

C & G interviewing Sony about Hong Kong's Harcourt Road

Interview Date: 18th July, 2024

The interview was conducted in Hong Kong Cantonese.

The following is the English translation of the transcript.

C: Clara Cheung, G: Gum Cheng, S: Sony

G: [00:06] Today is Thursday, July 18, 2024. We're now at the 226 studio, interviewing Sony. The official start time is 4:10 p.m.

S: [00:29] Okay, let me first talk about how I came to know Harcourt Road. Actually, the exact year is a bit fuzzy... back then, a friend and I were really interested in Hong Kong's local history and culture. So I went to take part in this docent training offered by the Antiquities and Monuments Office. The Antiquities and Monuments Office, for what they call "Heritage Trails," there are four official routes. Obviously, for those trails, you walk along and provide guided tours. They also have some fixed-point tours, but I joined the training specifically for the "Heritage Trail Docent." We were trained on all four trails, but I clearly remember that for the exam, I took the Hong Kong Island route.

G: [01:44] Which year was that?

S: [01:46] It's a bit fuzzy. I think it was in the early 2000s, sometime in the 2000s. Since I was born on Hong Kong Island, I only moved to the New Territories when I got older. So I've got this strong familiarity with Hong Kong Island. Hong Kong Island has two Heritage Trails: one is the Sheung Wan Route, and the other is the Central Route. I remember I took the exam for the Sheung Wan Route, but for some reason, I was assigned to lead the Central Route in the end.

When I was studying, I had to learn both routes anyway—both Hong Kong Island trails—because I was testing on the Island routes. For the Central Route, as far as I recall, the route started at Hong Kong City Hall, went along... Edinburgh Place, then HSBC's main building, then up to Hong Kong Park, where the route ended. So when you walk behind City Hall, that's Harcourt Road. We had to talk about various sights along the way—landmarks—and explain their relation to Hong Kong, or how the street names and the layout came to be. That's when I learned that Harcourt Road was named after a figure in the military. Then, later on, in 2007, I started working in Admiralty, right on Harcourt Road. Yes, that's how I spent roughly about four or five years—working on Harcourt Road.

To me, Harcourt Road was... especially the part where my office was, it was super convenient. Typically, you'd exit the MTR station and get to the office without needing an umbrella. When a typhoon hit, it was great. You could go down to the MTR, ride one stop to Tsim Sha Tsui for lunch, then one stop back—it didn't matter if it was black rain, red rain, or whatever, totally fine. So that was a nice benefit. We even tried walking from Admiralty to City Hall for dim sum, literally walking along Harcourt Road to City Hall for tea. That's probably my biggest memory from back then—though I wasn't that young—and that's my strongest impression of Harcourt Road.

G: [05:12] Back then, how would you describe Harcourt Road?

S:[05:32] I saw it as a business district, a place you'd pass during rush hour. After 6 p.m. or so, there'd be no one. For instance, if you wanted to go see a performance at City Hall, beyond the Maxim's inside City Hall, there were hardly any places to eat. It'd be all quiet. Walking back to Admiralty was also very quiet. Basically, after peak hours, it's deserted. The busiest times came when there was a march, like heading toward Pacific Place or the Admiralty Centre footbridge. Typically, everyone would already disperse via the MTR once we reached there—so in those days, it rarely extended all the way to Central. Usually, once people reached Admiralty, that was it; they'd find a restroom, then leave. They didn't go as far as Central. I think that was also before the new government headquarters moved to Tamar Park—previously, the government headquarters was behind the HSBC main building. Once you got to that junction, you'd basically stop. You wouldn't go as far as Cheung Kong Centre, because going up near Cheung Kong Centre led you to government headquarters. Most people wouldn't head that way; they'd stop and disperse. So later on, the only times I'd go along Harcourt Road more frequently were for marches that ended at the United Centre, where there was a turn that led to government headquarters and the MTR. You'd exit there.

After I stopped working there, I rarely had cause to go unless I was going to see a performance at City Hall or participating in a march—like I said, the route ended at the United Centre, and people dispersed.

C: [08:23] I want to ask a bit more about the Antiquities and Monuments Office... The historical content you mentioned about Harcourt Road was fairly brief. Do you recall if there was anything more you were supposed to talk about?

