultural norms could blur the boundaries between right and wrong, allowing new self-positions to be created and facilitating the flexibility of self-movements. This opened up space for older migrants to negotiate alternative ways of living that might be more suitable for them. Accepting the idea and practice of filial piety at a distance and acknowledging the importance of self-care in old age, rather than regarding self-care as a selfish act, were examples.

A significant issue from the findings is that there is complex interplay between various structures and human agency working back and forth in a dynamic relationship. Tension in the self occurred when structural constraints restricted the capabilities of individual older migrants to act independently and intervene in the world according to their needs, desires and expectations. However limited the options available to them, structural constraints never forced the older Chinese migrants as human agents to behave passively in particular ways. There often coexisted the structural enablements which made it more possible for the older migrants to exercise their individual agency. These structural enablements could be families, neighbourhoods, English schools, ethnic communities and organisations, religious groups and policies and services that promoted positive living, health and wellbeing. They could serve to not only facilitate the development of new, more desirable *I*-positions according to particular situations but also facilitate the self to move flexibly among different *I*-positions in order to

competently respond to changing conditions and situational demands. Taking Jiang's case as an example, change in filial beliefs of her daughter and her ineligibility to receive social benefits during the sponsorship period functioned as structural constraints for Jiang to live positively and independently in New Zealand. Nevertheless, her religious beliefs, informal help from the Chinese community and the eligibility for financial support as a student were structural enablements available to Jiang. These structural enablements allowed the more beneficial self-positions – “*I as an English learner*” and “*I as independent*” – to create and develop. This facilitated Jiang to actively involve in the constraints, exercise her agency to make appropriate choices in meeting life demands, dissolving tension, restoring some sense of inner and intergenerational harmony and promoting wellbeing. In addition, the findings illustrate that one or more younger generations' wellbeing and welfare often played a vital role in older participants' subjective wellbeing and quality of life. Therefore, policies and services which aim to address migrants' issues such as underemployment, unemployment and gambling problems can be potential enablements to enhance older Chinese migrants' health and wellbeing in two ways. They serve to reduce older parents' worries about their offspring and to strengthen the capabilities of family to care for older parents by relieving some potential life stress in younger generations.

Limitations and future directions

Several limitations of this study need to be acknowledged. The first limitation is that all of the older Chinese people who took part in this study were those who migrated to New Zealand after their retirement. This warrants further research across a range of Chinese migrants who migrated to New Zealand at different stages of life and are ageing in New Zealand to reach a deeper understanding of the concepts of self-harmony and self-movement in relation to subjective wellbeing and ageing well. Secondly, although the participants were not free from health problems, they were, in general, functionally capable and mobile. They could, to a great degree, maintain independent living in the community and self-care. As such, the results may not adequately reflect the experience of ageing and the process of attaining happiness of those who are homebound and under residential care. Thirdly, how these findings relate to older Chinese migrants living in other host countries with different socio-structural, cultural and ecological contexts and to other older ethnic minority populations within New Zealand also remain unknown. It would, thus, be beneficial for similar studies to be

conducted with older Chinese migrants in different host countries. Future research could also extend this study to include ethnically heterogeneous groups in order to derive a diverse set of understandings. Moreover, research focused on how to apply these study results to inform the formulating and provision of services that enhance health and wellbeing of older people would be worthwhile. Finally, it is recognised that there is the limitation of narrative-dialogic inquiry related to the researcher's construction or interpretation of the participants' narratives. Although a reflexive stance towards the research process has been taken, the interpretation was potentially influenced by my subjectivity. Ultimately, I am the one who decided what held narrative significance in the analysis as well as what meanings were drawn from the accounts. In this regard, there is a possibility that an important issue given by the narrator was overlooked. Nevertheless, I have endeavoured to maintain a fine balance between providing my academic voice within a framework of theoretical and conceptual abstraction and giving lifeworld voice of the participants throughout the thesis.

