

A fresh start - notes from three editors

This is the “memory compilation” of three people: I) editor and researcher of The Library, [Muj](#); II) web copywriter, [Ka](#); III) audio editor, [Edwin Lo](#). These are memories of our work, the founding of The Library, bits and pieces from the lives of the sound collectors, about the first sound explorations of a group of high school students, about Hong Kong — and stories related to listening.

(I)

As a “newbie” editor, how can I use a few hundred words to sum up our work over the last ten months? Not to mention this is not simply the work of three people, but the work of the entire team of The Library, with 18 sound collectors, over 100 high school students, two foley artists, and the head of Digital Audio Broadcasting at RTHK — with all the time and toil expended. It is somewhat regretful that at this point, I still feel I am back at the starting point. Fortunately, there are always different people keeping me company, thus allowing me to listen with greater variety, breadth, and depth.

Editors are listeners who regard fully the original recordings— in order to reflect and sort out texts, recordings, and oral memories from different individuals. Editor is more like a joining point. She/he attempts to gather various people through different forms, and then through the various voices discover the points of connection with the world. I must thank people to have allowed me, within the sounds and voices of individual lives, to hear society, to hear the times, and to hear one another.

(II)

It was exactly in May, early summer last year, that we began preparing for The Library. At the time, the cicadas were chirping all around us while the air conditioners were humming along. A thought came: what kind of character would The Library have, what kind of attitude, or style? Now, after a good part of a year, the whistling of the seasonal winds has not stopped, but The Library has started to take shape and found its style. I believe that by the time you read this text, The Library will have become a small but complete space.

From conceiving the themes and columns to the commissioning of interviews and articles, to finally sorting out the categories of sound by editing the text and the sounds separately, though complicated, all this has come to pass rather smoothly. With every interview and with every edit of the collectors’ text, the feeling was not merely that of hearing through the ears of others but to understand, through “listening” as a medium, the day-to-day details and background stories to different lives, as well as people’s perspectives and even echoes. In particular, the sound collectors’ writings, though fragmentary jottings, are so very true.

(III)

Listening to the first recordings makes me think of the time when I started doing field recording. Through setting up the recording, I listened to a world different from the one normally heard by our ears; more importantly, this opened up another world. From the everyday sounds of the city to a soundscape imbued with politics, listening to these fragmentary everyday segments reminds us of the importance of the aural world. Humans need to listen. Aside from our physiological or instinctive needs, what is more important when we listen are the interest,

emotional reactions, memories, and desires that such sounds incite. When listening to these sounds about to be shown to the world, I sometimes imagine what kind of setting they will be in and try to place myself within that moment. As someone who participated in editing the sound, what I aimed for is to show the key parts of the sound. I wanted to display a sense of completeness and to construct a short narrative — of course, some parts will be treated in a more instinctive or casual way. What is more of a challenge is that there is a temporal limit. Listening to these recordings, I think back of myself when I first started doing field recording, eager for the whole world of sound. And so I hope participants will keep the curiosity and enthusiasm going.

All the best, everyone!

February 5, 2013

三位編者的話

這是「三個人」：(一) 聲音圖書館的編輯暨研究員阿 Mui、(二) 網絡撰稿員阿 Ka、(三) 聲音編輯員 Edwin 的「記憶合輯」。這「記憶」關於我們的工作、關於聲音圖書館的建立、關於採聲人的生活點滴、關於一群中學生的聲音初探、關於香港.....關於與聆聽有關的故事。

(一)

作為一個「菜鳥」編輯，如何能夠用短短數百字來概括過去十個月的工作呢？何況這不是三個人的工作，是整個聲音圖書館團隊、十八位採聲人、逾百位中學生、兩位特殊音效師、一位電台台長...所付出的時間與心血。慚愧的是直到此時此刻，我仍然覺得自己站在事情的原點上，幸運的是總有不同的人跑到這原點來，讓我聽得更多、更闊、更深。

編輯作為聆聽者，從不加刪減地細聽別人的錄音片段，到思考和整理不同人的文字、錄音與口述回憶；編輯像是一個中介者，他/她透過不同的形式去聯繫人，又從不同人的聲音故事裡找到與世界的連接點。感激人，讓我在個體生命的聲音中聽到社會，聽到時代，聽到彼此。

(二)

去年著手準備聲音圖書館的時候正值五月初夏，當時蟬聲處處，冷氣機也隆隆作響。有一刻曾想：究竟聲音圖書館會是甚麼樣的性格呢，又會有甚麼樣的氣韻呢。到現在已大半年光景，季候風的呼嘯未有間斷，我們的聲音圖書館亦逐漸擁有自己獨特的輪廓和姿態，相信您看見這一小段隨筆時，她已是一個微小但完整的地方。

由構想主題、欄目設定到邀約採訪、撰稿編輯，到及後決定以「分開編輯文字與聲音」的原則來整理試驗，事情雖繁瑣，卻於彈指之間便輕輕經過。每一次訪談，以及編輯採聲人的文字時，感覺不僅是與別人交換耳朵，更是透過「聆聽」作媒介，了解一個人的生活細節、背後的故事，以及他對世界的看法，甚至是反響；特別是一眾採聲人收集聲音時所寫下的文字，縱使只是片言隻語，卻如此真實。

(三)

聆聽著第一批錄音就想起幾年前開始做實地錄音 (field recording)。通過錄音的裝置，聆聽到一個跟耳朵與別不同的世界，而更重要的是，打開了另一個世界。從日常、城市的聲音到有政治意味的聲音場景，聆聽這些日常瑣碎的片段提醒我們聽覺的世界的重要性。人需要聆聽，除了出於自己生理或本能上的需要之外，更重要的是當我們聆聽聲音的時候，聲音所激起的樂趣、情感反應、回憶與欲望。聆聽這將要面世的聲音的時候，我有時設想他們在一個什麼樣子的場景，聯想我在場的一刻。而身為參與其中的聲音剪接者，當我要將聲音編輯的時候，我想到的是將聲音比較關鍵的部份呈現出來，我想呈現一種完整性和構成一種簡短敘事。當然，有部份也會用一種直覺或比較隨意的方式去處理。而更具挑戰性的是，它有時間上的限制。聆聽這些錄音，我回想起當初接觸實地錄音的自己，對整個聲音世界充滿著熱情，而我希望參加者將那份好奇與興趣一直持續下去。各位，加油！

二零一三年二月五日