

Houston Asian American Archive

Chao Center for Asian Studies, Rice University

Interviewee: Jane Zhou

Interviewer: Nick Shea

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Transcribed by: Nick Shea

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Key:

JZ	Jane Zhou
NS	Nick Shea
...	Speech trails off; pause
Italics	Emphasis
(?)	Preceding word may not be accurate
Brackets	Actions (laughs, sighs, etc.)

NS: Okay, so I'm going to start with some uh, somewhat easier, basic questions. Um, the first one is: Where did you grow up?

JZ: Uh, I grew up in Shanghai, China. Mainland China.

NS: Okay. Uh, were you in the city or were you in a more suburban or urban location?

JZ: Uh, in the city.

NS: Okay. Um, do you remember what your house was like there or if you lived in an apartment or...?

JZ: Um... [pause] I... I don't know what...what it is in the American terms. It's called, I guess it's like, uh, a apartment-like. Hou—yeah, I guess it's an apartment. It's not like, you know, here, houses, like, umm, standalone.

NS: Okay.

JZ: Uh, a house by its own, but it's like apartment.

NS: Okay. Okay, so, so almost like a townhouse or condominium, or?

JZ: Yeah, I guess... I guess it's kinda like, Shanghai, the, you know, like, uh a big city in China. It's gonna be—it's like New York. You... too many people in the city so even today there's not many houses you know like, the definition of house in the U.S. So...we live... So it's kinda like apartments... um...

NS: Okay.

JZ: Like four, five, six depending on the layout of the apartment. You know, houses of families on each floor, so that's what we really, yeah.

NS: I was in Beijing before, so I think I have seen similar things to that. Umm, okay, next questions is, did you receive your education in China?

JZ: Yeah.

NS: And if so, like what degree did you obtain and how many years of study did you have there?

JZ: I got, I think, uh, Bachelor's of Science. Uh... four years college, yeah.

NS: Okay. Umm, just a quick question. Did they have the gaokao around during your time, or was that something, like the test you have to take to get into college that all Chinese students take currently.

JZ: Oh. Gaokao. What is gaokao? Yeah, we did have to take a test. It's like, uh, like take three days, two days, I forgot now. It's like you have to take every subject, I guess kinda like the SAT here. You take it all at once. The entire country, [**NS:** wow] it's like fixed two or three days, the entire country takes those, and then the high school graduates of the whole country takes those on the same day at the same time on the same topic so nobody can cheat. You know, all these kind of things. So it's like, one shot. You know, you do well, that's it. You don't do well, that's it. (laughs) As well, so yeah. It is called the what? The Gout?

NS: The gaokao. Um, I guess for the [writes down characters]

JZ: [looking at characters] Oh, gaokao! I got you. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Uh-huh, yes. That's pretty good.

NS: Umm, okay, and so what college did you attend after, after, uh...?

JZ: I did Shanghai's Teacher's College because I wanted to be a teacher. So um, yeah.

NS: Okay, umm, what did your parents do when you were in China?

JZ: My parents? They were, I guess, my dad is a engineer.

NS: Okay.

JZ: And my mom is like, a, um... [pause] I'm trying to translate the terms, uhh, say like the, uh...project manager type. Yeah.

NS: Okay, okay. Did you work in China when you were there?

JZ: Yeah, for very short period of time. For like, uh, less than six months, I taught um, middle school, uh, then I came to U.S. So I came to U.S. six months after I graduated from college.

NS: Okay. Umm, what type of lifestyle did you have while living in China? Were you comfortable? Did you live in like a nice neighborhood or, was there anything more specific?

JZ: Uh, yeah. Uh, I guess we're my family is middle class. You know, parents work, you know. Um, but not rich or anything. So, just middle, uh, you know.

NS: Okay, so did you ever go to the mall, or to places like to places to shop during the

weekend? Like what was your typical weekend like? Were you able to... Did you work or did you...?

JZ: Well, it's um, before get to college, weekend is study...we do a lot of schoolwork in China, you know. So, um, and at the time, there was no mall or anything in China yet.

NS: There was no what?

JZ: No mall, there was stores you can go... like department stores. But uh, no I didn't, sometimes go to if I need to buy things, but very rarely. Normally, we go, we go to like a, um, neighborhood store to get things. It's like that.

NS: Okay. Um, so right before you left, what did you think of the political climate in China? Just what did you think of the government and about?

JZ: I was not too much involved in that, these kind of things. So, um... I don't know cause I didn't really involve in that kind of thing, so I can't say I have much uh, opinion or comment, cause I guess, you know, just graduated from college, you know, didn't really involved in the life, you know, the—the...

NS: Focused on starting on your career.

JZ: Yeah, yeah. So hadn't really thought about those kind of things.

NS: Okay. What did you think of the religious climate? I mean I know a lot of Chinese people are atheists. What did you...What did you think about the whole religious climate in China when you were there?

JZ: Um, the religious environment was not really, um, I don't know not many people that really have a religion at the time.

NS: Okay.

JZ: I, I have a neighbor there, are religious, I think they are Catholic or something, you know. But most people, they don't have a religion. So, uh, even in college there was no, you know, at the time, there was no talking about these kind of things. You know, this.. there's like, um, yeah, there's pretty much no talking about those kind of things. At the time I, you know graduated, I mean, I went to the college or anything.

NS: Okay, okay, cause yeah, cause when you come to Rice, there's a Catholic student organization, an Episcopalian, like everything, but China, it's pretty much not is happening there in terms of religion.

JZ: I guess religion is part of the culture of social life in the—in Western. In China, for the, I guess after the [pause] I don't know, I—I—I just say I can't remember, even remember when I was growing, there was not many mention of those. There was just not an environment for it in China, I guess, at least when I was there.

[Phone Call Interruption: 8:10-8:53]

NS: Umm, okay. So now going to the migration part. Um, but, what year did you emigrate to the United States from China.

JZ: Um, it's—it's January '91, 1991 yeah.

NS: Um, and, um, have you obtained citizenship since then?

JZ: Yeah, mmhmm.

NS: What year did you obtain citizenship?

JZ: I can't remember, um [pause] Uh, maybe around '95, '96. I'm not sure exactly because I—I don't remember exactly.

NS: No, that's alright, that's alright. Just like a rough approximation. Umm, what was your Visa status was when you came here? Did you remember what your Visa status was?

JZ: Umm, I think it's called F-2. So like, uh spouse or wife to my husband, because my husband was a student in the college. Yeah.