While the study reported here was small and reflects a nuanced set of understandings of ageing well through exploring older Chinese migrants' experience of happiness and the relationship between the self and subjective wellbeing, the empirical findings point to some important elements that constitute a good old age but that have not been recognised in the dominant and prevalent conceptual frameworks of successful ageing and the like. The elements identified include harmony within the self in terms of balancing different *I*-positions, harmony of intergenerational, familial and social relationships, balanced interdependence across time and space, mind-body-environment harmony and a balance between socio-structural constraints and enablements for facilitating individual agency to meet the changes and challenges in old age. In this sense, harmony, instead of success, appears to constitute the core of wellbeing in old age. The study results resonate with the recent theory critique provided by Liang and Luo (2012), in which they call for a discourse shift from successful ageing to harmonious ageing in order to capture cultural diversities in old age, the multifaceted nature and the dialectic and holistic process of ageing. What contributions this newly proposed conceptual model of harmonious ageing, which is inspired by Chinese philosophy of *yin/yang*, would make and to what extent this model is applicable to older population in general, remain to be seen. However, from the insights provided by this thesis, it is believed that harmonious ageing can represent a new research direction in

social gerontology and other relevant disciplines. As a more inclusive and comprehensive framework, it has the potential to provide an alternative understanding and enrich our knowledge base of ageing in the global ageing context of increasing mixing and moving cultures.

To conclude, this thesis has made two major contributions. In terms of the literature on Chinese migration to New Zealand, the thesis has broadened the knowledge and increased the level of understanding of older Chinese migrants' experiences of ageing in this country. It has been shown that there were many differences in the life situation and preference of living a later life of older Chinese migrants in New Zealand. The difficulties and challenges that they faced could not only be attributed to the migration experience nor to the distinctive cultural traditions that they embraced. There always coexisted personal, familial, cultural, community and social resources to safeguard the wellbeing of older migrants. The thesis has identified key factors that enhanced or undermined participants' ability to live a happy and satisfactory life in New Zealand. It has also provided a better understanding of how these factors may interact with each other to affect older Chinese migrants to age well.

The second contribution is related to the development of the self and subjective wellbeing literature. With its focus on three detailed case studies, this thesis has provided new insights into the relationship between the self and subjective wellbeing, in which the concept of harmonisation of the self has emerged. It has demonstrated that the self is always in a process of becoming and "making" rather than a static state of being. The self is always on the move in terms of different *I*-positions while dealing with continued changing personal and social circumstances and relationships. The attainment of happiness is, thus, a dynamic, complex and ongoing process of dialogical negotiation, involving the continuous interplay of a multitude of *I*-positions. It involves the complexities of the individual's efforts to achieve a harmonious sense of the self. Specifically, this thesis has revealed three constituents that are central to happiness. First, happiness is dependent upon the ability to create and maintain a harmonious state among a multitude of *I*-positions. Three prominent pairs of *I*-positions have been identified in the context of ageing and migration, which could contribute to a sense of happiness if they acted together in harmony. Secondly, happiness is dependent upon the individual reaching a balance among mind, body and surrounding environments.

Thirdly, happiness is dependent upon the balanced dynamic interplay between individual agency and the social structures of changing contexts and situations. Moreover, this theoretical development has also made a contribution to social gerontology literature. It has extended the knowledge beyond the prevalent models of ageing well, which have been developed based on Western values and concerns, and opened up an alternative understanding of a good old age.

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Chinese migrants' experience of ageing in New Zealand

Information Sheet

My name is Siu-Chun Tse and I am a PhD student in health psychology at Massey University, Albany Campus, Auckland. I am undertaking this research project, as part of my degree, under the supervision of Dr. Chris Stephens and Prof. Kerry Chamberlain in the School of Psychology at Massey University. In this project, I am interested in exploring the life experiences of older Chinese migrants living in New Zealand. The aim of this project is to gain a better understanding of the experience of ageing from older Chinese migrants' own perspectives, including their needs, concerns, challenges, expectations as well as strengths of ageing in New Zealand. The information will be of potential use to relevant government departments in helping to develop elderly-related policy and to government agencies, migration service providers, Chinese communities and organisations in order to provide older Chinese migrants with culturally appropriate services. This, in turn, would promote their quality of life, health and well-being.

