

[Bible verses as chosen by Daniel Prajogo and quoted from The Jerusalem Bible Standard Edition]

PART TWO

THE GLOBAL GENERATION OF THE LIEM ISKANDARS

Happy all those who fear Yahweh and follow his paths. You will eat what your hands have worked for; happiness and prosperity will be yours. Your wife: a fruitful vine on the inner walls of your house. Your sons: round your table like shoots round an olive tree. Such are the blessings that fall on the man who fears Yahweh. May Yahweh bless you from Zion all the days of your life! May you see Jerusalem prosperous and live to see your children's children! Peace to Israel! (Psalm 128:1-6)

And there are no more distinction between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)
And in that image there is no room for distinction between between Greek and Jew, between the circumcised or the uncircumcised; or between the Barbarian and Scythian, slave and free man. There is only Christ: he is everything and he is in everything. (Colossians 3:11)

CHAPTER ELEVEN

BOBBY HITS MELBOURNE

His recollections:

I was seven years old. I remember getting on a plane with my parents and younger brother Danny. When we disembarked, we were in Singapore, where we were picked up by a wealthy gentleman in a Jaguar. We were there for a day or two. Dad bought me a guitar. Everything else was a blur.

My memory jumped. It seemed that all of a sudden, we were in Melbourne, Australia.

We met some people, and they gave us a home to live in. Now I understand that they were part of the Christian community Dad associated with, Dad being a pastor.

The home was very different from those I had been used to. Looking back now I can describe it to be like a community hostel arrangement though we were given a house to ourselves. However instead of having our own meals, we ate with the people in another house where there was a common dining room.

My parents then sent me to school. It was more like being thrown in school. It must have been autumn because I recall the ground was continuously covered with leaves.

People treated me differently. To begin with, everybody at school had blond hair and blue eyes. I was the only one who didn't have blond hair and blue eyes. They spoke a language I didn't understand. However when the period of confusion and apprehension passed, I don't remember feeling threatened. Somehow I felt special. I felt unique. I was probably the only Asian kid in the entire school.

That was in 1979, and I was in Canterbury Primary School in Maling Road.

My teacher's name was Mrs Powers. I eventually learned to communicate in their language, and made friends with a boy called Alistair who introduced me to football. I was fascinated by this oval-shaped ball, because the football I knew, soccer, had a round ball. Everybody in my class barracked for Hawthorn, so I started to barrack for Hawthorn myself.

The faces I remember well are probably those who were good or bad to me. The rest were just neutral. Another blur. All the kids in my class were either good or neutral.

However I don't readily recall particularly bad incidents, except for one. It involved a bigger boy. I was in the yard and he told me to move, because he was doing something which needed me to shift. I didn't understand what he was saying, so I stayed put. He was annoyed, he pushed me and I fell over. I didn't know why he treated me like that. I cried. Some of the kids from my class came over, and spoke to him. They probably told him I didn't speak English, because the boy then came to apologise. I remember that very well. So he was quite a nice boy after all.

I went to several other primary schools after that, because my family moved around quite a fair bit.

After Canterbury, we moved to Brunswick or Flemington, I can't remember exactly which suburb. However, I remember going to Brunswick West Primary School. That was very different from Canterbury Primary School. Unlike in Canterbury where everybody had blond hair and blue eyes, here I found myself among kids with dark hair, blond hair, darkish skin, fair skin, blue eyes, green eyes

and brown eyes. Their names were also different from those of the kids at Canterbury. There were Vito, Abdul, Abbas and many more. I found out that they were from Lebanon, Turkey, Croatia, and Greece. I made friends with a guy called Vito.

It was a brief friendship because I was only there for a few weeks.

After that I went to Ashwood Primary School. And here I stayed for a year or two. We lived in Cleveland Road in Ashwood. That was also arranged through the church, I believe. Like in Canterbury, the community was dominantly fair skin, blond hair and blue eyes.

I remember we were more into music here. There was an 80's band called KISS. They painted their faces and sang rock songs. Everybody loved this group. I found it cool too. One of the boys, Anthony – he had curly hair – was a big fan of KISS. We all became fans too.

Every morning we had an assembly for flag-raising. They played the drum while they raised the flag. I was fascinated by the way they did it, so I learned how to do it myself.

After that we moved again, to Richmond. I went to Richmond Primary School in grade five. Here I was among ethnic community again – many Greeks, Yugoslavs and New Zealanders. We rented a house there in the area. After finishing grade six, I went to Richmond High School for one semester. I had a tall friend from New Zealand who loved football, so I really got into sports and was good at cricket as well as football.

Changing schools didn't faze me that much. I was a relatively big kid, so nobody bullied me. In fact, I suspect some of the bullies were a bit scared of me. But I made friends easily.

My brother Danny only came onto the scene when we went to Waverley High School. Before that we practically went to different schools, because in school year he was four years behind me.

BOBBY'S ADOLESCENCE AND YOUNG ADULthood

When Danny and I were in Waverley High School, my dad led Indonesian Praise Centre. The church was a brown building, shared with a Uniting Church congregation. We had the Indonesian service in the hall, they had their service in the chapel.

My mum played the accordion. I carried the accordion for her every Sunday morning. We gradually built up quite an orchestra as more people came. I played a base guitar.

There were many people older than I was, most of them from Indonesia. I understand they were studying in Melbourne. We were all friends. Sometimes we played cricket in the oval across the road. Being Indonesians they didn't know how to, so I, all fifteen years, was the best one and had to teach them. That was fun.

My parents were much more occupied in Australia than when we were in Indonesia. They hardly had time to themselves.

When we were in Indonesia I spent more time with Dad. He used to take me to buy matchbox cars; I had a big collection of them. Mum used to stay home looking after me, and read me Bible stories, such as *Daniel in the lions' den* and *Noah's Ark*. I also learned things from Sunday School. I read my Bible and went to church every Sunday.