NS: Okay, That answers my next question: Did you come over as a spouse? [**JZ:** Right, right.] Okay, Did you find it difficult to apply for citizenship? Was there anything about the process that you thought was, like, unjust or not equitable?

JZ: Umm, no, uhuh. It was pretty, well, it was pretty smooth for me, yeah.

NS: Okay, that's nice.

JZ: Yeah.

NS: So, what led you to decide to migrate to the United States?

JZ: Umm... [pause] I—I mean, for me it was join my husband, right, but I guess for my husband, he want, he wanted a better life, more opportunity, you know, to see what the... the world is like outside China. You know, maybe.

NS: Did he want, like, more education, more work opportunity, or...?

JZ: Yeah, yeah, both. More education, more work opportunity, you know, um, and chance of having better life or different life, you know.

NS: What was it about the Chinese environment that maybe stifled that work, or that desire for more work and education opportunity?

JZ: Yeah, uh, cause at the time, um... um, China is already—is already opened the door to the Western, but not, um, that much difference yet compared to today. It was still pretty, uh, I can't say isolated, but not as much as today, you know, you go to China today, it's like, you know, to Shanghai, it's...it's you can tell it's China, but the environment and all those is a lot more modern today, but...so I guess, umm...

NS: Shanghai looks like a typical modern city from all the photos I see.

JZ: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Umm. So... you know it's a, it's a fact that Western is more advanced, you know, right, than China, so you know, as a young man, he wants, you know, to see, if he can get the opportunity to learn more, um, to be more educated, you know, to see what he can do in an environment like this.

NS: Okay.

JZ: Yeah.

NS: Were you nervous about the move to the United States?

JZ: Yeah, I guess I was. Um, but since he's here already, so I'm— it's a lot better for me than when he came here first, you know, alone on his own, you know. So, I was nervous but he already he got, uh, you know, scholarship and college. So, it's not as bad, you know, not like when he came here, there was no money, no scholarship. He has to borrow money, then trying to find a Teacher Assistant or that kind of stuff to support himself. It was a lot tougher on him than on me at the time. Yeah.

NS: Okay. So that kinda answers my next question. Did you have some sort of network in place to help you out once you arrived, you had your husband to help.

JZ: Yeah, I mean, yeah, I had my husband, he had his friend, you know, that came to the U.S. before him, you know. They all help each other out, you know. Of course they had to work, you know, when the, during the school breaks, the holidays, you know, summer or winter, they all go find a job, you know, you know, trying to support themselves.

NS: So they did a lot of temporary work in order to...?

JZ: Yeah, yeah. And also trying to talk to professors, trying to find, you know, scholarship during the school year. Get tuition away. He came as a graduate student, so more opportunities like that than the undergraduate, but still you have to work, you know, help do the research for professors, and find opportunities.

NS: Did you feel that you, like, you and your husband started at a disadvantage because of the relative strength of the dollar to the Chinese currency.

JZ: Oh yeah, definitely. I think at the time it was a dollar equal to more than eight Yuan. Now it's almost six, right? Yeah.

NS: Yeah, when I was there, it was around six, eight.

JZ: Yeah, at the time it was around eight, and it was hard to get, you know you go to the bank, bank only allow you to get this money, this much, you know, you have to go to the, I don't know, black market or somewhere, find, uh, find...you know private resources to get dollars, you know, so yeah, it was—it was tough, but that's the way it goes, first generation immigrants. It's always a lot tougher. Yeah.

NS: Um, so when choosing to live where you did, well okay, first of all, where did you move to when you first came to the United States?

JZ: Uh, Mississippi. So my husband was at the University of Mississippi. I think it's called Ole Miss uh, in graduate....

NS: Ole Miss, yeah.

JZ: He was a Double E major there. Graduate student, so at the time was uh, he graduated in '91, end of '91, so at the time, it was really hard to find a job. Job market is really bad, you know. So, you know, when he did the job search, you know, sent resumes to all over the country. Seems that Houston, he got better response from Houston in this area. So that's why come to Houston.

NS: So you only lived in Mississippi for a very short time?

JZ: Well, yeah. I lived there for a year.

NS: Okay, when you, umm, when you chose to live, moved to Houston, did you take into...

[Phone Interruption 15:40-16:10]

NS: Okay, so when you—when you moved to Houston, did you take into account the racial makeup of those in your neighborhood, when you, like, when you chose where to live?

JZ: Uh, okay. When we come to Houston, of course we live in apartments, right, so uh, yeah, we rent apartments close to uh, Chinatown because it's a lot more convenient. You know, shopping, all those, and it's got lot less expensive then...

NS: Over in this area?

JZ: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And it's, you know, most— a lot of Chinese people over there, so it's a lot easier to get help, you know, get a network, those kind of things.

NS: What type of help did you, did you use or did you need when you first moved to Houston that you had to...?

JZ: Um, when we first moved to Houston, of course, at first, we trying to find a place to stay, you know, so my husband had, you know, um, uh, friends, they were here in Houston graduated from Ole Miss as well, so we stay with them for a week until we find apartment. You know, so and then they you know, took us to Chinatown, showed us around where to go to find things, where to shopping, this kind of stuff. Umm, yeah.

NS: So that was your first experience with the Houston Chinese community, or the Chinese-American community?

JZ: Yeah, uh huh, yeah.

NS: Okay, um, when, like when you chose to live in Chinatown when you came to Houston, did you feel more secure by having others of your race around you. Was it something that made you feel more comfortable, like...?

JZ: Yeah, I guess the—the make—make... they make me feel more secure when we find a church here, you know. There's a lot of church, uh, Chinese people go to. Uh, so you see a lot of people you know. Um, and you know, you have, you know, so many people, a network, you know cause church here, especially in the Chinatown area, is a lot of students, you know, people at the church you can, we see how people get helped, you know all those people be

here for long time establish, and all those offer you experience, give you a lot of information, you know, uh it does feel, it did feel a lot secure, safer, you know. Around, around—

NS: Okay.

JZ:—in that environment.

NS: Okay, umm, let's see. Um, so when you moved to Houston and into the China town apartment, did you feel integrated within a community. Was it, did you feel it was easy to—to become part of that Chinese-American culture?

JZ: Yeah, I mean. You see cultural-wise, there's not much, I did not feel a big difference in China or, uh, in here, 'cause, uh, you know... um, of course, it's in a way it's very different, right? The way we go around, you know, in a car, or in China, pretty much we most just walk, you know, take the bus. And in here, it's like, in Houston you drive everywhere, right? That's different but cultural-wise, it didn't feel a huge difference or anything.

