

## CAROLE LOUIE TRANSCRIPT

### CAROLE:

...I was eleven years old, because when I was eleven years old my parents had split up. I'm half Chinese half Caucasian and my mother was from Florida, the panhandle of Florida. So, I was sitting under this oak tree and I had this vision of being an architect. So, long story short I did become an architect, not an architect, an interior designer. I have dyslexia so I switched over to interior design which was natural for me, because I ended up working with builders and developers. So, this is one of the places that I developed, that I designed, won five awards for. This was the first model that I did, that I was able to incorporate feng shui principles. So, I studied all different schools of feng shui, and I would read everything I could get my hands about feng shui. And it was so funny, because I'd read things and I'd say that's not right, that's not right and I didn't know how I knew this.

So, to back up a little bit, whenever I would reunite with my father, when I was an adult and I'd ask him questions about my Chinese heritage he'd do this: "be American, be American". And, even you, who are 100% Chinese, you probably heard that story also. And, it was only through digging and digging, that I found out why he had that aversion to talking about our family. Let's see, this picture is a picture that I had very early on, that's my grandmother in the center there, she escaped to Hong Kong in the 40s, I believe, after my grandfather died, with an uncle and an aunt. And then, and I got a letter from her in the 1960s, and of course it was translated for her. And, you know, she told me that she really wished that our family would go back to reunite with my father and if we would do that she'd come and live with us. And, she died before any of that happened, and it wasn't going to happen anyway.

And, then when I was 16 years old, I get this picture and, you can kind of tell from the background, it's a manufactured setting. Well, this picture was my older brother, at 16 years old I discovered I had an older brother that I did not know before then. And so, that was him, and on the back of the picture, and I have that over there on the board, was a message about how he and his wife and his two children only had X amount of you know, bowls of rice to be able to eat and how they had to work long hours. So, they were in China. He was born in 1931, his mother died right after he was born and my father had just come back to the United States. So, my father did not even see his first child, his first son until Du-Yung[?] was an adult. So, in 1960s, late 60s, early 70s my father

finally met his first child. And then, this is a reunion picture, just before my father died in 19..., the reunion is in 1989 and my father died in 1990.

And then that's when the fun began. So, all those years, he would not talk, he would not talk and I wanted to put this picture up, because if you haven't seen your totems, these are the totems of all the different names. Here it is again and the Louie name in the top hundred names Chinese names, is number 88 and it's over in this area. I have learned to read that, so I could pick that one out even though I wasn't literate at the time I found this picture. So, and then here are just some of the ways of transliterating and speaking, pronouncing the name, so there's the character for thunder, the rain over the field, and that was my beginning.

So, my first trip to China was in 1985 and we started in Beijing, I was with an interior design group and so I was so excited about it, okay, I'm finally going to meet some Louie people. And I asked everywhere, everywhere, you know who, do you know any Louies? And, I didn't know at that time, that that's not the way you pronounce the name. And, so, finally I showed, showed my guide this, which my father wrote my name on, and, they said, oh, Lei, you're Lei. And, I thought, oh, okay, that kind of explains why I wasn't getting any positive answers. And, so that was a beginning for me, realizing, ok, there are lots of dialects and you know, the tones totally freak me out. But I'm getting used to them, I can, now that I've studied a little bit, I can read and I can write, way better than I can speak.

So, as I began my research, I discovered that my father wasn't the first one to come into the United States. My father, I thought was a chef, and then I later found out that oh, he was actually the son of a merchant. And, so that, so this is the store on Grant Avenue, back in the 1800s, so, this is in the 1900s, in the 1800s it was Fung Song Lung[?] and, in 1907 it became Wah Song Lung, so a slight name change. But all those years that I had walked the streets of Chinatown and never knew this. It just, blew me away. So, here's your map of Chinatown from 1885 and, notice the different colors on the map of the different buildings, so they indicate prostitute houses, gambling houses, white prostitute houses, Chinese prostitute houses. This is a wonderful map, I just found this one with the coding on it, just recently.

