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“Librarians Navigating Change” Oral History Project

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Jianye He

Interviewed on May 7, 2025

By Ann Glusker

--For more information about this project, and the oral history method in general, please consult the Project Overview Document at the URL provided above.

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00:00:00 **Ann**

This is Ann Glusker interviewing Jianye He on May 7, 2025, for the “Librarians Navigating Change” Oral History Project. This is a remote interview. Ann is in Seattle, Washington, and Jianye is in Berkeley, California.

So, I’ve been starting with people by saying, “Would you please share with us whatever you would like to about your background?” The focus really is, what led to your going into librarianship and maybe a little how you made that decision.

00:00:55 **Jianye**

Sure, Ann. Thank you so much for your invitation. That I became a librarian was not that I planned in my earlier life. I always wanted to be a professor, so I got my master degree in China. My alma mater is one of the leading universities in China, and I was one of the top students. I came to United States in January 2002. I was accompanying my husband. He came here as a postdoc. So, I was trying to get a PhD from maybe Columbia University, with my background. I have my Chinese classic literature master degree, I also know Korean language very well. I actually studied in South Korea. I also know Japanese. So, I was trying to get a PhD degree in East Asian Studies.

But then I was very lucky that I know a famous Sinologist in SUNY [State University of New York] Albany or University at Albany. I met him, I didn't know him before, just ran into him. And then I introduced myself and my background, and guess what? He gave me advice. He said, “Oh, I think you'd better to pursue a librarianship.” He said, “In our field, for the Chinese studies field, we really needed someone with your background.” Because at that time, [there were] fewer people with a background of classic Chinese literature or pre-modern history. And that's exactly what the Sinologist or Chinese studies faculty really needed. And he also told me that they really need a new generation librarian. Before I came to the United States, majority [of] librarians, in the Chinese study field, their background... they were from Taiwan. They probably study... either, you know, maybe their husband study computer science or something, and they study library science. But that time, database was not even very normal yet. And he said, “I think if you pursue a librarianship and you learn the new technology, the changes are happening now. I'm sure you'll get a good job.” So that's how I really seriously consider pursuing a new, different career path.

I was lucky that I passed my TOEFL [Test of English as a Foreign Language] test. I was selected by the library school of SUNY Albany. My dean, my library dean, also liked my background. He also said the same thing. “We need students with your background.” So, I was very lucky. So, that’s my goal. But I have a reality problem. How can I support myself financially? That’s another concern. I was also very lucky, with my past experience... you know, I was a lecturer in Nanjing University for many years. So, I have lots of teaching experience. So, they hired me...by the East Asian language and literature, to be a Chinese language instructor. So, with that job, I can support my library school. So, it all worked out. Actually before that one, I also actually... no, at the beginning of my library school, I actually had a different plan for my future librarianship career. It was that I thought, “Oh, I came to United States when I was already over 30 years old and my English is not very good.” I was not very confident at that time. I said, “Maybe the best thing for me to do is to focus on cataloging. Because cataloging is more like a technical work. You pay attention, you’re detail oriented. You don’t have to interact with the people all the time at the front desk.” That’s my previous design for myself. But again, I was really lucky. I had another great mentor, one of my library school professors. He himself was also an immigrant, from Lebanon. And, he told me, after he taught me for three or four classes, he said, “No, Jianye, I think your great strength is your subject knowledge. You should pursue a career as a subject librarian.”

So even though I told you when I was working on my internship-- as you can see from my resume-- it was very difficult, you know, to find such [subject-focused] position as intern. So, I end up doing a catalog internship, at the Capital District Library Council, which is based in Albany, New York. I was also very lucky to have my advisor and mentor [there]. She really taught me how to do original cataloging, gave me a lot of advice and help. So, I was very proud, actually. I helped cataloging a whole package for the Irish Museum in New York City. I helped them, did all the cataloging. And then even before my internship ended, they told me the book that I cataloged already being circulated. They received interlibrary loan request. That was very rewarding to me.

Even so, I enjoy doing cataloging, but I still think my dream is to be a subject librarian, [so] that I can combine my own knowledge, my background, together with my own interest. I don’t know why I have been really lucky all the time [they laugh]. Another lucky thing for me is that the East Asian Department of SUNY Albany, they received a huge grant. It’s called a Freeman Foundation [Grant]. It’s over \$1 million. They said, “Oh, we need someone to help us with

library collection development, since we have the money here.” I was very lucky to have this opportunity to really start to do book acquisition, cataloging, reference, everything, all done by myself. That really well prepared my future career. So, as I said, although it's not I planned to, but it did turn out wonderfully.

[00:07:49](#) **Ann**

That's so great. I'd love to ask a question, if you don't mind.

[00:07:53](#) **Jianye**

Yeah, sure.

[00:07:53](#) **Ann**

So, here we are many years later, from the point where you had that discussion with your mentor, who said, “Maybe librarianship would be good for you in terms of a fit with your background—and there's jobs.” Did you have any internal struggle, or, what was your thought process because you were on a path to a PhD and then you made a big shift? There's a big change in your plans. How did you think that through?

[00:08:28](#) **Jianye**

Actually, I didn't get into the PhD program yet, I was just about to apply. I was quite positive that I could be accepted with my own background, particularly my language strengths. Few people [could] know all the CJK [Chinese, Japanese, and Korean], the languages. I also had an early experience of pursuing a PhD. That was the time when I was studying in South Korea, trying to pursue a PhD, but didn't work out because the Asian financial crisis that happened in 1997. I was studying in the year before, but the crisis already happened, so the financial situation prevented me from pursuing it. So actually, I already have kind of a worry, “Could I really finish?” And also because I have my daughter. My daughter was 4 years old at the time. I have to think about my family duties. My husband was very busy working in the lab all the time. I said, “If I also pursue my PhD, who is going to take care of my daughter?” So, I didn't have much struggle about that one. I said, “Yes, I have to support my family.”

[00:09:42](#) **Ann**

Yeah. And actually, for a lot of people—women, and we can talk about this more later, but the life balance kind of thing does tend to affect women more—the idea that you can have some kind of intellectual content in your job is very attractive, I think. I'm glad that your mentor recognized that.

[00:10:03](#) **Jianye**

Yes. Forever I appreciate him.

[00:10:05](#) **Ann**

So then, when you think back to your first days at Berkeley, and what you're doing now, can you cast your mind back and think, what are some of the changes that come to mind over that time period?

[00:10:27](#) **Jianye**

There was a big change. Really. When I started, actually, our East Asian Library was located at the Durant Hall, not here [at the current East Asian Library]. This is a new building. We just moved in March 2008. Before that one, our East Asian Library was in the Durant Hall. And it's a totally different setting. It was a very nice building, beautiful. But, the space was very limited. I don't know if you have ever had a chance to visit there. The books were very crowded and our offices were kind of hiding behind the shelves. And because I just came here [to Berkeley], I didn't know anyone yet. So, I didn't get a busy traffic for the visitors, or people came here for reference service yet. But my normal day was very busy. You probably don't know— at the time, our orders, we still print out the slips for the book orders.