NS: Okay, um, do you currently feel integrated? Like, in—last year do you feel like you've become part of the Chinese-American culture and you feel that, do you feel like everything is, or just do you feel integrated now?

JZ: Um... integrated? In what way?

NS: Umm, I mean... that's a good question.

JZ: I guess I do feel a lot more, I—I guess it's the word 'integrated'; it's okay. A lot more, um, I guess I feel a lot more being part of society, if that's what you mean, after so many years here. You know, like you're used to the environment, used to the culture, you know, used to everything happens surrounding me. Um, but do I really, really feel that this is, uh, my home? You know, I'm going to, um, you know, um... spend my entire life here? I don't know yet.

NS: Okay.

JZ: Uh, you know still thinking that maybe when I get old I go back to China, you know? So, I can't really I say I'm, um, 100% integrated, really consider here is my, uh, home home where I will end up, you know, with here. There is still opportunity I may go back to China, you know, so, 'cause, uh, I think to me it's been growing up there, you know, it's different than in your 20s moving here, except getting involved, uh, getting used to the environment, but I think my kid's generation, it will be different for them, 'cause things happen, you know, and all those things that um, you remember when you were younger, when you were little, it plays a lot, uh, more important part than when you grow up, when you're an adult, you know, you just pure, um, except try to adapt. The, the difference is, I guess, just the weight it carries is a lot different.

NS: Okay.

JZ: I mean, but it's just to me. And I know to some people, they have no problem—they love. You know, but here, I'm part of the society here, you know getting involved, but um, I think I still miss my country a lot, you know, so... so I guess depends on your definition of being integrated.

NS: Right, so you still, you still feel a connection to your hometown but your comfortable living here when you are here.

JZ: Right, I'm comfortable with the environment here, you know, um, no problem but, um... if I—if I, umm, given a choice, oh, what you know.

NS: Like if you, if you were told you had to spend the rest of your life in America or the rest of your life in China...

JZ: Yeah, if I have the opportunity to go back to China to do work, doing the kind of work I do since like that, um, I probably would choose to go back, you know, that—that's what I mean. So I, I don't know. Depends on your definition of 'integrated'.

NS: Right. It's, it's kind of a very open-ended word for a lot of, I don't know, topics in this class, so it's...

JZ: Right. I guess integrated, you know, in... in, yeah, I guess you can say 'integrated', cause I work in a, in a big company, you know, my colleagues are all, you know, um, most of them are American people, you know. Therefore, more than, I mean, ten years, you know, no problem, you know, just you know come here, you know, watch TV, watch sports, all those, yeah 'integrated', but, um, there's still part of me, it's, um, missing the culture I used to have.

NS: Right, okay. So, this question is, uh, like, how difficult was it to transition to life in America at first? Like...

JZ: Um...

NS: What did you have to change about your daily habits? What, what had to change for you to get accustomed to living here?

JZ: [pause] Um, I guess I didn't feel like I changed anything, which is like a natural, adapt to the environment, whatever is required for me to move on, you know, to go to school, um, find a job, those kind of things. Whatever is required, I just naturally adapt. Okay, this is what is required of me to do. Okay, I just do that, you know. It's like kind of like, one example, like, in China at the time, you know, most of the, the, like, as soon as I graduated from college, I didn't have to find job myself cause it's like all arranged, you know, school is tell you this is where you go to, this is what you do... At the time, still the—the college still, you don't have to worry you have a job, unlike today, is like you have to find your own job. And too many people, things like that, they have interview process now. You know, right? Just like here, but at the time, I didn't have to worry about that, so come to the U.S., you know. That was the first thing you have to adapt, you know.

NS: You have to start making all these choices.

JZ: Yeah, you have to apply, find the job yourself. But it's like a natural process, like okay, this one requires this, the world is here, you know, this is what I do, I didn't have to feel like, 'Oh, this is very hard'. You know, I didn't have to do this.

NS: Okay, So it kind of just fell into place? Almost?

JZ: Yeah.

NS: Okay.

JZ: Yeah, I guess it was a good thing that I was just fresh, kind of fresh from college. There was no, um, standard on those, anything already said in my mind, and what we are supposed to be. There was really not a comparison, you know. I didn't compare things.

NS: Okay.

JZ: You know, at the time, this is what is needed, what's required. I just do that, you know, move on. Now, lot's of times, I do compare now, what it used to be, what it should be, what it is now, that that's, that will make it a little harder, but at the time, did not, whatever the cost, I do that, move on. Cause I guess I was still young, you know, had no, um, expectation or anything. It's whatever comes, that's the way it is.

NS: Almost made it easier, probably, to transition.

JZ: Yeah, 'cause I know, if, like some people a lot older came to the U.S., they already had work experience, had some kind of, uh, social status established, like they were, 'cause a lot of people came here, they were like, uh, like the, like the, not exactly top, like the, um, leaders or the seniors of where their companies used to be. They all have, they already have a good job and those kind of things. And they have to commit to stay, start over again, you know. Then, in that case, will be very hard. It's kind of hard for them to adjust, adjust, you know. Adapt to new laws. It's like that. They do do that, but in my case, it's, it was a very easy process 'cause there was no comparison, I guess.

NS: Okay.

JZ: Yeah, so, 'cause I start fresh, from scratch as well, you know, like my husband, he graduated, yeah, he came to states before he even graduated so there was no expectation, you know, no comparison: 'Oh, I used to be this, this, this. Now I'm here, you know'.

NS: All he knew was that there was more work and education opportunity in the U.S. and so... everything else, all, like, daily lifestyle just kinda fell into place after that?

JZ: Yeah, exactly, 'cause we were open-minded. You know that's what you call it. That's what it is, you know, I just accept that, adapt that, you know, and that's it. I'm just naturally getting into it, so there was no struggle or anything, I mean, to us.

NS: Okay. Yeah. Did you find that the situation was different with other Chinese immigrant families?

JZ: Yeah, some more of them was harder cause some more of them, they had, you know, they

are at, they already well positioned in China, you know, they have to come here, start from the lowest level, you know, all over again. That would be hard. I can't imagine if, I'm in my 30s, 40s, you know to come to here, I'm already a senior in some kind of country with, you know, years of experience, now I have to come here, start all over again, going to school, being, you know, being an assistant. [laughs] You know, teacher assistant and then go find the lowest position in a company. You know, and everybody is younger than me. I'm older, but actually I have more experience in those kind of things. You have to prove yourself again, you know, and you're already 30, 40 something. It would be really hard if I... it's kind like if you had to start your life all over again. I mean, to us, our life had just started. So this was like great timing, you know, so there was no, not much struggle. So in a way, we were very lucky.