S:[08:41] Actually, there wasn't much talk specifically about Harcourt Road. Mostly, it was a bit about the overall layout of Central and Admiralty. Initially, before any of those buildings—before Pacific Place or anything on the waterfront—everything near the coast in Central/Admiralty was military land, all barracks. That's why there's Arsenal Street. The whole area used to be a military site. You also had the building now used by the PLA (People's Liberation Army). It used to be called the HMS Tamar Building or the Tri-Services Building? I can't recall its old name. We introduced that location in more detail as well, then explained how going up to Pacific Place, you'd be in what used to be the barracks. Near the water, you had the naval forces; further uphill, you had the barracks for their living quarters.

G: [10:05] Like the Commander's Residence?

S: [10:07] Yes, that sort of thing, like the Commander-in-Chief's Residence, and the old Murray House was originally a military structure. Up above, you had the likes of Wellington Barracks, all those sorts of military barracks. So that area—our tours would compare how, under British planning, the area was set up with a government hill up top and the barracks down below. They also had their traditional establishments, like the Hong Kong Cricket Club for lawn bowls or other sports, St. John's Cathedral for religious activities, Government Hill, and so on. I recall a police station or two—one was further into Central near Sheung Wan, something like a certain numbered station. Then on the Wan Chai side, near the Hopewell Centre,

there was another station. Essentially, the entire hillside was part of that big complex. We also mentioned that from Pacific Place, if you look toward Central, on one side you have the tram lines heading to HSBC, while on the other side is Cheung Kong Centre, which kind of encircles HSBC. We once had a Hong Kong history teacher say that if the British Army simply blocked off that spot, the layout was such that if you got stuck inside, you'd be trapped.

C: [12:11] Could you clarify which spot gets blocked off?

S: [12:14] Basically, if they blocked off that intersection on Queensway near Admiralty—where the tram runs from Wan Chai out toward Pacific Place, and then you get close to HSBC, going down to the right side—and on the left side you have Queen's Road, or maybe Des Voeux Road, splitting that way. This side is Cheung Kong, the other side is the park behind Statue Square, so behind HSBC. If you flip it around, that side is the tram line, near the Methodist church in Wan Chai, and the other side is Queen's Road East. If they blocked off that fork, plus the other fork, you'd be surrounded on one side by the military barracks (the old Tamar site) and on the other side by Government Hill. If anyone tried to stir up trouble, the British Army's design meant they could seal those intersections and trap you right there. Above on the hillside, the roads also run both ways, so they could block them off, and the whole area is flanked by the sea. You wouldn't be able to escape that way, plus the military and the Tamar site are there. So this zone could seal you in. Supposedly, that's part of the defensive layout. That's what I heard people say. That side is Government Hill. Once you cross Queen's Road East, near Ruttonjee Hospital and so on, I believe they used to call that "Hospital Hill." There were a few hospitals around there. So if needed, it was very close to those hospitals, and you could reach them via the upper roads, avoiding the lower section.

C: [14:26] In that "defensive box," Harcourt Road is a key coastal road...

S: [14:32] Yes, though Harcourt Road is on reclaimed land. From what I heard, the older roads are the tram lines, Queen's Road. As you move seaward, the land has been reclaimed in stages. The straighter the road, the more likely it's on reclaimed land; the curvy roads are the original lines, while the straight ones are built on reclaimed land.

C: Could you talk about Harcourt Road in day-to-day life? Usually it's just a commuting artery in a commercial district that empties out at night. It's pretty dull around there. But then, for instance, during the Occupy Movement in 2014, or the protest marches you mentioned, or in 2019 with so many demonstrations passing through, do you recall any special moments or impressions of social movements in or around Harcourt Road?

S:[15:58] During the Occupy Movement, I did go down there a few times, but all at relatively calm times. I wasn't there at any critical moments. It was mostly in the evenings, and by then people had already set up tents. There were folks there reading, singing. Some volunteers came around asking if you needed water or supplies. I didn't actually run into anyone I personally knew because I didn't really know many of the people occupying. I just came down to put a Post-it on the Lennon

Wall [the mosaic wall of post-it messages created during the Occupy Movement at the government headquarters. This form of free expression later spread throughout various locations across Hong Kong during the 2019 social movements.] or something, without doing much else. Two events stand out: one is in September when the police fired tear gas. I believe that was on Harcourt Road. That day, I happened to be away on a work trip to Taiwan. I can't recall the exact time, but I remember when I landed, I turned on my phone and discovered, wow, tear gas had been used! That was shocking. But obviously, I'd just landed, so I went home in a worried state, not knowing exactly what had happened. Before that, everything had seemed fine. We'd been wondering how long the occupation would last because clearly the police wouldn't let it go on forever, but no one knew how or when they'd end it. Then, all of a sudden, tear gas.

