

Maureen and Mike

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Missoula MT 59812-9936

Email: library.archives@umontana.edu

Telephone: (406) 243-2053

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Oral History 436-10

From Far East to Old West Collection

Interviewee: Ding Tam

Interviewer: unknown

July 27, 1998

Tam: My name is Ding Kee Tam, also known as Daniel P. Wong, and I live in Butte and I have the Pekin Cafe and Lounge. I have been here since the end of 1947 and I come direct from China, Kuangzhou, China.

Interviewer: Which part?

Tam: I come from Kuangzhou Province.

Interviewer: Can you describe who in your family first came over here?

Tam: My grandfather's grandfather, oh just, many, many years, in probably 18 something.

Interviewer: Did he come to Butte?

Tam: They all come to Butte. Butte was the Tam's family town.

Interviewer: *Asks question about when the Tam family came to the U.S. Mostly unintelligible.*

Tam: My grandfather's grandfather come in this country well in 18, late 18 something, and my grandfather didn't come until 1916 to Butte, direct to Butte. And he has been in Butte ever since.

Interviewer: Now why did they come to Butte?

Tam: Well, because that... it used to be all the Hum family from China, they all come into this country. And some work in the railroad, some work in the mines, just try to make a few dollars, go back to China, which they did.

Interviewer: So your grandfather's grandfather, he went back to China. What did he do before he moved back?

Tam: Well, he was a Chinese merchant, like a banker that handled somebody else's money, too. He never worked in the mining. He's a merchant. He had that store and everything like that in Butte, out by Arizona Street.

Interviewer: Your grandfather's grandfather, can you give us his name?

Tam: My great grandfather's grandfather's name the Tarn Muntong and my great grandfather's named Hum Yu Guy, and my grandfather's name Joe Tam. He used Tam — also known as Tam Gon Yee. Some use the Tam in the front, some use it in the back, the Chinese family name. So I use the name Tam in the back.

Interviewer: What did your grandfather's grandfather do again?

Tam: Well, he's a Chinese merchant, and that he owned Chinese... Chinese grocery, and like also, like a banker do, handle that. The Chinese people working around the mining in there, Pittsburgh, I mean Phillipsburg, and Boulder and all that area. People would bring in there, he'd take care of their money and help them send the money back to China.

Interviewer: So how did the system work? Did your grandfather's grandfather then bring over your...

Tam: My great grandfather, yes. And they also owned a laundry too, you know. My grandfather — my great grandfather, he's pretty fair-sized man, over six foot tall, and he could do this hard work, packing the laundry basket into his shoulder and back and forward, pack up and deliver.

Because my grandfather, he's a small man. He only weighs about... he's about five foot four and he weighs about one hundred and twenty pounds. He can't do that kind of work. And my great grandfather told my grandfather, "Boy, you'd better find something else to do. This is not your life because you can't carry the laundry from Arizona Street way up to the Montana Tech." It used to be called School of Mines. My grandfather couldn't carry on that kind of work. He don't have that much strength.

Interviewer: What did he do then?

Tam: So he come over to the Pekin [Café] as now and learned it. Well, he knows how to operate a Chinese casino business. So he work out there, and take care the casino, the business. And my great uncles and all that, they owned a restaurant and he take care of the restaurant part. So my grandfather start the casino business down where they call 119 —everybody know, an old timer, they know it's the 119th. It used to be a pretty nice casino in Butte.

Interviewer: Now what was the name of it? Was it the Chinese Keno?

Tam: Chinese Keno, yeah. But lots of American people played it. Just like the American keno now. We used to have the Chinese character, the Chinese letter and everything in it. They come with that from one to eighty, instead of Chinese letter in it.

Interviewer: Is there a meaning (unintelligible)

Tam: Yes, uh-hmm. Each would mean something, like one to the 80. Each would mean something, like the bird, the sky, and all different things. And the Chinese, they call lotto, you know, keno or lotto, or whatever they call it now.

Interviewer: I think you at one point to me the Chinese didn't go into laundries because they like it. It was that it was all they were offered to do. Describe what other businesses they might have gotten into.