NS: Okay, um, was there anything you were particularly surprised about that, or made life difficult for you in the first years? Was there anything that, like, stuck out as being, like, you didn't expect it at all when you came to the United States?

JZ: Um... uh, no, I can't think of anything. I guess, I guess a big thing for me, um, during those years, um, was like I had to go find a j—something to work, right, support my husband, you know? Had to work in the restaurant cause that's where the most, you know, at the time, if I didn't have a U.S. degree, nobody's going to hire me to do any office work or anything. So most people, students, or their spouse or something, during the summertime, you know, the kind of work they try to find is in the restaurant, you know. To be a waitress, it's kinda that. So that was like, okay, I didn't expect that. [laughs]. You know, so that was kinda hard.

NS: Did you like that job when you were in that job, or was it just like, you got through it, you supported your husband?

JZ: Yeah, uh-huh. I didn't really think about I like it or not, 'cause I knew it's going to be temporary, you know, right, just goes through it, you know. It's something— kinda like, it need to be done and everybody is doing that, you know? So, it's just the way it is. So, it wasn't, um, it didn't make me feel bad or anything, it's just like, that was a surprise, kinda like different experience I didn't expect, you know.

NS: Yeah, I get the feeling if you were, if you already had, like a senior degree, or you were at a senior position at the company, then you worked at a, at a restaurant, you might not feel great about that, but if you're just starting out, then it makes more sense to, you know, start, start almost at the lower rung and work up. I worked in food service at Sonic Restaurant for a couple summers, so I...

JZ: Right, exactly. And especially at the time it's like, think people, it's like you feel good or bad, it depends on the environment you are in, you know, and in—at the time, you know, people in our situation would all do that. It's like, that's the way just do to support yourself, right? So it's like you don't feel bad about it, 'cause that's just the way it goes. You know. It's kinda like in China, you know, when, um, you know, um, many years ago it was, like, not as modern, you know, not many, umm, it's like the life is not so, uh, what's the word, I guess, the, uh, not like everything is so right there, you know. So you get, you get limited supplies of everything, but people don't feel bad about it because everybody lives like that. That's just the way it is. You know, once you compare to the other countries. 'Oh, they don't have to do that'. Then you kind

of feel bad. You know, so you compare to the, you live in the environment, around you, right, so surround me everybody does that, so I don't feel bad at all. Now I look back on it: 'Oh, I had to do that?' Not like I feel bad or something, but sometimes you kind of...you. That's what I had to go through to get where I am today, you know? Sometimes I tell Sally, I'm like hey, 'See, you know how lucky you are? You didn't have to do this'. [laughs] You know, your mom has to go through that. You know, for us. You know, taking it for granted. That's the way it is for first generation immigrants. But still, it was a little bit hard, cause restaurants work large hours, this kind of things, right? You know, so, yeah. But not, not too bad or anything. You know, looking back, I went through that, it's part of my life, you know. It's kind of experience. You don't feel bad or anything, but that was something kind of unexpected. You know... [laughs]

NS: Right. You didn't see yourself once you left China going into waitress. It happened, and it's a means to an end.

JZ: Right, exactly.

NS: Uh, okay, here's a question about English. Did you learn English prior to coming to the United States?

JZ: Yeah, we took, you know, we took classes, uh, I think starting in, um, middle school, we start taking English classes. Um, then all way through, um, second year in college, I think. But not only like, uh, I think like in high school, we had English class like every day, uh, 45 minutes a day, 'cause you know. But in college, it's like, twice a week, once or twice a week, something like that, so not much. Every, I know the grammar, you know, know the basics in talking, things like that. But, um...

NS: Do you feel that your experience learning English in China helped you when you came over here?

JZ: Oh yeah, definitely. Uh-huh, yeah.

NS: Okay, um, do you, do you know how you compared to other Chinese immigrants in your English-speaking ability? Do you know if you were, if you came here relatively well prepared to speak English, or...?

JZ: Um, I guess, I don't know. I guess I'm in the middle. I'm not sure, uh, how, uh, 'cause I know people have the same, at the same I went through college, like me. They are all, they can all speak English pretty well, but I know there are also people who didn't go through that, so they, didn't know much English. I guess I'm in the middle.

NS: Okay. Um, is there any particular situation that stands out in which you, you think you were looked down on or marginalized because, I don't know, you accent or because of your race? Can you think of anything?

JZ: Um, actually, I was surprised, because when I find a job, when I actually my first real job, I was at, I was hired as a, what do you call it, support engineer at COMPAQ, now it's HP. You know, so I was like, you know, be on the phone with so many customer calls, have problems on the phone, helping them, you know, I was not in the desktop, you know, division, I was in the

server, basically the companies used to be common, right, so those kind of things. So I was surprised I got hired. I was like, hm, I didn't think I could do that, because you have to talk, speak English every day over the phone with customers, but I got hired, so I guess, and I was the only, we had, uh, because it was, I was the only, um, non-American people in the group at the time, I guess. So, I was a little bit surprised I got hired for that job. No, I didn't feel discriminated or anything because of my race, or the accent or anything. Now I think, it was kind of strange. Yeah.

NS: So, you said you were, like, a support engineer? So, after coming to the U.S., did you get a degree in the U.S.?

JZ: Oh yeah, at the time I hadn't got my degree yet. I was like a year, or uh, into my master's degree. So, um, I guess, a support engineer is kind of like at the entry-level job. Not really, if you're really experienced, you know be on the other side of the phone is helping people do those kind of things, right? So, you want to be, really, uh, you know, doing real projects on your own, you know? So, so, I remember at the time most people in the organization were pretty young. You know, started—started. I remember my, one of the questions in my, the interviewer asked me, 'Why did you, uh, want to be a support engineer?' So, I was like, 'Well, I just started, I'm willing to try anything.' You know, I really did not know how it works, you know? I know it's kind of support engineer, but it's a job, you know, right? So, um...

NS: So you were balancing getting a master's degree and working as a support engineer?

JZ: Yeah, yeah. I was working, cause the, the, the Master's degree is little different than the undergraduate, 'cause you can, like the school I went to. I went to, uh, Clear Lake, UH Clear Lake. 'Cause, I mean to us, it's like we don't have to go this, like to this top-level schools or anything. All we need is degrees so we can go look for professional job in the U.S., right? Good enough to be accepted by the employees here, so you know. So, at the time, I applied for the UH main campus, but the, 'cause my major was in physics, so I wanted to go to computer science. They said, 'Okay, we accept you. But then you have to take, make up 8 courses'. That's like a year, you know? And your time, at the time to us, we have to pay out-of-state fees, you know with a year. Like 'Oh, that's not, it's just degree, right?'