[00:11:31](#) **Ann**

I didn't know until this project when people started talking about the [physical] slips.

[00:11:36](#) **Jianye**

Yes, the slips. I might have some samples. So, you know, we process order in the system and then we print out. And actually, you have to pick up from the Moffitt Library, the basement. So, every day we have to go there to pick up our order slips. And then you mailed out to our Chinese vendors, that would take a lot of time. And then also, the other thing, I was busy at that time is because our collection was scattered. We had at least three locations on campus. So, the main location is at the Durant Hall. The second location is, we call it Annex, which is in the basement of California Hall. You probably never know that. The basement of the California Hall, this is our East Asian's annex. They have actually a separate circulation spot there. Another [third] place is located at 2223 Fulton Street. But the building is gone now, it was demolished, probably a little before the pandemic, because it's not seismically safe. [It] used to be a six-floor building.

So, the East Asian Department, and the Institute of East Asian Studies, and the Center for Chinese Studies, and the library, they all share the same building, but the library is called Center for Chinese Studies Library. It was affiliate library. I already knew when I came here that the three locations will be consolidated and then moved into the current building. So, when I joined the library, it was just right in the transitional period. So, lots of planning. For example, I have to decide what books I will keep here, and what books will be sent to NRLF [the Northern Regional Library Facility, now called Systemwide Library Facility-North, is a high-density storage site for infrequently used items in the University of California Libraries system], or what more important core collection have to be brought back from NRLF because the faculty really needed them. Due to the limit of the space at Durant Hall, we couldn't do that. So, I remember I really spent lots of time doing that—I selected, for example, over 10,000 titles from NRLF to bring here. So, you can imagine how busy I was.

[00:14:15](#) **Ann**

Yes!

[00:14:19](#) **Jianye**

And then after we moved into the new building, it became totally different, because this is a very new beautiful building. Many people would come here, and I'm very visible, because my office is really next to the circulation desk. So, whenever I open my door, people just come in and stop by and say hello to me, or the general public, or our students even. They don't have to make appointment with me, just walk in my office. “Oh, can I ask you a question?” So, my traffic gets much, much busier. Then the technology, of course, no longer print slips. So it's all online and we just sent Excel files. So that had changed, and I have more public face to my community and users that I serve. And I really love it. I feel the connection between my community is really much strengthened. And yeah, I like it. I like to be visible. I don't want to hide somewhere. So that's why I feel that's a big change. The routine, the daily routine, really has changed.

[00:15:28](#) **Ann**

Yes. Do you feel that the questions that come to you are different? So, you're saying at the beginning of your career you were doing cataloging, but that you were encouraged to be a subject expert, and that comes with reference. Have reference questions changed over time for you?

[00:15:48](#) **Jianye**

Oh, yeah, sure. First of all, you know, my users really are very diverse group populations. We have very academic scholars, professors, from our own campus and from other universities in the US and even internationally. Every year I would have a lot of visitors from over the world, from Europe, from Australia, [and] from Asia, including Japan, Korea and China. So, it's very international and everyone would ask you different questions. Some are really very difficult to answer. So that's why I said, even all answering questions. But one question might take even days, several days. And this is one group. And the other group, my stable group, is a graduate students group. Whenever they were preparing for their qualification exam, or they were preparing for their dissertations, they came to my office, consulted with me really frequently. So that actually is very helpful to my job, because by this connection I will know what is the collection they are looking for. It help with my collection development a lot. So, by the time one student finished a dissertation, one special collection might be already available, on my shelves. I love this scholarly communication. And my third group is the general public, because we are based in San Francisco Bay area. The Chinese American population is huge here, and lots of people are very passionate about doing their family history or other thing or their independent study. So, they would also come to the library to use our resources. So that's mostly the three kind of, types of my users. So, the questions are very different.

[00:17:52](#) **Ann**

Yes. And did the questions change over time do you think? Or...

[00:17:58](#) **Jianye**

More and more toward special collections.

[00:18:02](#) **Ann**

So interesting.

[00:18:03](#) **Jianye**

Yeah. At the beginning it's general question, "Oh, how can I find things, blah, blah blah." And nowadays most people, particularly scholars, they would really ask me, "Jianye, do you know, any special collection on my topic in the United States?" And also, how to access our Bancroft or Stanford's Hoover Institute [collections]. Also, they want to know what are available in the world. For example, if they are from our own users, they want to know what are the special collection in China. So, things like that, more and more towards special collections, I have to say.

[00:18:48](#) **Ann**

Interesting. And, I feel like—I don't know what word I want, but I think the word is profile—the profile of the East Asian Library and all of the language materials you have draws [users]. I don't get questions from the public about sociology. I don't really get questions from, you know, Australian researchers about sociology (actually I've had one or two), because that's not really the profile of our collection and our collection is not so unique [related to sociology]. But I'm hearing that about what you work with, it sounds really exciting.

[00:19:27](#) **Jianye**

Yeh, indeed! You know, I have been collecting our interlibrary loan data. The data for the books that I lend out. I have a lot of borrowers internationally, even something exciting like from the Denmark Royal Library, just to give one example.

[00:19:45](#) **Ann**

That's so cool!

[00:19:50](#) **Jianye**

How unusual. Oxford, Cambridge, all these great universities, I received quite a lot of such requests.

[00:20:00](#) **Ann**

So, my sense from your CV, and my sense from what you're saying, is that you do a lot of networking, because you need to know people who are doing the same work as you, but you also need to know people all over the world. How do you take on that challenge? What is your approach to networking?

[00:20:21](#) **Jianye**

For this one I have to thank UC Berkeley, our campus, because we have a very active visiting scholar program, that is hosted by our Center for Chinese Studies, and also our East Asian Studies Department, also the History department. In the past, most of those visiting scholars, they are professors in China. So, whenever they came here, I would always invite them for a library tour, and I show them my collection, particularly in their field. I would have really been humble. Ask them, “Oh, what is your opinion about my collection? What do you think the weakness of my collection?” They would always give me their professional advice, and through this one I build a collection.

In the past days we just communicated by emails. But nowadays, with the social media (I told you we will have question later) I just say with social media, make it very easier to connect with people where, whatever you are. So I keep this connection very active, because I have been very nice to them when they are here [they laugh]. So, this connection really exists for a long time. For example, during the pandemic period when our faculty and grad student had a very much difficulty to access our materials, I really ask help from my Chinese scholar friends. They all helped me. Either they scan chapter of books or articles, it really helped me.

[00:21:57](#) **Ann**

That's great. And that's because you had those relationships already existing.