Tam: Well, most of them come in here is doing laundry business and that's not other business. They don't know how to do the other business. They don't got that much opportunity, schooling, anything else. Either that or like at my grandfather's grandfather, he's like a Chinese merchant, you can't use too many of them. Laundry, you could almost every day, you'd have something to do, see. You sell Chinese supply; you don't... not every day. People use that much stuff before.

Interviewer: *Question unintelligible*

Tam: Chinese laundry business, you have to work every day, seven days a week, and unlimited time to do it. But the other business only lasts so long and you cannot do it at nighttime because nobody going to shop at night.

Interviewer: Did your grandfather, how many of the Tam (*unintelligible*). Did your grandmother stay...

Tam: In China.

Interviewer: Can you explain what happened to her?

Tam: Well, good old days, and my great grandfather and all, they tell 'em... they don't believe in that Chinese ladies should be coming over this country because they don't have much opportunity. So when they come over here, the men come over here and make some money and go back home and that's all they do.

Interviewer: A lot of them did not go back. Try to explain the ones who went back and the ones who stayed.

Tam: Well, the ones that stayed had, they don't have — talking back home — they don't have nothing, no life to look forward to. The whole family has been pretty lucky then. Generation, generation, and they had a chance to come to the United States.

Interviewer: Your father came over to work with your grandfather. Is that how that worked?

Tam: No. Different time. My grandfather died a few years before my dad... I bring my dad over and my mother. My mother and dad to come in late '70s, and my grandfather was here all this time. He never went back to China, just times different, World War I, depression time, and World War II and all. Every different time he had no chance to go back.

Interviewer: Did your father or grandfather, when he came over did he bring you with him?

Tam: Yes, uh-hmm.

Interviewer: Can you explain how the system worked?

Tam: Well, I had a godfather in San Francisco. He went back to China and he bring me over and my grandfather was here at that time. I'm the first one come over right after my grandfather. That's in 1947, late '47. I've been here ever since.

Interviewer: Did you meet, the Pekin was owned by your uncles?

Tam: Yeah, my great uncle.

Interviewer: What was his name?

Tam: Tam Ye Ow.

Interviewer: Did he *rest of question unintelligible*

Tam: Oh, not that I know of, and we always get along with them pretty fairly, and we never have too much problem with them. He, I don't know during that time and he never have any problem either. Same thing with my grandfather and my great uncle. I never know the time they have problems, though.

Interviewer: *Question unintelligible*

Tam: Chinese... catered to a lot of Butte people. We used to feed everybody come in there after work, two o'clock to five o'clock in the morning. That's what my grandfather told me, and they've been busy all the time.

Interviewer:

Tam: Yeah, there are a few, but most of them are American, though — not that many Chinese in there. Catered most of them. Oh, I guess some of the old timers remember that too. They come in here late hours, from noon to five o'clock in the morning. We had the casino downstairs and always things were going on around this area there, too.

Interviewer: Did your grandfather, did he ever tell you about any of the men who lived here and how the community itself worked?

Tam: Well, he didn't tell me too much about it and he tell me what's in our family and how my great grandfather - I mean, my, yeah, my great grandfather - and he go back to China and just say he cannot survive in there. He went, let's put it this way, he wanted to be buried back in China when he died, and because the other family might not have a chance to come over.

Interviewer: *Asks question about his Tam's great-grandfather returning to China*

Tam: No, he go back by himself. He go back by himself.

Interviewer: Then the gist of your family is that they wanted to make money and go back to China?

Tam: Go back, yes.

Interviewer: *Mostly unintelligible question. Asks question about American food served in the family restaurant.*

Tam: Well, this is mostly Chinese in there. We served mostly Chinese food and we do have a few American dishes, mostly Chinese food. I don't know that... they say when they walk in and they get off a late hour, they say the Chinese food digests faster and so they don't need a big, heavy steak. That's what we do; a lot of people coming in at a late hour. They still do too.

Interviewer: *Unintelligible question*

Tam: I think so too. Because, during that time when we, my grandfather told me, when in business you had to go into the union, otherwise you might as well quit because they don't even come in. Let's say that way. That time.