So at the time, UH Clear Lake still, uh, allow people to apply. Cause most people have deadlines back in February or something, you know. I think it was pretty late at the time. Still they accept applications, you know. So, I applied for process control, you know, in the, in the, in the engineering department. I think. I didn't have to make up any classes or anything. You know, I got accepted, and so that's, um, why where I went. I remember I lived at the time, my husband found a job close to like 290, Northwest area. So, I drove all the way over there to Clear Lake, 50 miles one way. 100 miles both way. Like 3 times a week. But I took the class at night, cause it's a process control major, most students in the, uh class were all engineers already working at the plant, you know, for big oil and gas companies, for petrochemical companies, you know. So, all my class are at night, you know. So, so during the day I can work. So that's why I...

NS: So you were pretty busy during that time?

JZ: Yeah.

NS: What year did you receive your Master's degree?

JZ: Umm, '96.

NS: Okay, so it was just five after, five years after coming to the U.S., you had already lived in Mississippi, then moved to Houston and got a Master's degree. So, you were...

JZ: Right, actually I, yeah, it's like, uh, you know, at the time, I know I skipped one semester 'cause I had Sally, you know. Yeah, so by the time, in '96, I had both my kids, you know, worked at COMPAQ, and I got, I don't know if you know the MCSC, the— like the certificate from Microsoft at the time, the certificate just came out, so like, COMPAQ sponsored people to get you know, trained, get certifications, you know. They even sponsor you to go to college, you know, just like that. So, I got that, so, um, just like, then a lot of things during those years. I left COMPAQ in '96. You know, it's like I worked there for two—two and a half years, yeah, around two years. Finding a job, move on.

NS: Okay, um. Let's see. The next few questions are about jobs, but I think we're already answered some of the, some of the stuff. Like what type of job did you apply for after moving to America? You became a waitress.

JZ: Oh, yeah, that.

NS: And then moved onward. Umm, what skills allowed you to transition into an American job? Like once you came to Houston, what—what skills?

JZ: So, at the time, in '91, '92, the computer industry, like IT just started, you know. At the time, it was very hard to find job. But, so my husband, a job, he's a double-E engineer, but he found the job he had is a computer programmer, so the good thing is when he was at the college, he was doing the, um, research for professor who was, he needed some computer programming skills, so he had those skills and he knew that's the kind of skill the market is looking for. So, he took computer science classes that helped him to get his first job, very first job. It was very hard, actually he was the very first one to find a job among, you know, his friends, you know, students that graduated with him. So, so I knew computer is the skill the market needs, you know, and umm, so I, I took, even though uh, my major was process control, it's really kind of like mass, you know that kind of stuff. But, uh, I took computer science classes, you know, in the, umm, college, UH Clear Lake. So that helped me land my very first job, you know. Cause, uh, COMPAQ, they basically train you, cause it's, they train their product, they train you with their product. But they also, you have the background, you know, so they can train you, you know. So that's how I get my very first job. I guess education does help. You know, so they know you have the background, you have the ability to learn, you know. Then from there, uh, I— I— I got the MCSC certificate. At the time, Microsoft just, you know, come out with that, certificate. So, I was very few that have, had that at the time.

NS: What's the MCSC?

JZ: It's like the Microsoft Certified System Engineer. So you have to take six class—six exams. You pass, basically their operating system. At the time, was still DOS, window just came out. So I took the DOS exam. And then there's, like their, the database, Sequel Server, you know certificate. Just their, their product, you know. You have to take six of them to become certified with that title. You can only take, or you can take one of them, you become specialized in that one product. So, I took six, so that opened the door for me to my next job in the, as a DBA. So, I took the Sequel Server, the database certificate, you know, so that's from there I moved on. So once you have experience, you know, it's a matter of, you know, opportunities, you know. You still learn, right? You learn a lot on the job, you know all those kind of things. But it made it a lot easier because people know you have the background. Cause otherwise, you have to show them, you know, what you have. Otherwise, why did they hire you, right? So I think the certificate helped me a lot at the time 'cause very few people that had it. Now, it's like almost everybody has it. [laughs]. Everybody who works with Microsoft product has it. It's like a must-have or something, you know? Yeah.

NS: And where do you currently work?

JZ: Me, I work at, uh, in downtown. LyondellBassell Industries. Uh, petro—petrochemical company. So, I've been there 13 years now.

NS: Wow, okay. Um, are you involved in any civic or political institutions in Houston, such as churches or uh, neighborhood organizations?

JZ: Churches, used to but not much. Now, very, very little.

NS: Okay, when you said you went to churches when you first came to Houston in order to, because they were almost like a network to help you out. But do you feel like you don't, you don't need that network anymore? Is it because of, like, a change in religious beliefs, or...?

JZ: Uh, no, I mean. I still need the network, but, um, I guess after, um, I guess it's—it's—it's hard to, to explain, because some people are very religious. But I'm just not that type. So, I go to church, I sit there and listen, hear. You know, church I go to is like the Christian Church, it just doesn't... oh what's the word, um... I just don't feel like, you know, I'm really, um, I'm really. It's not my true belief, you know. I don't really believe that, that particular religion, you know. So, it's hard when I get older, It's harder and harder to sit there, listen to the things that you don't, you don't really believe, you know. So, I feel like waste of my time, you know. I respect that, the other people, but for me it's hard to sit there, you know. 'Cause you know, you go to church, most of the time it's the priest talking, you know. I mean, most, I think most religions teach you pretty much the same basics. Be a good person, be nice, those kind of things. So, I kind of feel like I don't need to go to church, you know, for that, you know. Um, I guess in a way, when you are young, when you are young, you are willing to listen to anything, you know, just, you know, go experience things. But when you get older, you know what you want, you know, um, you know what you believe. You kind of, it's getting at least for me. I'm not willing to, um, do things that I don't want to do anymore. Just to, you know, even for the, for the network or socializing, or those kind of things. You don't have to go to, uh, church to socialize, you know, those kind of stuff. So, I guess I go to church a lot less after, umm, after, uh, Sally went to high school, I think. Less and less, you know. So, and eventually I

just stopped going 'cause it just, nothing attracts me there anymore. You know? Cause at the beginning, I was like 'Ok, listen to it, okay, yeah, think about it.'

