

Houston Asian American Archive
Chao Center for Asian Studies, Rice University

Interviewee: Jia-ling Li

Interviewers: Priscilla Li, Taylor Crain

Date/Time of Interview: July 9, 2018

Transcribed by: Steven Loyd

Audio track time: 1:28:33

Edited by: Priscilla Li (12/19/2018)

Background: Dr. Jia Ling Li was born in Tianjin, China, the youngest of five children. Growing up closely with her older siblings, Dr. Li studied medicine and agriculture in high school, and was financially supported by her father, also a physician, to go to medical school. She enrolled in an 8-year program where she was an undergraduate student at Beijing University for three years before attending Peking Union Medical College (PUMC) for five years. Her studies at PUMC was prematurely stopped due to the Cultural Revolution and she was then assigned to practice medicine at Guizhou with her husband, who she met in medical school. From there, Dr. Li taught and obtained a Master's degree in physiology at PUMC and the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences. During the interview, she shared some of the sacrifices she made for family, as well as her perspectives on life.

Setting: The interview was conducted on July 9th, 2018 in the Digital Media Commons at Fondren Library and lasted an hour and a half. Dr. Li's husband, daughter, and two granddaughters were present in the studio during the interview.

Key:

JL: Jia-ling Li

PL: Priscilla Li

TC: Taylor Crain

BSL: Bridgitte Shen Lee

GLS: Guo Liang Shen

—: speech cuts off; abrupt stop

...: speech trails off; pause

Italics: emphasis

(?): preceding word may not be accurate or transcribed

[Brackets]: actions [laughs, sighs, etc.]

Interview Transcript:

PL: So we're here today at Fondren Library on July 9th, 2018, uh for the Houston Asian American Archive. We're interviewing Dr. Jia-ling Li. My name is Priscilla Li.

TC: Taylor Crain.

BSL: My name is Bridgitte Shen Lee, the daughter of Dr. Jia-ling Li.

PL: Okay.

JL: My name is Jia-ling Li.

PL: Okay, great. Uh. so we'll start out with uh, where and when were you born?

JL: Uh, I was born in, uh, Tianjin, China.

PL: Okay. Uh, what year?

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JL: In 1944.

PL: Okay. Uh, what was your childhood like?

JL: Oh, my childhood, eh, in my family, actually there was a picture of my dad, and uh, here is my mom. My, my childhood, I, uh, I have...two brothers and two sisters, I'm the fifth one. I'm the baby of the family. My family is uh, everybody is very [laughs] nice to me, and I was spoiled maybe in the childhood. Uh, but uh, unfortunately, my dad pa—passed away when I was uh, eight. And my mom passed away when I was 15. Uh, but my brothers and my sister were all treat me very well.

PL: So were you the youngest?

JL: Yes, I'm the youngest [**PL:** Okay.] of the family.

PL: So uh, did they take care of you?

JL: Yes, yes, uh huh. And uh, uh, I was take care of by my, erm, mom when she was still alive. And then my brothers take care of...[coughs]

PL: Um, so...uh, what kind of schools did you go to?

JL: Oh, uh, all the schools I've been to since elementary and uh, um, middle-high school and high school are very good school. In middle-high school, it's—I was, uh...[speaks Chinese] Oh, I was sent by the elementary school there directly without uh, any testing. [**PL:** Mhm.] And this school is very close to, to my, eh, home, uh, on the same street, and so my mom said, "Here is, uh, safe, uh, safer, for you just across the street, you can go to your school." So it's a female school.

PL: Okay.

JL: Eh, and my high school is uh, Tianjin Yaohua School. Um, during our time, eh, the name is uh, Tianjin 16 High School. Uh, it's very famous. And very famous school in—during the China. It was uh, founded by uh, American church in 1930s, maybe. It's very good school, very prestigious.

PL: Okay. Um, so what kind of subjects did you study? [**JL:** You mean—] In high school.

JL: In high school? Oh, in high school we just—it's the general. [**PL:** Mhm.] Uh, we, we did not uh, divide it into sub-class. But during the last year, we just uh, sub—uh, subdivided into different subjects such as the culture or the, um...eh...[speaks Chinese]

BSL: Okay, so...in Chi—in high school in China, you do, you choose, um, they make you—they separate you, either choose the literature route, or you choose the uh, STEM route. So she chose the STEM route.

JL: No, after—during our years, we have the medical and the agriculture. I chose the med—medical and agriculture. [**PL:** Okay.] [speaks Chinese]

BSL: Yeah, which is equivalent to STEM. Mama, STEM's just science, technology, engineering, and math.

JL: Mhm, yeah.

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PL: Okay.

BSL: So it's equivalent to the STEM route [**PL:** Mhm.] versus the literature. [**PL:** Okay.] [**JL:** Yeah.] So that's an English translation, in Chinese it's uh, medicine, agriculture, it's one route, and then um, [speaks Chinese]

JL: [speaks Chinese]

BSL: [speaks Chinese]

JL: Just like American. [all laugh] But not in Massachusetts. [laughs]

BSL: Yeah so, the way they divide it, it's medicine and cultural, um, uh, agricultural, it's one route, the other one is engineering, technology and math. [**PL:** Okay.]

JL: And the third one is uh, literature.

BSL: Okay, the third one's literature. So within the STEM they separated out the medicine/agricultural as one. [**PL:** Mhm.]

JL: It's the last year, during the high school.

PL: Oh, okay. So why did you choose that route?

JL: Oh, it's a family story. [laughs] You know, I have uh, two brothers, two sisters. And my dad is a doctor. He has his own clinic. And uh, he save up the money for the education. He want all of us, study medicine. But during, eh—I was born in 1944, this is the last year of World War...uh, World War II. After that, there is a civil war in China. During the civil war in China, the...[speaks Chinese]

BSL: Uh, the price...[**JL** speaks Chinese] the currency lost its value. Yeah, so everything, the—the currency lost its value, everything, all the prices went up.

JL: Mhm. So all the money, my dad save for the gradu—um, grad—uh, education for my brothers and sisters, just come down, down, down, down, down. Finally he could only bought two bottle of the, eh, antibiotics for his clinic. So do not have money for my, uh, brothers and sisters to go to medical school. And then, uh, I dad said, mmm, uh, send me to the medical school.

PL: Oh, using the rest of the money for you? Okay. And how much older were your brothers and sisters?

JL: Uh, they were, uh, 10 more years older than I. [**PL:** Oh, okay.]

BSL: They were 10 to 20 years older. [**PL:** Oh, wow.]

JL: 10 to 17.

BSL: Okay. 10 to 17 years older. [**PL:** Oh, okay.] [All: [laugh]]

PL: Um, so uh, instead of medicine, do you—what did they go to, what fields did they go to?

JL: You mean in the med—in the medical school?

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BSL: Brothers...[speaks Chinese]

JL: Oh, my, my sisters, one yes, uh, one sent—go to school - nursing school, and another is the OBGYN school, but not med—not the medical school. And one of my brother is finance, another is accountant.

PL: Okay. Um...so what other influence did you have to go into medicine?

JL: Uh, actually, um, I...I was told, “You need to be a doctor,” when I was very young. [All: [laugh]] So I just think, Okay, I’m a doctor. And when my mother, my mother has diabetes, I always go to hospital with her, so I think the doctor is very, uh, respected by all the people, by the nursing, by the patient. So I think, Oh, I’ll be the doctor. [laughs]

PL: Mhm, okay. Um...and what kinds of foods did you grow up eating?