So, last year, no, 2016, I made a trip with Friends of Roots. Now, [unintelligible] no Rita, mentioned Friends of Roots with that village database. That was actually how I found Friends of Roots. I'm a

meditator, and so one morning I woke up and I meditated, okay I know the name of the village, now, you know I've looked and looked and looked for 20 years for this village that I have the name of but, it wasn't until I put, San Duo, you know, in Google search and found the Friends of Roots database. And, so 2016, I made the trip to China with Friends of Roots.

So, you know, China is a big place. I didn't know at the time that most of the people from China came from the Toisan[?] area. So, I was really, I wasn't just going to go there and so it gets, Google Earth, closer and closer. And then, so this area is above where Rita and Helen and Dan's area was from. And then, I really paid attention to the landmarks. And, even when I got there, they weren't sure, you know where, if they were going to be able to find my village. But, when we physically got there, we, we found this village, and fortunately it's right on the main street. In fact the sign was right there in front of the street, this old rickety sign and so we found San Duo village.

So, some of you may know, that San Duo is, means the three plenties. And in the Buddhist culture it stands for the Buddhist hand or citron, the pomegranate and the peaches. And so, so, even though I found my father's village, I found my father's village, I still did not find his home, that was a dud trial there.

But that same year that I was doing the research, and my research took me to NARA, the National Archives. I did come to the National Archives here, but I had much better luck at the National Archives in San Francisco.

**[AUDIENCE]:** San Bruno

**CAROLE:** San Bruno, and, of course, you do have to push you have to be a little pushy with the people there. You know they can, they say they're real, real busy and have a lot of demands but you just have to be a little pushy which I wasn't until I started all of this stuff and now I've gotten pushy.

[LAUGHTER]

**CAROLE:** But that year, that year, also again I meditate, I had these two words on my mind because I knew there was something in me besides, you know that vision when I was 11 years old about wanting to be an architect. And so, I, here are those two words in my head: architect, China, I Googled and lo and behold I find this article, and I'm so glad I printed out this article, because it's no longer available. This was in 2016, and, and it was about Yangshi Lei, architects, from the Louie family, the Lei family. Not just any

architects, eight generations, this is the biggest architectural family I have been able to find because remember I'm a student of architecture and interior design. It's the biggest architectural family I have been able to find, the longest reign of an architectural house. Eight generations, almost 250 years and who they, who was their main client? The 8 last Qing Dynasty emperors.

So, so I was hooked and I happened to mention that I was looking for, you know, this family to a friend of mine who is from China and actually, her family is in Guangzhou, and she's with the Confucian Institute in William & Mary. So, she goes home on December the 13th of 2017, opens the paper up and what does she see? This full page article about Yangshi Lei, and I brought the article and the pages from, that I found on the internet. So, I really felt like, not only was my, were me ancestors guiding me, but they were enlisting anybody who could help. And I was starting to take Chinese classes at this time and it took me months, but I translated this article so I would get the story. And, not only did she give me the article, but she also gave me some CCTV documentaries and I've got a handout with some of the documentaries if you're interested in watching those, and some of the research tools also, they're printed on that.

So, after I came back from the 2016 trip, I had made some connections, and, and so I found, someone who could get me a zupu, so that's what's over here, a four volume zupu which is similar to a jahpu[?] but there's slight difference and if you if you're around genealogy people they'll tell you what those differences are. I don't really care, but what was so fascinating about it was, and here again, you know, little by little, I'm translating, I've translated and finally I get to these two pages where it talks about Yangshi Lei and Lei Fada[?], the progenitor of Yengshi Lei. So, I knew, OK, these are my people, I'm not getting excited for nothing, these are my people.

So, I then began doing lots of research from the documentaries, from other things so, you know the Qing Dynasty was the last dynasty in China. This yellow line that's on top of the orange line represents the years that, that the Yangshi Lei was involved with designing for, for the Qing dynasty emperor. So, here is Lei Fada[?], he was born in the South, Jiangxi Province, and which is North of Guangdong. Nanjing is the city that's closest to his village. And, so what had happened was, the emperor at the time sent ministers down to that area to look for people who could build things, because he wanted to, the Hall of Supreme Harmony had been destroyed, they wanted to rebuild that, and out of those

people Lei Fada was chosen as the person to be the overseer for the Hall of Supreme Harmony, there were three halls, the main three halls of the outer courtyard.