Interviewer: What is you *unintelligible* background? *Rest of question unintelligible.*

Tam: That's the way it is. We just have people in the restaurant and they don't have any other skill, and they can't do anything else and they don't have a chance to go to school and learn a different trade. So all they do is just either the restaurant, laundry or some odd job. If that's all I know of. That's what my grandfather told me. My grandfather is also, he's the Chinese herbalist doctor, too. He's a Chinese herb doctor.

Interviewer: Why types of stuff does use for patients?

Tam: Yeah, well, he use the Chinese all this herb thing and make teas. So he helped a lot of Butte people in Butte, too.

Interviewer: They would *unintelligible question about populations served.*

Tam: Oh, yeah. They serve every nationality people.

Interviewer: *unintelligible question*

Tam: Yeah, some of them. Say, sometime when you need the stuff, indigestion, and all thing like that, headache, and all that, all different things, too. We still have some.

Interviewer: Where did they get their supplies?

Tam: Well, we get it in San Francisco.

Interviewer: And your grandfather also?

Tam: All San Francisco, too.

Interviewer: So he didn't tell you any stories about *growing up in China*?

Tam: Well, my grandfather told me little bit about it but he said, he told me, must have left it behind. I don't know how good or bad or whatever and then he just looked forward to it and forget about it.

Interviewer: Did your grandfather *unintelligible* a lot?

Tam: Never. Not that I know of. Not since I had it. I never have any problem in the city of Butte.

Interviewer: But you did consider *rest of question about a boycott mostly unintelligible*.

Tam: Well, Butte was really nice to me ever since I come to Butte and nobody boycott me or do a few things crazy to me or anything. That's how I like to see it. And even the senator, well, Mansfield, when he come and eat with us just like normal people and we just love to help him all the time. He enjoyed eat our noodles ever since when he taught school up in the School of Mines or Montana Tech it is now. We've been very good friends for many years. My uncle's kid, he taught my uncle's kid in school too.

Interviewer: *Asks question regarding the beginning of the Pekin restaurant.*

Tam: 1916, he start 1916.

Interviewer: That was in the *unintelligible*. I imagine he felt *unintelligible*.

Tam: That could be, yeah. Like I say, my grandfather told me a few things happen he was there, but he just ignore it. But Butte treated me very good all through the years. I keep, my kids go to school here. They all really helped them there before they go to college, their choice.

Interviewer: What *was the secret* about the tong war here in Butte? *Asks what Tam's grandfather said about the tong.*

Tam: Well, also my grandfather, he told me, and he belonged to the Bing Kong Tong, too. But they usually fight over certain things there. That's all I, he don't even tell me too much about it.

Interviewer: But it was Chinese and Chinese, right?

Tam: Chinese and Chinese, yeah.

Interviewer: What were the Tongs that were here in Butte?

Tam: Hip Sing and Bing Kong. There's two tongs here.

Interviewer: Was there one that survived and the other one didn't?

Tam: Well, the other one just broke down and they gone somewhere else and they still have tong everywhere, too. But no such thing as survive. It's always there.

Interviewer: Is a tong like a benevolent society? Did the tong help pay for school or *rest of question unintelligible*.

Tam: Not that I know of.

Interviewer: They don't have a *unintelligible*?

Tam: No.

Interviewer: The Pekin Noodle Parlor served Chinese food. Do you see that there's an attempt to assimilate food style or how do you use American way of life, the way we know it, with some of the Chinese heritage *unintelligible*. Is there an effort to assimilate or do you *unintelligible*.

Tam: Well, we do the thing where we always do in there: We always use the high quality stuff in there, what the Butte people like. We always put out the thing what the Butte people liked in there.

Interviewer: So the food is Chinese...

Tam: Yes.

Interviewer:...but it's still what the Butte people like?

Tam: Yes.

Interviewer: Can you explain how you vary it?