[00:22:02](#) **Jianye**

Yeah. Or sometimes when we, our faculty, organize some international conference, I always attended for the chance of meeting people. Through this one, I also knew a lot of scholars, particularly from Europe, because that's not my normal area that I would have connection with, so that is very important, as I said.

[00:22:28](#) **Ann**

You know, I am looking at the question [list]. We don't have to touch on any of them in order, but actually one of the early questions is, “What kind of changes have you seen over time that seem to be specific to Berkeley?” So, I mean, there's a lot of people doing your work around the world and in the United States, but I'm guessing—maybe that's not true, you can tell me that too—that some things happen a little differently at Berkeley. Do you have any comments about that?

[00:23:03](#) **Jianye**

You mean from the general, the library environment, or my East Asian library?

Ann

Both!

[00:23:20](#) **Jianye**

If it's from our East Asian library, I think the changes, mostly is that... first change is, I think, about maybe 10 years ago, our library didn't collect archival materials. We only focused on print

collection, general print collection or e-collection [electronic/digital collection]. But then, I think, it's around 10 years ago that Peter [Zhou, then the Assistant University Librarian and Director of the East Asian Library] decided that we can also collect archives. I think it's due to the limitation of the space. Back in the Durant Hall, we have a very tiny rare book room, which can only hold hundreds of books [and] artifacts.

But now with this big new building, we have quite a big space. And also, we realize that it's important that you have special collection to make your library stand out in the United States. So that's one big change, focusing on special collection more.

[00:24:16](#) **Ann**

Especially, if your reference questions are more special collections related. It's circular, if you have more...

[00:24:24](#) **Jianye**

Yes, yes, that's why, I think so. And the second change I would say is the digitization projects. When I just joined the library in 2005, I didn't hear any digitization projects going on at that time. And because HathiTrust was later, I believe. But over the years you see how, in what a larger scale we are doing the digitization now. And that also changed the landscape of information, the seeking behavior, and, many things, how people access materials. So that's the second, the big change. And the third change I personally feel is that we really keep changing our library, either the website or the integrated library system quite frequently. I have been through the three big changes for the integrated library system. When I join here, we were using INNOPAC [a library automation system from Innovative Interfaces, Inc.], and you still have to do this command, to type "title 'ti = blah, blah, blah'". All these command words to look for information, which was a surprise to me, because when I was in SUNY Albany, they were already using Aleph [Automated Library Expandable Program, an early online integrated library system]. Already [in SUNY Albany] there's a web-based search phase, is very easy to use. But when I came here, I have to learn how to use Telnet [a client-server application protocol that provides access to virtual terminals of remote systems on local area networks or the internet (Wikipedia)] to type the command to search.

[00:26:00](#) **Ann**

Is that the same as GLADIS [General Library Automated Database Information System]?

[00:26:02](#) **Jianye**

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Yes, it's GLADIS. But the thing called INNOPAC. Yeah, it's GLADIS. You are right.

[00:26:08](#) **Ann**

Different people call it different things...

[00:26:10](#) **Jianye**

Yeah. GLADIS is the library inside, but the whole package is INNOPAC I believe, or the company name. Then the second-generation—Pathfinder, as the public search phase, Millennium was the library system. And now it's Alma [and] Primo [Alma and Primo are the back- and front-end integrated library system interfaces used by UC Berkeley Library, from the company Ex Libris]. Every change was really big, and even so, there's no perfect solution. For example, I always feel to search [by] publisher is very important, but we don't have such feature, and [also] how to search within series nowadays. Probably they already added, so you never know. But you can see how the changes happened over the years, right? So, these are the changes. And from other side, I just feel nowadays the technology change is really fast and overwhelming to some extent. So many things that we have to catch up with. Even though my job not directly related to those technology, but I do feel this overwhelming pressure.

[00:27:26](#) **Ann**

Is there anything that stands out to you over your time at Berkeley? That it really was a big project to get up to speed with the new technology? Like, it was a big change? Certainly, the ILS [Integrated Library Systems] changes are big changes. But anything else come to mind?

[00:27:45](#) **Jianye**

Oh, other things, maybe not just for Berkeley in particular, but in general. There was this trend for digital humanities we all feel, even in my field, because most of my users, they are the scholars in the humanities fields. So, when they first said, “Oh, digital humanities!” that means humanities studies scholars also needed to learn and to use, to embrace, the new technology. At that time, I felt a challenge, and I actually participated in some our library workshops in the summertime, like the one for text mining, for GIS [Geographic Information Systems], and Wikipedia. All these things I tried. I have to say, when you were in the training it was easy to follow up. But if you don't have a real project to follow up, after a while you will forget about it.

[00:28:46](#) **Ann**

So true.

[00:28:48](#) **Jianye**

Right? I remember my one successful example is that I learned the Wikipedia. Then I actually collaborated with our faculty to teach the research methodology class. I convinced our professor to assign a project for editing any Wikipedia articles, and I gave them instruction on how to do it. At that time, I really feel good about myself. “Oh, wow. I can teach what I learned.” And the students [were] also very enthusiastic, they feel. But then after a while, you know, you don't have the demand, and after a while you don't use it. And of course, for Wikipedia is a different story, because our professor told me that she could end up with fights with those, the original creators that disagree with edits or something. So, lots of issues. But for these other [tools], I myself didn't try a DH project. And then now with the AI, just launched, actually many things could be done by AI easily. You see these kinds of changes. So, I don't feel regretful that I didn't follow up digital humanities very closely. You never know how the evolved technology would bring you to the next stage.

[00:30:14](#) **Ann**

Yes, so true. So, this is not necessarily about change, this question, but I'd love to hear your thoughts, just for context, about the fact that as I look at your job and your career as a librarian, I started this project thinking about people who are liaison librarians. Like, the classic “I am the liaison for sociology”, versus functional librarian, so, “I am also a data librarian.” I have liaison and functional together. But your job has so many different aspects, and it has the language component. So, my guess, but I'd love to hear more from you, is that you not only have a job that has many facets, but then there's cultural and language issues as well. Is that right? How does that all play out?

[00:31:21](#) **Jianye**

Yes, indeed. As a subject studies librarian, people would come to me because they like my background, I get a training in China and how—I don't know how to say this, maybe they feel they can trust me more because I am from China—I got all, most of my previous knowledge there. They trust that I [am] authentic. And another way, I can speak the language, so they feel easily communicate with me. This happened mostly to our graduate students and undergraduate students, and the general public. Because nowadays, older generation Chinese American here, they speak Cantonese, right? Which I can understand, but I cannot speak. But their second generation actually more or less can speak some Mandarin, make it easier to communicate, so maybe they like this, my identity. It really makes the connection easier.