JL: Oh, it’s the traditional Chinese food. [**PL:** Mhm.] Uh, my mother is uh, was born in Suzhou, so our food is uh, a little bit uh, Southern style of China. We, we eat a lot of rice. [**PL:** Mhm.] Um, not uh, lots the eh flour flood. [**PL:** Okay.]

BSL: So Suzhou is a city about an hour out of—outside of Shanghai, yeah.

PL: Okay.

BSL: So it’s uh, the cuisine is Southern-style. [**PL:** Mhm.] Or Shanghainese style. [**PL:** Mhm.] [**JL:** Yeah.]

PL: Okay. Did you have a favorite class in high school that you remember, like, [**JL:** Oh yeah...] or a teacher?

JL: My favorite class is two kind. One is Chinese, and another is chemistry. [**PL:** Okay.] Our chemist—our Chinese teacher is graduated from Beijing University. Uh, he’s very good. He uh, told all the story of each classes, and I like his class. And I think during the, uh, those time, I have very good uh memory, whatever he said, I, I can—I remember, and then I can repeat out. [laughs] And uh, I, I think one time, he ask us to uh, prepare *Hǎiyàn*. There is a, um, article by a Russian famous, uh, culture [speaks Chinese] and he just said, everybody have to pre-prepare. And then when he has the class, he said, “Who did the pre-um prepare?” I raise my hand. And uh, he said, he said, “Okay, you are the only one?” Nobody else raise their hand. So he just ask me stand up, to say what you read about these. And then I just uh...I, I just...[speaks Chinese] I can...[**BSL:** Recite it.] I can recite it. [**BSL:** She read *The Seagull*.] Yeah. I can—

BSL: A very famous Russian, uh, author wrote a book called *Seagull*. So my mother memorized the entire thing, [**JL:** So...] and she recited it in front of the class.

JL: Yeah, I just uh, speak out from the beginning to the end. He was surprised. He said, “I did not ask for that, I just ask for you to say the outline.” I said, “Okay, um, just what I remembered.” And then, he was very surprised. [**PL:** Mhm.] And uh, another, um, is chemistry. Our chemistry teacher is very experienced. He uh, I learn a lot from her, not only chemistry. She told us, no matter what, because chemistry—chemistry has all, has lots rule, uh, has lots, uh...[speaks Chinese]

BSL: Formulas.

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JL: Yeah, formulas, and then she said, “You, you, uh, each of you just remember the principle of each things. And then you can—as long as you really understand that, and then you can do any, eh, question you can answer, any question, you can do any exercise.” I think, uh, at the beginning I did not realize, but I just remembered that. So I found all the concept, I read them three times, and then I remember. So by that way, all he—all her class, all her tests, [coughs] I always the top. [**PL:** Mhm.] Top scorer. And she said, “I never gave you hundred, because I don’t think everybody can be that perfect. The best I give is 98 or 99.” [**PL:** Okay.] So she said, “Even if you,” uh, [coughs] “you think you are right, but always think about something—you’ll have lots you did not know. Never think about, Oh, I know everything.” No. So I think, all these things she said, mmm, I learned it’s more important than the real chemistry.

PL: Um, so what did you do after you graduated high school?

JL: Oh, I just uh, we uh, in China, uh, we just joined the eh, national, uh, test. The, all the—whole national have the same test, we just uh, join that, and then you can, eh, you were selected based on the score you got, to different college.

PL: Oh, okay. Um...

BSL: So just a little bit of history. [**PL:** Mhm.] In China, um, it’s equivalent to our SAT and the ACT. So in order—so you go—before you, uh, a s—a student’s is, um, is selected, what college to go to, it’s based on your college entrance exam. So the English translation would be college entrance exam. So after high school, that’s basically what all the high-school students have to do. ‘Cause that school determines what kind of college you get into.

PL: Mhm.

JL: It’s very restricted, just based on the score.

PL: Oh, okay. So what college did you...? [**JL:** Uh, I...]

JL: I applied, uh, Peking Union Medical College. [**PL:** Mhm.] During that time, it was called, uh, China Medical College. It is the, the top, most prestigious medical school in China. And this school was, uh...[long pause, microphone disruption] prestigious medical school. This school was founded by...[unintelligible, microphone disruption] medical school. It was founded by, by Rockefeller Foundation. [**BSL:** Rockefeller.] Uh, Rockefeller Foundation. It’s prestigious medical school.

PL: So that was in Beijing?

JL: Beijing, mhm.

PL: So how, how far away was that from your hometown?

JL: Uh, it’s uh...

BSL: By train it’s 25 mile—I mean 25 minutes, train ride...[overlapping with **JL**, both unintelligible]

JL: Uh, I think, yes. When...40 kilomet—kil...[speaks Chinese]

BSL: Kilometer, oh gosh, how many miles is that? 160, 170? [**JL:** Oh no, it’s 18 mile.] How many kilometers to one mile? Oh yeah, okay, it’s less than hundred, it’s the other one. Yeah. [**JL:** Around hundred mile.] ‘Cause the current high-speed train, I know this because I just had to look it up for

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someone 'cause we're going to China, it's a 25-minute high-speed train ride from Beijing to Tianjin. So, [PL: Okay.] my guess is less than 100 miles away.

PL: Okay. So how did you um, like, when you got in, how did you feel?

JL: Oh, I feel, mmm...actually, in, in our school, during our years, just uh, 60 students for each year. It's selected from national-wide. I think, uh... [BSL speaks Chinese] Hmm?

BSL: [speaks Chinese]

JL: No. Our—in our year, it's 60. It's, uh, from—but not every, [laughs] eh, it's just from five provinces. The, the most uh...I think for, if you're selected by adm—if you can, eh, go to, uh, Pe—uh, Peking Union Medical College, it's PUMC, everybody think, oh, you are great. So during those year, (?) when we want go into the school, we are very proud of ourself. [laughs]

PL: Okay.

BSL: Okay, to give you a little bit of background, Peking Union Medical College was funded, um, found and funded, by Rockefeller Foundation about 125 years ago. It is the number-one medical school and college. The undergrad—so you get accepted into the medical college, but the undergrad is done at Beijing University, which is Harvard-equivalent. It's the number-one university in China, okay. [PL: Mhm.] So for, um, both my parents, for them to be accepted—so currently, they only accept...[to JL] 50? [speaks Chinese] [JL: 40.] Okay. So now-a-days, they only take... [JL: This is...] they only take... [JL: This is the history...] Mama, [speaks Chinese] Um, so currently they only take 40 students a year, even today, out of entire China. So during their year, it was 60. Okay, currently it's only 40, but during their year it's only 60, so imagine out of entire U.S., only 60 students are selected to attend the number-one, um, medical school, or the number-one college. [PL: Okay, wow.] Yeah. So that's how significant it is, that's what she was trying to convey, they were all very proud and the...and...elated.

JL: Here is the first generation of the uh, of the [unintelligible] [PL: Oh, wow.] And the...

PL: Uh, so this is a six-year program?

JL: Eight-year program.

PL: Eight-year program. Okay.

BSL: So four years undergrad at Beijing University, and four years medical school. And then followed by same thing here, residency, and fellowships.

JL: *Three* years in Peking Medical School. [GSL: Five years. [unintelligible] Five.] Five years.

BSL: So five undergrad at Beijing University? [JL: No, no...]

JL: Five in, eh, medical school, three years in premed in Beijing University. [PL: Okay.] [BSL: Okay, three and five.] And then...

BSL: Three in Beijing University, five in the medical school.

PL: Okay. So did you live on campus?

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JL: Yes. [**PL:** Okay, um...] Here—Beijing.

PL: Oh, okay.

