

Jacob Petty

Professor Diederich

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Ann Hwang Interview Transcript

JNP = Jacob Petty

JWP = Joanne Petty

AH = Ann Hwang

JNP: My name is Jacob. Today is March 28, 2023. I'm interviewing through Zoom my grandmother, Ann Hwang, for the Colby College Korean Oral History Project. Do you agree to grant the College permission to archive and publish this interview for educational purposes?

AH: Yes.

JNP: Alright. Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me. I really appreciate you taking the time to speak your story and let others discover new things about Korean history.

AH: My pleasure.

JNP: I just want to make sure that you're comfortable with this. This recording will be placed online where others can view it and you are okay with all this?

AH: Yes.

JNP: Just so you know, during the interview if there's anything that you don't feel comfortable talking about, please let me know and we don't have to discuss it.

AH: Okay.

JNP: Okay. Let's get started. Let's just start a little easier. Tell me a little bit about yourself. What's your background? Where are you from?

AH: I came from South Korea. I was born 1947 June 15 and I am the eighth child from my father and mother. I'm the youngest child in my family. Do you want [more] background?

JNP: We can talk about whatever you want. What was it like growing up in a family of eight? I know that your oldest siblings were a lot older than you. So how was that dynamic growing up?

AH: My brother and sister?

JNP: Yeah.

AH: My oldest brother's name is Young Un Choo, the second is Chae Un Choo, and third is Park Un Choo. My sisters names are Myoung Hee Choo, Myoung Cha Choo, because my last name [was] Choo. My father's name is Choo. I married my husband, so my last name [became] Hwang. My

name is Ann Hwang, but my maiden name is Choo. My third sister's name is Myoung Suk Choo. My name [was] Eunhee Choo, but now my name is Ann Hwang. My father founded a school in Korea—a middle school and high school. He founded the school in the 1930s, when he was 31-years-old. He was born in 1903. When he was 31-years-old he founded the school, [and] the school is very big, middle school and high school. The location is South Korea, Daegu. The school is still a very famous school in Korea. My brother's child is running the school [today]. My mother passed away when I was three-years-old, [indistinct Korean] and my father remarried when I was four-years-old after my mother passed away. One year later my father remarried. But [my stepmother] was a very nice Christian woman. She took care of us eight kids, and I was very happy with all my family. My older brother is a medical doctor and professor. He married a very nice lady, my sister-in-law. My second brother is a businessman. And my third brother took over my father's school. He ran the family school business for thirty years. My fourth brother—after [my third brother] passed away—my youngest brother took over the school board and everything. He's also passed away. But now their kids are running the family school business. I was raised with my parents and four brothers and three sisters. I was raised very happily during my childhood, and when I graduated high school I went to college in Seoul at Ewha National University. It was very nice, my college time. After graduating from college, I met my husband, Jin Hwang. He is a pharmacist. He graduated from pharmacy school. We met and we came to the United States in 1972. Before we came here, I had my first child, Joanne Petty, Jacob's mother. We left Joanne in Korea with my husband's parents. They took care of my first child, Joanne Petty. We came to the United States, and it was a very hard time because we left Joanne in Korea, the baby. I cried all the time. I missed her. My husband studied first-time pharmacy in grade school. But he became a pharmacist. He got licensed in pharmacy

school. At first, he worked in Harlem Hospital in Manhattan, New York. After a few years, after one year, we brought my daughter—my first child, Joanne Petty—to the United States, and at first the baby didn't adjust to her [original] parents. She was looking for her grandma and grandpa all the time, and it was very sad. But she adjusted so well. My husband was working in hospitals—Harlem Hospital and Roosevelt Hospital. Then he opened a pharmacy in Long Island. We settled in Long Island, New York. At first, we settled in a small studying house in Plainville, New York, but after that, we moved to Stony Brook. Meanwhile, I had a second daughter, Grace Lee. [My daughters] have become parents now. My husband opened a pharmacy in Long Island. We are Christian [so] we attended Korean church. We were very serious members in the Korean Church, we were involved so seriously. My husband became an elder with that church. We attended the Korean church so *yeolsimhi* (diligently).

JNP: I appreciate you telling me all that. It was a lot of interesting information, a lot of things I didn't know. But I wanted to go back to being the youngest child of eight. How was that? Was it fun or was it like difficult at times? How was that experience?