When we came to Australia, our routines changed. I seemed to spend most of the time at school, away from my parents. Mum and Dad were probably busy with the ministry, too. I learned things from different people at school – mostly friends and teachers. But I also learned subliminally about good behaviour from the family. For instance, I noticed that Mum always smiled when talking to people, so I learned to be nice to other people, too. Dad was busy as there were always young people coming to him for advice.

I remember however, that my parents instilled in me that I had to be responsible for Danny, and that I had to be a good example to him.

When I finished secondary school, I went to RMIT University to study Building and Project Management. The course was dominated by boys. There were probably only five girls.

After graduating I went to Singapore in 1993 and worked in quantity surveying business in Singapore. At first I worked for a local commercial contractor. I didn't feel I was doing very well in this job. What I had studied was very different from what was expected of me at work. They expected a lot more technical skills of me. Our training at university was much broader. I only worked six months for them. After that I moved on to a quantity surveying consultancy company. It was more international and more organised. But after six months, I knew I didn't like it that much either. It was mostly measuring buildings, costing rooms, buildings, and the materials to be used.

In all honesty I didn't really know what I wanted to do. Even at university I realised now I wasn't sure why I was studying building, except that Dad was a part-time developer at the time.

I came back to Melbourne in 1994.

BOBBY'S ADULTHOOD

Coming back to Melbourne also means returning to the family's fold. Eventually I discovered then that what I wanted to do was property developing. That was when Dad gave me an ideal opportunity. He was then working together with Heru Indrawan, and his son George Ong. Dad asked me to join them and learn about the business.

At the time, the then Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett, closed down a number of schools, the company founded by Dad, Heru Indrawan and George, *Smart Homes*, bought six of them. So I worked with them as an employee, for two years. They made a tidy profit out of that project, and I really enjoyed the work.

The first year I wasn't even paid a salary. It was regarded, rather, as my period of learning the business. There had not been any agreements regarding paying me salary when I had joined. It was a matter of just joining Dad. He was starting this business for them. I think he was given a company car and an understanding of them providing for his family. However, in the second year, they paid me salary for that year and the previous year as well.

Our solicitor, Clifford Kwah, saw what Dad and I did, and was very impressed. He put a proposal to us. He would provide a capital for a new venture with him, and offered me a share in the company. I promptly accepted it. We bought our own development property.

In the meantime, Dad was becoming dissatisfied working with his partner George Ong. So he left and joined us. I gave the business the name *Golden Gate Group*, because I couldn't think of anything else at the time. Looking back now, *Golden Gate* must have evoked in me an image of prosperity, gold having a special significance in Chinese culture, gate representing a meeting of two sides, like 'East meets West'. We are Chinese Indonesian family, but I myself feel Australian more than anything. So I regard myself as a result of an 'East meets' West process.

So now there were Clifford, Dad, and myself. We were doing big projects, twenty in one area, fifteen in another, another fifteen in another area again. Clifford had access to a lot of money, which he invested in the property development. In 1998, I bought a unit with the twenty-percent share I received from Clifford, and sold with a profit of four hundred thousand dollars.

However not long after that, still in 1998, Dad clashed with Clifford. So we stopped working with him. I was living with Mum

and Dad at the time, so I felt I had to take his side. Only in 2002 did I move out to a terrace apartment I had bought in Carlton.

In 1999 when I had just returned from China, my brother Danny came back from his work in China, and joined us also. He had no experience yet in property developing, but we gave him a third of the share of the company anyway.

Danny took a lot of risks, and made many mistakes, Dad had to clean up after him, but he certainly learned from it. Danny and I have different skills. He is from a commerce background, while I from a building background.

Danny and I have a great relationship. He is a very understanding person. We have total confidence in each other. In business, we are a good team.

When he and Caroline married, he went off and started his own business in Hong Kong, and they are now doing bigger developments than we are.

Later on I picked up again with Clifford. We still do specific projects together. When we resumed, we had different arrangements. We both put in money, and we split the profit fifty-fifty.

I have twelve projects going at the moment, and with all my business partners – including my ad, we have the same arrangements, fifty-fifty.

Under *Golden Gate Group*, Dad has his own companies, and each of us have our own.

I really appreciate the opportunity Dad provided. It was my entry to the job I really enjoy doing.

Right from the beginning I was doing very well because I was doing something I really liked. My skills and knowledge grew, and now I don't even feel like I'm working. It's like an unending monopoly game.

It is never a burden for me, for instance, to have a look at a potential property, regardless of the time of day. Sometimes a friend will ring me in the middle of the night and I will get up and go to have a look. In fact, it is an ideal time, when you don't have any distractions, so you can ponder as long as you like.

BOBBY MEETS ANITA

Around the tenth of December of 2000 I was invited to several birthday parties. I went with some friends to one, Gia's, then moved on to several others. Toward the early hours we came back

to Gia's. At around 4 o'clock we were having breakfast at Gia's when Anita came with her friends. The group then went for coffee at Café Greco in Chapel Street.

I sat at a table next to where Anita was sitting, surrounded by guys who appeared vying for her attention. I couldn't help glancing at her often. She was very attractive with beautiful eyes and her hair, dyed light brown, made her look like a very famous Japanese singer Amuro Namie. I didn't know if she noticed me then.

When we left the café, I walked behind her hoping to get a chance to say a word, but she seemed occupied with other people.

As luck would have it, two weeks later we came across each other again. A mutual friend, Candice, was going back to Singapore, so we had a farewell party at a bar in the city called Honky Tonk, in one of the landways off Flinders Lane. She came with Keith, a male model friend of ours. When I saw them walk in together, my heart sank. I thought they were an item. But then after a while, I saw Keith walking away to get a drink then lingering to speak to some friends, so I quickly moved in. I greeted her and we began chatting.