JL: We, in the first three years, we started at Beijing in the, uh, department of biology. We have a, um, premed, uh, program.

PL: Mhm, okay. So what was that like, um, studying there?

JL: Oh, I think 'cause those three years in Beijing University is uh, um, for myself, is my happiest, uh...university life. Uh, we studied hard to get, try to get uh, straight A, but for the politics I could not get the A. I could only get a B. Most of the students could only get B. And the reason I do not want to mention, but you can understand that during China, for those years, it's about—all the others, uh, I got A. So we are very happy we studied hard, we're very happy, and we play hard. [**All:** [laughs]] Uh, I joined...here is some picture. Uh, actually to—in this year, 19...mmm, uh, 2018 is the 120 years of Peking University. [**PL:** Oh.] And this is there.

BSL: Oh sorry, 120 years. Mama, [speaks Chinese]

JL: Uh...120 is Beijing, 100 is PUMC. Here is the last year, um, we celebrate hundred-year anniversary of PUMC, Peking Union Medical College. So I went back to Beijing to join the celebration.

BSL: Okay sorry, 100 years, not 125.

JL: Yeah. [**PL:** Okay.] Uh, for Beijing, Beijing University, this is, uh...

BSL: The front entrance of Beijing University. [**JL:** The front entrance, mhm.]

JL: And, mmm, here is some picture of the Beijing University, a very famous, um, view. [**JL:** Sceneries.] Yeah. And in Beijing University, uh, mo—most of the student has to study hard, because in our PUMC, when we was admit—admitted, the first thing is tell the student, if you have one class could not pass, you will step down to the next class. If you, uh, you could only allow to step down one time. If the second time, go home. [**PL:** Oh, wow.] But uh, even in Bei—Beijing University, the students need allowed two courses, do not pass, to go to the sec—uh, the second class, and you have, you can go to twice to the second class, but in PUMC, only one chance. So everybody has to study very hard.

PL: Okay.

BSL: So let me clarify. Um, the term is, if you fail one class, you're held back for that year. You repeat that year. And you fail again, you're out. So you have one chance to fail one class, you're held back one year, one chance, and you don't pass, you're out.

PL: So that's for Beijing University? [**JL** and **BSL** talking over each other]

BSL: PUMC. Beijing University is twice. [**PL:** Oh, twice.] You're allowed to fail twice, and held back twice, that's it. And then if you still don't, then they kick you out. [**PL:** Okay.] And then you forfeit your entire college education, and you don't get a degree for that. [**PL:** Ohh.]

JL: And I can tell you, in our—in PUMC, we didn't get—in the first year, it's 80 students, but the se—the eighth grade, I mean, higher than ours, just have 27 students left. [**PL:** Oh, wow.] In our class.

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BSL: They flunked out a lot. [laughs]

JL: Yeah, yeah. So everybody has to study very hard. [**PL:** Mhm.] And seriously, nobody push you, but if you do not study hard, your fate is here. [**PL:** Ohh.] So in Beijing University, we study hard, and then we—I join the Bei—Beijing University choir group. So our choir, this is our perform—performance, during the um, National Day, and we are in Tiananmen Square. Not everybody can go there, just some. Uh, import—um, most famous school student can go there, this is our choir group at the Tiananmen Square. And we go to, um, Summer Palace during the summer. We have the, uh, have to come together to um, practice, and then we play at the Summer Palace. Uh, whenever we—no, no matter where we go, we sing everywhere, so we are so happy. And uh, um, for our choir group, okay, we had lots of champagne(?) during the universities in Beijing. [**PL:** Okay.] So it's very happy years. And uh, our classmates, we went to, um, different places to visit because Beijing has so many historical places to visit. [**PL:** Mhm.] So these three years is the happiest university life.

PL: You mean if you had to study hard, you...?

JL: Yeah, yeah, this is, uh, before nineteen-six...[**PL:** Yeah.] 1966. Our—at uh, Beijing University is from 1962 to 1965. It's happy years.

PL: And how much—do you remember how much it cost to go to school there?

JL: Oh, actually, this is the national school. In China, there's no private university [**PL:** Mhm.] during those years. So we do not need to pay.

PL: Okay. So the money that your father said to give to you to...?

JL: Oh, because those days is, eh, in...not in the People's Republic of China. [**PL:** Okay.]

PL: Um, and then after medical school, you uh, where did you practice?

JL: Oh, uh...oh, I...you just jump the...[laughs] [**PL:** Oh, yes. [laughs]] Uh, one jump. Uh, I do not want to miss this jump, [**PL:** Mhm.] but I do not want to say a lot about this jump. Just uh, I tell—I told you in Beijing University, the three years, it's the most happiest years of the university. After then, uh, something happened in China. The Cultural Revolution. So all the class stopped. So everything, it's changed. Uh, during those year, uh, I—oh, this is our, when we graduated from Beijing University, this is the whole class.

BSL: What year is that?

JL: 1965, I think.

PL: Okay.

JL: Mmm, and then...oh, this is my, uh, coat in medical school. [All: [laughs]]

BSL: What year is that?

JL: Uh, this is 1967. And then 1968. I just have some picture when we just uh, have first time wear our la—white lab coat. [**PL:** Mhm.] Uh, so...uh...I do not want to talk about too much, I just show you the graduation picture. You can see all the students is uh—the youngest one is the students. You can see lots

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of workers and lots, uh, army. [PL: Mhm. Are they mostly...guys?] This is during...oh, this is during the, uh, agricu—uh, during the Cultural Revolution. [PL: Mhm.]

BSL: Are those the uniforms they have to wear? Or they chose to wear them?

JL: During the, uh, Cultural Revolution, finally, um...workers and, uh...

BSL: Peasants and farmers.

JL: Yeah, and uh, mmm...[speaks Chinese]

BSL: And our—and soldiers.

JL: And the soldiers come to all the university. And they have to lead all the university. So our uh, during those days, no matter our practice at uh, hospital, and to do anything, we have the stu—uh, political study. We, we just educated by the...by the, uh, Chairman Mao's thoughts. So this is our graduation picture. Very, eh, Chinese way. [PL: Mhm.] You'll see everybody...hold a red Mao's book. [PL: Mhm.] This is our, this is us. You can see, this is bigger. [PL: Okay.] This is the history.

BSL: Can I elaborate on that, to help you guys understand? So during the Cultural Revolution, from 1966 to 1976, this is when Chairman Mao, um, with his little Gang of Four, they turned the entire country upside-down, 'cause he wants to solidify his absolute power. But he cannot be an emperor, because they had just overthrown the empires, um, fifty years prior, okay. So what they started—the Cultural Revolution, the purpose is for all *educated*, all your engineers, your physicians, your attorneys, everyone who's highly educated to be *re-educated* by the soldiers, the, the peasants, the workers, and the farmers, right. So that all the universities, all the setting, (?) they sent army soldiers to, uh, lead the political studies, and political study's one of the mandatory subjects that they all have to follow. So what she was trying to say, when you look at the graduation picture, that's how they are dressed, the way—'cause they have to copy what the soldiers are wearing, and everyone has to hold that *Little Red Book*. Uh, Priscilla, are you familiar with the *Little Red Book*? [PL: Mhm.] Taylor, how much do you know about the *Little Red Book*? [several talking over each other] Okay, so the *Little Red Book* has all the Chairman's—Chairman Mao's thoughts, and his philosophy. His teachings. So everyone in the country must always carry that *Little Red Book*, and must learn from it, okay. So it's very difficult for, um, my children and for your generation—and Priscilla probably had done more Chinese history study to understand, to even fathom, why are we forced to do this. No one had a choice, you must do it. Yeah, so my mom probably won't feel as comfortable talking about the history, but I will try to explain in a very politically neutral, uh, language, uh, because we're recording this, to tell you guys, but if you have any questions afterwards, you can ask me.