And also, I actively participated in their activities. For example, I often was invited to give them talks or workshops, to teach them how to search their family history, how to use our library collection on the Chinese genealogy, something like that. On the other hand, I myself insist that I should be a researcher myself, so that I can be convincing to my users that you can provide high quality reference service. So, it was not easy. When I just joined the library, it was very difficult for me, because they didn't know me. My predecessor actually was not invited to teach any classes. I don't know what was the reason. So, it was very difficult for me. But then I believe that my communication should work. So, I emailed every professor. I would talk to them, ask about their research interests, their projects and, and provided them what I can help. And it was one time, one professor invited me to the class to give one-hour instruction. And I was very well prepared. And then she was amazed how excellent my instruction was. And then she spread words. Then more and more faculty would come to invite me to give talks and instructions.

So, as I said, you have to... at some point let them know how good you are. If you keep hiding yourself in the office, that's not going to work. So actually, all started from you provide a good reference service, then you will know. So, I always try to do better. For example, I'm really serious about.. even if it's an undergrad student's email, I was really serious. And [I] constructed my email very well, provide all the resources I could provide. So, you know, making them feel, "Wow, that's more than I expected!" You know, that's how the way you get your reputation.

[00:34:49](#) **Ann**

I hope you don't mind if I say this for the recording, but everyone was so excited when you got the award from the American Library Association.

[00:34:58](#) **Jianye**

Thank you.

[00:35:00](#) **Ann**

The "I Love My Librarian" award. There were 1800 applications, and they chose 10 people. And you were one of the people. It just felt so right when that happened! Did that change things for you at all or what? What was that like to be chosen that way?

[00:35:22](#) **Jianye**

Yeah, to be honest, when I heard the news, I didn't believe it. I deleted the email right away. I thought maybe it's a fraud message, you know [Ann laughs], [it] said, "Congratulations, you win a prize." Something like that. And then after several minutes, they sent me another email, [it]

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said, “Did you see our earlier message? Here is your nomination package. You would know who nominated you.” Then I click on that one and then, “Oh, wow, all the people I know!” Then I realized it was not a fake news. But just tell you how unexpected. Whenever I work on my jobs, I never thought how I would want to get anything as a reward. I never thought of that. I just say, “I enjoy doing my job.” But over the years, probably I didn't even realize the work I have been doing. Like the way I build the community here. I do outreaching to our undergrad students, international students, helping visiting scholars, helping professors from other universities. I even didn't realize what I have been doing [for] them, and how they appreciate this. I really didn't know. So, I was really deeply touched, and I feel really very humbled, I have to say. That's what I said, It's... very humbled. And so, when many people congratulated me, I really feel kind of a little shy. I feel, “Oh my, awkward!” I hope this is gone soon. You know, I really just want to back to my normal life.

The thing that... actually, the impact on me is that it just encouraged me to do more. And it makes me believe what I have been doing is right. I don't have to follow everything, but I follow what I have been doing well. And I strongly believe serving your community is the right thing. No matter what technology changes, outside world changes. If you lose your users, lose your community, then that's the end of our librarianship. So that's how I feel about that way. So, in my library, I'm probably, I don't know, I am probably the only one that works every day in the library. I didn't choose a flexible work hours at all from the very... from the beginning when we reopened the library, because I love interacting with the people. And when I think back why I chose to be a librarian, I think maybe the most rewarding thing is that I could talk to people, interact with people. That's what I really enjoy the most of my job, I have to say.

[00:38:00](#) **Ann**

And that kind of gets into the whole question about COVID and the changes after COVID. I mean, your award ceremony for your award was online. It wasn't even in person. It was 2021. Right?

[00:38:13](#) **Jianye**

Yeah.

[00:38:14](#) **Ann**

And so, you're making actually kind of an unusual choice to be there every day. I love that choice ([there's a] long story about my life and that choice, but we won't go into that now).

What other changes are you seeing after COVID? Is it affecting your library and how people relate to it? Or do you feel like you're pretty much back to normal? Any thoughts about that?

[00:38:45](#) **Jianye**

Yeah, actually there's a change, during the pandemic and after pandemic. During the pandemic, people were all very frustrated because many people, including our faculty and the graduate students, they were so used to coming to the library to browse the shelf to find things, to check out things, and suddenly they cannot have access. So they were really panicked, and they complained. They even said, "Oh, is there a way I could just go to the library? I would quietly go and take things out." I said, "No way." This is the whole thing, the library shut down. They were very frustrated. Even though I have to say, the HathiTrust ["The HathiTrust 'Emergency Temporary Access Service' permits special access for HathiTrust member libraries that suffer an unexpected or involuntary, temporary disruption to normal operations, such as closure for a public health emergency or natural disaster, [making] it possible for member library patrons to obtain lawful access to specific digital materials in HathiTrust that correspond to physical books held by their own library"], you know, these temporary access, [helped]. I read the report, which is very good, they give the data to show how satisfied or not satisfied [users were] with that service. So at least in some way, to some extent it really solves their problem to access something urgently. If it's a digitized book, or if it's an e-book that we purchased, or if it's a book that we have the printed copy, but [they offer the] e-copy, there. But they are far from being satisfied. They always say, "No, it's really hard to use and you can only borrow for one hour long." They have to return and then re-check out.

And maybe because this frustration, when we reopen the library, they actually kind of cherish the library more than before. They would come to library and then really use the library, check out the books. I actually saw the recovery of our circulation of the print books. But also, there are many things we should really consider about the digitization projects. Not everything is better to access the [electronic] copy. For example, even for the digitized books, for example, if it's a rare book, the digitized one is black and white. You couldn't see the difference. You couldn't touch the paper. For the rare books, most people study, they concern, "Oh, which date the book was imprinted and who make the notes, what's the image?" and there's a color difference. You know, some people make notes in black ink, some make it in red ink. But the digitization project, it's only black and white. They couldn't tell. And particularly for the special collection, as I said, they cannot access the special collection. Even if archive is digitized, it's still not the case, because I myself use Bancroft archive very frequently. So, I know how different it is. You know,

the serendipity, that something suddenly catch your eyes because a different format, different font, a photo, or any scripts really different from... If it's digital, you couldn't tell. Even you can do a full text search, you [still] have to view it personally. Really. I would say so. that's [why] I said maybe the good thing happened after pandemic is that our professors and the students appreciate the library, the print collection more.

The other thing that our professor didn't like is the [electronic] course reserve. Before pandemic, we provided the print course reserve. But then they canceled it. This is no longer... because Alma didn't support it. That's their way to say. So, our professor was very frustrated, because there are some particular courses [where] the books themselves is object, for the study for the book culture. Even [if] you agree to scan the content, it's not useful, you know. So, as I'm saying, many things you have to reconsider. The other change is, you can see that because the morale was so low after you experience this pandemic, many things happen to their family members, and you are uncertain about the future. I saw the decline of people to come to the library. That's true too. You know, we used to have a lot of people coming, but the seniors, they worry about it, the virus. So, for a while there was a decline of users coming to the library.