You are invited to take part in this research project, telling your life story about migration and ageing in New Zealand and expressing your thoughts, feelings and voices. You are eligible to participate if you are a Chinese migrant coming from Mainland China, Hong Kong or Taiwan, are aged 60 or above, and migrated to New Zealand between 1987 and 2002.

If you are interested in participating in this project, I would like to interview you at least twice about your life experiences. The first interview mainly involves your life and experience of migration to New Zealand. The second interview mainly involves your life and experience of ageing in New Zealand. Depending on the length of individual life story told, an additional interview(s) may possibly be needed. Each interview will last for about an hour to an hour and a half. You can choose a place for interviewing that is convenient to you. I can interview you at your home or you can come to my work place at Massey University, Albany campus.

The interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed. However, you can be reassured that your name will be kept confidential and you will not be identified in the transcripts or any reports from the research. Pseudonyms will be used in any written information. The signed consent forms, tapes and transcripts will be locked away and only be accessible to my supervisors and me. The tapes will be destroyed after the data analysis is completed. The consent forms and transcripts will be stored securely for five years and then disposed of by Massey University.

We hope that everyone involved in this study will benefit from having a chance to express their ideas and thoughts about their life and experiences of living and ageing in New Zealand. We believe that your contributions to the project would benefit other older Chinese people and the Chinese community as a whole.

Please note that your participation is completely voluntary and you are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to

sign an Informed Consent Form before participating in this study. As a participant, you have the right to:

- decline to discuss any particular topics;
- ask any questions about the project at any time during your participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used;
- ask for the tape recorder to be turned off at any time if there are contents that you do not want to be recorded during the interviews;
- withdraw from the study at any time up to one week after the last interview;
- receive a summary of the project findings when it is concluded if you request.

You will be reimbursed with \$50 in cash at the end of the last interview as compensation for the time you contribute to this research.

If you are interested in taking part in this research, please complete the Consent to be Contacted Form and send it back to me in a pre-paid, pre-addressed envelope. When I receive it, I will contact you by phone to discuss all the aspects of this project. If you wish to know more about this research, please feel free to contact me.

Siu-Chun Tse
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Auckland

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If you would like further information about any aspects of this research, you can also contact my supervisors.

Dr. Chris Stephens
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This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee Northern, Application No: 08/009. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr. Denise Wilson, Chairperson, Massey University Human Ethics Committee Northern, telephone: (09) 4140800 ext. 9070, email: humanethicsalb@massey.ac.nz.

新西蘭華人長者的生活與經歷 研究課題簡介

您好！我是謝小珍，現正在梅西大學（Massey University）修讀健康心理學博士學位，從事有關本地華人長者的研究。這項研究是在梅西大學心理學高級講師 Chris Stephens 博士及心理學教授 Kerry Chamberlain 教授指導下進行。研究內容是有關華人長者從移民到步向老年的生活和經歷，目的是希望從華人長者的角度去瞭解他們的生活情況，需要，關注事宜，面對的生活挑戰，期望和能力。這項研究將會加深我們對華人長者在新西蘭老年生活的理解，而研究結果將有助政府有關部門發展長者政策，並為提供長者服務的機構作為參考，讓華人長者在新西蘭過著健康快樂的優質生活。

我們邀請您參與這項課題研究，講述有關您的移民經歷和在新西蘭生活的情況，表達您的想法，感受和意見。我們需要徵集華人長者來參與這項研究，如果您年齡為 60 歲或以上，並於 1987 年至 2002 年期間從中國大陸，香港或臺灣移民到新西蘭，就符合參與條件。

如果你有興趣參與這項研究，我將會與您進行兩次訪談。第一次訪談內容主要圍繞您的移民經歷，而第二次訪談則有關您步向老年的生活體驗。每次訪談大約一個半小時，但如果參與者需要更多時間講述他/她的個人生活經歷，可能會安排第三次訪談。您可以選擇適合您的訪談地點，我可以到您府上與您進行訪談，您也可以到我在梅西大學的工作間會面。