JL: I just show you this picture. So this is special.

PL: Mhm. So can I ask how you felt?

JL: During those time? [PL: Yeah, during those times.] Oh, I just—we just think we want to, uh, graduate as soon as possible. We do not want to stay, uh, even if we want to learn, we still have a lot to learn, but we still want to graduate.

PL: Mhm. So...

BSL: To be free. [All: [laugh]]

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JL: No, actually, no—nowhere, but it's better when you step out. You know, oh...and then your question is what I'm doing after...?

PL: After, yeah, medical school.

JL: Okay, uh...after the medical school—I'll, I'll show you something. When I saw your question, so...I can, I can show you something, and then I'll tell you. You ask me about the hukou. [**PL:** Yes.] Because the hukou is uh, closely related, uh, with where you go and uh, what are you doing. [**PL:** Mhm.] In China...

BSL: Taylor, "hukou" means a...a closer translation, Priscilla correct me if you think—if you have a better translation, [**PL:** Mhm.] a residence card. Kinda like your ID. [**TC:** Okay.] 'Kay. Your ID, your residence card, and everyone is assigned a hukou. Wherever you're assigned to, that's where you remain for the rest of your life. So Taylor, imagine you're being told, "Okay, you're being assigned to Tucson, Arizona, and that's where you'll remain for the rest of your life." So imagine the—that that's how, that's how it is back then in China. There's no freedom.

PL: I think it's still—still going today, or...?

BSL: Much better today, more flexibility. [**JL:** But still.] [**PL:** Okay.] But still, yes. [**PL:** Yeah.]

JL: Still. Uh, about hukou, so I just uh explain something. In, in China, there are different city—the different system. The highest, uh, uh system is Beijing. The center part of China, the highest survival(?). In Beijing, there's lots local citizen, and several, mostly important university is in Beijing, so the students in Beijing, in there—in those university, can have the Beijing hukou. Such as PUMC, our school, such as Beijing University, such as Tsinghua University, et cetera. And then, uh, after, um—the highest is Beijing. And then a few city is direct to Beijing, but do not belong to any province. During our time, it's Shanghai and Tianjin. Sh—Tianjin is my hometown. This is the second. And then, uh, each, um, city has a lot different university. And, uh...Chin—there's Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, and then province. [**PL:** Mhm.] Lots different, province. They have the, uh, lots of universities. After the province, there is district city. And then county. And then, after the county, they have subdistrict. The lowest one, the basic one, is the community. In our time, they call the [Chinese word], the community. So when we started our here, PUMC, we are here. If no Cultural Revolution, all the graduate students of PUMC will go to, uh...PUMC Hospital or, uh, the Chinese Academy of Sciences of medicine. Uh, sub—sub, sub, uh, group of the different, uh, hospital. They are all in Beijing. But after the—just during the Cultural Revolution, we were sent from here to here.

BSL: All the way to the bottom.

PL: To the community level?

JL: Mhm. Eh, no choice. You ask if, uh, this is your choice, no, this is mandatory.

PL: Okay.

BSL: Assignment. It's assigned.

JL: Yeah, assigned.

BSL: It's like you just graduated from Harvard Med and they tell you, you have to go serve in the most remote area in Alaska, and there you'll remain for the rest of your life.

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JL: But even if Alaska, you could not, uh, stay at the capital city, you have to go to the, uh... **[BSL:** Smallest town in Alaska. [laughs]] *Smallest* town in Alaska.

BSL: With no highway out. You have to get in by boat. **[JL:** No. [laughs] You have to walk by yourself.] So imagine being told that.

PL: Mhm. So you were assigned to Guizhou province? **[JL:** Guizhou.] Guizhou.

JL: Uh, actually, not the Guizhou, Renhuai county. **[PL:** Mhm.] [speaks Chinese] That mean the clinic is, uh...the very, the, the bottom...bottom level.

PL: Mhm. So what kind of patients did you see?

JL: Oh, we uh, we, in, in these small, uh, clinic, uh, any kind of patient, as long as the patient come to us, we have to treat. **[PL:** Mhm.] But if the, uh, big surgery required, there's no condition, so we send them to the, uh, county hospital. **[PL:** Okay.] A lot—uh, most of the patients are kid. **[PL:** Kids?] Uh huh, kids, and uh, mmm...men, men, old, older, older generation.

PL: Mhm. And how was that like, practicing medicine? Like, what kind of challenges did you face? **[JL:** Oh...]

JL: Uh, you know, in one way or other, um, medical college, PUMC, we—any patient come, we just have to do something such as to test their blood, uh their stool, their urine, and get X-ray, and uh, mmm, do every examination. And then based on that, we give the diag- diagnosis, we give the prescription. But in the countryside, the only thing we have is the telescope. [speaks Chinese]

BSL: Stethoscope, stethoscope.

JL: Yeah, uh, and then our finger. And so, the basic...at the beginning, we could only listen. But on the— [speaks Chinese] touch the patient, cold. Just...cold. [speaks Chinese] So, but even if these, it's different with tra—traditional Chinese medicine. So the patients call us, uh, call us, have the [speaks Chinese] have the machine to listen to the, uh, disease. So everybody want us to use the [speaks Chinese] but you know. **[BSL:** The stethoscope, yeah.] Um, we could only listen to—for the pulmonary disease and the heart disease. All the others...so, the basic, uh, technique we learn in PUMC, it's the most helpful technique during the countryside.

PL: Okay. So did you work with mainly, like, uh, minority populations?

JL: Uh, no, our uh, in our county, the min—not a lots of minority. **[PL:** Okay.] The most uh, um, most big um, mi—minority is Miao mi—minority. There are some in the very high mountain area, just in the [speaks Chinese] in the [coughs] uh, trading day, they come. **[BSL:** Market day.] They come from the mountainside, and they, they speak the same language. Uh, if they speak the Mia—the Miao language, we could not understand, but they know we could not understand them, so [coughs] they never speak Miao to us. They're very kind, very simple, they're very good.

PL: Mhm. So how was that, like, adjusting to that area? It's very mountainous. **[JL:** [laughs]]

JL: [coughs] And for—from our is Han, there is Miao. They are big, um, custom difference, yes. They wear the dress, but they did not wear underwear. [laughs] **[PL:** Ohh.] But their dress is very heavy. So even if the, the wind blow, it could not blow their dress—dress up. I remember when I, during the

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summer it's very hot. I br—I brought uh, two uh skirt with me, and one day I wear the skirt. Uh, after I see the patient, uh, very—neighbors actually, she, a young girl, she just lift my [laughs] skirt! I said, “What are you doing?” She said, “Nothing, nothing!” But every—everyone laugh, and they said, um, “Dr. Li is different from Miao.” [laughs] They just want to see if you wear the underwear. [PL: Oh, okay.] But uh, um, the, the people are very nice, very simple. [PL: Okay.] They treat us very, very good, very well.

PL: So did you live with a host family, or did you have your own place?

JL: Oh, mmm, my husband and I, we live—I'll show you the picture. Here, this is my son. It's Bridgitte's brother. [PL: Mhm.] This is Bridgitte.

PL: Were they twins?

BSL: No, we're not twins. He's two years older than me. [PL: Oh, okay.]