The second event was the Chief Executive election—when John Tsang ran against Carrie Lam. By that time, I was already working in a different office in Central, but I could see City Hall from my office. There was a bend in the road near the old Star Ferry Pier and City Hall—maybe it was Harcourt Road, maybe not—where John Tsang had rented a double-decker bus. If I recall, it was the night before the vote, or maybe a couple of nights before. Down below, people were shining lights with their phone flashlights. We could hear the noise from the office, but we didn't know what it was at first. Then we looked out the window and saw them waving phone lights. I'm not certain, but basically, there was a double-decker bus, and his supporters were waving their phone lights. My coworkers were from mainland China, so they asked, "What's he doing?" And I said, "He's a chief executive candidate, so I guess he's laying out his vision." Then they said, "Oh, so you guys can vote tomorrow, right?" And I said, "Who told you we can vote?" They were confused. "Isn't there an election tomorrow or the day after?" I said, "Yes, but not for us. Only about a thousand or so electors can vote. Regular people like us can't." After I explained it, they still didn't fully grasp what I meant. Anyway, I remember that scene, but I'm not sure if the location was officially Harcourt Road or perhaps near it. In any case, we still don't get to elect the Chief Executive today.

G: [21:05] That spot might have been Lung Wo Road...

C: [21:10] ... possibly between Harcourt Road and Lung Wo Road.

S: I'm not certain.

C: [21:10] Because trams don't stop on Harcourt Road; it's a high-speed thoroughfare, so you'd usually turn off first to get near City Hall.

S: Yes, I checked once, and it seemed City Hall blocked part of it. The bus probably drove around inside. It likely wouldn't be on the outside section of Harcourt Road.

G: [21:47] So quite close to Harcourt Road?

C: Yes, close by?

S: [21:53] Right.

C: [21:53] So you mentioned that during the Occupy Movement, you went to Harcourt Road, seeing the occupied area. Could you compare the scene back then to how Harcourt Road normally was—like daily life—maybe describing what was special about it, or what struck you?

S: [22:36] I never really thought about it in depth, but if we're comparing, the simplest difference is that normally you'd never see such a wide road with no traffic, where groups of people with different demands were just sitting there—for more than a few days, for quite a long time.

C: [23:06] 79 days, depending on how you count.

S: [23:13] And basically, everyone there was getting along without interfering with each other. I suspect—because I didn't stay long—I'm not sure if people who were complete strangers ended up befriending each other. I heard some stories: for instance, some people worked during the day and came back at night to chat, study, or even camp overnight. It shows a lot of commitment because it was a hot season in Hong Kong—and it can suddenly pour with rain. So the people there must have been determined and supported each other. I wonder if it got boring just sitting around. We see the positivity: everyone believed in genuine universal suffrage. But in reality, it wasn't easy, and the government was ignoring them. So despite encouraging each other, there must have been discouragement too. Because it didn't seem like the government was responding at all; it was more a waiting game to see when or how they'd clear them out.

But personally, since my commute didn't go through there, I never felt like they were blocking me. My company did warn us not to go down there, but I didn't really care. I didn't go all the time though—just occasionally.

C: [25:55] Because you were in a mainland Chinese-funded enterprise?

S: [25:58] Yes, yes. I didn't pay attention to their warnings. Sometimes I'd go down there, sometimes to Mong Kok—wherever. That was 2014, long before 2019. No one was wearing masks yet.

G: [26:23] During the occupation on Harcourt Road, you mentioned you went several times. Did you make use of their facilities? For instance, the shared supplies, the restrooms... Did you ever take any items like water?

S: [26:52] I think I might have taken something. Maybe someone asked if I wanted water or cookies, and I said, "No thanks." They insisted, "Take it, it's fine," and seeing them so enthusiastic—like a young girl offering it—I took a pack. Later on, I remember donating some money into one of their boxes. But I never used their toilets, so I have no idea if the bathroom situation was rough.