訪談的內容將會以錄音機記錄下來，以便轉成筆錄和分析。我們確保您的名字在所有研究記錄和報告中得到絕對保密，所有抄本，研究報告，學術文章和論文均使用假名。所有“同意參與表格”，錄音帶和抄本會被上鎖並保密存放。在研究分析完成之後，錄音帶將被銷毀。同時，根據梅西大學的規定，已簽署的“同意參與表格”和抄本在大學存放五年後，便會被銷毀。

我們希望能透過提供參與者機會講述他/她的個人生活經歷，表達他們的想法，感受和意見。我們亦深信您對這項研究所做出的貢獻能為其他華人長者及華人社區帶來裨益。

我們希望您能參與這項研究，但參與純屬自願性質。如果您願意參與這項研究，請您在“同意參與表格”上簽名。作為這項研究的參與者，您擁有以下權利：

- 拒絕回答任何您不願意討論的題目；
- 在參與期間詢問任何有關這項研究的問題；
- 在您提供的所有資料中，您的名字得到絕對保密；
- 在訪談過程中，如部分訪談內容您不想被錄音，您可要求關掉答錄機；
- 在參與訪談期間至最後一次訪談後的一星期內可要求退出這項研究；
- 在研究結束後，如果您願意，可得到一份研究結果的概要。

在所有訪談完成後，您將會獲得 50 元紐幣作為感謝您對這項研究的參與。

如果您有興趣參與這項研究，請您填妥同意被聯絡表格，然後放進已備好的回郵信封，把表格寄回給我。當我收到表格後，便會致電與您聯絡。如您想更多瞭解我的研究課題，請直接與我聯絡。

Siu-Chun Tse 謝小珍

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如你對這研究課題有任何查詢，也可以與我的導師聯絡。

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這項研究已通過梅西大學道德倫理委員會的審批。申請編號為 08/009。如果你對這項研究有任何疑問，請與梅西大學道德倫理委員會主席 Denise Wilson 博士聯絡，電話：(09) 414 0800 內線 9070, 電郵：humanethicsalb@massey.ac.nz。

新西兰华人长者的生活与经历 研究课题简介

您好！我是谢小珍，现正在梅西大学（Massey University）修读健康心理学博士学位，从事有关本地华人长者的研究。这项研究是在梅西大学心理学高级讲师 Chris Stephens 博士及心理学教授 Kerry Chamberlain 教授指导下进行。研究内容是有关华人长者从移民到步向老年的生活和经历，目的是希望从华人长者的角度去了解他们的生活情况，需要，关注事宜，面对的生活挑战，期望和能力。这项研究将会加深我们对华人长者在新西兰老年生活的理解，而研究结果将有助政府有关部门发展长者政策，并为提供长者服务的机构作为参考，让华人长者在新西兰过着健康快乐的优质生活。

我们邀请您参与这项课题研究，讲述有关您的移民经历和在新西兰生活的情况，表达您的想法，感受和意见。我们需要征集华人长者来参与这项研究，如果您年龄为 60 岁或以上，并于 1987 年至 2002 年期间从中国大陆，香港或台湾移民到新西兰，就符合参与条件。

如果你有兴趣参与这项研究，我将会与您进行两次访谈。第一次访谈内容主要围绕您的移民经历，而第二次访谈则有关您步向老年的生活体验。每次访谈大约一个半小时，但如果参与者需要更多时间讲述他/她的个人生活经历，可能会安排第三次访谈。您可以选择适合您的访谈地点，我可以到您府上与您进行访谈，您也可以到我在梅西大学的工作间会面。

访谈的内容将会以录音机记录下来，以便转成笔录和分析。我们确保您的名字在所有研究记录和报告中得到绝对保密，所有抄本，研究报告，学术文章和论文均使用假名。所有“同意参与表格”，录音带和抄本会被上锁并保密存放。在研究分析完成之后，录音带将被销毁。同时，根据梅西大学的规定，已签署的“同意参与表格”和抄本在大学存放五年后，便会被销毁。

