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Section 1

On November 3rd, 2015 we sat down to interview Julia Chang Bloch. The three of us were students in Women in U.S.-Asian relations and we were very interested in hearing more about the endeavors of this woman. The little we knew of her was told to us by Professor Christoff and was found by basic Google searches. Presently the founder of the U.S.-China education Trust, Ms. Bloch has held many titles in her life, including but not limited to, Ambassador of Nepal. The interview took place at 4:30pm via Adobe Connect, in a conference room in the Humanities Building at Stony Brook University. The interview lasted approximately thirty minutes. Our objective was to better understand the life, endeavors and challenges of Julia Chang Bloch and to learn about her career path and about the ways that women have contributed to U.S.-Asian relations.

Section 2

We prepared for our interview by first going on to the open web and searching for Ms. Bloch's name. We sorted through a numerous amount of material and photos on Ms. Bloch. This material allowed us to learn more about Ms. Bloch prior to our interview. She is a woman that has done so much in her lifetime and there are many things to read about her. We needed to come up with some good questions and this gave us an idea as to what kind of questions to ask her. After working together in and out of class we gathered our questions and ran them by Professor Christoff for her guidance. Some of the questions we asked were as follows:

1. What were the reasons you and/or your family left China for the U.S?
2. What inspired you to join the Peace Corps? How would you describe your experience volunteering and did this establish your drive to continue working in civil service?
3. Can you tell us a little bit about your experiences as the U.S. ambassador to Nepal?
4. What were your driving forces in your career and what inspired you?
5. What is your vision for the U.S. China Education Trust?

We were provided the email of Ms. Laurie Size, the executive secretary for Julia Chang Bloch. We sent her an email requesting the opportunity to interview Ms. Bloch. We requested that she forward this request along to Ms. Bloch. This is the correspondence that was sent on October 21, 2015.

Dear Ambassador Bloch,

Under the direction of Professor Peggy Christoff, we are writing to request an interview with you. We, Stephanie Paguay, Melissa Kelly and Maria Marrero, are students at Stony Brook University and taking a course titled, "Women in US-Asian Relations." Our majors are Psychology, with a concentration in Sociology; Business, with a concentration in Accounting and Multidisciplinary Studies with concentrations in Health Science and History. We are very interested in talking with you about your career path and contributions to US-Asian relations.

Thus far in our coursework, we have conducted library research on women who historically have made a variety of contributions to US-Asian relations, including

missionaries, educators, artists, and film-makers (Isabella Thoburn, Jade Snow Wong, Ida Pruitt, Harriet Newell, Gertrude Howe and Gail Dolgin.) We are excited to learn first-hand about your visionary work and share it with our classmates. We understand that you earned a Masters degree from Harvard University and went on to become not only an ambassador to Nepal but also the first ambassador of Asian descent. What an admirable feat!

We would like to set up a video conferencing appointment with you, hopefully, before you leave the country in November. If this is not possible, we could do it after Thanksgiving. Our University uses Adobe connect, which is similar to Skype. As we are developing our interview questions, we also wondered if you have information that you would like to share with us prior to the interview.

We are honored to learn from you. If there are any specific times that you are available, please let us know. Thank you in advance for this opportunity.

Maria Marrero

Melissa Kelly

Stephanie Paguay

Laurie got back to us very promptly. She advised that Ms. Bloch was available on November 3rd, 2015 at 4:30pm. This worked great for all three of us on the interviewing end because our schedules are all a little hectic and this is the time of day we were hoping for. After securing this date and time we revisited our questions in preparation for our interview. The questions were then mailed to Laurie Size. She was very helpful in getting our questions along to Ms. Bloch so that she would understand in advance what the basis

of our interview would be. This would also help speed along the interview process because we had limited time with her via Adobe Connect. This is the email that was sent at that time.

Good Morning Laurie,

These are some of the questions we would like to ask ambassador Bloch in our conference tomorrow:

- 1. What were the reasons you and/or your family left China for the U.S.?*
- 2. What inspired you to join the Peace Corps? How would you describe your experience volunteering and did this establish your drive to continue working in the civil service?*
- 3. Can you tell us a little bit about your experiences as the US ambassador to Nepal?*
- 4. What were your driving forces in your career and what inspired you?*
- 5. What is your vision for the US-China Education Trust?*

We would like to just send this ahead of time so that she has an idea of what we are interested in learning and also, since we won't have a lot of time, this would help speed things up.

Thanks a lot.

Maria, Melissa & Stephanie

Section 3

1) We were able to get complete answers to all of our questions. The first question we asked really opened up a dialogue between the four of us. Ms. Bloch gave us a little bit more background of her father, being the first Harvard graduate of Asian descent, he

had many friends in the U.S. and several of them were telling him that he should move here. She also explained that it was a time when China was in turmoil and the decision was made by her parents to bring their family to the United States. It was nice talking to her and seeing her reflect and reminisce about what it was like when she moved here at the age of nine. Although a young girl at the time, she was old enough to remember her first moments living in the United States.