C: [27:22] They placed a lot of shampoo, soap... Some people said they even brought all sorts of personal care products and sanitary pads...

S: So people would actually wash their hair there?

G: [27:36] Yes, some did.

S: [27:38] But what kind of facilities were there?

C: [27:39] No shower stalls, but I'm not sure how they washed. Possibly at the sink in the government headquarters building's restroom. There's a female restroom near the "pot" area, and another near government headquarters...

S: That women's restroom is a normal restroom?

C: Yes, so it doesn't have a shower. Probably just sink-washing or sponge-wiping.

S: [28:12] I kept imagining something like a beach shower stall with four standing shower stations (laughs).

C: (laughs) No, not at all.

S: I never experienced that. I didn't even know where the bathrooms were. I just went to see what people were reading...

C: Do you recall what they were reading?

S: They were reading actual textbooks, really studying.

C: [28:40] Do you recall the ages of participants—were they mostly younger people?

S:[28:53] Yes. I suspect the ones who stayed overnight without going home were very young, under 20, maybe in their teens.

G: [29:09] Did it feel like the atmosphere was calm, peaceful? Were they planning anything intense, or was it more like they'd turned it into a study room?

S: [29:27] When I was there, it seemed like people treated it like home. Some were gaming, some on their phones, some studying. I didn't hear discussions of big strategies; it was more like a study room. Some folks were sleeping in tents. I guess people anticipated a long-term occupation, but nobody knew how long it could last. I didn't feel any intense vibes. Even in the end, when there was the final standoff, it was triggered by the side that wanted to clear the area, and only then did people tense up.

G: [30:47] Moving on to 2019, that was a longer period of protests, though they weren't centered on Harcourt Road. From 2019 to early 2021, did you experience anything around Harcourt Road—passing by or taking part—seeing or hearing anything noteworthy?

S: [31:21] Specifically on Harcourt Road... to some extent, I feel the front line had shifted to Lung Wo Road. Because that's newer, and in 2019, if you went to a rally,

you'd typically go as far as Pacific Place on the opposite side, and there'd be a footbridge going to government headquarters. By then, roads were usually blocked, so you could simply climb over the barrier to get to government headquarters' lower plaza. I felt that the whole zone was bigger than just Harcourt Road by that point. In 2019, if something happened, I would usually go. But as things escalated, we began to worry about how to disperse and leave afterwards. They might shut the MTR, so you'd have to figure out how to exit—maybe walk to Sheung Wan or Wan Chai. For those of us who weren't so young, sometimes we'd see a huge crowd and not know where they were heading. So we'd move back toward Central, sit down for a while, then decide how to get home. Younger people were more on edge.

C: Could you elaborate on why younger people seemed more on edge? What was going on at the time?

S: [33:44] Sometimes on weekends, if you went to Admiralty and it was cordoned off, the police would be more suspicious of young people—especially those wearing black. So they'd get stopped and questioned by the police. Whereas for me, if I changed out of black clothing, they might let me walk right by. I remember one Saturday or Sunday, I couldn't get through Admiralty at all, so we looped around the back into Central, near the Entertainment Building. Then we realised we could still smell tear gas. The police were firing tear gas over the World-Wide House area. That was later in 2019, after which some of my friends wouldn't dare come out anymore.

C: Was it somewhere around July or August or September, or right after June 12, the 2-million-person march?

S: [35:38] I think it was July. By then, they were firing tear gas with minimal hesitation, in Central. Then from late 2019 into the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University incidents [major flashpoints of the protests in late 2019, where prolonged campus standoffs between protesters and police involved police sieges, barricades, tear gas, and mass arrests—turning university grounds into intense battlegrounds and drawing global attention] in November, things suddenly went quiet. In December, I'm not sure if anything happened. By January 2020, the pandemic started, and the government used COVID as a reason to ban gatherings. So that basically curtailed the protests. But I remember around that time, we still had the "Lunch With You" gatherings. And in Central, at Statue Square or Chater Garden, there were sometimes assemblies. I remember one about women's rights—everyone wore purple.

G: [37:11] You mean Zi Teng or another women's group?

S: [37:13] (I remember seeing on TV news that) One of them was the female CUHK student who confronted the vice-chancellor Rocky Tuan. She wore a mask then removed it, asking why the university wouldn't support students. That was around the same time.