So, this is, from the documentary, this is what a, a design house of the time would have looked like. Some people are not as visual as I am so I thought it would be helpful for you to see some of those visuals. These are actual drawings from Yangshi Lei: blueprints, elevations, detail drawings. They were known for this, and when I was in design school this was absolutely the thing I hated most to do, scale models, but they were known for the scale models that they created. They built them, so when I was in school, we did them out foam board and glue and you know colored pencils. And, but they built them out of like a papier-mâché, mud where they needed to and they they wove iron into the papier-mâché to make it strong and so that's why the models became known as the iron model. And these still exist, from the 1800s, these models still exist, they were built so well. So, so there's the Hall of Supreme Harmony. And the two main, other two main halls where the political business was done, the ministerial business was done. And so, these are the buildings that Lei Fada and his then son Lei Jin-yu[?] were responsible for.

When I had been, gone to China in 1985 I did not know this history, and yet I, I wept when I was in these places, they touched me so much. So, here's a closeup of the Hall of Supreme Harmony. And I went on this last trip with my sister, so that's Florence and me with a bigger view. The Temple of Heaven, they were also responsible for the buildings at the Temple of Heaven. And, imagine all the details, in interior design my model was attention to details. And so, and when I look at these buildings, I think the myriad of details that they were responsible for. I'll come back to that one in a moment.

So, one of the really cool inventions that I found, so you're going to learn a little architecture here. This interlocking bracket, the dougong, my ancestor Lei Jin-yu[?] was responsible for standardizing this part right here, and by standardizing it, it speeded up the production of things and it made the column size exact. And so it made everything go so much faster, and that model still exists today. Now you might be familiar with a dougong because you have them in your gateway. Next time you go by the gateway, be sure and look up at that and know that you have Lei, Yengshi Lei to, to think about when you look at it.

Now the Forbidden City is a huge place, I made a point when I went this last trip to take the half day tour. So, and I wanted to focus on the East side, because up in the East corner is the Qianlong [?], so he was one of the very famous emperors, had a very long reign, it was very prosperous during his reign. And when he was getting ready to retire, he had a beautiful studio and courtyard built and that was done by my ancestors also. These are just some more of the detail shots in Forbidden City. And what I love, when I had that vision about being a designer, I knew, at the time, that, for me, there was no separation between architecture, interior design and landscape design. And when I was talking to my, so I'm in elementary school, right? Sixth grade. And, my teacher happened to have had a book about Frank Lloyd Wright. And Frank Lloyd Wright at that time was one of the revolutionary people who thought the same way. That the interior, the architecture, the landscape all was integral. So, I had to put some shots of the outside, the exterior. And I could go on forever and ever on the architectural details but I won't. But I did want to show you some of them, so I was hoping that this was going to be the building I was looking for but it wasn't. And, again, the dougongs are just everywhere once you realize, you know, what they are you see them just everywhere. And, do you know that dougongs were tested for a 9.5 earthquake? And there are no nails in them, just amazing to me.

So, I love this picture, because this is a picture of Qianlong and Giuseppe Castiglione. So, you know, he was in the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace about the same time as the Lei family, so they crossed paths often. And, and one of the reasons why he became important with the Lei family, was, he introduced a different way of doing art in China. He integrated the Chinese way of doing art and the Western way of doing art and, so there's some things, when he started painting in China, that had never been seen before. For instance, the emperor on a horse, that was just an unheard of thing before he came along. And he's going to have an interesting role to play in this retirement house also. He also brought a technique call trompe l'oeil, and trompe l'oeil means 'to fool the eye'. It's a art technique where it's made to look like it's real and Qianlong wanted to have this technique used in his retirement studio. So, this, this is showing you the renovated studio. In 2003, they opened the doors to the studio and it was the best preserved place in the Forbidden City. And so, they began renovating it, and this is the end result. Unfortunately, I did not get to go into the studio last year. But I was told that next year is

the 600th anniversary of the Forbidden City and all of these will be open. So, guess who's going back in 2020?