She had just come back from Taiwan where she had stayed for several months. Since only a year previously I spent six months in Beijing we had a lot to talk about. I felt myself mesmerised by Anita. She was so pretty, and the glitter she was wearing above her eyes made me unable to look away from her! Something was happening to me, because I was not at all nervous being near her, she being so beautiful.

At the end of the night I asked her for her phone number, and the following day I called her, ostensibly to find out how she was settling back in Melbourne. She told me she was looking for a car to buy, so I offered to help her.

I didn't see her again until the following weekend when I invited a group of friends to go clubbing at Salt Discoteque in South Yarra. I came with a female friend from church. We only had a brief chance to speak to one another, and that was on the dance floor as I deliberately stood next to her. My heart sang when she glanced at me and started the conversation going. She asked me what kind of music I listened to. I knew then, that I also was on her mind.

I asked her out on a drive, and had a chance to meet her family in Keysborough.

That was the beginning of a very exciting relationship. To me, it felt sudden and spontaneous. It was as if I was swept into it and liking it.

Toward the end of the first year however we started to have our ups and downs, but we stayed together because we enjoyed each other's company. Then three years into our relationship it became obvious that Anita wanted us to make further commitments, and I was not ready. I couldn't explain the nature of my fear. There was no doubt I wanted us to be together, but I was not sure we would if we got married.

I seemed to have difficulty in forming a deep relationship. Looking back now I realise that I was having emotional problems because my relationship with Dad was not very good, though I have had no problems with my mum. I've always known that Mum loves me whatever I do and whoever I am. But for a long time I believed that Dad didn't love me, that he loved Danny but not me. This feeling of not being loved by my dad then extended in my subconscious into a feeling of not being loved by anyone. I was continuously driven by the need to prove myself to Dad, and subsequently, prove myself to everyone around me. My conversations with Dad revolved around business where I felt I had to achieve and achieve. With Mum on the other hand, we haven't had to hold long conversations about anything. When she cooks something nice for me for instance, I know it is her expression of love for me.

My relationship issues with Dad caused me to have problems loving anyone or believing that anyone loved me.

Then in 2006, at Anita's promptings I did several self-discovery and self actualisation sessions with Landmark Education with her. And during those sessions I discovered that I had been wrong, that Dad had always loved me. Everything he did, he did because he loved me, because he wanted the best for me. This realisation made a big difference to how I regarded myself, and how I saw other people. Now feeling that I was loved, I was ready to give. My relationships with people around me changed drastically. And more important, I was then able to make real personal and emotional commitment with Anita.

In late 2006, Anita and I travelled together. We went to Vietnam, and there, in Halong Bay, on 8th January 2007, I proposed to her. It was the seventh anniversary of my really kissing her for the time.

We got married on 7th April 2007.

I realised I had wanted to have a child of my own when I was holding Joseph, Danny's then four month-old baby, and looked into his eyes. I am now the proud father of Jeremy, our son, and am very happy that Anita, the love of my life, is the mother.

I often think of Mum too. I feel I've wasted a lot of time not spending time with her. I really want to make it up to her. With my own family and work however, it is not very easy. But I know I have to try.

I feel the same about Dad. Sometimes I call and offer to pick him up to see a property or something, or recently, some Chinese New Year celebrations. I still do projects with Dad, from time to time. Dad and I have mutual understandings about how things are done. So we rarely have to discuss at length about what should be done. That is something I miss when I work with other partners.

CHAPTER TWELVE

In 1975 the President of South Vietnam Nguyen Van Thieu resigned after failing to stop the North Vietnam forces, known as the Vietcong, from taking over the south. The United States, which had been financially supporting his government, had lost the appetite for war, leaving President Nguyen Van Thieu powerless from lack of funds. On 30 April Saigon surrendered after five divisions of South Vietnamese infantry troops, a division of US Rangers and two brigades of US Marines in position around Saigon were outnumbered by the Vietcong by more than two to one.

Less than a month later, international journalists were driven out of Saigon.

With no outside monitors, the South Vietnamese felt justifiably vulnerable. They lived in fear every day as an increasing number of them were arrested, some executed.

No longer able to bear the situation, people organised make-shift boats to flee the country, and on 3 December 1977, the first group escaped on a very inadequately sea-worthy boat. More groups followed, despite sporadic news that many did not make it anywhere and disappeared at sea.

[Though the city was since renamed Ho Chi Minh City, the older population still privately refer to it as Saigon].

ANITA AND FAMILY LEAVING SAIGON

I was born in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam, in 1972. When the war ended in 1975, I was only three years old. As I grew older, I became aware of the fear felt by the people around me, their fear of the communists who had taken over. Everyone, it seemed, wanted to leave.

People were fleeing in droves from Vietnam to seek safer lives elsewhere. My family – my mother, my aunt, my two elder sisters and myself, finally escaped in September 1981. I was only eight.

We left home in the middle of the night, on a bus which took us to a countryside where we were led to the water. We filed as soundlessly as we were able to, in the dark. It was pitch black around, wet and muddy underfoot. I was very, very scared. Then we had to go down into the river. I couldn't swim. When water came to my neck I couldn't go on. A man picked me up and carried me on his shoulder. None of us made a sound, because we didn't want to alert the troops guarding the waterways.

Eventually we were helped onto a boat. Probably there were fifty or sixty people all told, and the boat was packed. I remember sitting below deck where water would come in. We were all wet.

Two days after we left, the engine broke down, and we were stranded in the stormy seas. The boat was rocking wildly, thrown into all directions, yet we couldn't see a thing. We thought we were going to die.

Then we saw lights from distant ships. We tried everything, including burning some clothes to attract their attention. But nobody came to our assistance. Our boat was taking in water. We all had to work like mad scooping out the water to keep the boat afloat. Then the sea became so stormy again all we could do was hanging onto anything in order not to fall out into the sea. Everyone was screaming and crying. We were physically weak because we had run out of food and water.

When the storm began to calm, we realised we were floating back to Vietnam. By then we didn't care any more whether we'd be arrested, we just wanted to get out of this horrible situation.