C: [37:45] Was that in Edinburgh Place?

S: [37:49] I think there was another time in Edinburgh, but I'm not sure what it was about or who organised it. Then there was an event at the former Legislative Council building—at Queen's Statue Square outside—that we also [took part in]. Once, I recall Denise Ho[a Hong Kong singer and vocal pro-democracy advocate who actively supported the movement] was there, but I don't remember which gathering it was.

C: [38:12] Could you explain “Lunch With You?” That happened in commercial districts, right?

S: [38:14] Yes, at the time I was working in Central, so typically it would happen near Edinburgh Place, Statue Square, or IFC Mall. Sometimes out on the footbridge area—can't recall exactly. People would come down around lunch, maybe 1 p.m. They'd gather at IFC Mall, or Statue Square, or Edinburgh Place. Some would hold a yellow umbrella, some might hold placards, some just wore black, and they'd stand around singing “Glory to Hong Kong”[A protest anthem during 2019 Anti-Extradition Bill Movement] and chanting slogans for maybe 20 minutes. Then it got more and more “flash-mob” style, because the police started arresting even those at “Lunch With You.” Even if they didn't literally arrest you, they'd stop and search you, check your ID. So it became a real “flash-mob.” Later on, by 2020, it might just be one “Lunch Brother” standing there holding an Apple Daily, and the police would question him. Eventually, some people would just hold up a copy of Apple Daily without even singing, and the police would still come over. But a lot of people did it, and it wasn't just in Central—there were “Lunch With You” events in Tsim Sha Tsui and other business districts too.

C: [40:42] In 2014, you said the main demand was genuine universal suffrage. In 2019, it was also about that, but the scope was bigger. From your perspective, what was Hong Kong fighting for in these large-scale social movements?

S: [41:03] Well, in 2019 at the beginning, it was very much about the Extradition Law Amendment Bill. A friend of mine was concerned about it. There was a march that only had a few hundred or a few thousand people, maybe in March. I didn't go that time. Then in April, there was another with tens of thousands, and that one I first joined. That's when I realised what was going on. So initially, it focused squarely on the proposed amendment. We felt it was unacceptable to let them just extradite whoever they labeled a “criminal.” We believe it's not that simple. Even though it didn't directly affect my life, I felt it was wrong. So that's why we came out to protest. Then in June—June 9, June 12—so many people took to the streets, yet the government wasn't listening.

C: They didn't respond?

S: [42:55] Right, no response. They just insisted on moving forward with second and third readings of the bill. It made no sense to us. That's why so many people came out. Then on June 12, they still proceeded. On June 14 or 15, Leung Ling Kit (one of the protestors in 2019) jumped from the scaffolding on Pacific Place in Admiralty. We never expected that. It reminded me of the movie “Ten Years,” which had a segment depicting self-immolation. I remember thinking, “Would that really happen?” Then it

did, in a similar sense. The government still ignored us, so people were outraged. Then we saw the police resorting to violence, which we felt was excessive. So it wasn't just about the extradition bill anymore—it was about police brutality. That's where the five demands came from. Actually, those five demands... I recall they included a full withdrawal of the bill (not just a suspension), the release of arrested protesters, an independent commission of inquiry, and genuine universal suffrage was also in there. We saw the excessive force as unacceptable, and the more violence used, the more the protesters escalated, and so on. It got out of hand.

C: [45:59] So you continued to support the movement?

S: [46:00] Yes, though purely as a peaceful participant. We weren't on the front lines...

C: [46:05] But later even just holding up a newspaper could get you searched...

S: [46:10] Exactly. Our company told us not to go out, but we'd sneak out anyway. During lunch, I'd put my bag over my shoulder and walk around, just to appear in the area. At other times, I'd wear a mask. I recall once the march ended in Causeway Bay. We couldn't get on transport there, so we had to walk to North Point to catch a ride across the harbor. Or if we were in West Kowloon, we might have to walk from Jordan to Prince Edward. Yes, that was typical. I feel it's never really about how large the crowd is. Sometimes if you have more people wearing black, it might actually become more dangerous. Since I wasn't young, or obviously rebellious, the police usually ignored me. I wasn't rushing the police lines or anything. If I saw police on one street, I'd turn down another. Fortunately, I never got stopped on a bus at the tunnel, though I always carried zip ties and an umbrella in my backpack—if they had checked, it would've been troublesome.