我们希望能透过提供参与者机会讲述他/她的个人生活经历，表达他们的想法，感受和意见。我们亦深信您对这项研究所做出的贡献能为其它华人长者及华人社区带来裨益。

我们希望您能参与这项研究，但参与纯属自愿性质。如果您愿意参与这项研究，请您在“同意参与表格”上签名。作为这项研究的参与者，您拥有以下权利：

- 拒绝回答任何您不愿意讨论的题目；
- 在参与期间询问任何有关这项研究的问题；
- 在您提供的所有资料中，您的名字得到绝对保密；
- 在访谈过程中，如部分访谈内容您不想被录音，您可要求关掉录音机；
- 在参与访谈期间至最后一次访谈后的一星期内可要求退出这项研究；
- 在研究结束后，如果您愿意，可得到一份研究结果的概要。

在所有访谈完成后，您将会获得 50 元纽币作为感谢您对这项研究的参与。

如果您有兴趣参与这项研究，请您填妥同意被联络表格，然后放进已备好的回邮信封，把表格寄回给我。当我收到表格后，便会致电与您联络。如您想了解更多了解我的研究课题，请直接与我联络。

Siu-Chun Tse 谢小珍

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电话: (09) 414 0800 内线 41219 (当您拨上 414 0800 后，梅西大学的电话系统总机便会以英语要求你输入内线号码，在那时，请你输入 41219，便可与我联络)

021-0398344

电邮: siu.tse.1@uni.massey.ac.nz

如你对这研究课题有任何查询，也可以与我的导师联络。

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这项研究已通过梅西大学道德伦理委员会的审批。申请编号为 08/009。如果你对这项研究有任何疑问，请与梅西大学道德伦理委员会主席 Denise Wilson 博士联络，电话: (09) 414 0800 内线 9070, 电邮: humanethicsalb@massey.ac.nz。

Chinese migrants' experience of ageing in New Zealand

Consent to be Contacted Form

I have read the Information Sheet and now consent to be contacted by the researcher, Siu-Chun Tse.

I understand that it is not consent to participate in the project, but only consent to be contacted to discuss any issues related to the project. If I decide to participate after this discussion, an interview time and place will be agreed upon.

Signature: _____

Full name (in print): _____

Phone No.: _____

Time convenient to contact: _____

Date: _____

研究課題：新西蘭華人長者的生活與經歷

同意被聯絡表格

我已經閱讀“研究課題簡介”及同意課題之研究員謝小珍與我聯絡。

我明白我現同意研究員與我聯絡只在於討論有關研究課題之事宜，這並不表示我同意參與這項研究。如我決定參與這項研究，研究員將與我安排訪談時間及地點。

姓名：_____

簽名：_____

聯絡電話：_____

方便聯絡的時間：_____

日期：_____

研究课题：新西兰华人长者的生活与经历

同意被联络表格

我已经阅读“研究课题简介”及同意课题之研究员谢小珍与我联络。

我明白我现同意研究员与我联络只在于讨论有关研究课题之事宜，这并不表示我同意参与这项研究。如我决定参与这项研究，研究员将与我安排访谈时间及地点。

姓名： _____

签名： _____

联络电话： _____

方便联络的时间： _____

日期： _____

Chinese migrants' experience of ageing in New Zealand

Translator Confidentiality Agreement

I undertake to translate the contents of what participants say in Mandarin into Cantonese for the researcher, Siu-Chun Tse. I respect the privacy of the people in the research interviews by not talking about the interview contents with anyone else and by keeping confidential all information concerning the project.

I will not retain or copy any information involving the project.