When the second question was asked, she actually corrected our question and said that she works in public service and not civil service. She then continued to explain to us what her public service was and this only helped us to better understand her vast career going forward in the interview.

2) We feel as though our interview was done in a mixed format because even though we had a set of questions, some of the answers provided by Ms. Bloch would lead to other topics. For instance, when we asked Ms. Bloch about her childhood and if it was hard to come to America she told us a little story on how her life actually changed (for the better) and how freeing it was for her to not have to be with her Amah (her Nanny) all the time. She also told us the story about a little girl who was eager to meet the Ambassador of Nepal but was shocked when she saw that she (Ms. Bloch) looked just like her. A great cue that we picked up on this was how excited Ms. Bloch gets when reminiscing about her childhood and it was easy to see that she was enjoying the interview because she was giving us a lot of positive non-verbal cues, such as smiling often, getting excited about answering some of the questions and nodding her head. Listening to her was very interesting and we spent a lot of time writing down as much as

we could. We wanted to get as much as we could from this experience and the time spent conversing with her.

3) When Ms. Bloch told us some of the interesting things that happened to her as an ambassador (such as the incident with the little girl) we asked some of the probing questions to get a more in depth understanding of how this took place. Rather than being bothered or offended by how she was perceived by that little girl, we got the feeling that Ms. Bloch was actually proud of that moment in her life because she had a big smile on her face and her eyes lit up.

4) We approached the interview with a plan but it changed as the interview got started. The plan was that Melissa was going to ask all the questions and Stephanie and Maria would take notes but we got so engaged in the interview and we all took notes and asked questions although Melissa asked the majority of them.

5) Ms. Bloch did not give us any documents or follow up references but she did however, give us great advice. That advice was to use the momentum or the 'don't's or cant's' of other people as a driving force to push us farther.

Section 4

While all intently listening we tried to take as many notes as possible. We did not want to appear disengaged and although we needed to jot down what was being said we also knew that we would have the interview recorded to refer back to later. We took this time to listen intently and be fully engaged in the time we had to spend with Julia Chang Bloch.

The notes we did take were pretty straightforward. Ms. Bloch advised us a lot about her childhood in China; that she was constantly looked after and cared for- almost

to the point where it was cumbersome; she never had any time to herself or time to play or go outside; she explained to us that girls of her generation did not go outside to “play”; they went to home and school only. When she was nine and her family left China, the decision was made solely by her parents. This decision was based in part by the signs of the times because of the turmoil that China was in and also based on the fact that her father had just finished his education in the United States at Harvard and he had many contacts and friends here who suggested that it may be the time to leave China for the United States. Ms. Bloch explained that when first living in the United States she now had the opportunity to be a kid- she had time and she had freedom to play outside- and she loved it! As we wrote down as much as we could Ms. Bloch fondly reminisced about her time as a young girl in the United States; she felt free coming to the United States versus living in China; she didn’t have a nanny here and her mother and father were working a lot; we then asked her what her mother did for work and she started talking about that- saying that he mother did various work- she was a cocktail waitress who then years later owned her own business.

There was a large part of the interview where we discussed the assassination of JFK. Talking about this even today you can see that it really strikes a cord with Julia. She kept referring to herself as an old lady, I do not think that she thought that we were old enough to understand the impact of this loss to our nation. Although we may not have been around when it occurred it is something that we definitely know of and have learned in history classes. However, to speak with someone who was of college age when it happened we realized what an effect this had on her. This was the driving force in Ms. Bloch joining the Peace Corps. She expressed her concern about today’s youth and how

she feels that not enough young people are involved in their government; more young people need to be involved and care about what goes on in their country; she then explained about her time as ambassador and as previously discussed her story about the young girl in Nepal; she talked about how she has filled positions that men may have previously filled and no matter how people looked at her she had a point to prove to show that she could get the job done and that if someone said otherwise this would only make her work that much harder; she spoke about the U.S.-China education trust and how important education is; how important keeping a good relationship between the U.S. and China is; we advised her that Stony Brook has a very high Asian population and we discussed the exchange programs Stony Brook University offered; she was intrigued by this and we listed the countries that the students were from; we advised that in our class there are several students from Asia.

Section 5

While conducting our interview with Ms. Bloch we discovered various information especially what drove her to be successful in her career. Although we followed our format with questions when interviewing Ms. Bloch there was of course new questions that we felt we had to ask and wanted know. Specifically, when she was appointed as Ambassador to Nepal, we wanted to know if she faced any criticism or difficult time working with colleagues.

Her response to us was that she did not necessarily face criticism, but she was looked at as someone who was not fit for the job. Being a small woman in a room with tall, grown men she often received attitude from others that made her believe that they

did not believe in her and her capabilities. Ms. Bloch told us that whenever she faced a situation like that she picked her head up high and showed them that she could in fact do her job and do it well. She explained to us that throughout her life she has been breaking barriers and that is what has made her successful. Her prime mission in her career is to break the barrier between China and the United States. As president of the U.S.- China Education Trust, Ms. Bloch's primary focus is to strengthen American Studies in China and vice versa. She focuses on this because she feels that these two countries can become educated on one another and form a strong relationship. Ms. Bloch expressed to us how very important this is.