Then we saw another boat, much bigger than ours. Incredibly it was coming toward us. We thought it was a pirate ship, and was despairing for our lives. We were aware there were pirates around. And they would kill, mutilate and rape with impunity. There were many women on our boat. Fortunately for us, it turned out to be a boat, which had just left Vietnam. They had meant to take many more passengers, but when they had

arrived at the appointed place, they had discovered that the group had been busted, so they had had no choice but to go on with the voyage with only six passengers they had already picked up earlier.

They rescued all of us.

That was not the end of our ordeal. The captain of this boat then lost his sense of direction. We didn't know where we were, and where to go. Again, fortunately, an oil-rigging ship came along. We received food and water from them. The captain of our boat asked for direction, but when told, didn't seem to understand. So we were not much better off.

Eventually, a big ship came along. The crew came to us. My aunt, the only one on our boat who could speak English, talked to the crew. She told us that this ship was on its way to Malaysia from the Netherlands. We asked them if they could take us back to the Netherlands. They said they couldn't, but that they could take us to Pulau Bidong refugee camp in Malaysia. I think they made some radio communication with the camp managers.

We were taken onto their big ship. We couldn't believe our luck. They gave us some of their food to eat. I remember being given apples. To us apples were luxury items!

From then on, it only took us one day to see land again. I remember sleeping overnight on the ship and the next morning we arrived on Bidong in Malaysia.

It was an extreme sense of relief for all of us the moment we saw the island. We hadn't seen land for what seemed like an eternity.

Some of those who were already on the island turned out to be friends of my mum's and my aunt's.

Something interesting happened which I always remember. When we were on the first boat, the captain was angry with Mum, probably he thought she hadn't paid enough for the voyage. He threw a can of food at her, which hit her face. A few days later Mum had a big black eye resulting from that incident. And when we arrived on Bidong, the black eye perturbed all her friends, who thought she had been raped by pirates. Mum tried to reassure them saying that she had not been raped, and told them not to worry about her. That failed to calm her friends, who then came to us. We told them what had actually happened. The story outraged her friends so much they sought out the man and roughed him up. After that, nobody dared bully us.

That somewhat reassured us, because we were all women. Mum in her thirties, my aunt in her twenties, my two sisters and myself were ten, nine, and eight.

I remember the first meal we had on the island was fried noodles. Indonesian *mi goreng*. Boy it was good!

We were then taken to a hut which was to be our home until we could be placed in a receiving country. At first we couldn't lie down. We were covered with sores and scabs. So we were taken to the camp hospital for the necessary treatments. The doctors in the hospital were from various countries, such as Germany, France, and Britain. My aunt who was a dentist in Vietnam, began working there almost immediately.

The camp was fairly well-organised, having been set up for three or four years then.

We were in Bidong for three months. It was relatively short considering that many were there for years. We were interviewed by representatives from different countries, the US, Canada, Australia. I remember that at first we were supposed to go to the US. Then it appeared we were going to Canada. We got relatives in both countries. My uncle had escaped and had settled in Canada. But then Mum thought it was too cold in Canada. So we were then going to the US where we also have relatives. But the US rejected us. So we were coming to Australia. One of my uncles was here. He had arrived a year earlier.

ANITA AND FAMILY ARRIVE IN MELBOURNE

When we were accepted in Australia, we were sent to Kuala Lumpur, and waited there for another three months for our proper visas. Then we were sent to Singapore before coming to Melbourne in February 1982.

Once in Melbourne we were put up in Nunawading hostel for about six months. There were five of us women. My dad had passed away before the war ended, when I was still a baby. So I never knew my real Dad.

We were very well-treated by our Australian hosts. My sisters and I went to school to learn English as a Second Language. We didn't have to do much beyond studying, since even our meals were taken care of at the hostel. They even prepared packed lunches for us to eat at school.

ANITA AND FAMILY SETTLE IN MELBOURNE

After the six months in the hostel, we went to live with my uncle – the husband of one of my aunts – in Abbotsford, for a year. My uncle had had to flee Vietnam in a hurry, leaving his family behind. He had been in the South Vietnamese army, so after the war his life had been in extreme danger and he had no choice but to leave the country.

Then we were given a government house to live in.

My sisters and I went to Abbotsford Primary School in Richmond. After that we went to Kew High School for three years.

I had my senior secondary education at Chandler Secondary College in Keysborough, where Mum and my step-Dad had bought a house, in 1989.

When we had been in Melbourne for a year, my uncle introduced Mum to a friend of his, also from Vietnam. He married Mum and became my step-Dad. Two years later my youngest sister was born. She is twenty-three now.

I studied Information Management at Deakin University after graduating from secondary school, but I didn't like it, so I left after a year and took Banking Finance at Monash University at its Caulfield Campus, for three years. When I graduated with a Bachelor of Business, I went to work in National Australia Bank in 1996.

In 1999 I went for a holiday with some friends in Vietnam. It was a big step for me. I was twenty-seven, and when I had left the country I had only been eight. Understandably I was very excited. I had learned that Vietnam had freed up a lot, and that the economy had opened up. By 1994 Vietnamese diaspora from around the world had begun to return to invest and start their own businesses. I really liked it then.

Two months later one of the friends who had gone there with me wanted to go back and start a business, and wanted me to help him. I left the bank and went to Vietnam, and stayed there for fifteen months. We tried to set up a network marketing outfit, but it did not take off. The truth is, while Vietnam had opened up its economy, culturally it took a lot longer for the society to catch up with the idea.

They were giving us a real hard time. In newspapers the *Viet Qs* – the overseas Vietnamese -, were constantly being accused of coming to the country to rip off the locals. And since people's perception was very much influenced by newspapers, the idea became widespread, and we were always targeted. We had to pay a lot of money to obtain various licences for the business. We waited for eight months just to get the business set up, while

we kept paying money to the authorities. We had to entertain the officials almost every night. We were given the run-around, well and truly. In the end my friend lost almost all his capital, about two hundred thousand dollars, and we couldn't go on.