JL: See, this is our clinic. [PL: Okay.] It's two, two floor. Uh, we live upstairs, the clinic is downstairs, here is our clinic. This is my son, you can see just this picture, you can see the mountain. Mountain just, uh, Guizhou(?) there just mountain everywhere. You can see the mountain is very high. [to BSL] Do you remember the mountain?

BSL: I think so.

JL: Eh, in—around our clinic, there is a road, it's the, uh, just...not a concrete road, just uh, the road, but can go through the—the, uh, car can go, but not the sedan. It's uh, the, eh... [speaks Chinese]

BSL: Trucks.

JL: The trucks can go through. Because in the high-mountain areas, uh, some cold. [PL: Oh, okay.] And um, my husband always hold her along these road and sing the very simple music. [laughs]

PL: Like what kind of music? Like nursery rhymes, or...?

JL: Uh, very simple music. [PL: Mhm.] Uh, just a few tones so my daughter, uh...her singing is not good. [laughs] Because I do not have time. [PL: Mhm.] After work I have to prepare dinner for the family, so uh—but even if, during the countryside, I think during those years it's better than in the big city, because in the big city after your working hour you have to uh, stay, have to, uh, study the politics. You could not go home until eight, normally. But in the countryside, after, uh, dark, the patients is at home, so we can be at home. So it's very quiet. [PL: Okay.] It's good for us.

PL: Mhm. So you met—where did you meet your husband?

JL: Hmm?

PL: Where did you meet your husband?

JL: Oh, in the, eh, college. In PUMC.

PL: PUMC. So he was in the same program.

JL: Yeah, so we come—we were sent to these, uh, mountain area together.

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PL: Oh, so were you married bef—uh...

JL: We, we married on the, on the—after we graduate, on the road, uh, on the way to this Guizhou.

PL: You married? [**JL:** Mhm.] Oh, okay. And...

JL: But our certificate is in—we got the certificate in Beijing, [**PL:** Mhm.] and then we got married in Tianjin. And then just, I come with him to visit his mom and his sisters, and then we go to Guizhou. [**PL:** Oh, okay.] And one, one...one trip.

PL: Mhm, okay. So did you have your children in Guizhou? [**JL:** In—]

JL: In Guizhou, mhm. [**PL:** Okay.] And we—both of them were born in Maotai. Do you know Maotai? [**PL:** Mm-mm.] Uh, okay.

BSL: Maotai is the name of a town, not a city, just a small town. So Maotai is famous in China, because that's—that's the town where the most famous liquor. You know, Irish has whisky, [**PL:** Mhm.] China has Maotai. So Maotai is the name of a liquor. It's the liquor that's in a white bottle, it's the highest alcohol content liquor, the hard liquor, in the world. And it's what they serve at all the state banquet. When you go to any state banquet in China, or a big fancy Chinese banquet here, here you probably can't get the real ones, but that is considered the state liquor, Maotai. And that's the name, um, of the town where they were sent to. And what makes that liquor famous, it's the water and the soil. It's one part of China where the soil is dark red, like a clay, dark red clay soil. [**PL:** Mhm.] And they have unpolluted water. So imagine like Fiji water, flows through this special part of soil, so it makes the water sweet. So that's why you cannot duplicate this liquor anywhere else in the world, it has to be in that region. That's what makes it has—it's very fragrant. When you open the real bottle, Maotai, the entire room will be permeated with the fragrance, it's a very pleasant fragrance. They happen to have very high alcohol concentration. So uh, so any Chinese people, when you say Maotai, they all know what it is, [**PL:** Oh.] like whisky, right. What we—we just say whisky, and people know. Oh, Scottish, not Irish. Yeah, Scottish whisky, yeah. [**PL:** Okay.] So that's what Maotai is, it happens to be the name of the town.

JL: And all the, eh, American presidents, when they went into China, um, the national banquet, the Maotai is, eh, the national, um... [**BSL:** Liquor.] Liquor. [**PL:** Mhm.] Yeah.

PL: Okay. Um...so do you remember, do you have any memorable experiences, um, being a physician in Guizhou?

JL: Yes. Uh, actually, I just w—I just want to tell you one story. Uh, I think in Guizhou, one story is—there is, uh, I learned—I just tell you this story one time. There is a heart-failure patient. So I was asked to go to home, to go to their home to treat that patient. Because I used [inaudible], this is uh, a medicine treat the patient, has to be give *in vivo* and has to use in three days in different dosage. The second day, I went to their home, and all the...mmm, just uh, the patient and her, and her daughter-in-law is at the home. Uh, and after I give the injection, I have to wait until the second-day injection. When I was stand, uh, on, on the floor—on the door of the kitchen, her, her daughter-in-law just called me, “Dr. Li, come in, do not stay there! The dog is dangerous!” So, [laughs] when I heard. - I am...afraid of the dog, the country dog is—they really bite people. So I just step into it, and then I—she's cooking. Uh, she cook for the whole family. Oh, I rec—oh, I recognize she's pregnant. And uh, maybe in the late pregnant. Oh, I just a—I ask her mm, “When is your due date?” She said, “Oh, just these two days.” And she did not talk to me, she just do her things very quick. So I think—but she give me a cup of tea, and let me just sit inside the...kitchen. So she did her thing, I just sit there, and then I w—I step into the room to see the patient. Later on, I just saw some people go around, go around. And uh, the patient has got serious. So I don't

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know what happened. Late—maybe one hour later, mmm...a lady is—who is their neighbors, told us, uh, she delivered a girl. A baby girl. And uh...I think this lady is very...very strong. Because during her, make the—cooking the, uh, lunch for the family, I know, I am the doctor, I know, um...during, during those times, she has pain. But she still stand until the last minutes to finish all the work she should do, and then go to her room to deliver the baby. So from her, I learned...[speaks Chinese] It's powerful and strong, uh, tenacious.

BSL: Tenac—ten—ten—tenacity. Tenacity and uh, strength. [**JL:** Yeah. Mhm.]

PL: Okay.

JL: And she's very pure and very simple. [**PL:** Mmm.] And this is one story, another story, um, I think all of us were touched. When we are leaving those area, and...because this mountain area is uh, not easy for the transportation. And uh, when we were—we worked there for four years, we know lot people. And then we know, uh, a driver, a truck driver. She—he work in the Zunyi medic—uh, in Zunyi city. And he's uh, from Hebei province. So it's close to Tianjin, so we are...老乡 (lǎoxiāng).

BSL: Uh, people from same... [**JL:** Province.] [speaks Chinese]

JL: [speaks Chinese]

BSL: Hang on, hang on, give me a second, um...you know how when you meet someone from, um, you go somewhere else and you meet someone from the hometown? [**PL:** Mhm, yeah.] Same hometown? Is there an English word to describe—let's say you and I both realize, oh my gosh, we're both from Texas. Is there an English word to describe that you are from the same place? Is there—is there English equivalent? I can't think of a word. [several talking over each other] The—but—so when people, 'cause in China it's rare that you meet someone from the same hometown, 'cause it's not as mobile. So it brings you closer right away. [**PL:** Mhm.] So that's what “lǎoxiāng” means, “lǎoxiāng” means—“lǎo” by itself is old, “xiāng,” hometown. So someone that you meet at a different land from your hometown, [**PL:** Yeah.] and it brings you closer together.

PL: Okay.

JL: Yeah. So uh, he said, okay, “I'll give you a ride, I can move all your family, all your items from here to Zunyi,” because that's just on his way. And uh, so we just lost the—lost the local, um, pea—um, farmers just help us to loading the things. And uh, the student there, during those hours, just the school, uh, release hours, so students go back, and then, um, they just told their parents, Dr. Li and Dr. Shen will move to Zunyi. And then they tell a lot people, from different—our, our, uh, clinic is higher from different places, just come together. They hold...different things, uh, meat, eggs, and noodles, different things. But we could not accept. And uh, one is, uh, dam yeah uh... [speaks Chinese] Dam.