Something that we took away from the interview that was incredibly meaningful was how she expressed such autonomy. As young women starting our careers it was very insightful to see such a successful woman succeed so far in her life. So many times throughout her career she was able to prove to those that did not necessarily believe in her that she was able to do whatever she set out to do. Having a supportive father and family it also pushed her to achieve such great accomplishments.

Another part of the interview that we will take away is the story she told us about her first trip to Nepal after becoming ambassador. This was one of the best parts of the interview. Ms. Bloch was appointed to be the Ambassador of Nepal by George H.W. Bush in 1989. Upon her welcoming visit to Nepal there was a little girl near her who was talking to her father. Within earshot of Ms. Bloch the little girl asked, "Where is the American ambassador? I want to see her." To which her father replied and pointed that is her right there. The little girl then said, " But she looks just like me."

The only thing that comes to mind when thinking about what else we want to know about Ms. Bloch is where does she go from here? She has accomplished so much in her life and she is such a role model for students like us. Does she plan to retire anytime soon? Does she want to continue living in Washington, D.C. or will she retire somewhere else? Will that be in the United States or outside of the United States? Does she have family in China still that she keeps in touch with? Would she ever consider living in China again?

These are just several questions that come to mind when thinking about what else we would ask Ms. Bloch if given the time to interview her again. She was such a pleasure to talk to and if time allowed we could see ourselves talking much longer than we did.

Along with presenting in class all of the information we learned about Julia Chang Bloch, we also had the opportunity to listen to several other presentations. These presentations were all based on women somehow involved in U.S. Asian relations. These women have really made an impact on not only society but on our class as you can see in the presentations that were put together.

Day one the first presentation was about Jennifer Cho from Radio Free Asia, a journalist. In the beginning of the presentation it was said that her parents emphasized the importance of education. We couldn't help but think about Julia Chang Bloch's father who also stressed the importance of education. Both women upheld these values expressed by their parents and obtained various degrees. Chou's first job was at Voice of America- the official external broadcast institution of the United States federal government. She worked in human rights and in recognizing human rights violations. For Melissa and Stephanie hearing about Chou's experience working with people against

China's one child policy educated us even more on the subject we have been learning about in another one of our classes this semester. It was interesting to tie the two classes together and see a woman working toward a woman's right to bodily autonomy.

Day two of presentations we learned about Mary David. She works in the field of human rights and human trafficking. Maria and Melissa were in a group project previously in class where we read and learned about Malaysia and the issues faced there with human rights and human trafficking. It was a good tie in for this class to learn more about this woman who is directly involved in it. She is currently working in Baltimore, Maryland with criminal prosecution in regards to human trafficking. It was interesting to learn about her method of educating youth on human trafficking. She is involved in beauty pageants and the arts and this is the platform she uses to obtain speaking engagements. It is here that she is able to combine her interests and put it towards a good cause and the greater good by educating others on major issues. With all of the paths she has been on she is able to educate others who may have no idea that this goes on.

The third day of presentations we learned about Carol Hamrin. She too works with interests of human rights. The presenters explained that she could be compared to women missionaries that we learned about in class, however it was not her goal to spread one religion but to spread the view and understanding of the right to religious freedom for all people. Carol Hamrin stated that she sees things differently because she is a woman; that people in her field may not see what she sees as far as really understanding the culture and society of the Chinese people. The presenters explained how she was very passionate in discussing how they should continue towards their goals and work hard and not let someone talk them out of what they want to do or accomplish. This reminded us of

Julia Chang Bloch's words- that we must continue to work hard despite what others may say or think.

We realized after listening to the other interviews how lucky we were that our interview went so smoothly. Many of our classmates had scheduling issues and connectivity issues. We did not face any of this but it was easy to understand how this could just as easily have happened to us. The women interviewed were very gracious to all of us in allowing us their time. They are figureheads in their field and just allowing us a little bit of their time was a humbling experience.

We really learned a lot from Julia Chang Bloch and also all of the other interviewees that we heard about in class. Many women, just like Julia Chang Bloch, are consistently working towards breaking barriers -- for women or human rights in general. It is these women who continue to make us have a hope for the future. They continue to work towards a common goal for a greater good of men, women and children.

This is the email that is being sent to Julia Chang Bloch to thank her for her time and her consideration.

Dear Ms. Bloch,

We wanted to take a few minutes to thank you for taking the time to speak with us on November 3, 2015 and allowing us to interview you.

We sincerely appreciate the opportunity and are so grateful for the time you took to spend with us. Your answers were wonderful and we enjoyed learning about your life. Thank you so very much for your willingness to help us accomplish our project. We have enclosed our presentation and paper for your review. We hope that you will enjoy

reading this. You have truly made an impact on not only U.S.-Asian Relations but also on the three of us.

Again thank you so much for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Maria, Melissa and Stephanie