AH: My childhood. You know, I lost my mother when I was three. My father sent me to my mother's family, my uncle. I was raised there until I was ten-years-old. Because I have no mother, that's why they sent me. My mother's brother wanted to take care of me until [I was] ten-years-old. But I

was very happy because they have only one son, they treated [me] like a daughter. I didn't remember my mother and I was very happy. [At] ten-years-old, my father took me home [to] my real family. I had a grandpa and my father [and] my stepmother, but she's very nice, and then my oldest brothers [and] sister-in-laws. I had a big family in my house. My family is very big. But I was very happy at a young age.

JNP: That's great. After you moved back with your family, was it difficult acclimating to having to... You were living with your cousin for a long time and then you moved back in with your family. Was that a difficult experience to move back in with your birth family?

AH: [At first], I missed my uncle's family, my uncle and aunt. I missed [them] so much [at first] because I thought they were my parents. But after school, my school was near my family's house, it was very close. Every day I went to my house, but they told me, "This is your house. This is your father, your mother, this is your real family." They keep telling me. That's why I realize this was my real family. But after I come to my real family, I was so sad. I missed my uncle and aunt. Sometimes I cried. But I didn't cry in front of people, my family. But [eventually] I adjusted very well.

JNP: You moved back in with your father and the your rest of your family, but I'm assuming you still sporadically you saw your uncle and his family at times for family gatherings?

AH: Yeah. After I [returned] to my family, [my uncle's family] would come to my house [and] I went to their house. At first, I didn't go too much because my parents didn't send me too much because they

wanted to keep me close to my real family, and so for the first few years, I didn't go there. But after that, we slowly started to get together and they came to United States when I was married in Plainville. My daughters... Do you remember, Joanne? My uncle and auntie came to my house. You don't remember?

JHP: I don't think so.

AH: Yeah. He came to United States. Stayed in my house a few days. We had a good time. After that, my uncle passed away. They have both passed away now.

JNP: I'm sorry to hear that. When you were talking earlier you mentioned religion. Growing up in Daegu, what kind of religion did your family believe in? How important was it to the way he grew up?

AH: Our family religion is a Christian. Presbyterian.

JNP: Did you regularly attend church or pray? How big a part was that in your life?

AH: My religion?

JHP: When you were growing up.

JNP: Yeah.

AH: Every week I had to go to church. My father was an elder. My grandpa was an elder in my church. They contributed so much. They were so involved, so deeply involved in the church. I grew up in the church. We always had bible study and always we had worship in the house. I was raised in a very deeply religious family.

JNP: Would you say that after you moved to the US your belief in religion continued to stay the same, or did it go up or down?

AH: At first, my husband was also from a very deeply religious family. My husband's father was an elder, and everybody like that, but my husband was not too deeply involved in religion at first. He didn't go to church too much. He always stayed home. I went all by myself and I took my little girls. But later he became born again, my husband. Later, he was a very, very deeply religious Christian. He became an elder, and he served my church. Very deeply involved in church. Yeah, he was a very good Christian until he died.

JNP: Aside from your family and your religion, growing up in Daegu, what was your education like, like school or teaching? I know that your older siblings helped you learn English, correct?

AH: No. My oldest brother is a professor in the medical school. He spoke English very well. But the three brothers were just attending Korean [schools], they don't speak [English] too well. But one of my sister's studied English and she became an English teacher. I learned from her when I was in

middle school. She was my English teacher. Yeah. But my brothers all graduated college and my two sisters were not too crazy about college, because at that time not many Korean girls went to college. You know, the Japanese ruled Korea at that time. But me and my sister went to college, graduated college. That is my siblings' education situation.

JNP: You would say that growing up with doctors and teachers and businessmen in your family helped further your education at home?

AH: Doctors? Doctors?

JNP: Yeah. Did you have a lot of schooling and education before you moved back in with your father, or were those years spent mostly at home?

AH: *Seolmyeonghaebwara* (Please translate the question).

JHP: Just ask him to clarify.

JNP: Where did you go to school? What was your school like in your early years?

AH: My school? Yeah, I attended middle school and high school in Daegu, and I went to college in Seoul [at] Ewha National University. I studied literature. Then what did you ask me?