Tam: Yeah. We do that, uh-hmm. I use the high quality meats, and I marinate it, like pork and all different things there. We still do the same thing. We don't buy nothing frozen and already prepared for it. We always make our own stuff and it has been that forever since the Pekin was there. We still use the same high quality stuff to prepare our food.

Interviewer: Did you learn how to cook from your uncle, then? Your grandpa?

Tam: Yes, uh-hmm. I learned it from the Pekin.

Interviewer: You remember growing up in Butte. Did your *mother* eat Chinese food?

Tam: Yes. Before we do but now we just have the family dinner now. There's not that many Chinese around here. We still have the old custom. My wife always prepare the Chinese custom for the Chinese New Year's and after New Year's and keep those day and all things like that, too. We still do.

Interviewer: What kinds of customary foods does *unintelligible*.

Tam: Well, like all different variety food and like chicken and the whole thing, and just completely, just like what they do in San Francisco. My wife takes care of that part.

Interviewer: Are there *unintelligible*.

Tam: Not anymore, now. Whoever convenient.

Interviewer: So you *unintelligible*.

Tam: Not too much.

Interviewer: *Mentions laundry business with great-grandfather. Did he ask about help from non-Chinese women.*

Tam: No, they never talk about it. They always do their own business because they use a hand iron. I even tried it. Eight pounds is pretty heavy for me to pack it, too. But they do different than

American way. Later on, but they do use the machine though. And after that, then the war come and then they all left that business.

Interviewer: About how many people worked in a Chinese laundry?

Tam: Oh, they used to have about ten, fifteen. That's my nephew. Oh, they used to have a great amount of Chinese people working there and...

Interviewer: *unintelligible*

Tam: They used to have great amount of people working there.

Interviewer: Did anybody ever talk about tunnels and what they meant here in Butte.

Tam: Yeah. Off and on a few people come and ask me about. We do on the tunnel, on the tunnel, too. But after all the buildings deteriorized and we block, block out our tunnels, the one left to me, and fill up for parking. And the other side there, they still have problem, but we partition ours.

Interviewer: *Asks question about what the tunnels were used for.*

Tam: Just like shopping. They have all different Chinese shop in there. They show all Chinese grocery and everything else that's... you name it. They've got it down there.

Interviewer: All the people who were in the tunnels, were they legally here?

Tam: Yes, yes, they are legally here.

Interviewer: Some people have said that the tunnels were used to hide illegal immigrants.

Tam: Not that we know of, in our place here, I mean in this area.

Interviewer: *unintelligible*

Tam: Yes. They go around this, you know, just in this Main Street, the 100 Block Main Street, around there.

Interviewer: *question about location of tunnels.*

Tam: They go on the alley. They have alley access. They got all kind of access, the front access, the back access.

Interviewer: Was there a community here in Butte when you came over here? *Rest of question unintelligible.*

Tam: Well, it's not much, now. They still have a few people in there who have — few families in Butte, but not that many. There's about 200, about 200 people, Chinese, in late '40s.

Interviewer: *unintelligible*

Tam: Oh, they have just a few here, too, but not that many either.

Interviewer: Where do you think most of the Chinese *went to*?

Tam: All over, New York, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and they all left right after the war, when they got out of service. They just go every place where they have work to do.

Interviewer: *unintelligible*

Tam: Well, they do when after the war, they — when they come back there's not much work around here so they go all over. From Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York and all that. Most of the Horn family is, went to New York, and San Francisco.

Interviewer: Did your father, grandfather or *great-grandfather* ever talk about life in early Butte in terms of games or activities or *hotels*?

Tam: Yeah, he do. He did talk to me a few thing what they do during the time, depression time, what Chinese do and what they do. He did talk to me about the good old days in Butte and everything else. Butte was one of the best Chinese communities in the United States. Even I had an uncle in Tucson. There's not much to do down in Tucson. They would come up here and find some work to do. Now Tucson and Butte's completely reversed now. You have more population in Butte than Tucson at that time.

Interviewer: What kinds of activities, what would they do for fun?

Tam: Oh, they usually have some Chinese game and gambling and all different Chinese things to do, too. Oh, they like this outdoor and everything in Montana, but just not enough work for them to survive in Butte.