BSL: Oh, uh, mute. [**JL** unintelligible] Okay, so let me give you just a little, 'cause my parents treated everyone in the surrounding area, so they were very well respected and loved. So when they heard that they were leaving, all these people came to say goodbye, and they want to express their gratitude, so they brought whatever they could. So one guy is mute, he couldn't talk.

JL: Yeah, uh, just a few days ago, my husband treat her—treat his only daughter, just save her life. And uh, the...[unintelligible] he could not speak. [**BSL:** Mute, mute.] Mute. Uh, he could not speak, but he hold, uh, a bath kit with the red dam. 紅棗 (Hóngzǎo)? Date. [**BSL:** Uh, dates. Red dates.] Red dates. Red dates. And...we're really touched. [**BSL:** speaks Chinese] Uh, no, we just told all these people, so we

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appreciate, they say goodbye to us, and that just...get it, the basket of the red... [BSL: Dates.] Red dates, and I said, um—he just replant all of, all of you, so we just accept these as—accept all of [BSL: As a token of everyone’s gift.] your meaning, yeah. [PL: Ah.] So, and the, uh, her brother hold this, and then we say goodbye to them.

BSL: What—what year was that?

JL: 1973.

BSL: Okay, so I was two years old and my brother was four years old. My brother was born 1969, I was born 1971. [PL: Okay.] So this is 1973.

JL: Yeah. When the cart - because the, the road is uh, in this way, so when go away, we still can see people on, on the mountain.

PL: Okay. So where did you go to? [JL: Hmm?] Where did you travel to after that?

JL: Oh, we was uh, uh relocate [PL: Mhm.] to Zunyi Medical School. [PL: Okay.] To, uh, do the research and do the teaching. [PL: So what’s—] Teach the medical students.

PL: Okay. So was that by choice, or no?

JL: No, this is by chance.

BSL: There’s nothing by choice. [laughs]

JL: Nothing by choice. [BSL: A different China they—they grew up in.] After, oh, there is another story. [BSL: speaks Chinese] Uh, during, during those year, the Zunyi Medical College was moved from Dalian. The original, they are Dalian Medical School in, uh, north, uh, northwest of China.

BSL: East, east, mommy. Dalian northeast.

JL: No, [speaks Chinese] [GLS: North—northeast.] [BSL: Northeast. [speaks Chinese] northeast.] Oh, northeast of China. They are very good medical school. Uh, but they moved to—they have to be moved to Zunyi. And then, uh, set up the Zunyi Medical School. Uh, for—the reason is uh, not very simple, is um...[speaks Chinese] It’s too complicated, ignore it. [laughs]

BSL: Okay, let me give you an analogy, so you guys understand the significance of it, okay. So, the analogy would be—‘cause you asked several times, you made me smile every time you ask is it a choice. So during that time, the entire country is turned upside-down. So imagine, the best medical center in Boston being forced out of Boston and have to go somewhere, and not like going to a city like Philadelphia or Dallas or Houston, but forced to a city—let’s give an example, League City. You—you all know where League City is, right? [PL: Mhm, yeah.] It’s not—it’s not even Galveston, it’s a tiny city in between Clear Lake and Galveston. So imagine the entire Boston Medical Center being forced out to reestablish itself in League City. So just imagine the significance of that. So Dalian, Dalian is a very well known, beautiful coastal city, uh, in the northeastern part of China. So the entire medical center there, let’s just use the word “forced” to relocate, and they relocated to Zunyi. So Zunyi is not the capital of uh, Guizhou province, province is state. It’s another big city. So they reestablished there. But then when they are established there, they need—‘cause any hospital need a good doctor. So they’ve heard about my parents, so they wanted my parents to go to that hospital to work there, and also to teach there. So that’s

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why they were, again now, sent from this small town that they served, now to Zunyi. So you went from town to a city. [PL: Okay.] ‘Kay.

PL: So you taught there from 1972 to 1978, around?

JL: Yes.

PL: Okay, and um...uh, and then after that, you...

BSL: Went back to Beijing.

PL: Went back to Beijing to get your degree in physiology.

JL: Yes.

PL: Okay.

BSL: Master degree.

PL: Master degree. [JL: Mhm.] So was that... [chuckles] Was *that* a choice? Like, to get a master degree? Why did you choose to do that?

JL: Oh, oh no. Actually, uh, when we was, uh, relocated [PL: Mhm.] to medical school, uh, at the beginning, uh, I was there first, and uh, I was assigned to internal medicine. Uh, my husband was assigned to microbiology department. He likes that. Uh, and when we—when I go back to move the family there, and uh, uh, I was told—uh because you were from PUMC, in Zunyi Medical School in the department of physiology, there is a very famous, uh...teacher. He is very famous professor. Is national recognized professor. [Chinese name] He said, uh, he was heard there, uh, in the new, uh, teachers, there are one—there are two from PUMC. He said, “I want one of them to go to our, uh physiology, because PUMC is the best medical school. I want them.” So I was [laughs] assigned to the, to this department [PL: Okay.] in p—in physiology. This is 19, uh, 73. But for, for me, it—for both of us, it’s very hard, because we are physicians in the countryside. We familiar with all these dise—the, the common disease, but not physiology. It’s a scientific, uh, subject. It’s, uh...teach the medical student the normal function of the whole, um, body. Different uh, teacher, different organ, different system, the normal function. For me is a learn, I have to learn, I have to learn very—study very hard. And during the 1987, in China, something changed. The- [BSL: 1977.] 1977. [GLS: Chairman Mao died.] Yeah, Chairman Mao died in.. [BSL: I thought he died in ’76.] 1976. [GLS: 1976.] And 1977, just uh, all these system was set up. The, the graduate school system was reopened. Uh, we heard of that, we want to go to the graduate school. I think we need to, uh, recharge ourselves. Uh, in the Zunyi Medical College, because they are in Guizhou, it’s far away from Beijing. At the beginning, eh, when we just—we, if we want to, uh, register, we have to, uh, report to the direct—department director, and uh we report when...when [speaks Chinese] And then, uh, my husband us, told me, mmm...we were told...do not allowed to, uh, regis—to [speaks Chinese], register to register the graduate, uh, school. And he said uh—and they said, they will send us to get the reeducation. You can go to anywhere you want, but you have to stay here. Uh...I think, no, it’s not correct. I could not, uh, uh, follow this. And then I found the pic—the, uh, newspaper, there is uh, [speaks Chinese]

BSL: Uh, rules. Um, um... [JL: By the...highest...uh...] The bylaws, and the rules.

JL: I found that paper, and I bring that paper, go—I do not talk with the local, or with the department, no. I just go to the highest, uh, authority of the medical college. Uh, a teacher, uh, just uh, talk with me, I

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show him this, I say, “Did you read this?” Uh, because he’s the political teacher, he said yes. And I told him, uh, I want, my husband and I want to register to the graduate school. Uh, I want—I need your support. Please support us, register, we just uh, join the national test. If we could not get accept, we’ll stay, and uh...um, do the work very well, and continue, um, study, eh, as working, and then we do the study. But uh, he said, uh, he said a lot of reason, still no. And I told him, he said, “Just tell me one word why you want to go.” I told him, “I have ten years’ experience, working experience, but I do not have ten years level as a medical-school teacher. I need to get this level.” And uh, then, I’m lucky. The highest, the person, the...[speaks Chinese]

BSL: The, uh...