JNP: It's fine. You mentioned you went to a university in Seoul. How was the acclamation from living in Daegu to living in Seoul when you went to university? Was it difficult to live in Seoul, or were you happy?

AH: Yeah, I was happy in Seoul because my parents were so conservative. I cannot go out with friends after dark, you know, something like that. But when I went to college, I [felt free] and I enjoyed [myself] so much. I stayed in the dormitory and I had a lot of friends and we were meeting with boys and getting together. I had a lot of friends. It was very fun. The happiest time in my life, college.

JNP: What did you study in college?

AH: Literature.

JNP: Literature, interesting. I want to go back to something you said earlier. You mentioned Japanese impacting the way you grew up. How? Because I know you were born in 1947.

AH: 1947.

JNP: And Japanese rule ended around that time. So how was growing up in post-Japanese Korea? How was that experience?

AH: I wasn't even born yet. The Japanese occupied my country. My sisters, at their age, they [had directly] experienced the Japanese ruling my country. They spoke Japanese. Their names were all Japanese names. Changing names—the Japanese changed people's names. They spoke Japanese, but I wasn't even born yet at that time. I just heard [the] history [from] my sisters. They were so sad, but they felt like they were Japanese [laughter]. They definitely thought they were Japanese. A lot of Korean people protested to the Japanese rulers. A lot of people were killed. It's a sad story, a sad history, my country. But yeah, actually I don't know [much about] the Japanese [or] that time.

JNP: I can understand that. In that period you were probably too young to remember anything. But the Korean War was 1950-1953. I'm sure that you were too young to remember [the war], but do you remember anything in the years following that when you might have been a little older? How did that shape your experience growing up?

AH: The Korean War 1950. I was three-years-old. Actually, I don't remember the Korean War. I was three-years-old and my father took one bus with the whole family. We went to Busan. Busan, Korea. We escaped from Daegu. Busan was the safest place. The whole family stayed there. The whole family [stayed in] somebody's house until the war was finished. Until then.

JNP: Do, you remember, when you were older, any of your siblings or your parents, do you remember them telling you any stories about the war? Like what it was like fleeing? Because I know that for a lot of people that was a very difficult time and I just want to know, how was that for you?

AH: There were a lot of people from North Korea, refugees. There were a lot of refugees in Daegu, because Seoul was a very dangerous place. Daegu was a better place than Seoul. North Korean armies didn't come to Daegu, it was kind of a safe place. That's why a lot of refugees came from Seoul and North Korea and stayed in Daegu. I heard that they are so poor, they have no house, no food. Every Daegu citizen, when they ate dinner, they always save some food because of the refugees. [The refugees] had no fear. They were like beggars. At every door, they would knock, "Give me some food, give me some food!" We all shared the food like that. They had a school [in the] refugees camp. All the kids attended the refugee school. A lot of people were killed. And a lot of people were North Korean spies and hid in the mountains and came out to kill people. It was a very scary and sad story.

JNP: Thank you for sharing that with me. I know that the relationship between North and South Korea following the war were tense at times. Do you remember in the years following the end of the war the political scene or social scene [between] the two Koreas?

AH: North Korea and South Korea?

JNP: Yeah. How was the post-war relationship to your family? How did that impact your life?

AH: My family did not to have a relationship with North Korea. We didn't see their faces, the North Koreans, how they looked like. In Seoul, the capital, a lot of people's houses were bombed, they saw the North Korean armies. But the [in the] South, in my town, Daegu, [we were] not occupied by the North Koreans, [and] we didn't see them, but they have the same Korean people's face. But something, so they said, "We're so scared of them and we don't want a relationship with them." They are enemies.

JNP: Interesting. I know that your father was involved in politics in South Korea following the war. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

AH: It wasn't during the war; it was after the war. He was *gyoyukja* (an educator) running the school, but people kept asking him, "Why don't you run for senator?" He tried to do that, but in the middle of it... [inaudible Korean].

JHP: What period of time was this?

AH: [In Korean] *He went out to be a candidate in the election.*

JHP: When he was running as a candidate. What period of time was this? Before the war?

AH: After the war. When I was in elementary school, about 12- or 13-years-old, that [length] of time [after] the Korean War. He was involved a little bit with politics, but my house got arsoned. The opposition party, they set fire to my house.

JNP: Go ahead. Go ahead.

AH: You can ask me.