So I came back to Melbourne. Two months later I left for Taiwan and stayed for three months. I returned at the end of 2000.

ANITA MEETS BOBBY

A short while later, a friend invited me to his friend's party, and at that party, I met Bobby. But we didn't have much time to talk to each other.

In fact, I didn't really notice him then. It was four in the morning and we were tired. We met again at a mutual friend's farewell drink. Bobby came up to me and introduced himself properly. I was impressed then. He was very polite, quietly spoken, pleasant to talk to, and very charming. He offered me a drink, and we began chatting. We found we a lot of common interest. I had just got back from Taiwan where I'd learned a little Mandarin, and Bobby had been to Beijing and stayed for six months. We started practising our Mandarin. Bobby thought I was pretty bad, and we laughed a lot. More importantly, he asked for my number before leaving.

Bobby then called me several times before we met up again. One weekend he called and asked what I was doing. I wasn't doing much. I was still trying to find my feet again since returning from overseas. He came to pick me up and we went shopping at Chadstone, then we went for a drive to Mornington beach. We had a good time.

We found that we enjoyed each other's company. We both liked to socialise, shopping and savour the finer things in life. At the time I wasn't looking for a new relationship. I had only recently ended one. However I was attracted to Bobby. He was a gentleman, and I liked being with him.

It only took a month for us to start going out. I was looking for a car to buy and Bobby offered to help. Naturally we ended up speaking and seeing each other a lot. Then our relationship just grew. It was spontaneous. And it went well at the start. We saw each other two or three times a week. He was very caring, generous, and fun to be with.

We broke up several times. I think I wanted to settle down, but Bobby was not ready. After some time I thought we should go our separate ways giving ourselves opportunities to meet other

people. But each time I broke it up, Bobby called me and wanted to get together again.

In 2006 we did a self-discovery and self-actualisation session, called Landmark Education, together. I had done one before and found it very helpful. During this session, we were able to access our deepest troubles, be they resentment, anger, or guilt which had been preventing us from growing and developing, and which blocked our acceptance of other people. We both felt it did us good. So we continued doing more and more sessions. They worked for us. One thing for sure, they freed up a lot of pent-up resentment and self-doubts inside Bobby.

At the end of 2006 we went to Singapore and Vietnam together. And On 8 January 2007 when we were in Ha Long Bay, Vietnam, the sixth anniversary of our being together, Bobby proposed to me. I was surprised, but happy. We knew then that we wanted to make the commitment. We had talked about having a baby several months before that. We planned to marry on 8 January 2008, but we found out that I was eight weeks pregnant, so we planned the wedding within two months and got married on 7 April 2007. Both our parents were very happy.

During the time Bobby and I were seeing each other, I kept moving from one job to another. I worked at Westpac for three and a half years, where I worked myself up to a senior business manager role, before moving on to real estate and finally to finance brokerage. By that time we decided to get married, and I left the brokerage to start a family.

BOBBY AND ANITA'S FIRST BUSINESS VENTURE TOGETHER

Bobby's account:

In 2003 Anita wanted to invest in an apartment. I discouraged her from going ahead, and suggested she let me invest her money for her. We took up a corner-block development in Mont Albert. We bought the property for three hundred thousand dollars, and now it is worth over a million dollars. We kept the existing house and built two new units at the back. Then we sold the existing house at a higher price than that we had paid for the whole property. And we still have the units at the back.

From then on, we've never looked back. An accountant friend I met through tennis, had lost a lot of money in shares, and was thinking of starting his own business outside accountancy. I told him about my project with Anita, and invited him to join. Within

two and a half years, we bought four properties together and we have been doing very well.

Other friends joined as well. We also do projects with Dad.

Now I don't even need any more capital injections, yet people keep offering their money to invest in our projects.

BOBBY'S FUTURE PLANS

Now that I have achieved the goal of having a family, my next goal is to bring up my family.

Careerwise, I have already established a network of close friends with whom I do business. Financially, I don't really need to make any more money. If I need to make any more money, it's only for my ego. Probably for personal growth.

Now I want to move to a different game. I would like to set up a property investment fund to attract bigger investors. And I would like to do something with my brother Danny, which may be more meaningful for me, and hopefully for him.

ANITA'S IMMEDIATE GOALS

With our son Jeremy only six months old (in February 2008), my immediate goals revolve around looking after him and the home. I get along well with my older sisters, but I would like to spend more time with my youngest sister. We haven't had the chance to do that. She is so much younger.

I also want to spend more time with my step-Dad, because in reality, he is the only Dad I know. Mum has always been very close to me. We call each other almost every day. I want that to continue.

Since we would like to have two children, I really would like Bobby to spend more time at home.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DANNY'S EARLY YEARS IN MELBOURNE

His recollections as a four-year old:

I remember we were very poor when we arrived in Australia. However I also remember the kindness of many families who took us into their homes for short periods.

We first settled in a house connected to a church in Maling Road, Canterbury, where we stayed for a few years.

When he was several years older:

We went to live in a very small two-bedroom single fronted miners' cottage in Richmond, before moving to a house in Ashwood, Chadstone.

When I started school, there were very few Asian kids around. I often found myself being treated unfairly, so I ended up fighting with other kids a lot. Sometimes I got myself into impossible situations, such as in a fight with eight or ten kids at a time. Bobby would step in to protect me whenever he was able to.

Though I didn't always lose in these fights, deep down I felt very sad and a little lonely. My temper made other kids, even those who were my friends to begin with, stay away from me.

Bobby however, was always there for me. We had, what I would call, brother-relationship. We would play and fight, but we remained very close. In fact, after a few scuffles, I realised that I had to find more creative ways of getting what I wanted, other than by fighting. Fortunately Bobby has a likeable personality. When we were children he was always protective of me.

