小依：
和何光平一家是挺熟的。我读过何光平当我国驻
泰国、比利时和西德大使的父亲何日华写的《吃盐巴的日
子》。了解当日他怎样为了去养正学
校读书，寄居在外国公馆，受表哥气
的委屈。后来他到中国，从岭南小学
读到岭南大学。还有后来他到美国康
奈尔大学与三金小姐李廉贞结婚，成
婚，以及共同创业的经过。日华先生
富贵不能淫、贫贱不能移、威武不能
屈的高贵品质，令人敬佩。
我也访问过何光平，母亲，双语
作家李廉贞，还有他的妻子张齐娥。就连
我的儿子陈立扬也读过何光平父亲何
明芳写的儿童文学，并和何光平的女儿
何仁榕是初院同班同学。
然而，直到最近，新加坡管理大学
为了庆祝建校10周年，我才有机会
访问他们董事会主席何光平的机会。访问时
分，是个清晨，何光平半夜刚从严寒的
杭州回来，没休息几小时，就赶到办公
室来接受访问。
何光平是悦榕集团执行主席，是世
界酒店业巨子。难得的是，他不只是一
位企业家，还是一位教育家。
去年8月，他以新加坡管理大学
（新大）的贡献，赢得“国庆顶级奖
章”。这项荣誉，对他是实至名归的，
因为他是孕育新大的“母亲”。新大短
短10年，巨步迈跨，至今取得的任何荣
誉，都与何光平从开始就为新大定调，
指引方向，设立框架，督促实践，陪同
一起成长有关。
何光平可说是新大“第一人”。当
日政府准备开办第三所大学，主管大学
部长陈庆炎副总理第一个电话就打给
他，请他负责草拟创建新大学的建议
书。
那个清晨，我们的访问就从“您是
生意人、企业家，国家办大学，为什么
竟然会找上您？”开始。
他说：“是的，我也奇
怪，我想这也许跟我经常批评
新加坡教育，引起政府注意有
关。当陈副总理要办一所着眼于‘迥
异而不切实际’的大学
时，他想起了我。我从
小在不同国家
受教育的经历，帮助我跳出新加坡既
有的框架看事。”
何光平生于泰国，在泰国英国学
制小学、英国学制中学毕业后，到台
湾东海大学学习中文，其后进入斯坦
福大学，因参与反越战抗议活动被大
学开除，其后回到新加坡大学完成学
业。单是大学他就读了九年。后来，
还曾因为在《远东经济评论》撰文批评
新加坡政府而入狱两个月。这些缤纷的
个人经历，使他虽然是一个生意人，却
对教育有着恢弘的视野。
他说：“妻子到现在还经常提醒我
33年前我们结婚时候她对我的要求。当
时我是个新闻记者，她要求我永远不要
做生意。虽然我现在的事业不少，我对
自己发展的企业也乐此不疲，但是我办
悦榕庄，从来不从赚钱着眼。赚钱只是
生意做得好还是不好，在市场是否具备
竞争力的业务指标。如果我要赚钱，应
该去金融业发展，那里更容易赚钱。”
因为新大是带着改革新加坡大学景
观和生态的使命诞生的，这个重任让何
光平更是兴致勃勃。
他说：“很多人认为新加坡学生很
古板，只有外国学生才有创意，这是我
最反对的。我认为新加坡学生和其他地
方的年轻人一样有创意，只是被制度拘
束，无从发挥。新大是为新加坡的大学
引进新制度而来，我很感谢陈庆炎博士
从始至终的支持，还有志同道合的新大
教员一起的合作，没有他们，单靠我是
无能为力，而他们的成绩是远比我们
当日前的要好。”
在何光平掌舵下，新大未来10年将
更灿烂夺目！
I know Ho Kwon Ping and his family fairly well.

After reading “Eating Salt: An Autobiography” by Ho Kwon Ping’s late father Ho Rih Hwa who was a businessman and former ambassador to Thailand, Belgium, Germany, I gained a better understanding of his life – how he stayed in his grandfather’s house in order to study at Yang Zheng School, withstood the bullying from his older cousin, his education at Lingnam High School and Nanking University in China, his postgraduate education at Cornell University in the US where he met and married Li Lienfung and how they later went on to build a business together. Neither riches nor poverty could taint Mr Ho’s unyielding noble qualities which made him one who commanded respect.

I had also interviewed Ho Kwon Ping’s mother, Li Lienfung, an acclaimed writer and playwright, and his wife Claire Chiang. Even my son had read Ho Kwon Ping’s sister Ho Minfong’s books and was classmates with Ho Ren Yung, his daughter, in junior college.

Recently, I had the opportunity to interview Ho Kwon Ping, Chairman of the Singapore Management University (SMU), as the university celebrated its 10th anniversary. It was in the morning when I conducted the interview. He had just returned the night before from wintry Hangzhou and barely had hours to rest before coming in to the office for the interview.

Ho Kwon Ping is Executive Chairman of Banyan Tree Hotels and Resorts, a major player in the hospitality industry. What is most impressive is that he is not only an entrepreneur but also an educator. Last August, he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal as part of the annual National Day Awards, in recognition of his contributions to SMU. It is well-deserved award as he can be said to the “mother” of SMU. In a span of 10 years, SMU has made tremendous progress. What it has achieved thus far is related to the direction he set for the University at the outset, the structure he put in place, monitoring its progress and growing along with SMU.

Ho Kwon Ping is SMU’s pioneer. When the government announced the setting up of Singapore’s third university, Dr Tony Tan’s first phone call was made to him, requesting that he draft the proposal for the university’s establishment.

That morning, our interview began this way – “You are a businessman, an entrepreneur. Why were you sought when the government wanted to set up a university?”

He said, “Yes, I am also puzzled but it has probably got to do with my constant criticism of the Singapore education that caught their attention. When then Minister in charge of Higher Education Dr Tony Tan wanted to set up a third university, he thought of me as I was educated in different countries since young, which helped me step out of the Singapore education system and be able to view things from a different perspective.”

Ho Kwon Ping was born in Thailand and was educated in a British system primary school and an American system secondary school in Thailand. He then studied Chinese at Tunghai University in Taiwan before heading to Stanford University in the United States. He was expelled from Stanford due to his involvement in student demonstrations against the Vietnam War. He then returned to Singapore and continued his studies at the University of Singapore. His university education took up to nine years. Later, while working for the Far Eastern Economic Review and writing articles that criticised the Singapore government, he was jailed for two months. These colourful experiences led him to have grand visions on education although he was a businessman.
He said, “My wife will still remind me of her request 33 years ago when we first got married. I was a news reporter then, and she had asked me never to venture into business. Although I presently do have quite a number of companies, I am happy running them. Making profits has never been my focus at Banyan Tree. Earning money is only an indicator of how well the businesses are doing. If I had wanted to earn money, I could have gone into finance, which would have been an easier way of making money.”

As SMU was meant to bring about change in Singapore’s university landscape, the responsibility of its establishment filled Ho Kwon Ping with zest.

He said, “Many people feel that Singapore students, compared to foreign students, lack in creativity and this is something I totally disagree. I find that Singaporean students are equally creative when compared to other youths. They are simply confined by the system and so cannot bring to bear their potential. SMU was set up to bring about a new model of tertiary education. I am thankful for Dr Tony Tan’s unfailing support and for the like-minded fellow SMU faculty and administrators who worked together with me. It would have been an impossible task for me alone. What they have achieved far exceeds what we had envisioned at the start.”

With Ho Kwon Ping at the helm, SMU will have another dazzling 10 years!