G: [48:28] Comparing 2014 and 2019–2020, in 2014 the occupation on Harcourt Road was centred at a specific location—people gathered there and engaged in various activities. In 2019–2020, the action became more mobile and took place at many locations. If you compare the relationships between people in 2014 and in 2019, what do you see as the difference? Did things change for better or worse? Any lasting effects?

S: [49:15] If I do a quick comparison, I'd say in 2014, everything—people's attitudes, the movement itself—was simpler and less polarised. People didn't yet see the other side as purely evil. There was a certain innocence. In a single location, like Harcourt Road, some people would come regularly—some singing, some chatting. I think in those moments, people genuinely get to know each other. Social workers might also be there to talk with folks. I think they built closer bonds.

By 2019–2020, it was more fluid. The movement had evolved to people wearing masks, moving around from place to place. People often connected through online groups without revealing their real names. Even if they met in person, faces were covered, so they might not know each other's identity. Maybe if they were already close, they'd have private hubs to change clothes or plan next steps. I heard about people renting a room to change afterwards. Those folks would know each other

well, but in general, many people were total strangers. Meanwhile, I heard that in 2019–2020, there were more professionals participating—people with a lot to lose if they got caught—yet we didn’t know who they were. If you compare that to 2014, the main figures were known—leaders who stood on stage, gave instructions about clearing out or staying put. We knew their names and faces. But by 2019–2020, there really wasn’t a single leadership group. They were smaller, hidden groups. They might have planned tactics for confrontation or retreat, but there was no public figure. If things ended quietly, these individuals might never be identified. If they did get caught, they faced serious consequences. From the court cases nowadays, we see some who turned out to be professionals—but nobody knew at the time.

So in terms of organization, it was different. I can’t say they had no organisation, but the structure wasn’t like 2014’s. Also, in 2014, we had recognised leaders, but by 2019, those leaders couldn’t really lead. People just did their own thing.

But in another scenario, that particular small group must have had a high level of mutual trust. Yet on what was that trust based? Maybe they didn’t actually know each other, just people in a LIHKG group[an online forum that became a crucial platform for organising, sharing real-time information, and strategising protest actions, playing a central role in coordinating demonstrations across Hong Kong] or a Telegram group—maybe twenty members, or however many. Possibly there’s a group A and group B. There were quite a few, because even the people you’d see running around were not just a small number. With so many different small groups, where did their mutual trust come from? It’s hard for me to imagine. Without trust, you can’t pull off these actions; but how do you trust people you barely know? It’s really a unique operation. I’m not sure, but if you compare it—looking at the human or organisational aspect—it’s very different in those two [time periods]. Back then, there was still a set of so-called “leaders,” but the people taking action no longer listened to them, and those leaders couldn’t really lead. That’s how it was.

G: [55:41] That kind of tacit understanding emerged specifically around 2019. We’re not sure how it formed—maybe it was due to the magnitude of the events. Do you think that sense of shared understanding persisted afterwards? Could it still influence the future?

S: [56:08] I guess... I’ve heard some people mention—though I’m not sure if it’s true—that during the protests, whenever they decided to go out, they would mask up, rush out, and then, by the next day, behave as if nothing had happened and go back to work. A lot of professionals apparently did this. You’d never know that person in a professional role had been out there on the frontlines. Now that so much time has passed, who’s still in Hong Kong? Who’s on trial? Who left quietly? We really don’t know. Do they keep in contact with each other? I doubt there’s no contact at all, but I suspect it’s not that common. If someone was arrested and their phone number got confiscated, they wouldn’t dare keep in touch. Maybe those groups disbanded. Still, one day—if they remember one another’s faces or voices—they could reconnect.

Meanwhile, circumstances vary. Some people have just gone on with life, reflecting on things, and aren’t necessarily outspoken these days. Others might still be active but quietly so. Some might be dealing with what could be trauma or simply want time to reflect and not touch these issues for now, though that doesn’t mean they’ll never resurface. I’m not sure, but after so long, for anyone who remains in Hong Kong and

isn't clueless... take 1989 as an example: people who criticised [the authorities] in print ended up joining [that regime]. So for 2019, might there be people who once stood with us and are now assimilated? Maybe they decide they were foolish back then, that they should be patriotic, and suddenly renounce their former selves. I won't rule that out. It happened in 1989; it could happen in 2019. It's just a question of how many. It's not surprising. But it also doesn't mean that those who are silent now won't someday reignite the spark. Everyone thought after 2014 or 2016 that things had settled down, but who knew 2019 would erupt? That's just how it is.