JNP: Your house was set on fire by protesters. Was this during the running for the election or following the election?

AH: During the election.

JNP: Do you have any idea why the protesters were angry with your father? Was it something he stood for?

AH: The opposition party, they were [trying to] disturb my father's running... [in Korean] *Help me say it.*

JHP: They didn't want him to run.

AH: Yeah. They didn't want him to run. All [my] family escaped from my house. The big house was set on fire. We lost... We didn't have any clothes. We were just in the middle of the street. We all escaped from my house. It was very sad and very scary.

JHP: It was a traumatizing experience.

AH: Yes, it was a traumatic memory.

JNP: I'm sorry to hear that. Following the house fire and fleeing your house, did your father drop out of the election or did he continue to run? What happened afterwards?

AH: After that, he failed. He didn't become a senator.

JHP: He did not win the election.

AH: He did not win the vote.

JNP: Did he just go back to working at the school?

AH: Yeah. He's still *Jaedan isajang* (Chairman of the board of directors). He is still the chief board member and the founder.

JHP: He was the chief of the school.

AH: Chief of the school, yeah. Our family was all separated. We had a grandpa who was very old. We were all separated. All our relatives were separated for a while. And my father built a new house. You came to my house, right?

JHP: Yes.

AH: It's very nice. The house was the best house in Daegu. Jacob, did you come to see it?

JHP: Yes.

JNP: Yeah, I did.

JNP: I heard you say that people were urging your father to run for a senate position. Do you know why they wanted him to run?

JHP: Well, he was a businessman, right? In Daegu?

AH: Yeah. Yeah.

JHP: He was a prominent businessman.

AH: Yeah.

JNP: So, his status as a businessman made him as a promising candidate for election?

AH: Yeah. Yeah, he was an educator.

JHP: He was an educator.

AH: Then people thought, "He is very popular," in Daegu. People thought, "Oh, why don't you run for *uiwon* (senator)?"

JHP: For senate?

AH: For senator. My father, he wanted to become a politician. But my mother didn't want it because it is a very dangerous and very hard-working, innovative in a dangerous [way]. Like in America, politicians are very risky, and it is so hard.

JHP: It's like Michael Bloomberg running for the Senate [or] for President.

AH: Yeah, something like that. That's why... I was young, I didn't know anything. But my mother said she wasn't happy that [my father] was involved in politics. He didn't become a senator. He just lost his big house and he lost everything. But it didn't impact us too much because we had the school, we had our own business, we recovered. He built a much better

house for us. I remember when I was young, I was so scared and I cried watching my house burning. My father came to my house. He helped me. He said, “Don't worry, I'm going to build a better house for you.” I always remembered that that is what my father said.

JNP: That's a very, very riveting story. Thank you for sharing. Following the election and the house burning and moving into your new house, did your lifestyle change education-wise or social-wise, or did things go back to normal?

AH: Yeah, everything. We didn't have any changing of life. The house was nothing, because my father was a *buja* (rich man), *uri Abeoji* (my father). He was very rich. So [the house] was nothing. He built a better big house, and we enjoyed our new house. Everything was the same.

JNP: You were in your early-teens, like thirteen-years-old. Following that, you went to college or university at eighteen-years-old?

AH: Nineteen-years-old. In Korea, nineteen-years-old.

JNP: What inspired you to study literature?

AH: Because I didn't like science and math. I liked to read books. I always liked it, it felt comfortable to me, that's why.

JNP: That's great. You went to university in Seoul. We talked about that. When did you meet your husband?

AH: After I graduated. During the college period of time, we didn't see each other. We didn't know each other, then. After I graduated college, in Korea at that time there was matchmaking [to arrange] marriage. My husband and I met [through] a relative who introduced us to each other, [this was] matchmaking. The funny thing is, my husband and I just [had a] first meet, second meet, then third meet, [and then] we got married. In the Korean olden days, [couples] didn't even see each other, then they marry. We saw each other just three times and then we married. Then we stayed one year in Korea. During that time I was pregnant with [Joanne]. My first child was born in 1972 and we came to the United States. Joanne, your mother came in 1973. She came to the United States.

JNP: I want to circle back to this, but it occurs to me that when we ended our last meeting we left off with your family fleeing to Busan during the war to escape Daegu. Can you tell me more about what that was like? How long were you there? What were your living situations like?