NS: You feel like you've already gained what you need to gain from the church? You've already, you feel like they've already helped you out with ethical and moral situations, and so now...

JZ: Right, because like in China, there was not really a religious environment at all. We don't go to church, you know. Very, I don't know today if there are many churches I haven't seen many, you know. It's just, it's no such thing, right? And so, so I didn't really have a strong religious belief or anything. Um, so to come here, you know, it's like first thing, you know, um, students come, you know, the first people you know are the first people your friends or family introduce you to is the church people, you know. So, because it is, they are very helpful, very nice, and all those things. So you naturally get involved in those things. So, they tell you those kind of things, All those things are new to me, I'm like, 'Okay, interesting.' So, at the beginning, I sort of listened to things like that. Then, you start reading, reading the books like that. I just find that, how to believe, you know, it's really hard for me to accept that kind of faith, you know. Um, to me, it's the faith we have in China, like the Buddhist, Buddhism. It's a lot easier for me to accept. You know, it's just different. Not a lot of people here are really into, uh, Christians, here, you know. They do believe it, but I don't believe it. I don't want to pretend I believe it sitting there, you know, that's another reason I don't want to—I don't go anymore, because I feel like that church should not be place like that. Cause I know some people who treat it like social place, you know. Some people go for the network, all those kind of things. And I really don't want to do that, you know. So, so, um, but even like the Buddhism, um, that church, they don't call it church, they call it temples, right? I went several times and I don't go cause it's kind of far, you know, from where I live. But also I feel like if you truly believe something, I really don't have to go over there to have the ceremony, you know? You know, so that's just, just me, you know. I'm kind of like, uh, what you call, a lazy person or something. I don't want to just go spend this time to go over and see it. I mean, it's, I mean, it's a format if you truly believe it. It shows your belief, those kind of things, your sincerity or something. But to me, I don't have to do that. I don't feel like I need to do that. So, um, so, no I don't get involved in this kind of religious things, but I do believe there is some bigger force, a force a lot more powerful behind us exists in the universe. You know, that's what I believe, but really, um, one type of religion or something, but now I'm not. Probably because I think it had a lot to do with my background. I just didn't have that kind of background when I grow up. So, when I get older, it's kind of harder for me to accept those kind of things.

NS: Okay.

JZ: Yeah, I mean if I had that kind of education when I was little, you know, tell you those kind of things, you believe, you start believing it as a child, I think it would be a lot more easier, you know? Or it would come natural to you, you know. You became really, it became your faith, but I didn't have that, so...

NS: Okay. Umm, how has it been finding community in the United States? Do you have a diverse group of friends?

JZ: Um, oh, I guess church is one way. And then the parents of my kids, you know? Right, naturally. And then, um, just—just the people, just you know, you go to parties, or you go you know, or people this people or that people, just naturally happens. Didn't specifically go looking for friend or try to network, and...

NS: Okay.

JZ: I'm too lazy to do that.

NS: So, like, with like Sally's, the people from Sally's high school class, did you meet, met parents from her class, and...?

JZ: Yeah, Sally's close friends, you know, and their parents, but um... Sally's pretty independent. So, I don't really, she doesn't really depend on me for much, you know, so she handles everything on her own. So, yeah, I just met them, you know, but didn't have much network or anything, phone calls or something. It mainly are like Chinese parents, too. You know, so...I guess it is a lot easier to talk in your native language, you know. Yeah, you have a lot more to talk about, you know. Same when you have people of the same background, you just, ultimately, you have a lot more to talk about than people you have totally different background, you know. You can only talk about the things both of you know, you know? Yeah.

NS: Um, okay. Going to, what are your current relations with China? Do you visit often?

JZ: Um, yeah. I try to, every two years I go back to visit my parents, my family.

NS: Uh, so you don't feel that you've become, do you feel like you've been distanced by China at all by being in the United States?

JZ: No, uh-uh, not at all. I still go visit them and now, with Dish Network, they have a lot of Chinese channels, you know. So that's what I have. I watch mainly. And I barely watch American TV, I mainly just watch the Chinese TV. So, yeah, no, I'm not distanced from that, that environment at all.

NS: Do you watch any Chinese soap operas?

JZ: Yeah. [laughs]

NS: Okay. When I was in Beijing that was pretty much all that was on TV...When I was looking.

JZ: Yeah, I know.

NS: Um, So, you keep, do you keep in contact with family and friends in China?

JZ: Yeah, yeah. Uh-huh. Yeah, I call, I mean phone call. I remember when we first came to the

States, the phone calls were really expensive. Like cost more than a dollar per minute. It was very hard, so we had to write letters, you know. And at time, Internet was not so, you know, not there. You know there's Internet here, but it's not like, China didn't have Internet or anything, you know. It was very hard to keep in touch than it... the phone call gap, you know. Less than, less expensive, you know. So, start making phone calls now, it's really cheap, right? So, with IP phones, it's free, you know? So, call my husband, my husband calls his family all the time.

NS: So, it's getting easier and easier to communicate between China and the area?

JZ: Definitely, yeah, yeah.

NS: Um, let's see. Umm, what did you think of the Asian-American families that had already lived in the United States for some time when you came there? Did you—did you feel like they were almost like your mentor, or did you feel that they helped get your life started here?

JZ: Yeah, um, I guess it's they, they, uh, yeah, I see, 'cause when I come over here, it's like most people that was here already established were mainly people from Taiwan. 'Cause I'm from Mainland China, right? The People's Republic of China. People from my country are mainly still students cause at the time the door just opened and not many people come to the U.S. yet, you know, right? So, everybody was just starting, you know, starting, just got started, but people from Taiwan, they were here for a long time, so I, you know, see how their family is, you know they have house, have kids, go to good college, you know, they have good jobs at the big corporations, all those kind of things. So, it's kind of like set an example for, 'Hey, this is my life going to be, you know, in the, in the future.' Umm, and some of them, they do offer you advice, you know, how the company is like, how the American corporation works, those kind of things. So...

NS: Do you feel like your life is kind of like those Taiwanese people? Like do you feel like you kind of went same track as the Taiwanese Americans?

JZ: Yes, mmm-hmm. I guess it's only natural, right? You, you do what you do, at different age, you know. You work hard, you study, when you're twenty-something, you get a job, you know? It stops when you're thirty-something.

NS: So, you're...you believe there's, everyone can be upwardly mobile, everyone can if they try hard enough...