JL: The, the highest the per—the person of the community, eh, party in the Zunyi Medical, uh, College.
[**BSL:** The political chairman.] Yeah.

BSL: The political-department chairman.

JL: Just step in. Uh, actually he just recover—recovery from the, uh, from stand—standby to the position. And then, and...that teacher introduced me to him. And then, I go to him, because I’m young; he’s, uh, aged. And I told him I want—I show him the, uh, newspaper, and I told him I want to, um, register for the, uh, graduate system. He said, “Where you want to go?” I told him Beijing, PUMC. And then he said uh, okay, he said, “Let us discuss this, we haven’t discussed yet.” I said, “Okay, I can wait.” But as long as their—because I’m not graduated from their school. Uh, we know the difference they treat us, and those—treat their students. We know the difference, but for the small thing, that’s okay. But this is the big thing, so I just told him, uh, as long as there is one person allowed to register, I think we want the same opportunity. That’s it. He said, “Okay, we’ll let you know.” And then I said goodbye to them. And in the afternoon, uh, my husband told me, “Okay, um, you can register now.” We were noted we can register, so uh, I brought her to do the register, and uh, remember? [**BSL:** No.] [All: [laughs]] And then I brought her to do the register, and then—

BSL: You know what, I think I do. I think I do remember. [**JL:** Uh huh.] Yeah, I think I do, now that my mom mentioned that. [**JL:** Take the bus. Yeah.] Yep, and I wanted popsicle, that was my reward for behaving well. [laughs]

JL: Yeah, yeah, to do the register. And uh, my husband said, “Are you sure you can get accepted by the PUMC?” I told him I’m not sure, because in the ten years, nobody is, uh, study all these professional. But...nobody studied the professional, but I stay at the medical school for five years already, so I maybe in advanced...compare with all the people still in the countryside. I want to do my best. I have to do that. Otherwise, we could only stay in the mountain area. Her name is [Chinese name]. Do you know what the meaning of [Chinese name]? No? [**PL:** No.] Okay, there are two meanings. [**PL:** Mhm.] In the Beida University, there is, uh...

BSL: Hang on, actually, let me interrupt, mama, hold the thought, my, my—just hold you for a second, I think there’s a lot of explanation so they understand the significance, ‘kay. So during 1966 to 1976, all higher education—all colleges, all graduate schools—were shut down. Imagine today, our government make announcement, starting today, for the next ten years, no higher education. And both of you, college students, are sent to the poorest part of U.S., deep Louisiana, to be reeducated. And there you remain for the rest of your life. Imagine, right. These are political circumstances. So 1976, Chairman Mao died. 1977, all higher institution—all colleges, graduate-school programs—are reopened after entire decade of being shut down. I want—I want that to sink in for a second, okay? So remember the chart that my mom showed you earlier? They graduate from the highest institution, sent all the way down to the very bottom, [**JL:** Yeah.] the lowest of the low. So what that story that my mother just shared with you is she’s fighting

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for the opportunity to—just to register to be tested. And just because she want to go back, now she wants to go all the way back up here, ‘kay. [JL: No—] They’re different—let me finish, mommy, I, I need to— [JL: We’re *here* already.] Mama, let me finish so they understand. [JL: Mhm.] But in order to get there, she has to get retested, both, um, she and my father have to take all the ex—examination. It’s like college-entrance exam all over again, to be accepted. But they’ve been denied even the chance to register to test, so she just—the story she just shared is her tenacity, fighting for that chance to register to test.

And now following that—‘cause I do remember that. Because they left us at home by ourselves, um, because they had to study. So I had to—after working all day they have to go study. That—I think that’s when my fear of darkness came in, [laughs] ‘cause they did give us one of the students, like a babysitter, who scared me with these darkness stories. So these things are coming back to me, just sitting here listening to that. So my parents are fighting for that opportunity to have that one chance to do very well on the test, to be accepted back by PUMC, to go back and do a master degree. Even though they have their MD degree. So later on, she earned her master in nephrology, kidney. My f—my father earned master degree in immunology. So the story that my mom’s about to tell you, the significance our names. I’ll just tell you English, and then she will—she can tell hers. Yan Yuan is the name of the campus of Beijing University, and also my first name of the—part of my name, Yan, could also—the original word is “three fire.” Okay, it, the, the word has changed now, but my original one, Yan, also means, um, a spark can lit up the entire, um—can, can um, like, a f—a spark can, what’s that English saying? Can burn the entire prairie, right, the entire forest. So my parents, for their generation, they couldn’t see the hope. So imagine your life being taught, it’s completely out of your control. They couldn’t see the hope. In 1977, that was the first glimmer of hope of—of a life that they’re not doomed in the little town forever for their children. They were fighting for that spark of hope. I’ll let her continue the story. [JL: Oh, you still remember that.]

JL: [coughs] Uh, in the Zunyi Medical College, we’re from here to here. It’s by the...to...um, by the relocation first. And the second is have to go from here to here, this is by the graduate—graduate school. And actually, we have to take test, not just us, it’s just corresponding to the GMAT. GMAT, yeah. But is a lot different, not just the GMAT, it’s the English; but I think the GMAT has different subject. Has the biochemistry and physiology and uh, English, and uh, politics, so everything.

GLS: National.

JL: Oh, nation—it’s national test. Just not uh, not just a local test. Local test, maybe it’s easy. Na—national test, it’s very tough.

PL: Um, so throughout this time, how were you balancing, um, work and family life?

JL: [clears throat] This is... [clears throat] a good question. [clears throat] Actually, I feel a little bit sorry [laughs] for my daughter and my son—thank you.

BSL: [speaks Chinese]

JL: During those days, mmm, at the Zunyi Medical College, I have, both my husband and I, we have to study, eh, hard to catch up all this knowledge, and then we can teach the medical students. Uh, we just uh, learning and working all these things together. And there’s another thing, has to go to countryside again to teach—to br—to bring all these medical students to go to countryside, and uh, to do lots different things. Because we are youngest generation in the medical school, all this hard work were assigned to us. No other choice, we have to do that. But as long as we are there, I feel happy because the students are good. All the other [laughs] things, it’s kind of under my control, I can control it. But in the school, I could not control anything. I have to listen and then do it. So, so this is another story, I just say how I can

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balance them. I want to say, eh, sorry to my daughter and to my son during the medical school, Zunyi Medical School. Because all the extra, uh, after-work time, I have to cook for the whole family. After they eat, and then I clean everything, my husband and I, we have to let them go to bed. And then my husband and I go to the, uh...office again to do the study. So we set up, you have to go to bed at 8. Uh, during the summer, [BSL: I remember that.] the 8 is still very bright [laughs]. And then her brother and herself just uh, just talk with me, “Mom, can—it’s still very bright. Every kid are playing, uh, downstairs, can we play a little bit longer?” And I’d say, “Oh, yes.” It’s really—so I told my husband, “You can go first, and then give you 30 more minutes.” So they, after they wash, they take shower, and then play 30 minutes. I s—well, whenever I call them, and then they heard my calling, they just come back, go to bed. And then they said, “Can we talk a little bit?” I said, “Just a little bit.” So just leave them alone. But by that time, I could not leave. I have to wait until they fall asleep, and then I can leave. But sometimes I do not leave, I just stay at the home to do the study. Let them to go to bed. This is one thing, pu—um, push, force, force them to go to bed as early as possible. [PL: Mhm.] Another thing is, mmm, for she is going to uh, elementary school, but I ask her, her brother, to teach him one year ahead. Both math and Chinese. And uh, I just teach, just uh, just get the older one. But other things I can, mmm...