But now, particularly during the finals, is so crowded, so things good and bad all happened after the pandemic. The shortened hours, you know, people really frustrated about. And then luckily, because the renovation of Moffitt Library, now our EAL [East Asian Library], we extended our service hours. So that's another. I hope it's permanent. I hope it's [not] a temporary change. They didn't realize that, for many of our students, they really need a quiet place, a shelter to study. You know, because of financial situation. Many students, they told me they couldn't afford to rent any place nearby. And someone even kind of squeezed in other people's living room or something. They needed to write the dissertation. They need to focus. So, the library actually provided decent place for them to really focus and write. So, they didn't realize how important a space is for them. I really sympathize them, and hope that really we could give more resource for them.

[00:44:43](#) **Ann**

So, one thing that's coming to mind as you're talking is that in our world the move in collecting is towards e-books and so we're preferring buying electronic books. Is it the same for your collection?

[00:45:03](#) **Jianye**

Actually, it's different story, because the market is different. For the United States and then maybe part of the Europe, e-book has been very mature market, right? And very fast development. But in many other regions and countries, it's not the story. For example, our Korean librarian told me the academic books are not available in the e-format. It's because of cultural issue too. Our Chinese scholars, they regard that only the serious scholarship can be printed. They regard it as a status, as authenticity of your scholarship. E-book is mostly for leisure reading, kill time or coffee table. It's not for serious reading. And to my surprise, even our graduate students—one of our excellent graduate students, now is an assistant professor at UBC [University of British Columbia]—he told me, “Jianye, I definitely prefer print books [over] the e-books. Of course, it's easy to search the keyword, but I need to have my deep reading integrated to my own knowledge and make my notes.” He said he only works most efficiently with print books, because I was surprised, “Oh, maybe it's just our senior faculty think that way”, but our young generation graduate students also feel that the same way. E-resources help them with search, but not with deep learning and the process of integration to their own knowledge, let alone the market.

So, for the Chinese market we do have a lot of e-book vendors. But as I said, you probably didn't know another fact that happened during the pandemic. One of our Chinese e-book vendors, they went bankrupt because of pandemic. And we purchased probably over 10,000 titles from them. But suddenly [we] find out there's no perpetual backup and the format doesn't fit the third-party platform they try to move to. So, all sorts of things you would never know.

[00:47:34](#) **Ann**

Though that's a lot of money that you just lost!

[00:47:37](#) **Jianye**

Yeah. They are still working on that, I think. So, I said, you think e-book may be the same format, the same requirements, same standard? No, it's not. Every country, region, probably have different practice or standards, and how to fit to our library situation? How you do perpetual archiving? you don't know [what will happen]. So, at least our print books here in our special collection, our earliest printed copy dated to the 13th century, it still exists very well. And also, another thing is my own personal opinion. In some way I feel print book is more democratic, serving more people because the print book can be circulating, can be interlibrary loaned to other libraries. But e-book, because of the contract, you cannot share. So, in another way, because we are the public library, we are responsible to educate, to benefit more people as much as we can.

So, in this way actually the print book can benefit more people. That's something people didn't think of, because they only think about open access e-books. Of course, that's benefiting everyone. But what if it's a licensed one? You actually can only benefit your own people.

[00:49:01](#) **Ann**

Another thing that I'm just thinking—I have not had this thought before—but the Main Stacks [in Doe Library] can be quite daunting. So, when I'm talking about [it] to my sociology and other undergrads and trying to explain how to find the sociology section that they want in the Main Stacks, that's a long email, and I have to send pictures of maps, and I'm not there with them. In a way, if you have a heavily print collection that's in a place that doesn't feel as accessible, that is a little bit of a challenge. But I feel like your library is more, it's just scaled better for people to come and use it.

[00:49:49](#) **Jianye**

Also, we have... every beginning of the semester we will have library instruction workshop. We teach the students and the visiting scholars how to browse a collection, what the classification is used, which floor is what range of core numbers. And then after that instruction, we will have a physical tour of the library.

[00:50:11](#) **Ann**

That's what I was going to ask. I used to do that, and then a lot of the faculty didn't want to take that extra [class] time for the tour. And of course, the Main Stacks tour, it takes a while to get to that library and get down into the stacks and everyone has to have their ID and blah blah, blah. So, that's very interesting because I'm hearing so much in this interview that is new to me in terms of thinking about library services being circular. Like if you start watching what your users want and giving them more of that thing, you'll get more users coming for that thing. Special collections is a big example for you. It's so interesting.

[00:50:55](#) **Jianye**

Yeah, yeah, as I said, a very different job.

[00:50:59](#) **Ann**

So, I'm going to ask a sort of a different direction question then. It's so interesting what you're saying about all of the changes that have happened. I mean, you've been at Berkeley a long time. Can you think of a time, or are there any examples of where you got that email that [said], “Okay, this change is coming”, like it could be Millennium to Alma or whatever [the] email is.

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This big change is coming. Do you have any ways that you like to prepare for that? Do you have any ways to learn about new technologies? Do you have any strategies, change strategies that you [use]?

[00:51:38](#) **Jianye**

Yeah, I think, for the library-wide, these big changes, it's good because they provide lots of workshops, right?

[00:51:46](#) **Ann**

That's true. Yeah.

[00:51:47](#) **Jianye**

Like, for example, when we migrated to the Alma, I remember the main library acquisition staff, Ricky, he actually taught us several times, because the first time was very general. And then once you really had hands-on [training], it's different. And then we have to ask him again. When we have more experience of problem. Then we accumulated questions, and then again, [and] again. At least I think he probably provided three instruction sessions, so that helped. And then, we have peer help, you know, like... for example, if I learn first and I will teach other staff and I share my knowledge. So I'm the designated person for our EAL about these acquisition changes. So, I have been being the middle person. If it's something I could have solved the problem, I help them. But if I cannot, I will ask the Main Library. So, this connection is very important. Don't be shy to ask, you know, otherwise you never know the answer.

[00:52:40](#) **Ann**

Yes. Good point.

[00:52:48](#) **Jianye**

But for other things, as I mentioned, like, those tours, text mining and DH, I just attended workshops, you know. The good thing with Zoom is that many things already available online. If it's a free one, I would also attend. I keep learning from OCLC [Online Computer Library Center, founded in 1967, providing tech services to libraries globally]. Whenever they have new updates, I would go there to see what's going on, to keep up to date. But I do have to say, for the very high-end technology, you do need hands-on experience. You know, people really help you sit with you. Otherwise it's really difficult. You know, you have to be step by step. That is very challenging. I still feel challenging to me. Unless, I said, if I have a project in my mind, then I

can ask help from one of the experts here, consulted with him or her or... and then give me guidance, and then, you know, that will be very helpful. Otherwise if you just learn the technology itself, I don't know how practical it is because I learned all these, but nowadays if you ask me what I did, I already forgot, you have to learn again.

