

Jennifer Chou



Founding member and Former Deputy
Director of Programming at Radio Free
Asia



Content

What is your interviewee's mission or goals in life and how is she/he fulfilling this? How does her/his mission or goals relate to women's roles in US-Asian relations? What did you learn from the interviewee that 1) reinforced things we learned in class and 2) provided new information?



Ms. Chou's mission was to help people through uncovering human rights violations by bringing them into the spotlight. She is fulfilling this through her work in founding and having been the Deputy Director of Programming at Radio Free Asia, a network that reports on news that the mainstream news media does not cover. Although she has recently retired, she is now starting to work with the Human Rights Network, which is also centered around acknowledging human rights violations in order for them to be fixed.

Her mission relates to women's roles in US-Asian relations because of her part as a woman in acknowledging human rights violations. Many times, women suffer from these violations, which Ms. Chou works to bring to the public's attention. For example, one man Ms. Chou worked with was protesting against forced abortions to meet the quota for China's one family one child policy, something that infringes upon a woman's right to bodily autonomy.

From Ms. Chou, we learned that her Confucian society often discouraged her from becoming a career woman, which was an idea that was thoroughly discussed in class. Confucian society enforced harsh gender roles that women are supposed to remain unseen and in the home. According to Confucian society, women's primary roles are to fulfill domestic responsibilities such as cleaning, cooking, and child-rearing. In addition, women are expected to remain mostly subservient, all while the husband works for the family as the primary bread-winner.

Ms. Chou covered lots of new information we had not previously covered

in class. Her advice focused mostly on not letting disadvantages get in the way of pursuing one's dreams. She firmly stated during the interview that hard work got her where she is, and being a female minority did not play a role in hindering or helping her progress.

Process

How did the questions you asked your interviewee influence the type of information you received? If working in a team, explain your approach and provide an example of your active listening.



During our interview, we began by asking questions about Ms Chou's background because we wanted to gain context about her life. She is an accomplished individual and we wanted to find where her inspiration and drive came from. We also wanted to know how she went about achieving her life goals. The most interesting thing about our interview is that she went into great detail while answering our short prompts--we think that this is due to her background in journalism. Every answer she provided for us was extremely insightful, and on our end, we did a lot of active listening. For example, when we asked about her background and where she grew up, it was natural for us to ask what influence her parents had on the choices she made that eventually led to her career as a journalist. Post interview, we were fortunate because she gave us a lot of information based on the open ended questions that we asked. Despite our own previous knowledge of Radio Free Asia, she persisted to including more background, such as being based off of Radio Free Europe, and how she was approached to be a founder. During the interview, we did not have one set person who asked all of the questions. We each jumped in to ask and respond where we felt necessary, and, in addition, we all took our own

notes.

Unfortunately, we did have one problem with the interview. On occasion, Ms. Chou's audio would fade out. Fortunately, her answers were so well-spoken that we were able to fill in the gaps if we missed some information.

So, to sum up our experience, although we had questions lined up before the interview, a lot of our questions during it were based off of her responses, and we developed more of a dialogue rather than a yes or no question scenario. Active listening was very evident because we were all taking notes, and each of us provided at least one probing question after receiving her response. We all showed interest in her life and each of us found a topic that was particularly interesting and that caused us to ask more questions.

One important thing to note is how she downplayed her gender discrimination. Being told by the department chair of journalism that transfer spots are limited and should be reserved for men because they would not eventually leave their careers to have a family could have been a barrier that stopped women from pursuing journalism, but it did not stop Ms. Chou.