Interviewer: I've heard that some of the Chinese *unintelligible*.

Tam: They do, they do. They have all different kinds of social things to do and like the Horn family; every so often they have so much activity going on. Memorial Day and all different things. They have a Chinese cemetery down there and oh, they have all different — May Day. They have some, every holiday, they celebrate every holiday, get together. They have their own Chinese; we have our own Chinese holiday, just like they do in China.

Interviewer: *Asks to describe Chinese holidays.*

Tam: Yes. They have Chinese New Year, Chinese Memorial Day, and all different sort of Chinese holiday. They all celebrate it, they all get together.

Interviewer: *unintelligible*

Tam: Chinese, they always, when you have few Chinese families in Butte, they always get together and they celebrate on all Chinese holiday, all of them.

Interviewer: *Ask about relationships among Chinese.*

Tam: Well, I don't know. They have all different, all different Buddhists and all things like that.

Interviewer: *unintelligible*

Tam: No, no.

Interviewer: What types of Chinese heritage are you handing down to your children? Are they kind of *unintelligible*.

Tam: Younger generation, they do what they like to do. It's sort of like they're educated different and I couldn't do what they do today. So, that's what I could tell them.

Interviewer: When did you come over to America?

Tam: Oh, in the '50s. I come over, not too long I become a citizen.

Interviewer: Where there ever problems *with you becoming a citizen?*

Tam: No, no. There's no problem that. And I changed my name back into Tam and I used that Tam in 19, in the early '70s and I have to be U.S. citizen again and you change your name into it, what they call like "confessed programs?" Wong into the Tam and all the things like that.

Interviewer: So you had to do it twice?

Tam: Twice.

Interviewer: Wow. So you are a citizen both under Ding Wong and Ding Tam?

Tam: No, just Ding Tam. Ding K. Tam now. I think Senator Mansfield knows me as Wong. He might know Tam by now too, maybe. I know Max Baucus, he knows me as Tam or Wong, too, both.

Interviewer: What do you think was the best contribution the Chinese brought to Butte?

Tam: Well, like my grandfather told me and they built the railroad, the Union Pacific and all. They do all sorts of things. From the Milwaukee Railroad there, from Seattle and they do a lot of railroad work in there in the good early days. That's my grandfather told me.

Interviewer: *Ask about Chinese working for big local companies*

Tam: Not too many people worked for the Anaconda Company, not too many of them. But they do mining all around this, outside around here, outside of Butte, like Phillipsburg Silver Mine and Boulder, they all gold mine and all different thing.

Interviewer: Small groups of them?

Tam: Small group, small group, yeah.

Interviewer: Do you have anything that you would like to say about Mansfield?

Tam: Well, not too much. You almost asked it mostly.

Interviewer: *unintelligible*

Tam: Well, that's good old day. You read a lot of book about it. And it's all kind of vegetables, thing like that. In China we don't have, people don't eat too much meat. They use a little meat in

to prepare for the chop suey. They eat more vegetables and they say it's more healthy food than the meat. That's what so many people eat vegetables. Right now, vegetables cost more than the meat. That's how it is. Even now in China they still, people eat more vegetables than meat because the meat's the more expensive. And say more healthy, digest faster and everything. That's how the chop suey come in.

Interviewer: *Asks about how Chinese food is currently made.*

Tam: Well, that's — now people prefer more vegetable than the meat now for a change. But before, everybody eat a big, juicy slice of steak. Now you don't see that much anymore.

Interviewer: *Asks about getting noodles in China versus in America.*

Tam: Oh, yeah. They do, depending you ask for it and you serve. In China they use lots of pan-fried noodles and from here we have it, too. But people prefer the different noodles. Like the old customers, they want pan-fried. They always get what they want. But they prefer the kind — crispy noodles.

Interviewer: *Question about Chinese New Year celebration.*

Tam: In Butte?