As I had few friends of my own, Bobby often graciously let me tag along with him and his friends. Then when I got into fights, especially with his friends who were much older than I was, he would still stick up for me and protect me, though sometimes I was in the wrong.

When I was in grade five and grade six I had a very good Physical Education teacher, called Mr Miller. He always encouraged us to excel. He would organise inter-school sports competitions – in athletics and cricket – and would spend his lunch breaks to personally coach us. I wish we had more teachers like him.

DANNY'S ADOLESCENCE

I began to grow out of the tendency of getting into fights when I was about thirteen years old. One day I told Dad, who was a pastor at the time, about a dream I had just had. Dad believed it was Jesus calling me to Him. The talk with Dad changed my life. I

no longer saw everyone as being against me. Gradually I involved myself in church and youth activities. By the time I was fifteen, I was well and truly a changed person. Being a Christian means a great deal to me.

I didn't have many friends before then either. A combination of my quick temper and the fact that our family moved frequently, made it difficult for me to form any lasting friendships. It was not until in Year Eleven did I find a friend called Allan Garner. We continued this friendship throughout our university years, until today. We are now not only good friends, we are also business partners.

When I was fifteen I was one of the two students from my secondary school, Mount Waverley Secondary College, to go on an exchange school program to Japan the following year, for a year. My parents were very proud of me. They funded most of the expenses during the time I was there. However I remember working briefly as a packing boy at Safeway to save up some spending money.

DANNY'S ADULTHOOD

After graduating from secondary school, I enrolled to do a four-year double degree of Commerce and Arts at Monash University in its Clayton campus. Dad had told me that business and languages would be useful for later life.

I enjoyed the course well enough, and I got pretty good grades throughout university. I was even lucky enough to receive two scholarships, one for a three-month study course in Japan and another for one year scholarship to study economics at Tokyo's Rikkyo University (St Pauls University), one of the top six universities in Japan. However at the time I was too young to perceive the real opportunity and implications of my scholarship. I had not yet developed a passion for any career. So I studied the subjects which I thought would help me best to land a job after graduation.

During my scholarship year in Japan I partly supported myself tutoring in English to primary and secondary school students.

Immediately after my graduation from university, I went to Beijing for an intensive study of Chinese for six months. This equipped me for my real first job. I was employed by a small Canadian management consulting company. The work was very challenging and exciting. And being a small company we had to do

various different jobs in a very hands-on manner. I really enjoyed the work and would often work until late at night to make sure the projects were completed smoothly.

After some time however, I missed home. So nine months later, I came back to Melbourne for a holiday and to visit the family.

DANNY MEETS CAROLINE

During that holiday at home I met Caroline.

My brother Bobby and some of his friends went out to a Latin dance club called Bull Ring, in Fitzroy. Bobby and I picked her up from her work at Allen Arthur Robinson where she worked as one of the lawyers.

When we were introduced I remember being impressed by her whole bearing. She was very attractive and very courteous.

She was the only girl in our group. I observed how she tried to get the eight guys to get involved in the dancing rather than just stand around talking. I saw that she was trying to make everyone feel included.

I went back to Beijing not long after that, but soon I became restless. I no longer found the job exciting enough to keep me there, so I returned to Melbourne. Caroline and I resumed our friendship which quickly developed into a romantic relationship. We went out for two years and became engaged in August 2001.

I proposed to her at Café La in the Rialto Building during a romantic evening. We hadn't realised that the other diners were able to hear our voices. When Caroline agreed to marry me they broke out in a thunderous applause!

DANNY ON HIS FATHER

One of the things I have always done well is observing my dad. When I was a young child we hardly had time to spend together. He was constantly busy, being a pastor and working fulltime outside as well in order to earn enough money for the family. Yet I learned many things from him through our interaction and my observations. He has been my mentor and my guide throughout my life, directly or indirectly.

Despite his busy life, whenever I got into trouble or needed advice, Dad would stop everything and sit with me to talk things over and give me the necessary advice.

In the background my mum has been a constant support. She took care of the household daily sustenance. Mum has been a

very hard worker, and she is blessed with a great deal of wisdom. Looking back now I believe that if we had listened to her more, many things we didn't like would not have happened.

Dad has always been a very authoritative figure. He has always believed in the integrity of the family, hence when we were young, he ruled with an iron fist. If we wanted to stay in the house, we had to obey his rules. He put family first and expected us to do the same.

I believe the security of the family was one of the motivations for his starting the property development business. He had a heart attack at the age of forty, which put him face-to-face with mortality. So he wanted to make sure that if anything happened to him, the family would be secure and would not be want of anything. And more importantly, he made sure that the children should be trained to be able to look after themselves.

Dad has been a man of great faith and vision. He brought his family to Australia. He started the first Indonesian congregation church in Melbourne. He served God fulltime while having to work as a taxi driver, then as a computer programmer to support his family. He started a property development business at the age of forty.

I know that Dad has had a hard life and has been a battler. He wanted to give himself a better life, and his family a better start in life than he had.

In twenty-five years in Melbourne we moved about twenty times because of various circumstances related to his occupations, and in the latter part, because of the property development business Dad had set up. He would buy a place, develop it then sell it, then move to another place, and the process would start again.

Dad is very compassionate. Without telling anyone, he would send money back to Indonesia for his family year in year out. He would contribute to various charities. When he had gone into business he would try to employ pastors and church workers for jobs that needed doing, and I noticed, some that didn't need doing, to support them however he could.

He is not one to tell us of his troubles. When he goes to the doctor, I know he is really sick. I have rarely heard him complain and he does what needs to be done.

Dad has not only preached Christianity, he has lived by the spiritual principles of Christianity. These principles have guided the way he lived and made decisions in life, one of these being unconditional love.

Despite my temper tantrums and my rebellious behaviour in my childhood and early adolescence, and all the mistakes and trouble I have often caused at other times, I have always felt both Mum and Dad's unconditional love for me.

