

Excerpt of Dr. Wang, Gen

My name is Wang, Gen, Gen means roots of trees. I was born in 1963, Liujia Village, Tielu Ward, Lintong County, Shanxi Province, a quite isolated countryside. It was a pretty poor place and has terrible transportation to the outside world. It's getting improved only recently. My family too was in grinding poverty. I've got quite a number of siblings. Both of my parents are peasants and illiterate. I witnessed, under these pathetic conditions, how my parents' generation struggling against the poverty. I therefore acquired the power of endurance gradually.

After I got my master degree from Northwest A&F University in 1987, I became a teacher there, teaching quite some courses. Moreover, I was in the first group in our university who voluntarily joined in the Ministry of Agriculture Poverty Alleviation Project. It's an extremely tough job. I, merely on foot, have travelled to most places of 13 counties in Shangluo Area, Shanxi province where no electricity supply, and usually on terrible food like decaying potatoes. I have served as principal in their Farmers Night School. I sometimes walked tens of kilometers a day. ... I just wanted to contribute my poor peasants with the knowledge I've got.

I started my PhD study in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, a joint program operated by Chinese Academy of Sciences and Zhejiang University in 1993. I then went to Northwestern University, Chicago Medical School as a postdoctoral visiting

scholar in March 16th, 1997. Later in 1998, I transferred to National Cancer Institute, University of South Florida.

In 2000, I got my immigration paper to Canada. The reason I wanted to immigrate is the difficulty in getting a family union class visa in USA during the 90's, without which my family could not join me in the states. They always reject you. One of my fellows told me that I'm qualified to apply for immigrant to Canada. My whole family can stay together in Canada once we are PR to Canada. That's just my humble incentive.

I was touched at the ceremony of citizen oath. I still remember the speech given by a Mexican Canadian MP's. He asked us to think what a man's true value is. How should one achieve his ideal or to maximize his value in a multicultural society like Canada? Bearing these in mind, I went home and made a decision: I won't go to USA no matter how juicy the job they offer me because I feel like my value, other than doing research in the laboratory, could be some contributions to the society in other ways.

I went to Superstore to do grocery shopping the first weekend I came to PEI. I waited outside of their store for quite a long time and the store still not open. I asked a man who was doing his morning jogging and he said, no, the store would not open. He said not only this one, indeed all stores on the island could not open on Sunday coz that was the law. After this incident, I appealed earnestly and

publicly for amending this law to many people including the MPs. Why can't the stores open on Sunday? See, we have about one million visitors coming over to PEI in summer and if all the stores close up, how could the travelers buy the food and the necessities? What the impression will they have about PEI? How could our PEI economy get growing?...I talked to everyone I met and I kept convincing them that anything can be and should be changed as long as it no longer fits. Of course I was not alone. I also encouraged other people lobbying the policy makers. Then in 2006, stores are open on Sunday!

One more example. Once I needed to take a bus but I was told there was no bus running on this island. No bus? How come? This is Charlottetown, the capital city of a province, the birthplace of Canada's confederation! This is unacceptable and not at all suitable for our economy. I then called upon the public and the authorities by writing articles on various media and continuous solicitation. If my memory is correct, we eventually have buses running on the street in October 2nd, 2005.

I canvassed the proposal of the Chinese school in our Chinese community by sending out emails asking for their opinions, ideas and suggestions on March 6th, 2007. I then collected all the response and set up the school with the help of these information and many activists. Our Chinese School of PEI soon opened in September and the ambassador of China in Canada, Mr. Lu, Shumin, came in and gave a speech at our opening ceremony.

Our Chinese School of PEI has received tremendous support from various circles of the society. I got an idea in 2014, participating PEI Christmas parade as a vehicle in spreading Chinese culture and publicizing our Chinese School. We needed a large truck as our parade float. After listening to my presentation on our school, a local company gave us one of their moving trucks, a very big one, free of charge. They just wanted to back up our school because they knew we were running this school with no funding. They supported us because they were moved by what we did. I, as return, wrote articles on various media to introduce them because I'd like to do anything I can to help people whoever provided their support to our school, no matter they are Chinese or non-Chinese. Our parade turned out to be a success in every year since 2014. The local residents started to know there is a Chinese school in PEI running so good and a prosperous Chinese community as well.

(Translated by Chen chen)