But I did get to meet Lei Zhangbao. Through some of the documentaries, I found his name, and, so, I thought, oh, if there is any chance that I can get to meet him that would just be wonderful. And with the help of MyChinaRoots, so the lead of MyChinaRoots Weihan[?] Lei is going to be, oh Weihan Lei, Weihan Wei [?], Liu...

**[AUDIENCE]:** Lei, Lei Weihan [?]

**CAROLE:** Lei Weihan[?], so he's going to be here next month, and, he didn't help me, but Liu Hao helped me tremendously. So, she did a lot of research before I got to China, she was able to locate Lei Zhangbao, to set up a luncheon meeting with him, and, of course, provide translation for me, because my Chinese is not that good yet. And, we had the most wonderful hotpot lunch, if you're ever in Beijing, I highly recommend the hotpot restaurant at Sunworld Hotel. Absolutely amazing, and not expensive at all. So, Lei Zhangbao said to me, "you've got to tell the story in America". Which is why, I had no intention of writing it as a story until he said that to me and I could not say no.

So, our next stop was, Singhua University, Liu Hao helped me get in there, also, it's not easy to get in universities in China, I'll forewarn you about that. Not like here, and the hoops I had to jump through to get in this university, oh my god. But, you know, they wanted me to go there, so I went and so she helped me locate, we found three books about Yangshi Lei. Thanks to being able to have a scanner on your phone, I scanned everything I could in the time allotted, that I had, and so I'm still working on translating those pieces. So, my favorite part of what Yangshi Lei designed was the Summer Palace, yuan ming yuan. And Lei Jinyu was responsible for a lot of the designs for the Summer Palace. It's a huge place, it's about five times bigger than the Forbidden City if you can imagine that. The Forbidden City is 155 times bigger than the Buckingham Palace. So, you kind of get, you know they did things on a grand scale.

So, they did these plot plans of the Summer Palace and then, the iron models again, they would take these iron models to the emperor and, of course, during that later part it was also the empress dowager and they would show them to the emperor and the empress dowager to get approval for the plans because the, they could, the emperor and empress dowager could not always read the blueprints but they could look at these models. And I had

a client, who was in New York, and he got to where he asked for models for everything too and I was like oh my god, something does not feel right about this. So, just models of individual buildings, this is a temple in the Summer Palace. My favorite, oh my gosh, the details of this walkway every piece of art that's in there, had to run through the offices of Yangshi Lei but I think about all those people who painted, and all those people who built, and, and just amazing to me. And, it's really in very good condition, you know, when you consider those were built in the 1800s. And of course, empress dowager's boat. I love the gardens, and the, the plot plans, there's descriptions about exactly what tree is going to be here and you know, what plant is going to be there and, you know, there's beautiful stone structures everywhere and so there's notes about all of those.

Have you all been to these places? I mean it's just, it's so beautiful, I need to go back for months, to really take it all in. I kept telling my tour guide, I need longer time, I need longer time and you know they have a tendency to want to rush you through everything and I just, again, I pushed, and I said "no, we're doing, you know, longer tours here".

So, Lei Jinyu was so honored by Qianlong that he had his, no, Emperor Yangzheng was so honored by Jinyu that he had his young son, Hongli to do a banner for him, to mark his 70th birthday. Hongli is who became Emperor Qianlong. So, that, you know, that's an honor.