So, another thing is that you have to give yourself a try. For example, like the ChatGPT: at the beginning I was resisting it, because I agree with many of our faculty, this is not good, because you are encouraging people to not be creative themselves. Not doing original research themselves. But then after a while so many people, and even our East Asian librarians. We would have annual conference, [and] at least at two years' conferences theme was about AI, the changes to a library. Then I realized, "Okay, why I don't give a chance to try it myself", and I realized, I said, "Oh, the good thing actually for AI is that, particularly for me, because of my background as a new immigrant." So, I realized it actually very helpful with translation, is much, much better than the Google Translate. More accurate, more sophisticated, and also polishing your text, if you have a text. Sometimes I use it for my paper abstract. You know, I already have my English paper abstract, then I just said, "Oh, can you help me to improve my writing?" And then when it sent it back, I said, "Wow, I think it's much better than I do, really!"

So, this kind of thing, I don't feel it's cheating. I feel reasonable and helpful. But other things I don't know. So at least I know from very beginning I was resistant, [but] from now on I can look at things in different ways. But I still have my own reservation as I heard more from faculty talking about cheating and how frustrated [they are], because it's harder to check the citation, at the least. if I... because I tried, I know. Otherwise you don't know what they are talking about.

[00:56:08](#) **Ann**

And you didn't sit in your resistance.

[00:56:13](#) **Jianye**

Yes.

[00:56:13](#) **Ann**

You had the initial resistance, but then approached it, and then you got comfortable with it.

[00:56:18](#) **Jianye**

Yeah. So, I said, actually you realize they can do more and more. Like, for example, the Chinese AI tool can actually translate a classic Chinese text and with punctuation, with annotation.

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[00:56:30](#) **Ann**

Wow!

[00:56:34](#) **Jianye**

Which is super helpful for people, students who study classic Chinese. Before that they only rely on dictionaries, rely on professor's instruction. But this is where they can teach themselves, and also learning language. I heard it very helpful, because [it is] interactive, and AI can pronounce it, you know, and very vivid conversation. So, you can see many places that can be used with fair use. I think that's actually the good things.

[00:57:13](#) **Ann**

Well, thank you for that. This question always feels a little bit [of a] sensitive question. So, feel free to say, "Oh, I don't want to talk about that." Were there any times that you ever thought about leaving Berkeley or leaving librarianship?

[00:57:35](#) **Jianye**

Mostly not. I think I didn't think of leaving, mostly because of my family, my husband and my daughter, they really love this Bay Area. And I love the Bay Area too. You know, the beautiful weather and some nice people here and the cultural environment. And I feel comfortable whenever I go to, particularly when I go to the San Francisco Chinatown, Oakland Chinatown. I feel I'm part of it. I don't feel I'm an alien. You know, things like that. I don't know if I ever thought of leaving. [Well,] probably. Of course, you will have ups and downs, right? Sometimes you feel a lot of pressure or challenges, or, sometimes interpersonal relationship, probably. But I never really think of going anywhere. I never applied, to be honest. I never applied any job, even though I received many invitations. People, particularly after I won the prize, a lot of people invited me to apply for leadership positions. I even didn't go. So, I just say I love this place as much as I first came here. I remember when—the first day I came here for my job interview, which was on April 26, 2005—I walked in the campus, I saw so many Asian faces. Right away I said, "Wow, what a world." Because when I was in Albany New York, I was the only one of the two Chinese people there in the library, the whole library. The other Chinese staff is for IT [support], you know, supporting the computer app, something. So, I felt very isolated there. I really felt that way. That's why I was looking for jobs outside. But here, first day for the interview, oh my God, I felt at home.

[00:59:35](#) **Ann**

Oh, that's so sweet. Yeah.

[00:59:51](#) **Jianye**

So. And then I, whenever, when I feel unhappy or doubtful, I ask myself, “What is the major reason I love here?” And after that one, I always said, “No, I already compromised. No, no, no, I still want to stay here.” And then over the years, when I'm approaching... this year will be my 20th year. 20th year! So, I said, “Wow, I've already been here for almost 20 years, so that means I will be here till I retire.”

[01:00:13](#) **Ann**

Well, a lot of people make that choice.

[01:00:16](#) **Jianye**

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Also, because our good benefit, if you can stay there long enough.

[01:00:23](#) **Ann**

Does leadership tempt you at all? Or maybe not so much. Your job sounds rewarding to you.

[01:00:31](#) **Jianye**

Yeah. I really love my job, I have to say. From all my experience before, I didn't take any leadership. Or maybe not—some professional organizations, people nominated me as a Chair, but I think my job keeps me very busy. I don't want to affect my service, so I always turn down and say, “Can I be a member instead?” So that way, when I ask myself, “Which one I'm more interested [in], if [I] want leadership? I want my own job?” I still love my job. As long as I didn't lose my users, you know, I still can do what I do. I really want to stay with my own job, because being a leadership is challenging. You have to being kind of all-round person. You have these skills, you have the vision, you have this personality. I'm a very soft person [they laugh], I know that. It's very difficult for me to say no to people. I know myself. Really. So, I attended that workshop about leadership. I compare myself, you know, I really care about emotion, care about, you know, how to influence people by your own personality. It's really not by disciplining, by other things. So, I know from there. So, I don't regret.

[01:02:06](#) **Ann**

I'm so glad. Let me ask you another thing, though. In a way, it's another kind of leadership, but not exactly. But I just want to ask you about your active role as a mentor. I feel that you've talked

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a lot about mentors you've had and how important they've been. And I know that you've mentored other people. Do you have anything that you want to say about that role, or how you're supporting the next generation of librarians?

[01:02:33](#) **Jianye**

Oh, yes, sure. As I already mentioned to you that my earlier mentors, they were professors, right? I also had my Berkeley library mentors. I was very lucky to have three mentors. One is my predecessor. She actually stayed for four more years as a part-time, you know, the recall service [where UC Berkeley librarians can return part-time for a period after retirement]. So, I learned critically from her, because it's really hands-on experience. When I came here, I was overwhelmed, “Oh, my God, this is a big collection, big budget.”

[01:03:08](#) **Ann**

Yes, yes.

[01:03:09](#) **Jianye**

I don't know what to do, even the routine things, what a vendor to contact, how to do things. So, she really kind of give me hands-on experience, connecting me with all the departments, and that's one thing. And then my second mentor, the library, the LAUC-B [Librarians Association of the University of California- Berkeley chapter] assigned to me, is Michaelyn Burnette. She was the English literature bibliographer. She really also helped me, particularly for my first library review. You know how you feel about the review, right? The first one could be very daunting.