Many of the values I have today, I have learned from observing my parents.

Now though Dad, Bobby and myself are three different entities, we often do projects together. I currently partner with Dad on projects in Melbourne, Tasmania and Kalgoorlie.

DANNY AND CAROLINE MOVE TO HONG KONG

Caroline and I married in November 2002. Soon after that her father, who had just founded a new factory, asked her to come and work with him in Hong Kong. Caroline had spend most of her young adult life in Australia, so we thought it would be a good opportunity for her to become reacquainted with her family.

We left for Hong Kong in March 2003. I ended up working for her family business as the financial controller for around three years.

Caroline's family business had survived and thrived since World War II and although it was a good business to be in, I did not really adjust well with the culture and work, and felt myself longing to go back to property. Caroline and I decided to go back to developing property in Australia. Initially I needed often to fly back and forth between Hong Kong to Australia. Soon we began to expand into Asia. We have now purchased property in Hong Kong and Malaysia and are currently exploring opportunities in Japan and other areas in Asia.

I love the exhilaration of finding new markets and doing new deals.

Caroline is becoming increasingly involved in the management side of our business. She has great intuition and her suggestions are always wise and practical. Recently she negotiated some leases and sales for a number of our Hong Kong property. She is in charge of the whole administration area and deals with our consultants and staff. At the same time she is helping with payroll at her father's business. And she is doing all this while running a household with two small children and a husband. I am constantly thanking God for her.

When we first came to live in Hong Kong, we worked from a bedroom at home. Recently however, we have renovated and shifted into a new office in the next building. By nature I can be a workaholic, but this new arrangement has helped us to separate our work and family life.

We do value our time with the family. When I drive our son Joseph to school, I often get asked where Caroline is, as I seem to be the only father that does this. Caroline also enjoys bringing the children with her whenever possible.

On weekends, we spend most of our time with each other and our children, be it bringing them shopping, going to church and bible study group or socialising with family and friends.

Hong Kong is a very glitzy and exciting place to be, but it is also very crowded. Most people here live in very small apartments and there are few parks and limited open space for children to run around. So joining clubs or living in new housing estates that provide a number of facilities is a nice way to spend time relaxing and socialising with family and friends.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CAROLINE'S EARLY YEARS IN HONG KONG

I was born on 23 December 1974 in Hong Kong, the only child of Wing Yu CHAN and Eleanor Yin Hing LO.

I recall wanting to be with Mum all the time, and her not being able to be with me as much as I liked her to. Then I became used to having other people around instead, the nanny, Grandmother and Grandfather.

My earliest memory was being in the livingroom of our home then. I have snippets of recollection taking place in it. My favourite Fisher-Price gramophone which I played a lot. My nanny (or was it my mum?) holding me high up to watch the Chinese lantern rotating slowly, maybe the windows were left open. Then when I was a little older, I would learn to read the time from the clock, and eventually I would be able to tell when Mum was coming home.

Both Mum and Dad, I discovered when I was older, worked full-time outside the house. Dad had a busy rattan furniture business in town, and Mum worked in the government as an executive officer, so she was equally busy.

My grandparents, Mum's parents, featured solidly and largely in my early years. When I started Kindergarten, Grandfather would pick me up after school and Grandmother would prepare stewed apple for my afternoon tea. This continued into my primary school years.

I remember Grandmother sitting with me when I was doing homework. And with homework done, sitting with Grandfather watching television.

My mother often despaired at my lack of interest in food. I just hated eating. As a result, I was very lean, which worried my parents. Then when I was about five years old, Dad made a bet

with my grandparents that if they were able to make me put on one pound of weight he would give them one hundred Hong Kong dollars, which was a lot of money back then.

That was the beginning of a major turnaround in my eating habit. Whatever Grandmother turned out tasted delicious, but I especially enjoyed the fish, sweet tea-cucumber and coriander soup, and the steamed minced meat cake. I think I even developed a love of cooking from my enjoyment of Grandmother's cuisine. And I did put on many pounds over that summer, but Dad never really paid my grandparents. This has remained a family joke today.

Being an only child I was used to my own company, but in primary school I began to make friends, and formed a lasting friendship with a girl called Jane Cohen, which continues until today. She has two children and they live in Melbourne. We exchange email regularly, and whenever I am in Melbourne, we catch up.

CAROLINE'S YOUNG ADOLESCENCE

On 1 January 1983, British Nationality Act 1981, which renamed all existing British colonies to 'dependent territories', changed the status of Hong Kong. Having been a British colony since 1843, and its inhabitants automatically assuming British citizenships, Hong Kong was to become a Dependent Territory and its inhabitants to become Dependent Territory citizens. While the government would continue to operate as before, the status of British Dependent Territory citizens of its inhabitants would not be transmittable by descent.

Many in Hong Kong at the time, especially those who had enjoyed western-style education and were aware of western-style government, were becoming anxious with the inevitability of Hong Kong reverting to become part of The People's Republic China. However, thanks to the pragmatism of the PRC's then leader Deng Xiao Ping, on 19 December 1984, the PRC and Britain signed a joint declaration, 'Sino-British Joint Declaration on the question of Hong Kong', so when Hong Kong was returned to the PRC in 1 July 1997, it became a Special Administration Region of the PRC, with many aspects of the former British legal system retained. Nonetheless the 1980s saw Hong Kong residents emigrating to the West, many to Australia.

When I was still in primary school, my parents decided to migrate to Australia. My parents wanted to give me an alternative citizenship should things go bad after Hong Kong was reverted to China. We migrated and arrived in Melbourne in October 1985.

Our first home was in 26, Tuxen Street, North Balwyn. It was a small thirteen-square house with a single garage on a quarter acre block with huge gardens. I remember enjoying the feeling of outdoor space, after living in Hong Kong. I have many happy memories of playing in the huge backyard, picking strawberries and raspberries straight from the shrubs and eating freshly cracked open almond nuts. Less than a year later, we moved to a much larger house in Doncaster.