JZ: Oh yeah, yeah. Especially that, yeah... Especially, I mean, America is a very open society, you know. They are, um, I guess what's they call, like, American Dream. As long as you work hard, you have the skill set that people need, you can find, um, a place for yourself, I guess, that's the word, you know. Things naturally come with your hard work, those kind of things. So everything falls into place naturally. You know, for me, everything just happens, naturally. I didn't really specifically looking for, that something that I... really, really, you know, wanted hard or something, you know. It's like, just it's natural process, it's like everybody goes through their path.

NS: Umm, do you feel like you've had to give up any of your Chinese culture to make it in the United States?

JZ: Umm, not, not exactly give up. It's like, um... how, how willing, um, how much you willing to adapt to the American, um, environment.

NS: Okay.

JZ: Depends on how much you want for yourself, you know? I mean if you don't want the things that will take that thing to get, then it's okay. As long as you're okay with it, yourself, then you know. I guess I have to give up something, like it's... I think the main difference here with my culture is with American culture is, maybe it's the main difference between Eastern and Western is, Western is more—open is not exactly the word— it's like open and more competitive, more outgoing. You know, uh, Eastern is like more um... It's like, it's not exactly the word like introverted and extroverted, it's like so in the America, like in the corporation, you have to speak up for yourself. So, they have, if you have an opinion or anything, you have to talk so people know, 'Oh, you have some opinion'. Like in China, it's like, nobody, it's like, okay, you know you talk, but you don't talk like, 'Okay, I know this, this, this', you know. It's different culture, so you have to give up something to say, umm, you have to adjust, I guess, find a balance of for example, being humble and being, um, basically you have to show yourself, prove yourself, you know. You still have to prove yourself in China, but you prove by doing it, by doing it, you don't have to say much. But here, you have to do it, you also have to say a lot, you know. To, for people to know, 'Okay, you know something.' Otherwise, if you just say it, or you just do things, people know you do well, but people don't think you have... um, you know, uh, leadership, not exactly the word. But you've proven everything you have, that kind of quality, you can also say things. But to me, I think it's the culture difference, you know. It's not like you, we cannot say things, like when we don't want to say, we don't feel like it's necessary for us to say things, you know. But here, especially in, um, the big large corporations, it's like, so many levels of, you know, um, structure, right? So, if you don't try to stand, uh, stand out, you know, by [laugh] you know. I guess it's everywhere.

I mean China today probably is getting more and more like in the U.S. now, but, so it's up to the person, you know. If you want to, want to, um, stick with your belief, you know, just do your things, don't say much, or you adapt, you know? Give that part, just you know, whatever it takes, you know. Just do it, not do your best things, but you just kind of like have to adapt the culture, agree with it. Okay, I need to say, speak up so people know that I know things, instead of just saying, 'I know it, I don't really have to say anything'. Well the fact is if you don't say anything, people don't think you know. I mean, in a way that makes sense, right? If you say it, other people choose you, know you know. But in China, nobody says anything, right? So, it just, they—they show by doing. Here, you show by doing, but a lot of it also depends, you also have to show by saying it. So that people know that you know and give you the opportunity. So that's a big thing that I think, I personally have to give up, um. Sometimes too, if I want the opportunity I want, I have to speak up, say, you know, 'Hey, I know this, I can do this'. It's lot like, I think, in China I think there's more chance I don't have to say anything, you know? A manager will come say, 'Hey, do you want to do this?' You know, because he's seen you can do it. But here, it's like, if there's two people, you can do it, other people can do it too, you don't say anything, then that people said it, he gets the opportunity.

NS: Okay, so the leadership, or the ability to speak up sets you apart from your other coworkers.

JZ: Yeah, yeah, 'cause I think, um, I read some article somewhere, just not looking for it, just by, uh, just by chance, talking about, um, uh, I forgot the title, the, um, the Secretary of Labor. The, the lady, she's from Taiwan, I think. Yeah, and I think, um, Secretary of Labor in the U.S., I don't know if she still is, has that title. Uh, that's what she said too. The biggest adjustment she has to, to make is to speak up. You hear, it's like in the U.S., they have meetings or something where everyone speaks up, speak first, people thinks that's the, that's the lead, that's the one that's the best knowledge in the...I mean, even today, I mean, where the group I'm in, we have, most American people, but now we have a couple Indians too. I'm, I've been there for a long time, but those Indian people, I mean there... there a couple years. You can see the culture difference, you know. The Asian people are a lot quieter than the American western people. You know, most people does talking are... Not saying they cannot do things, they can...But they talk a lot more than the Eastern people.

NS: Do you think it's because of the difference in the educational system?

JZ: Yeah, I think it's the culture. It's like, in the, in the Eastern way we were taught, it was like, we humble, you know. Do things well, but be humble. There always people better than you. Don't show 'Oh, you know this, you know that'. There's no need for that, it's not good. But here, my kids go to kindergarten and elementary school, they were taught, 'You were the best. You're special'. I mean... Show-and-tell, you know. That's so different, like show-and-tell. You go show our talent, you tell your talent. In China, you have talent, you don't say anything. People find it, good, people don't find it, I enjoy it myself. That's the culture way we brought up, so it's kind of hard for us to, you know, compare, suggest to someone, 'Oh, I'm good, I'm', you know, you know. So that's, I think that's the biggest adjustment for me. And it's the thing for most, for most people that at my age, but people in China today are different now. They are kind of like, Western now. They're because the environment has changed so much, right? You have go through interview process, all those kind of things. So they have to be, the college today, I think, are preparing, preparing students for that kind of environment too. So, so they're more, different now, different generations. Like my parent's generation are even more so than us. You know, so we're even more, I think, we're, my generation is in the middle, you know. But my previous generation is even, even more, um, introvert, you know. It's like, keep everything to yourself. People sees it, great, people don't see it, I'm not trying to show, you know, to get opportunity. Just—just, just not right. That was the teaching, what we were taught. But here, it's like you're supposed to show leadership, you're supposed to show-and-tell, you know. You're supposed to feel unique, you're special. I mean, nothing wrong with it, it's just different culture. I think that's why, the, uh, that's one reason that Western is so much more advanced in, industry advanced, than Eastern because Eastern never looking to go, you know, do those kind of things. It's just different thinking, just totally different, uh, culture environment. I mean, you know that's why Western is so much more, you know, open, advanced, you know, they, you know. It's like the American parenting environment, not like, 'cause everybody was brought up to be like that. 'I'm the best'. How can you not compete if you think you want to be the best, right, you know? It's a competitive mind, being brought up from very little, so...