[01:03:47](#) **Ann**

I know!

[01:03:48](#) **Jianye**

Oh, my God, I was so frightened, you know, so fearful. Can I pass? So she said, “Oh, you can show me your draft.” Then she sit with me and we go through it and she gave tips, you know, how to add things. Because I was a very modest person, I just kind of write it as facts, and then she said, “No, no, no, not just facts. You have to write the impact.” Something like that. So, she helped me. And also, we would have informal meetings. And my third mentor was Norma Kobzina, she already passed away a few years ago. She was in my Search Committee. And she was so [enthusiastic], so warm when I just joined the library. She sent me invitation email, “Oh, why don't we have lunch together? I want to share something with you and hear your opinion.”

So, she gave me very useful suggestion. She said, “Why don't you start your tour of visiting

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every libraries on campus? Get to know the librarians, build your first connection, and to know what different libraries there are, what everybody's doing.” Which is super, super useful. So I really admire her. And I also have other wonderful collaborators to work with. So, because all these people helped me, I feel like I'm obligated to help others.

After I got my library... passed the permanent [status] review, I felt comfortable I can be other people's mentor. So, I did help several, particularly for the outside. I helped at least two PhDs, maybe now more, maybe four now. Yeah, they got their PhDs, but they couldn't find a faculty job, so they think about a different path and become a librarian. Then I guided them on how to prepare for the librarianship and advise. And one student actually came here for the CPT, they call the Curriculum Practical Training. I actually also collaborated with him, work on some project together. So, all these people all find a good job and some are on the tenure track librarianship now. Yeah, the tenure track position. So, I was very proud of them.

Also, for the library here, I was a mentor for several staff. One staff, I remember she used to work in the NRLF. And then we talked about her strengths, and she already had a library degree. And then so... I realized that with her own real life and strengths, and I suggested her, “Why don't you also apply for public library job?” And then she got the Head of Circulation [job] in one of the good public libraries, you know, so she was very happy, she told me. Another one used to work at the [UC Berkeley] Main Library, and we talked to each other. So, I encouraged her to attend a library school and she said that she's very interested in doing reference. So, I really encouraged [her], I help her revise her application statement, things like that. And she was admitted, actually I think it was by [the] UW [University of Washington]. But then, she changed her mind and because of personal reason, but I also feel happy. You know, once they fulfill their dream, I always feel happy for them.

And also [I am a mentor] for newly joined LAUC-B members. Just kind of an environmental orientation. Tell them, you know, what are we, what are the campus like, the library like, how to find opportunity to network with people, collaborate, how to survive the review, something like that. Useful tips. So, I really enjoy that experience. No matter it's formally or informally, you know, whoever come here, I always try to give them some useful advice. I like that. It's rewarding to me, because I really feel so many people helped me on my way. It's my opportunity to return something.

[01:08:16](#) **Ann**

Yeah! Okay, so this question actually comes out of a discussion that we had when we were talking about planning for this interview, but is there anything you'd like to say or offer—and it's fine if not, but just checking—about what it's been like being a woman in this, [well,] maybe not male-dominated field, but this not always female-dominated academic setting? We were talking just a little bit about that, and I feel like even calling it a gender thing is getting a little bit on the edge of maybe I'm changing the discussion a little bit, but we were just talking about how some of the work-life balance piece can be really challenging for women.

[01:09:11](#) **Jianye**

I mean, as for the work environment, I'm fine. I didn't feel like I was discriminated or unfairly treated. Only just the big environment. Particularly because my community, mostly our East Asian Studies faculty, they are extremely dedicated, thoughtful, sensitive. So, I didn't have any bad experience really. One of the big changes, I really remember, for example, during the pandemic, I was chased by people several times, and shouting to me, just saying, “Go home, you bitch, you Asian bitch.” Something like that.

[01:09:55](#) **Ann**

I'm so sorry.

[01:10:01](#) **Jianye**

Really, it was devastating to me, because one day I was with my daughter, you know, on the bus, someone also shouted that to me. You know, even just a couple of days ago, I was walking on the street, and then one Caucasian lady spit on me. Because the recent US-China relationship. So, I tell you, just for the library, I don't have any problem. But the outside world, particularly now, I feel very fearful. Worried. Other than that, I'm very happy with my life here. This just came up from time...you know, when we have, you have no control because this social, political reason.

[01:10:51](#) **Ann**

Well, thank you for sharing that. I appreciate it.

[01:10:53](#) **Jianye**

Yeah, I did feel that.

[01:10:55](#) **Ann**

Yeah. We were also talking about a little bit about the early years when you had your young child and trying to work so hard.

[01:11:04](#) **Jianye**

That's true too. I mean, you know, I was very humble when I got a job. I didn't negotiate at all for my salary. My salary was very low. You cannot imagine. You know, my starting salary was only \$46K, and at that time my husband also didn't have a job, because... I think he was just laid off right before we moved here. So, [we] rely on my \$46,000 per year. And plus, you know how expensive to rent the house here. And also, my daughter needs after-school care. It was very difficult to find time for me, and I even didn't know how to ask help from... So, we just tried to be very frugal, honestly. So, my first several years was very difficult for us financially.

And then, you know, when you both are working couples, it is really hard to balance. One has to sacrifice. In our Chinese culture, mostly, usually it's women supporting men, that's true too. But in my case, [it] is that I chose to be that role, because I care about my family, I care about my daughter more. And I know I could do more to my daughter to help her, more than my husband can do. So that's why I chose that way. So, in fact, the other reason I didn't pursue my PhD is also the same reason. I feel if we both become a researcher, it will be very difficult to manage the family life. And I also feel I didn't realize how demanding our job [as librarians] is. I remember, once my health was really kind of affected, then my doctor said to me, "Don't burn out. You have to take care of your health first," when I told him, "You don't know how late I work till midnight, always endless emails, endless work." So, I really feel that way and you know, overwhelming. And also, my daughter once also complained, "Mom, you always work in front of the computer, even the weekends. We seldom have family activities..." something like that. You know, what can I say? Maybe I'm too workaholic. Even when I was on my conference trip, away for maybe one week or so, I couldn't help checking my emails as long as I can have access. This become a bad habit.

[01:13:08](#) **Ann**

Yeah, I understand.

[01:13:24](#) **Jianye**

I think the other reason is because the anxiety and insecurity you feel about your job security. You know we have this library reviews, right? So, every three years, when you come up with review, I always panic. I said, "Oh my God, what have I done in the last three years?" And then

even when you just pass this review, then you already start to panic again. “Oh my God. What I'm going to do for the next three-year cycle?” This one, I have to say, is really... I don't know how other people handle this pressure. For me, it's really a lot. So, I said, “Okay, I have to do more, do more.” Then you have these things in your mind. Then you cannot help to do more. And also, as I said, they said, “Oh, the review standard is to see the impact.” But I have to say, not everything we do daily has impact there. Right? Like my daily reference, my daily helping people wouldn't see big impact.