G: [1:00:30] Turning back to Harcourt Road itself—2014's Occupy Movement is often said to have begun there, triggered when the police fired tear gas at peaceful demonstrators. Harcourt Road became kind of a focal point, partly because the government headquarters is right there. In your view, regarding the fight for democracy and freedom, what role does "Harcourt Road" play? Is the name itself symbolic—when one hears "Harcourt Road," does it conjure the idea of protest?

S: [1:01:40] Yes, anyone who knows the background would see Harcourt Road as... if not the starting point, at least a key location for pro-democracy activism. I'm not sure whether to call it a "starting point," "end point," or "cornerstone," but it definitely has significance. However, the new government headquarters doesn't identify itself as "Harcourt Road Government HQ." The building is there, but it goes by a different name. So it feels a bit detached from Harcourt Road. Because previously, even before that government headquarters was built, everyone still gathered in that general area anyway. Then suddenly the government headquarters moved there. So Harcourt Road is definitely important, but the area has changed around it—now we have Lung Wo Road, Tamar Park, etc. That means the emphasis might not be on "Harcourt Road" in name as much. Also, in recent news, you often hear about "Tamar" or "Lung Wo Road," so the name "Harcourt Road" might get mentioned less. It's possible that the symbolic link with the movement isn't as strong as before—but it's still part of the bigger picture.

C: [1:04:44] Now, you came to the UK and primarily live in Sheffield. Have you ever passed by Sheffield's "Harcourt Road"? Apart from the event we attended together?

S: [1:05:01] I recall there was a "Harcourt Road" exhibit at Bloc Projects around two years ago?

G: That was one year ago.

S: [1:05:13] Yes, I went there. I might have seen some postcards referencing it. One day, while walking around Crookes Valley Park, I noticed a "Harcourt Road." That was the so-called Harcourt Road I'd heard about, and I said, "Oh, that's the one." If you're at Crookes Valley Park, it's near the exit toward the Wave—it's close by. I walk that area a lot, so I often pass that little corner. I've wondered, "How long is this Harcourt Road? Is it just residential?" I never ventured in until we walked together last time. I didn't research who this Harcourt was, but presumably it's not the same as Hong Kong's, because that was a British military figure. This Sheffield one was apparently a British politician or something, not the same guy.

C: [1:06:44] Yes, he was in Parliament in some era, and held a key governmental post—completely different from Hong Kong’s Harcourt, who was in a military-civil role.

S: [1:07:05] Yes, so I know this road as I often pass by that “corner.” That time was the first time I cut across. The last time, when I tried walking downhill, I deliberately went back to that “corner” (near the Crookes Valley entrance). I walk by that corner often, but I’ve only gone across it inside once.

G: [1:07:33] Interesting. That’s nearly everything...

C: Yes, thank you. So just to wrap up: do you have anything else to add about your Hong Kong Harcourt Road experiences, or your thoughts on the 2014/2019 movements you mentioned? Is there a possibility of continuing this now in the UK? And what about your bodily memories walking on Sheffield’s Harcourt Road with us last time—did it bring up any particular reflections?

S: [1:08:16] I did think back to what I did on Hong Kong’s Harcourt Road. There isn’t much comparison, aside from the name. The contexts are so different, and I don’t have a ton of first hand stories from Hong Kong’s Harcourt Road—just a handful of movement-related visits or working in that area. Over here, I mostly think about how, in Hong Kong, we often see British street names. Now Hong Kong is constantly changing. Might they rename Hong Kong streets eventually? Who knows. Maybe even the name “Hong Kong” itself might be replaced if they keep pushing the “Greater Bay Area” concept. You see people online saying “go back to the Greater Bay Area,” but we’re already part of the Greater Bay Area, so what does “go back” even mean? So yes, at some point, they might rename these places. I wonder which name will outlast the other.

G: [1:10:12] And with that, our interview with Sony finishes at 5:20 p.m. Thank you.