Interviewer: Yeah

Tam: Oh, they celebrate the Chinese New Year because they have Mai Wah Society and that. They try to bring up something, what the Chinese culture and all the thing like that. And every year they have party. I cater the party for the one sponsor, the Mai Wah Society. Besides, they have one in here not too long ago. Did Mrs. Maxson tell you? Every year I do the party, cater it. They wanted to come up here though.

Interviewer: *unintelligible*

Tam: Uh-mm, yeah.

Interviewer: *unintelligible*

Tam: Well, oh, they're okay. I see many of them, you know. I go to San Francisco and Chinatown and all that. They're all — they celebrate the Chinese New Year, for many months just with everybody working. They only have dinner when they're on the weekend. And you go to one family to another, like the Horn family and Wong family or Lee and all that thing there. They just celebrate it. I even took a lot of American friend of mine, went to that kind of party. I happened to be in town with them. "Let's go party." "Gee, I go one already. Is there another one?" I said, "Well, stick around, got many more, lots of food, lots of drink."

Interviewer: *unintelligible*

Tam: They start a little bit. For the younger people, you know. It's good to know the different languages, too, though, and the different culture and how the others live. Someday, maybe, they grow up, they go to China, they still see...educate them a little bit.

Interviewer: *Asks about going to China someday*

Tam: I've been in and out there a few time. I helped to build my village in there. I told Pat, a little while ago I build something to remember my grandfather. You know, he brought me over here, and he come over to the States and never had a chance to go back to China. One thing or another, one thing or another. Every time, would we take him there, it's not the Civil War there and not that, we never had a chance. By the time we get a chance to get him back there he got sick.

Interviewer: *unintelligible*

Tam: No. Most of my family's— most of my family is in Butte, in the United States now. Oh, my uncle, my brother and all of that, and they all live in the States now. We still have property in Kuangzhou, you know, they call it Canton. My grandfather bought it, and we still got a lot of thing in there. I keep all the house, and he built it when he come to this country, made some money, send home, build a home, and raise us and everything. I keep it just the way... we going all the time. I go back there and check it out. I always keep whatever he built and I keep it always in A-1 shape. I remember him by it.

Interviewer: *unintelligible*

Tam: Yeah, that's the house he built. Yeah, yeah. He wasn't there.

Interviewer: That your great-grandfather built?

Tam: That's my grandfather. My grandfather, he come to the States in Butte, make some money and send home, and that's — he built this brick house and I keep it up in shape all the time. You know, after so many years they deteriorize it and I redo the whole thing and... This is when my uncle got married. That's my mother. And my father was there at that time, and this is my dad's uncle, an uncle in here, just the whole family. This is my great grandfather and great grandmother and all of them.

Interviewer: And this one here?

Tam: This is me... that little one. I show it to my boy one time and said "That's me." He said, "No, that's not you." I was in a tricycle one time. We have a picture of me and the tricycle and they... "That's not you." I said, "Yeah, that's me." I was never that old. And they all laughed, the family laughed.

Interviewer: *unintelligible*

Tam: This is my grandfather. This picture taken in 1942, a nice young man there, too.

Interviewer: Did he end up fighting in the war?

Tam: No. He was the — I think he was a little too old that time. They didn't draft him. He go. I mean, most of my family, they all went, but I didn't know. I was past the time. I didn't go because they don't draft me. Age is why, you know. My brother went.

Interviewer: Are these taken here?

Tam: In Butte, yeah.

Interviewer: *Asks question about laundry business*

Tam: Wes. He's not strong enough to be a laundry business man. In the old day Chinese, you've got to be strong to be a laundry business. You carry this heavy two basket in your shoulders and carry over there, and he couldn't hack it. So he had to change his profession. He supervised a lot of Butte people how to run this casino game. After, they taught a few years. And still had a few of their friends out in Las Vegas and Reno; they learn it from my grandfather and my great uncle. They used to work for us in Butte. They at one time worked the number from the Chinese letter.

Interviewer: *unintelligible*

Tam: They call it lotto or keno. They call it pak kop piu, you know. That's Chinese name, but they can work that into lotto. They more easier converted from one to eighty.

