

## Lehong Jin

I was born in the city of [SuZhou](#), China in the Year of Great Leap Forward (1958) which had such a profound influence in China's modern history. What happened during the Great Leap Forward movement sent so many of industrial and political storms to this vast land and eventually led to the earth shattering event of the Cultural Revolution in the middle 1960's. The Cultural Revolution was a painful experience for the country and many families. Though I grew up in a normal family, my youth, like many others of the same generation growing up at this period of Chinese history, was full of ups and downs.

At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, under the calling of Mao Ze Dong, students were all part of the "Red Guards" and became a major force in the political movements. Since my father was from a family classified as "Landlord" after the formation of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and both my parents were educated, my home was searched by "Red Guards". I still remember that day when I was on the way home from elementary school with my friends, one of kids living on the same street rushed up to me and yelled "Lehong, your home is ransacked!" My heart was broken when I saw my home in a mess, my mom was crying and dad was taken away. Many armed fights broke out in the major cities among various political fractions.

Eventually in 1969, my parents left SuZhou, my beloved hometown and were sent to the remote village of [Yangloucun](#) north of the Yangzi River to be "re-educated". The time I spent with my parents at that remote and poor village was hard. However, there were also many wonderful memories, from the generosity and kindness of the people in the village to help us adjust to life there, simple yet warm ways of living, to the care and support from the village teachers and friends. I saw the humanity and the hope again! On the other hand, our presence together with other "educated youngsters" from cities also opened the eyes of many boys and girls in those villages to the outside world in the hope of a better education and opportunities! Seeing most of the girls of our village working in the rice field without schooling and marrying men by family arrangements those days made me realize how lucky I was to be encouraged to think big, to have a dream, to pursue any opportunities - if I had the chance and could! I have cherished those unforgettable memories. That unique growing experience has motivated me to the pursuit of excellence and career advancement.



After 10 years of the chaotic Cultural Revolution, China emerged to a recovery. In late 1977, Universities reopened their doors through a national examination system to high school graduates who had accumulated from the previous 10 years. I joined 5,700,000 fellow young people and took the exam. With a national acceptance rate of less than 5%, I was accepted to the Chemical Engineering Department of Nanjing Technological College of Forest Product (later named Nanjing Forestry University) in the spring of 1978 majoring in Wood Chemistry and

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Pulping/Paper Science. In my senior year, a new opportunity came through the open-door policy enacted by Den Xiao Ping's government encouraging all graduating seniors to apply for the chance of studying overseas. I was honored to be one of a few from our University to succeed in the examination and was selected to study overseas. After I obtained my Bachelor of Chemical Engineering degree in 1982, I was accepted to study at the University of British Columbia (UBC) for an M.S. degree. This started a new chapter of my life.



I arrived at Vancouver in the spring of 1983. The challenges initially at UBC were not only academic and financial but also those of language and culture. I was so lucky that my supervisors and fellow students were always there lending helping hands whenever and wherever I needed it. After one semester of taking courses in Chemistry and Biochemistry related subjects, and with the recommendations of the Dean and my supervisors I was awarded the opportunity to move directly into the Ph.D. program and became the first student from Mainland China at UBC to be awarded a Graduate Academic Fellowship of UBC which provided financial support to allow me to freely select a research topic of interest for the Ph.D. thesis without using funding from the department or my supervisors. My thesis studied detoxification chemistry and mechanisms of Thujaplicins in living Western Red Cedar tree by microorganisms. Four years at UBC was hard work and challenging, yet was really fun and rewarding. I am forever indebted to my teachers in Nanjing, late supervisors, Dr. Jack Wilson of UBC and Dr. Eric Swan of Forintek (now FPInnovations) for fostering my love for science, for their encouragement, guidance and friendship.



My scientific career was jump-started after the completion of my Ph.D. degree from UBC in 1987. I moved to the US to be a post-doctoral fellow in a joint project between the Forest Product Laboratory (FPL) at Madison WI and Mississippi State University (MSU) studying mechanisms of delignification by brown rot fungi and potential uses of the brown rot-fungi modified lignin under the supervision of Dr. Kent Kirk of FPL and Dr. Darrel Nicholas of MSU. Two years of work at both institutions helped me build a solid foundation for research in wood protection chemistry. In addition to the research, one of the kindest arrangements made by Kent and Darrel was to let me escape the brutal winter in Wisconsin by working at MSU from November to April and then back to Madison from May to October. With that, I had opportunities to visit many surrounding cities in Southern states as well as in the Great Lake region. Both Kent and Darrel not only guided my research but also encouraged me to explore and appreciate the American ways of life through learning its history, culture and traditions.



In 1990, I joined Chemical Specialties Inc. (now Viance). During the past twenty six years at CSI/Viance, my research focus has been on new wood protection system development, chemical formulations, chemical and

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wood interaction and fixation mechanisms. Under the leadership of Dr. Alan Preston and very recently of Dr. Kevin Archer, CSI/Viance's Research and Development team was very active and successful in the development and



commercialization of, among other things, ACQ (a family of Alkaline copper quat products), Ultrawood (a family of water repellent emulsions), Clearwood and Ecolife (non-metallic wood stabilized preservative systems) and D-Blaze (fire retardant) products. Since 1990, I have been passionately involved in the

AWPA and IRG. It has been a highlight of my professional life to participate in the annual conferences of AWPA and IRG. Through those meetings, I have enjoyed scientific information exchange, made wonderful friends and traveled to many memorable places. It was a great privilege for me to serve as the 1<sup>st</sup> female General Chairman of an AWPA Technical Committee (N-Committees



General Chair) from 2003-2006. I also served on the IRG Executive Council (EC) from 2007-2010, and am currently the member of the Scientific Program Committee (SPC) as the Section 3 Leader – Wood Protecting Chemicals. I am thankful to CSI/Viance for supporting my

involvement in various professional and industrial organizations and activities. I feel very fortunate and honored to have a career working side by side with a



visionary leader, and innovative and dedicated colleagues. As you all know Alan retired a few years ago from Viance, we truly miss him, and miss those lively group discussions/brain storms, even the occasionally heated debates, on many topics. To me he was not only a boss, a mentor, most importantly,



he is a dear friend.

Having a busy and demanding professional life is not easy. I am so grateful to my husband Jian and daughter Sharon for always being there to love and



support me. Over the years, for those long business trips and meetings, no matter how difficult, Jian made every effort to take good care of our daughter Sharon's activities: taking her to and picking her up after school at the school bus stops; going to swimming practice and orchestra performance; piano lessons and Chinese school and so on. When I had to miss some of Sharon's academic competitions or sports tournaments, she was the first one to tell me



"Don't worry, Mom, enjoying what you are doing and I will think of you and let you know how it goes!" When time permits, Jian and Sharon love to join me on various trips. IRG conferences

are their favorite. Sharon really enjoyed her trip to IRG34 in Brisbane, Australia in 2003 and the Americas Regional IRG meeting in Costa Rica in 2008. These meetings and trips planted the seeds for her awareness about the wood protection industry. Later on during her high school years,



prompted by the Advanced Placement Environmental Science course work, she conducted her

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two years of chemistry/chemical engineering research projects on how to recover copper from the treated wood waste. Now that Sharon has gone to MIT in Boston, Jian and I plan to attend as many IRG annual conferences as we can and hopefully we will renew friendships and form new bonds.