AH: How long? About a year? Years? I don't know if it was one-year or two-years. I only remember a little bit. I remember the house a little bit. I don't remember anything, but I heard from my brothers and sisters how they live like that. But it seems like it was June. It was

summer time. It was like a vacation, they said, and that there was no war there. Every day they went to the beach. We had a good... my sisters-in-law...*keunnim Siabeoji* (father-in-law through brother-by-marriage).

JHPL: So, your brother-in-law?

AH: My brother-in-law's father was [involved with the] government in the Busan government.

JHP: He was in the government.

AH: Government. That's why we stayed in the government...

JHP: Housing.

AH: Housing. We didn't have any hard time. Just stay there.

JHP: So you were pretty protected.

AH: Protected, yeah.

JNP: Do you remember how sudden the decision was to move to Busan? Was it quick, or was it a thing that you had been planning for a while, or how sudden was the move to Busan?

JHP: Did you have to flee in the middle of the night or did you have time to pack?

AH: Oh, no, no, no, we didn't rush like that. My father borrowed a big bus and the whole family, relatives, every family has sons [to] take him, bring him. We didn't rush.

JHP: You have to understand the size of her family, because her oldest sister was already married and had children.

JNP: Yeah. Yeah, I know. It was a big move because a lot of people are moving.

AH: Yeah.

JNP: You talked about how life in Busan was like an escape from war. I know you're probably too young, but do you remember what prompted the move back to Daegu?

AH: Yeah, we came.

JHP: Was a war over?

AH: I think it wasn't that long. I think it was about one year that we lived there. After that, they realized that [Daegu] was a safe place, that's why we came back. It was *ilsa buteo* (from January 4), January 4, when the

North Koreans occupied [the city] again. That was very dangerous. You know, that happened. I wish I could speak English.

JNP: It's okay. Don't worry.

AH: Okay.

JNP: You are doing great. I appreciate you talking about the war, I know that that was a difficult time for some people. Now we can circle back to your husband. You mentioned that you met after you went to university and you got married quickly. Where did he go to school?

AH: He went to Seoul National University, pharmacy school.

JNP: I see. I know that you moved to the US in 1972. I heard that it was because of the pharmacy job. Do you remember exactly what the main reasons were? If there were other reasons why you moved to the US?

AH: At first, my husband... Most smart people, after college, they wanted to come to the United States to study more. *Yuhak* (study abroad). My husband wanted to become a professor. At first, he went to St. John's University Pharmacy School in Flushing, New York. He was admitted to the grade, the pharmacy school, but he changed his mind. In the middle of studying for the grade school, he realized in the United States a license is very practical, he thought. He didn't want to go back to Korea. The Korea

parents are my parents and his parents. They wanted him to get a PhD and come back to Korea and become a professor. But he changed his mind. He didn't want to go back to Korea. He wanted to [continue] living in the United States. This was a better and safer and nice country, and to raise the kids the U.S. had a better situation. He changed his mind. He realized, if he lived here [the US], a license is more practical here. That's why he became a pharmacist. He took the test, studied, and he got the license, the New York State license. That's why he become a pharmacist.

JNP: I know that that time period there was a lot of immigration from foreign countries into the US. Do you remember the process of immigration? Was it difficult or was it easy? Was there are a lot of paperwork and things you had to do before you could leave?

AH: It's difficult to come here [United States]?

JHP: Was immigration hard?

AH: Ah, immigration, it wasn't too hard. We already had a Green Card. I think he was... I don't remember. But it wasn't too hard. So, when he came here, we got the Green Card here.

JNP: Okay. Keep going.

AH: Yeah. If there he decided to become a pharmacist. He became a pharmacist very early, he just wanted to become a citizen, so they gave us Green Cards. After five years we became citizens, it wasn't too hard for us.

JNP: Interesting. So now that you had gone to university in Seoul to study literature and then when you moved to the US, did you have a job? What did you do to pass time?

AH: No, I didn't have a job. I didn't work because I just went to enroll in West...it was a state university. I just attended the English course. [For] just one year, I took this class. But that's all the education I had here. I don't have any professional kind of license in anything. [I] just stayed home. Just raised two kids. I didn't work. I didn't have any career. [I was a] housewife.