Interviewer: *Asks question about gambling and Chinese numbers.*

Tam: Oh, like one, usually they start with number one, it's the sky....the sky: tien....tien. That means up there, the sky. Usually start at the top. Eighty is the ground: di.. .di.. .di. That means the ground. There's nothing farther than the ground. Usually top and the bottom, the last one. We still have those Chinese — I show it to you last time? The Chinese lotto ticket.

Interviewer: *Asks question about Chinese medicine*

Tam: Yeah. They still have some down there.

Interviewer: *Asks Tam if he found artifacts in the basement.*

Tam: No. My grandfather, he's a Chinese herbal doctor and he prescribes a lot of thing for the Butte people too; he'd help sometimes, you know. Right now, you have to be licensed and everything too. Well, he could be licensed too, though, because they don't use the system anymore. Like the acupuncture, you know, and all that stuff in there. In the old day, you just license it and you help people. You help lots of people.

Interviewer: Did he do acupuncture and stuff?

Tam: No, he don't do that. He would have to go to a school to learn that. He don't do acupuncture. He just made some Chinese tea and have people drink it and help them and make them feel.... He do quite a bit of it. Sometime you might have indigestion and sometimes you got headache, and one good thing when Chinese hope doc... you take stuff like that and you don't have the other side effect, mostly. Geez, sometimes like I do: I take aspirin, it upsets my stomach. But Chinese doctor, they don't do that. He helped a lot of Butte people...in Butte.

Interviewer: *Asks question about speaking Chinese - End of provided audio*

Tam: My oldest one speaks quite a bit of Chinese, because she lives in the Bay area and she do some talk a lot too, you know.

Tam discusses his family:

Well, he was really happy, because.... One thing, he was very happy. I told you before... Everybody worked then. My brother and everybody's gone someplace. My boy, after being in

San Jose. He's the one who take him to the immigration office. He couldn't speak Chinese. My grandfather couldn't speak English. Boy, do they have it tough. He told the immigration office, "That's my grandpa." He said, "How come you don't speak English." I said, "I haven't been around him long enough." So they got the job done. He got the job done. All he do is take him to the immigration office there in San Jose. And my boy tell the immigration officer, "This is my grandfather." They want him to translate it to him. He says, "No way." They have Chinese immigration officer there do.

Tam discusses speaking Chinese and his family:

My wife and I, we both do. But they spend more time outside than in home....They forget pretty easy that way. If they're willing to learn, there's an intelligence school they could go to. They will go, too, some day. They probably need it, especially like my boy. He's probably going back to China after some business. I show you the computer conversion CD thing with it. He needs to know a little bit about Chinese. But he probably do have to go to intelligence school in San Francisco and take up something. For his own use.

Tam discusses how his children learned Chinese:

No, we teach them. We make them talk. But they have so much activity in school, and just don't have enough time. They don't have enough time to study it and they... they talk a little. But just don't have enough time for write [provide?] all the work they do in school and everything else. Yes, but they do learn how to do it. But they forgot that easy, too. Even me. I come in the country so many years now. I still had a little...I still read Chinese newspaper and everything else. But sometime, after that many years, you don't use it and you forget it. I still, all the Chinese stuff, buy Chinese, do order. I do that all the time. I remember that. But I get any deeper than that and you forget a little bit.

I do. I could talk, though. I could talk. I do quite a few interpreting and everything, too. I understand, but sometimes only certain thing, when you underlie deep, and then you have to be a little more expert than that. But I still do quite a bit translation. My kids' mother talked Chinese to them all the time. They understand. They understand but they couldn't talk. Someday they will....Especially like my children, especially the young one. His computer converted into CD-

ROM. We'll go back to Hong Kong and China after do business there, and you have to know a little bit and that time probably study two, three months then before he make a trip.

I have a lot of my family do it, too. A lot of them, like my wife, speak English, though. And a lot of them, the parents, like my uncles, my aunt, you know, my uncle's wife, she couldn't speak English and all of the children in New York, they have to talk Chinese to her because you talk English, she couldn't answer you. So, as soon as you step into the house they have to talk Chinese. As soon as they go outside, they probably — they never speak Chinese again.