NS: Okay, tell me your opinion of Chinatown. Does it remind you of an authentic Chinese culture?

JZ: Umm, no. [laughs]. No, not exactly. Here is, all, um, Americanized.

NS: Is there any place in Chinatown that you can point to specifically that you enjoy going to because it... reminds you of China?

JZ: Uh, yeah. I mean, the, I like to enjoy, go to those gift shops. You see the Chinese stuff there, you know. Um... yeah, that's, yeah, that's pretty much it. Of course we go there every weekend to eat, you know, because the food is still pretty... it's somewhat, especially in Chinatown not as...more authentic than the Chinese restaurant on Westheimer or those places, you know. [laughs].

NS: So, it's more, more authentic than other Americanized Chinese restaurants, but it doesn't compare to what you had back home?

JZ: Oh, yeah, yeah. It's so different. [laughs].

NS: Yeah, I went to this Peking duck place in Chinatown. It was really good, but compared to the Peking duck I had in Beijing, it's uh, Beijing, Beijing's was on another level. Okay, so now this is getting into your children. How do you try to preserve Chinese culture in your children?

JZ: Um, well, to me, I really didn't try. I'm the kind of person, let it happen naturally, you know, I didn't really look far, look really hard to preserve anything, or, 'cause to me, there's no good or bad in culture, you know. In a way, I want them to adapt to the American culture, cause that's where they are going to be, you know. But, I guess, I didn't really try to preserve it, but I guess it just shows because they're living in a Chinese family, right? We eat Chinese food, we have, you know, um, speak Chinese at home, a lot less now, you know. But, um, talking about things happen in China, we have Chinese holidays, you know, those kind of things. We show them the things in the Chinese people made, those kind of things. So, they know, but I didn't really try hard to preserve anything.

NS: Okay. Do they go back to China with you every two years, or?

JZ: Yeah, so far, cause I used to go, my husband go back every year, but I trying to go back every two years, but my parents has been here three times, so, so I be skipping some times, you know, but after he came back, I go back every two years to see them. So, so far, every time, I go, they go, and they actually, were more than I do cause I think once or twice I stayed and went back, 'cause they, because both my kids, they grew up in China. But when they were little, like six months old, I send them back to China, spend two years there. Then, they came back at two and a half. So, they're, they are used to that environment. They like, they love to go back. They really enjoy it. So, they wants to go back, so, but I think the... it would be harder for them to go back now, because, you know, they get big here, they grow up, they don't really have that many holidays anymore. You know, this year, summer we are planning on like five weeks vacation, but Sally cannot, can't have that long. She can only go back for two weeks, so something like that. So—so—so we'll see, yeah but. They go with us when they can.

NS: Okay. So, do you feel, preserving Chinese culture is, like, you try to do it more passively

than actively? Like is it important to you that they retain some of their Chinese culture, or?

JZ: No, uh, no, I can't say it's important. I want them to learn Chinese language, but, um, ... culture or not, I can't say it's that important to me 'cause I don't think... it's part of them, but it's not exactly part of them, you know. 'Cause they're, they're, they belong here. They grow up here. I do think they have to carry that kind of culture. If they wants to they can, if they're interested, you know, right? I tell them, I show them. But if they're not interested, I'm not trying to preserve anything, you know. Um, yeah, mm-mm.

NS: Okay, um, what are your goals for your children in their education and in their, and for their future career, just generally?

JZ: Um, generally. Get a good education, umm, find a good job. Uh, a job that can, you know, they like, and also have some, you know, serve some purpose, you know, to the society, you know? Um, I guess that's why Sally's, is choose the medical career, because I've always, you know, told them, find a job that benefit to you and also to others. So, to me, doctor is the most noble career you can have, you know. Especially in the U.S., you know, cause not just that you're paid well, but you're also, I mean not just that you help others, but you also get paid well. Not like I China, doctors don't make that much money. You know, so, but, they also, I mean, both Sally and her sister, they also, actually, they said that to me before I even, you know, realized that there's a lot more ways to make jobs, pay, make money than being a doctor. Doctor really is a hard job. You can't go into be a physician just because of money. That's not going to work. As soon as they understand that, I mean, so, uh... Um, like Sally had the opportunity to go to really good schools, you know, other than Rice, these kind of things. She choose not to, she choose stay with a physician 'cause she was like, 'I want to be a doctor. I don't see making money for a big corporation. How much meaningful is that than being a doctor?' You know, even though she knows, doctor is going to be a very hard career for her, you know, a lot of pressure.

NS: Another six or seven years of school after college.

JZ: Yeah, exactly, it's a—it's a long path. But she choose to stay with it. I think that has something to do with what I always, you know, telling her. You want, not just want making money, you also want something that you feel is meaningful, you know, that you feel good about, you know, you like to do. So, it has to be a good balance, you know. To me, a doctor is perfect a choice, if you like it. So, she likes being a physician...I can't cause I'm afraid of blood, right?

So, my younger one, she's like, um, sophomore in high school now, so she's trying to decide what she wants to do. I'm like, well, you know 'It's up to you, right?' If you don't resist, don't dislike being a doctor, then I think that would be a good career to go to, even in the U.S. today, with all the Medicare reform, all those kind of things, you never know what's going to happen, but I think, you know, you go into that career not just for money, also, you know, you're helping others, you're doing something really meaningful, and it's something you like, you know. So, you have to like it, especially when it's a hard job. You have to like it, otherwise it's going to be miserable for them to have to do that thing you don't like for their entire life. That's

going to be really painful. So, yeah. So, so, I guess my, what I tell them is 'Find a good balance'. What you want to do and also something useful. You know, meaningful.

NS: Umm, okay, I kind of already asked this question, but do you ever think of returning to China and what are some factors that could convince you to return in the future?

JZ: Yeah, I, I, I always thinking about that. Just the, just the, the, just to feel at home, you know. Me at home. Uh, even though it's, there's no comparison, still, you know, 'cause the pollution, all those kind of things. Still, it's still, it's always on my mind to go back to China, even not, even if it's not China, maybe some Asian country close to China, you know, so one thing, I can take care of my parents, you know, when they get old, you know, right, get closer. And, also, it's just a more Eastern environment that I'm familiar with, you know, so...

NS: So maybe to take care of your parents, that would be one reason for you to return...?

JZ: Yeah, yeah, and also, I think, just for myself, it's like I feel more comfortable... afterwards the environment I grew up, when I was little, you know, so... yeah.

NS: Okay. Let's see. Um, yeah, well that concludes the interview.

JZ: Okay.

[recording ends]