BSL: Delegate.

JL: Delegate them, is during my cooking time. So when my cooking, I—I just saw her homework. Uh, and then her brother’s homework. And actually, her first teacher is her brother. Do you remember that?

BSL: No, but I’ll take your word for it. [laughs]

JL: Okay. So I feel, I feel sorry I did not spend, uh, lots time with them. But there’s no other way. If I did not study hard, [coughs] I could not catch up the development of the, uh, time of the science. I could not go, uh, get the high score in the, uh, graduate, grad—graduate-school admission test. I could not go back to PUMC. So there is, uh...

BSL: So to answer kind of your question, um, the building that we lived in, it’s all the people who worked at the medical center. So um, the kids just formed—just like neighborhood kids, right. So when they—and the mountains right in front of us, so I do remember, we had a lot of free time roaming around the mountain, ‘cause you’d just go, whole bunch of kids, and just go roam and have fun. Yeah, so it was, it was...I, I, I actually have memories of us catching tadpole and grow them, then we’d release them, so it was a lot of free time. Uh, when my mom, ’72 to ’71, were sent back to Zunyi by herself, at that time—‘cause she had shared the story with us, where my brother and I were actually left in the country ‘cause they couldn’t bring kids with them, ‘cause they were sent to Zunyi to work. So at a very young age, my brother and I got used to being separated with our parents, like for a year at a time, six month at a time or a month at a time, we used to do that. ‘Cause in—from 1978 to 1982, when they actually got accepted into PUMC master-degree program, for four years we were separated again. My brother and I were sent away to Changzhou to live with my dad’s older sister. [JL: No, it’s uh...]

JL: Grandma. Oh, oh, during the first time. Okay, you were right.

BSL: Uh, so during those four years, we were only allowed to see my parents for like once a year, during summer, for like a week or two. And then we would write letters. This is before FaceTime, before Snapchat, before like all the—so there’s, there’s no way we could talk to each other, it was just letter writing for four years. I’m just fast-forwarding it along a little bit. [PL: Mhm.] ‘Kay. So they took the test, they passed the test, they both got—got accepted. It was a huge honor. [PL: Mmhm yes.]

JL: Uh, actually, oh, best to do these questions so we can pass it. Um, for, for my, uh, feeling, I think later, I did two things, uh, to, be- between the work and the family, I make two decision. One decision is,

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in 2005, I think, uh, there is a chance for me to go back, uh, to China to work in the Beijing, uh, Life Science Institute. But I give up because—uh, even if there's very good chance for, for me to um, work, and...in China, can um, use all my knowledge, use my, eh, lots uh advanced technique. But I give up because during those days, uh, both my daughter and my daughter-in-law, they just, uh, having a baby, and then they are both family, even if they have many, uh, during the routine life, but sometimes if they need, uh, something happened, such as the kids, uh, has sick, things like that, they need my help. So I think I stay, uh, in the—Dallas. So, and the background of them, when they were—who need me, I can go, uh, their home to help. This is, this is the one decision. Another decision is in, uh, 2012. My daughter just uh, um...uh, ask me to get retired. To—she said, “Your granddaughter is growing up. If you do not spend time with them, they will growing up, they won't close to you.” Actually this is just one—uh, this is what *she* said. But I think is, um, during the early time, during the early years, I did not spend time with uh, her, and with her brother. And I feel sorry for that. But if now, I got tired—I got retired, I'm still healthy, I'm still...with the working condition, I got retired, I can help them. So I just talk with uh, my boss, he's the chair of the, uh, in—of the insti—of the heart institute, uh, and I told him all what I think, and then, appreciate for his understanding, he, eh, agreed I go back, uh, to Texas, so I got retired early to help my daughter to educate *her* daughters, [PL: Mhm.] and then to help my son whenever he need me.

PL: Okay.

BSL: So my mom just literally jumped from 1978 to 2005. [laughs] No, it's two part, to answer your question, how to balance work and life. [JL: Yeah, this is it.] So she gave two examples of how, early on in our life, she was forced to be separated from us, 'cause there was no choice. But later on she sacrificed her own professional advancement to choose to stay with the family, which is—'cause by 2005, my younger one and my brother's younger one were born in the same year. [JL: And in 2004, the chance is.] So the chance—so we were both pregnant with or number two at the time, yeah. [JL: Mhm.] So she was answering your question, it's about the circle of life, right. [PL: Yes, okay.] So go back to your question. [laughs]

PL: Um, we are nearing like, kind of the end of the interview, um, but I just—Taylor, did you have any questions?

TC: Not particularly, um...[several people speaking quietly]

JL: Can jump to the last one.

PL: Yeah, the last question, um...how do, yeah, how do you identify yourself? [JL: Oh...] Yes.

JL: This is, uh, uh, actually, I write—I just think how I can identify myself. I just write down—it's not, uh, I, I do not think about very well. You can, you can see, I can give you these, you can see—

BSL: Can I read it?

JL: Yeah.

BSL: So I'll make sure the translation... [JL: If you think it's not, uh...]

JL: ...accurate or something change, just, you can do the edit. [PL: Okay, thank you.] Every—every—each one, each word has a story. I just, uh... [laughs]

PL: Or um, I guess, uh, do you identi—do you still identify yourself as, like, Chinese, or Chinese American...?

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JL: Oh, I think, uh, I'm not uh, [laughs] it's a mixture. I'm not a typical Chinese now, and I'm not a typical American. [laughs] But I think it's Chinese American.

PL: Okay. Um...and is there—I know we d—we haven't—you g—you had a lot of stories of your time in China, so we didn't get too much of your time in America, um, but we can definitely do a follow-up interview. But um, is there anything else you would like to add about your time in China that you...? [**JL:** That's okay.] Okay.

JL: Yeah. Because uh, in China there are lots story. I, actually, I want to explain something. [**PL:** Mhm.] In the, uh, course of history—that mean the history is someti—sometimes up, sometimes down, especially in China. We are just up and down in the history. So I, I—we exp—experienced the up and down, that mean the life, the different, the sour, the sweet, uh, the bitter, the, the, everything, so. We are not so easy, and we are not always uh so sweet life now, but we, uh, experience different tastes. [**PL:** Mhm, yeah.] But all these tastes, uh, uh actually, I think I'm the, uh...[speaks Chinese]

BSL: Optimistic one.

JL: Yeah. [**PL:** Mhm.] And for—

BSL: She chooses to be optimistic. [**JL:** Yeah, and...] They see the personality different and she's taught my brother and I, choose optimism, choose positivity, choose optimism.

JL: Yes. And then no matter what time, um...I have my—how to be, uh, the, as a, I have in my mind. [**BSL:** The foundation. Solid(?) foundations.] Always treat people honestly, and the...with...yeah, sincerely, honestly, and persist in study. [**PL:** Mhm.] And learn something new. I always learn something new. So um, I can catch up um...every, everything. [**PL:** Mhm.] What I want to learn. And I want to say one thing is, um, I'm fortunate. [laughs] The thing is, uh, in the course of the life there are lots of change point. Such as, uh, this. There are lots change point. I could not, uh, cha—I could not change the point, but when there's something, uh, has the turning on, I always get [inaudible] that turning on to change our life for the whole family. And our—because I treat people honestly, so I always have some nobles to help me to push me, give me a push, to catch up the train to go to the—in front of the time.

PL: Okay. Thank you so much for your time.

JL: Oh, thank you for giving—for giving me this opportunity in your program, I appreciate it.

PL: Thank you.