[01:15:06](#) **Ann**

No, you don't see it. It's not measurable.

[01:15:10](#) **Jianye**

Yes, exactly. Then you have to think, “Oh, what kind of a big project I can do?” All these kind of things, really a lot of pressure, and you know, on me. I have to say, as a woman, particularly as a woman, you have many other responsibilities there. So, over the years, I even didn't know how I survived [they laugh]. Someone else maybe, when they consider retirement, and maybe this is one of the reasons, I guess. I didn't know. But I think people said, “Oh, wow, this is so stressful the job is, if I could have supported myself, why not I retire earlier.” Someone probably think that way. But for me, as long as I'm still on the track, I really feel this circle is like a spell, you know? And at the beginning, at the end of the three year. Oh my God, you know, this panic really there. I mean, I should learn how to manage this kind of pressure.

[01:16:12](#) **Ann**

Yeah, it's hard, isn't it? Because it's external.

[01:16:14](#) **Jianye**

It is hard. It is very hard.

[01:16:19](#) **Ann**

Oh, Jianye, this is so good, so interesting, so helpful. I'm coming to the sort of end of the questions I feel like I wanted to ask you. I feel like we've talked about everything. So, generally this is where I'll say to someone, how would you like your work to be remembered? But before I ask that question, is there anything else I didn't ask you or that you want to be sure that you mention? I know that you looked at the questions in advance and maybe you have some things like, “Oh, we didn't talk about this yet.” Is there anything you want to add in right now?

[01:16:57](#) **Jianye**

What should I say? What I didn't say? Mostly you already touched that part, I think.

[01:17:11](#) **Ann**

A lot of the conversation just went around and touched on different things. But yeah, I think we did great.

[01:17:21](#) **Jianye**

I think I actually make notes—let me see what I have done here, if it's anything I just said. I think, from my own experience, how... for the newly hired librarian, how to survive well. From my own experience, as I said, first of all, you have to know your environment well. And second, I still think collaboration is really important. No one knows everything, really, particularly when you are working alone, you really feel isolated. You feel, you know, not confident. So, my years here, I really collaborate with various people, faculty, students and librarians, you know. So after those, really gave me a lot of confidence. You feel the friendly environment. And to all the challenges, I feel, be patient. Even though I told you I experienced many bad things, but I said, “Be patient, things will get better.” Otherwise, if you are not optimistic, you feel very depressed, probably. So these are the, I think, most important things that helped me. As I said, at the end of the day, I ask myself, “Is there anything that I feel happy about today?” And then I feel very happy. You know, it's positive thinking.

But collaboration really means a lot to me. No one can be a hero. You have to be with other people, work together, as a team. That's what happened here, also happened in my collaboration with other my peers in the United States. and that's why I love conferences, you know, attending conferences. Because no matter how you work remotely, but when you attend a conference, you can meet people in person and you can exchange information. And then you learn a lot from others, particularly your peers. That's more convincing to you. And then you probably find an opportunity to collaborate, if you have ideas. This connection, I think, is very important for your career development. I said, for my oral history project, it's because I was invited by the Head of the East Asian Library of UCLA. But at the beginning, I was so frightened. I said, “No, no, no, no, I cannot do that. I didn't have any experience.” But she said, “No, no, don't worry. I invited [someone from] our Center for Oral History, and she will give us a training and you will learn new skills.” And once you are there in a group learning, you find out, “Oh, everyone's on the same page.” We just learn step by step. And you feel confident. So, all the things, you know, from panic, and then you become confident. [But] if there's no encouragement, no networking, I

don't think it's possible. So, with that one, I said, “No matter what challenges we are facing, you should be able to overcome.”

[01:20:34](#) **Ann**

I like that, thank you. So, then the question, how would you like your work to be remembered? Or, your legacy?

[01:20:41](#) **Jianye**

I told many people, I said, “You know, the way that I want to be remembered is that if after many years, some people come to the library and find a book that's exciting to him or her, will still say, ‘Oh, my God, how come this library has this book? Oh, the librarian was wonderful to get this book.’” [Ann laughs] That's my best appraisal. You know that I would really love to know that, even though I'm not here anymore, [it] doesn't matter, because I was inspired by my predecessors. I have at least three or four, my predecessors. from the collection...when I do the evaluation of the collection, I realize that how wonderful they have done the job before me. So that makes me feel I'm obligated to continue their good work, not to let the collection collapse or decline, the quality decline, or things like that one.

You know, when I came here in 2005, our Chinese collection was ranked probably number six in the country. And just right before pandemic, like 2020, my collection was number two. I moved from number six to number two. But then after pandemic, Princeton surpassed me. Of course, they have more money than me.

[01:22:02](#) **Ann**

Yes.

[01:22:08](#) **Jianye**

Their budget is more than I have. But at least I feel okay. I could say to my predecessors, I didn't disappoint you. Yes. I keep it strong, you know, and other things. Maybe the most, for the current and the near future, is that people that I helped, they feel they benefited from my help, like, maybe inspire their research. And the research was very excellent. Sometime when I check the dissertations randomly, I find people in acknowledgment, [and] most of our graduate students would have mentioned me in their acknowledgment. I really feel very touched. I said, “No matter what I said, I left my mark, my footprint here.” That's a visible mark.

[01:22:58](#) **Ann**

That's a wonderful thing. Yes.

[01:23:00](#) **Jianye**

So, I really hope the library will be here forever. I am really scared that if someday no one comes to library, everybody on the cyberspace, that's my biggest fear. As I said, today I suddenly think of my first class in the library school. We learn about the Five Laws of the Library.

[01:23:24](#) **Ann**

Yes! Ranganathan's Laws! [Five Laws of Library Science— Indian librarian SR Ranganathan developed these in 1931 and they are still quoted: 1- Books are for use; 2-Every person his or her book; 3-Every book its reader; 4-Save the time of the reader; 5-The library is a growing organism.]

[01:23:25](#) **Jianye**

Yes. When I reread it, it still works.

[01:23:29](#) **Ann**

Thank you for mentioning Ranganathan! [No one has] talked about that.

[01:23:35](#) **Jianye**

That still worked. You see, it's just with different interpretation. Like a book maybe, could be any format of resources. And, you help them to shorten the time to search for resources. And the Library keeps growing as organization. All the things still work. It's magical. So maybe I'm an idealist, but I really hope Library will never die. We will still keep growing. And, more importantly, that we don't lose our users, our community. That's more important. That's our solid cornerstone.

[01:24:07](#) **Ann**

Yes. Yes. I think that is just the perfect place to say thank you. If you're okay, I will stop the recording now. Are you good?

[01:24:22](#) **Jianye**

I'm good. Okay.