JNP: And you have no regrets about moving to the US? You think that that was definitely the right decision to make at that time?

AH: Yeah, I was happy being here because in my country it is always dangerous. It's still North Korea and South Korea. They are always dangerous. Lot of North Korean spies in Korea. Now, politics is very hard because there are a lot of North Korean spies. We never know when another war could start. Always North Korean occupied South Korea, always a dangerous country. That's why we're here. I'm happy being here.

JNP: I know you mentioned that my mother was born in 1972 and then moved to the US in 1973 and then, a couple of years later, my aunt was born. Do you think that the way you grew up in Korea impacted the way that you wanted to raise your own children?

AH: [inaudible Korean].

JHP: Do you think that you wanted to raise us in Korea the same way that you wanted?

AH: Oh, no. Here [the United States] is very good for kids. Korea is very hard. Education is very hard. College is very hard. Korean students are suffering so much. They cannot do anything. Always, study, study, study, study. The parents push them so much that some kids kill themselves, like that. So, my kids here, we have no stress. It's a very nice country, I think. I'm so happy being here. Raised my kids.

JNP: I'm glad. Moving to the US, was it hard to live in a place where English was the main language, or was it hard to leave Korea and the food or family? How was that change for you?

AH: The food, something like that?

JNP: Food and language and just overall life experience. Was it difficult or was it exciting?

AH: Cooking? Yeah. I always cook Korean food, as you know. I [was] raised [in Korea] and I lived there for almost twenty years, [so that's why I prefer] Korean food. At first, when I came here, for Korean grocery shopping there weren't that many Korean groceries, but still, you know, we tried to cook Korean.

JHP: Even in New York City.

AH: New York City.

JHP: What did you do to make Korean food?

AH: In New York City?

JHP: Yeah. When you first got to New York City.

AH: When we first moved to New York City, there was only one Korean grocery in the New York City, Sambok, and we would go all the way there. We bought some Korean *gochujang* (red pepper paste) and something basic. And [there was] only one Korean restaurant, Sambok Restaurant, same owner. The next restaurant in the grocery we go there sometimes to eat Korean food and make always Korean food.

JHP: Did you have to do anything to be creative to make Korean food when you first got to New York?

AH: I made *Kimchi*, making like a cabbage, because not many places have *Baechu* (Napa Cabbage), it's Korean cabbage. That's why I used American cabbage to make *kimchi*. And yeah, you know, the rice, I could buy rice and meat and vegetables. I could make Korean food, not too hard.

JNP: I want to stay on the topic of food. Before you moved to the US, was food a big part of your life? Did your family value meals, cooking, and Korean delicacies?

JHP: Can you rephrase that, Jacob?

JNP: Was food important to you in Korea?

AH: Food important in Korea?

JNP: Yeah.

AH: How important?

JNP: What role did food play in your growing up in Korea? Did your step-mother or your father cook a lot?

AH: In Korea, we had maids. We don't cook. My mother never cooked. We have a lot of people in my father and mother's generation of people [who] had maids.

JNP: Where did you learn to cook and pick up the style?

AH: Style? Rice?

JNP: Where did you learn to cook?

AH: Why do I cook?

JNP: When did you learn or how did you learn to cook?

AH: Oh, I never cook. I didn't know [how]. Before I married, I never did anything. But after I married and we lived in small apartment in Seoul, at first. And I [made] mistakes a lot. I didn't know how to cook. I learned from my maid. She was in my house. Before I was born, she was in my house. She's Japanese. She taught me how to make *Bulgogi* (Grilled meat) and how to make rice. I wrote down, memorized it, and then, every time I see how to make rice, how to make *Bulgogi*, I learned from her.

JNP: You mentioned that the maid you grew up with was Japanese. Did you do have any Japanese food when you were growing up in your house?

AH: Yeah, a lot of Japanese food. Her food was a little sweet.

JNP: Yeah.

AH: *Sukiyaki* (Japanese hot pot) is a Japanese food [that] we ate so many times. Japanese *Sukiyaki*, and *Sushi*, and *Gama*, a lot of Japanese food that she made. And my family's food is a little bit sweet, because Japanese like [food] a little bit sweet, like *Miso* (Soy paste), and, what is that, *Umeboshi* (Pickled Japanese plums). We knew a lot of Japanese food when I was raised in my family.