Now, the story gets really interesting in the 1800s. So, if you know your Chinese history, you know that there were two opium wars and, the opium war in the 1800s destroyed a lot of yuan ming yuan. However, my ancestor, Lei Jingchu had a feeling, he felt like something is going to happen, and his studio was in the Summer Palace. So, what he did was, he carted out the things that were in his studio and hid them in his houses. This is one of those houses in the Haiden[?] district. And, because of, you know, their family was so renowned, he did the jahpu[?] and he also created the cemetery to honor the ancestors before him. Jingchu was the fifth generation. So, he saved the documents, the iron models, so those iron models that I told you that lasted all those years, he was the one responsible for saving them. So, this is what it must have looked like speaking with, so here was the emperor before Pu Lei[?], and then there's the empress dowagers behind the screen who were really running the show. And then, the sixth generation, Lei Suchi[?], I hope I pronounced that correctly, he was advanced to second degree minister, so the squares on their robes indicate

what their degree in ministry was, so he advanced to the highest degree, and his son was given the third degree ministry. So, they were the last ones to work, and so here's part of the destruction of the Yuan Ming Yuan. The photo below is a digital, digitized, so that's what they're doing now with all of these drawings, they can take that information and do digitized drawings and recreate it. And, what was interesting, to note about this particular building is the animals that are around the fountain, Giuseppe Castiglione wanted to put nude statues. And, you know in the Chinese culture, that was absolutely taboo, so they decided to do the Chinese zodiac instead. And at each hour, each animal would, would put water out, to mark the time, amazing engineering. I would love to know how they did that.

So, thankfully, to this man, Zhu Qiqian saved the documents again, in the 1930s he was the head of a architectural society. He was also hired by the ministry, and so he convinced the ministry when he found, he would walk the streets of Beijing and he'd listen to the old people. You know, because he knew that they'd have the stories and he kept hearing about these documents that you know, the Lei family had fallen into hard times, so they were trying to sell some of these things, you know, to be able to survive, and so he heard about that and, thanks to him, 20 truckloads, over 2,000 documents, paintings and iron models were saved and they were taken to the National Library. And because, they were, they were taken there, they were saved even during the Cultural Revolution. And so, I'm so grateful, if anybody here is part of the Zhu clan, thank you, thank you, thank you. One of things that they also found, were rubbings from the cemeteries and so, the rubbings were used to document the oral history and the jahpu[?] and then, they were able also, because they had the Qing Dynasty documents, they would crosscheck them, and and everything matched.

I had no idea when I began this journey, that this was going to lead me to such an amazing story. Since they were saved, they, and in the early 2000s, new interest in Yangshi Lei came about, so the National Library pulled out the documents and they created an exhibit, I couldn't get into that one, it was under construction, so I could not get into that one, that's why I ended up Singhua[?] They had the few books that I could get access to. The Palace Museum, as the Forbidden City is also called, has a permanent exhibit now, about Yangshi Lei, they call it 'The way of building: The art of architecture'. I was able to look at it online, however, remember that shot I said I'll come back to that? When I got, physically, got

to that space, they would not let me in. It was closed, and, even though I told them, look I'm a descendant, you know, I should have rights, that didn't work. But, more, next year when I go, this will be open to the public and so I'll be able to see, up close and personal, these beautiful models and drawings and and just, so amazing to me.

The National Center of Performing Arts also did a play about Yangshi Lei, it first came out, I think, in about 2008 and then, last year, they redid it for National Day the first part of October, I missed that, darn. I didn't get there until the end of October, but hopefully, next year they'll do it again. And I was able to find online, and so I had a friend in China locate this book for me, and this is the book about Yangshi Lei, by a scholar, and he also got in touch with Lei Zhangbao and I'm in the process of translating that. And because of that book, I was able to find out that the birthdate for Lei Fada was February 20<sup>th</sup> and, I thought, I was working on the script in January and I thought I'll never be able to get it done in time but I got it done with a week to spare and so I was able to celebrate his 400th anniversary. And, in the book, Lei Zhang ... Zhang Bao Zhang's book, is a picture of Lei Fada.

Oops, wrong button.

So, I made, got mine, I have some copies here, they're only three dollars if anybody wants a copy, would like to read more details, I there's so much I didn't, didn't share. And my other book is also here, and even though Yangshi Lei comes from a small family, every time I think about this story every time I look at these pictures of all these places that I went, I thought about all those other families who participated in building, who built, who wove the textiles, who you know, who carved the wood carvings, the stones, made the tiles, so I have a feeling that your stories are wrapped in those.

Dou jao[?], it's the first Chinese word I knew, dou jao[?], thank you.