Here I developed a capacity for indoor space. Apart from the five bedrooms, it had a family room and a rumpus room. While the backyard was much smaller than that in the North Balwyn house, it was adjacent to a huge reserve.

In late 1987 we took up Australian citizenships. Shortly after that we returned to Hong Kong because Dad had to look after the family's furniture manufacturing business there. And I returned to Maryknoll Convent School.

In secondary school I also had a close friend, Grace Mak, who now lives in San Jose, USA. She has a son. We are on email communication and catch up when I visit San Jose or Grace visits Hong Kong.

As I was growing up, I felt increasingly, emotionally distant from my parents. From where I looked, they appeared determined to decide on the direction of my life regardless of my own feelings about the matter. Whenever I voiced my objections or tried to make them see my views, I faced a stone wall. We seemed to live in separate worlds. Fortunately I began to have some financial independence when I was fifteen. I had a casual job tutoring a Year-eight student in mathematics. And I enjoyed doing it because I felt I was helping a fellow-student in her studies.

Mum must have wanted a seachange, because she resigned her position in the government and started going to her friend's stockbroking company everyday instead.

In 1991 I returned to Melbourne for year eleven and twelve. Mum spent a lot of time in Melbourne with me during these years. Only after I started university and moved into St Mary's College, at the University of Melbourne did Mum return to live in Hong Kong. She must have liked stockbroking business, because she took stockbroking examinations and became qualified as a stockbroker. So it was a successful seachange for her.

The relationship with my parents was still tense, but I tried to accommodate my parents' wishes. Despite my own inclinations to do Photo-Journalism or Commerce Arts, I capitulated to my parents' directives, I did Commerce Law. Yet that did not made us closer.

When I was in my second last year of university, Mum and Dad separated for a while. They had a lot of marital problems and things were very unpleasant for about three years. During that time each leaned a lot on me for emotional support, which I found very stressful, as I didn't like the divided loyalty situation in which I often found himself. I was only twenty-one, and found the mental responsibility too big to carry. Fortunately for me, I was able to unload to Cassie Goh and Irene Tang, my friends at university, who gave me a lot of emotional support.

The situation continued to be tense between Mum and Dad for another two or three years.

While I didn't particularly enjoy the course at university, I did reasonably well. And I enjoyed my university years, especially the extra-curricular activities, particularly when I landed parts in plays.

I continued having part-time jobs during my university years, from waitressing, working as a computer centre assistant, to translating and short-term acting.

At graduating with a double degree of Bachelor of Law (honours) and Bachelor of Commerce, I received a Law School Foundation Prize in 1996.

I continued working with Allen Arthur Robinson law firm, which I had started two years previously while still studying.

CAROLINE MEETS AND MARRIES DANNY

My friend Cassie Goh and I joined Latin dancing. One evening Cassie introduced me to a friend of hers, Bobby. Then on another occasion Bobby came with his brother Danny who had just returned from Beijing, in 1999.

I was very attracted to Danny. He was very kind and always ready to help others. The attraction was obviously mutual, and we started going out not long after that. I also formed a close relationship with his family.

Less than two years later, in August 2001, we became engaged.

During our time together, I was baptised in December 2000. I had become a Christian when I was eighteen in 1993.

On 10 August 2002 Danny and I got married officially in Melbourne. Hendra married us, and Bobby witnessed for Danny and Irene Tang witnessed for me. We had our marriage celebration on 2 November 2002, held our wedding banguets on 3 November at Rippon Lea, Melbourne. This was then followed by another reception at the Peninsula Hotel in Hong Kong on 8 November 2002.

CAROLINE'S RECONCILIATION WITH HER FAMILY

After Danny and I married, I often pondered over my strained relationship with my parents. Now that I had Danny to talk things over, I realised that I couldn't allow the situation to remain the way it was as my parents were not getting any younger, so we made an important decision.

I resigned from Allen Arthur Robinson, then with Danny we moved to Hong Kong. I worked with Dad in his business for three years until I had our first son Joseph, born on 12 August 2005.

In the meantime Danny was doing well in his property business. I decided to work part-time to help Danny, while Joseph was being looked after by a live-in nanny.

The arrangements suited us, and we had another son, Joshua, less than two years later, on 3 March 2007.

I discovered that running our own business was more challenging than working as a lawyer. But it has advantages, such as my being able to have flexible working hours in order to spend quality time with the children, and being able to work together with Danny. And business has been good in the last two years. Apart from collecting tidy profits, we never stopped learning. Each new project has aspects new to us.

Just as important, we now have a family life routine which includes my parents.

Each morning I wake up when Joshua wakes up to be breastfed. Danny has breakfast with Joseph.

Then either Danny or I take Joseph to nursery. At around eight forty-five I feed Joshua his breakfast while I have mine. Then I go to our office apartment and work until around lunch time while the nanny looks after Joshua.

If Danny has not picked up Joseph from nursery, I will. At home I feed both children their lunch, then spend an hour with them one. Then I tuck Joseph in for his nap.

At four in the afternoon with the nanny's help Joseph collects the mail and brings it to us in the office apartment. He plays in the

office apartment for about fifteen minutes as he has his afternoon snack.

I finish work around six and play with boys at home. Danny comes home at seven, and we have dinner together.

After dinner we play with the boys. Housework fortunately, is done by our two live-in helpers, so we have all the time to spend to ourselves. Mum comes nearly every night to play with the grandchildren. Dad comes nearly whenever he is in Hong Kong, as he often has to go to the factory in Guangdong.

I breastfeed Joshua at around eight-thirty then put him to bed, while Danny reads Joseph his bedtime stories. When I turn out the lights in Joseph's room that is the time for us to pray together.

We usually have at least one meal with my parents over the weekend. And Danny and I try to have Friday nights as our nights out.

On Fridays I take Joseph out to lunch with Grandfather and my auntie, Grandmother having passed away.