

RESUME

Sherry Liu is a poet, artist, mentor and social activist. Having received education in a top law school in China and the US, she became the first licensed Chinese woman lawyer in the US. A few years later she returned to China as the first General Counsel for a major Western multinational in China managing its overall affairs in China, Hong Kong & Taiwan. She was profiled in various publications as one of the leading lawyer in China and has been featured by CNN, BBC and various Chinese medias for her prominent professional achievements and contributions to society.

At the height of her professional career, she became concerned with the social & environmental impact of the businesses & became an advocate for CSR, corporate social responsibility. In 2005, she quit the high profile corporate job, decided to focus her life on helping to grow grass roots NGO and projects that will improve China's environmental condition and social collaboration for charitable causes. She started to interact with different Chinese NGO leaders & activists working for ecological restoration, education reform & youth leadership development, giving speeches in the universities and different social forums to raise awareness of the ecological conditions and call on people to undertake social responsibilities. Projects she participated include: reporting major Chinese river conditions, land desertification reliefs, donations for charitable schools in nomad areas, advising village small business projects in the remote country areas, coaching & mentoring young NGO leaders, etc. She also is one of the founders of the only Hospice care NGO in China.

In 2008, she begin to work with the world renown leader, Mr. Peter Senge, in the leadership development to enhance the abilities of individuals and organizations to collaborate and interact. She organized to translate Peter's major books into Chinese, such as "The Fifth Discipline", "The Necessary Revolution", etc. Together, they held many dialogues engaging young people, business leaders, and social elites to reflect on the current social conditions and tragic flaws of the industrial age culture, having a deeper understanding on one's personal callings in relation to nature and the planet harmony, therefore collaborate with each others to create a better society.

She gradually concluded that the deeper problems required deeper approaches and that this required deeper learning & transformation of individuals and society. She guided in the pioneering efforts of many group dialogues on understanding traditional Chinese value & wisdom tradition; helped found several schools & projects focusing on young women's personal growth; taught and mentored thousands of individuals from all walks of life.

The other part of her life is as a creative poet and artist. Her bilingual poetry had been featured in "The World Literature" magazine, one of the most prestigious magazine for literature in China and recited by women around the country. Her artworks and poetry were used as a meditation vehicle in China, India & Europe, helping people to enter the profound tranquil space of consciousness. She also devoted a large part of her time in ancient Tibetan Buddhist art preservation work, being herself a very skilled Tibetan style painter.

9 August 2022 – Rotary Lunch at Kempinski Hotel

Speaker: Ms. Sherry Liu

Topic: “Living the Moment-A Journey of Self-Discovery”

Sherry Liu went to the US after college with little English. With a daring resolve, she went to law school and gradually mastered her English while studying law. After law school, she became the first Chinese woman on the west coast to pass the bar exam to practice law in the US. In 1995, she returned to China to work for a major multinational company, in a glamorous silk robe to grace her ancestral hometown, as the Chinese would say. During her ten years at a leading multinational company at the time up to 2006, Sherry achieved the height of her career and climbed to the top of the corporate hierarchy as the Cooperate VP and general counsel. In 2004, she was voted the best in-house counsel in a survey of 13 countries. In a calm manner, Sherry talked about the first part of her career: her love for working with people on both sides of the Pacific, bridging the gap between China and the US, helping a multinational to reap the benefits of China’s opening up, and helping China to leap forward after years of economic hardship.

But all that changed in 2006, when Sherry decided to change track. She gave up all worldly trappings of power, status, profession, lifestyle, money, and even her name. Sherry said, it was not a life-changing decision, because her life didn’t change, and life’s goals were not altered. It was only the path leading to those goals that had to change. She had returned to her country to help her people. But after years of working from her position, she felt powerless and something had to change. She felt that what she had pursued, the professional achievement, the status, the money, could not get her to achieve what she had wanted to do, to do good for ordinary people, for society, and the environment. Money, power, or high position were only means to an end and when she found that those means were useless, she didn’t hesitate to shed those and pursue a different track. She had seen the failings in her professional pursuit, and she decided to go down a different tract. In her moving narrative, Sherry shared her “experiment”, and the journey and trials of that experiment. Her “experiment” was to peel off what ordinary people would treasure, jobs, positions, professions, lifestyle, money, medical insurance, and even her name, the usual worldly layers that clothe us in life. Letting go of those identities was not a life-changing event or a lightening moment. She had felt the anxiety from seeing the chaos from the economic great leap forward and the damage the rapid expansion had done to the country. She listened to her inner voice to change track, to pursue a path that could calm her anxiety by doing good, but doing differently. She said she didn’t know what the right path was, but her intuition was to shed what she had and to come down from the alter to join the ordinary public. She had to relearn from the people, from ground zero.

The first step of this multifaceted experiment was to quit her job at a leading multinational company, reject all the headhunters’ pleas, and give up her comfortable lifestyle, her name, and her identity, to become a no-person. She rented a warehouse as her painting studio, and for six months, she felt lost, bewildered, and directionless. But this was the exact directionless she was pursuing. By letting go of the conscious objectives and the previous life’s path, she felt she could breathe and feel the ordinariness. She met and talked to ordinary people, felt their pain, sought solutions to help them, and met with environmentalists, charity workers, or the economic and social elite who were going out to save the world. She wanted to learn what hardship or difficulties ordinary people were going through, and how other people were doing to correct the social ills. The “experiment” also involved learning and reflection, learning from people who were making differences in various communities, and learning the “tools” to guide and to inspire the changes. It was three years of meeting people, talking, listening, and finding solutions to their problems before Sherry started to feel right about what she had set out to do. In 2009 Sherry was diagnosed with cancer but she chose meditation and spiritual exploration to help her through the treatment and healing. Buddhism, spiritual exploration, and meditation have since entered Sherry’s life. 16 years into her “experiment”, Sherry today is a spiritual speaker, painter, poet, social activist, and in her word, a person living the moment. She came from nowhere, going nowhere, but she never got lost.