JNP: That's interesting. So, this is more of a fun question. What was your favorite food growing up?

AH: Curry rice. During my birthday, they always made Curry rice for me. That's why I like Curry rice so much, and *Japchae* (Stir-fried glass noodles). I like *Jeon* (Korean savory pancakes), *Bibimbap* (Mixed-rice bowl). But I remember I ate Curry rice so many times. My Japanese maid made Curry rice so well, so often. That's why I ate so much.

JNP: Interesting. Continuing on the topic of food, I know you learned to make Korean food slowly, as you move to the US, did you continue to eat mostly Korean food or did you venture into more American dishes as you lived in the US?

AH: Most of the time I made Korean food. Sometimes I made spaghetti [or] steak. I like American food, well steak and spaghetti is Italian, but I like spaghetti and steak. [In Korean] *What do I like to eat?* I like [to] sometimes make American food, but most of the time I make Korean food.

JNP: Interesting. I think we're just about at time. What do you spend your time doing nowadays? I know you're living in Arlington now. What do you enjoy doing these days?

AH: Not much. You know, I stay home and I watch Korean dramas and listen to music and YouTube. Sometimes I read books, but I have no friends. I [don't have] much [of a] social life here. Just stay home and watch my dramas. That is my life these days.

JNP: I don't have any more questions. Is there anything that you want to say at the end like to leave the audience with? Is there anything, a takeaway from your experiences or a message?

AH: I don't get it.

JHP: Your early immigrant experience, you're starting businesses, maybe.

AH: Oh, immigration experience. Yeah.

JHP: You had to start from scratch and start businesses in the US.

AH: My husband opened the pharmacy, we had a business. It was up and down. Sometimes we had a hard time. But most times, you know, I think it's a really successful immigration

here. Not too much, but I think I have no complaints in [the United States], thank God. We have a good life here. I am very appreciative of God. He protects us. He leads us so well.

JNP: So actually, I have one more question. I know that my mother lived with her grandparents for the first year of her life. What was the decision like having to leave her in Korea? Did you consider waiting, or did you know that you had to leave at that time?

AH: My husband prepared to come to the United States. He had a school admission. We had time to come here because he has started school, but I had a baby—my first child, your mother. I had a baby. But after she was born, we didn't process her to bring her to the United States. Because we had already processed with my husband and me. Before she was born, we already processed. We got a visa and we had to leave. But she was too young. She was a baby, but we have no time to process her to come to the United States, it takes time. These days, it's not too long, but when it was 50-years before, it was so hard. So, it takes a long time. That's why I wanted to stay in Korea, take care of my baby. But my husband's parents, they were so worried about him going alone to a strange country. They worry he'd be very *buranhada* (uneasy or anxious), uncomfortable with him coming to the US alone. That's why my husband's parents asked me, "We take care of baby. You go with him because you have to take care of your husband." So, I left my baby with my husband's parents. Yeah, it's a sad story.

JNP: It seems like despite growing up with wealth from your family in Korea, you still had to work very hard to succeed once you've moved to the US.

AH: Yeah.

JHP: Talk about that.

AH: [Inaudible].

JNP: I mean, I knew that you grew up with some wealth in Korea, but that wealth didn't necessarily transfer over to marrying and then having a child and then moving to the US. So, you still had to work very hard in the US to succeed and give a good life to your children?

AH: Yeah, at first it was very hard. Because in a foreign country, it was very hard. At first, we were so scared, until we settled down. It was not easy. Now, it's already long time ago. I forgot. I forgot already, but that time it was so hard. Yeah. So scared. Oh my God. We can leave this country and on like that. Everything is hard the first time.

JNP: It's an inspiring story. Well, I think that our meeting is about to end. I am all set. I really, really want to express how thankful I am for you to take the time to talk to me today. I learned a lot that I did not know. And while this is as much a project for people to learn, I learned a lot myself and just thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me.

AH: Yeah. I tried to, you know, nice interview, but I'm sorry. My speaking is so poor. I am really sorry, Jacob.

JNP: It's totally fine. No, it's totally fine. I understand. You're doing great. I mean, English is not an easy language to learn. Thank you so much *Hami* (short for *Halmeoni*, meaning “grandmother”) and I'll stay in touch.

AH: Good luck. Okay.

JNP: Bye Bye.