Signature: _____

Full name (in print): _____

Date: _____

Chinese migrants' experience of ageing in New Zealand

Participant Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the research have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to provide information to the researcher, Siu-Chun Tse, which will be used in any scholarly outputs, on the understanding that my name will not be disclosed. I agree to the interviews being audiotaped and to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: _____

Full name (in print): _____

Date: _____

If you would like a summary of the research findings, I will send you a copy after it has been completed. Please provide your contact details below:

研究課題：新西蘭華人長者的生活與經歷
同意參與表格

我已經閱讀“研究課題簡介”及在這項研究的內容細節上得到詳細解釋。我所有的疑問也得到解答及明白我在參與研究期間可以提出其他問題。

我同意向研究員謝小珍提供資料，也明白在我的名字被保密的原則下，所提供的資料會被用於有關研究所發表的學術文獻中。我同意訪談的內容被錄音，也同意在“研究課題簡介”列出的條件下參與這項研究。

姓名：_____

簽名：_____

日期：_____

如果您希望得到一份研究結果的概要，請寫下您的郵寄位址，我會在研究完成後寄給您。

郵寄地址：

研究课题：新西兰华人长者的生活与经历 同意参与表格

我已经阅读“研究课题简介”及在这项研究的内容细节上得到详细解释。我所有的疑问也得到解答及明白我在参与研究期间可以提出其它问题。

我同意向研究员谢小珍提供资料，也明白在我的名字被保密的原则下，所提供的资料会被用于有关研究所发表的学术文献中。我同意访谈的内容被录音，也同意在“研究课题简介”列出的条件下参与这项研究。

姓名: _____

签名: _____

日期: _____

如果您希望得到一份研究结果的概要，请写下您的邮寄地址，我会在研究完成后寄给您。

邮寄地址：

Interview prompts

Interview 1: Experiences of migration and settlement

General:

- Can you tell me about your experiences of migration and settlement in New Zealand? Begin where you like and include whatever you want.

Possible prompts for issues during this interview:

- When did you migrate to New Zealand?
- Did you come with the other family members?
- What do you remember most about your first year of arrival in New Zealand?
- What was that experience like?
- What feelings come up when you recall that most significant event/experience?
- Were there any surprises or things happened that you didn't anticipate before migration?
- What do you think of those unexpected events?
- What were the most important things to you in the first few years of settling in New Zealand?
- What were some of your struggles you had experienced at that time?
- What has been the greatest challenge of your migration life so far?
- What do you think of that experience?
- When do you think you became adapted to the life of living in New Zealand?
- How would you describe your life after settling and living in New Zealand?
- How would you describe your family after migration and living in New Zealand?
- What are your best memories of living in New Zealand?
- What are your worst memories of living in New Zealand?
- What does migration mean to you in your life?
- Is there anything else about your experiences of migration and settlement in New Zealand you would like to add?

Interview 2: Experiences of ageing in New Zealand

General:

- Can you tell me about your life as an older Chinese migrant living in New Zealand?

Possible prompts for issues during this interview:

- What is it like to grow old in New Zealand?
- What makes you feel positive about ageing in New Zealand?
- What are some of the best things you have experienced in old age?
- What is that experience like?
- What makes it difficult for you ageing in New Zealand?
- What are some of the worst things you have experienced in old age?

- What do you think of that experience?
- How do you describe yourself at the age you are now?
- In what ways you are changing now?
- What is the most important thing you think/feel in your old age?
- What is your biggest/worry now?
- How do you use your time now?
- Are you involved in any organisations or activities?
- Do you have any kind of daily or regular practice? How important has it been for you?
- What is your most enjoyable time in old age?
- What is your least enjoyable time in old age?
- Have all your children left home?
- What was your first experience of your child leaving home like (if any)?
- What is most important to you about your family life?
- What accomplishments in life are you most proud of so far?
- What do you see for yourself in the future, in 5, 15, 25 years?
- When you think about the future, what changes would you like to see?
- What are your priorities and needs? Which one is the most important to you?
- How would you like to see support for Chinese migrants ageing in NZ?
- Is there anything else about your experience of ageing in New Zealand you would like to add?

Chinese migrants' experience of ageing in New Zealand

Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

I undertake to transcribe audiotapes for the researcher, Siu-Chun Tse and respect the privacy of the people on the tapes by keeping the tapes secure and by not talking about the contents of the tapes with anyone else.

I will not retain or copy any information involving the project.

Signature: _____

Full name (in print): _____

Date: _____