

Being a Global Person

---Opportunities and Challenges

Weiming Lu

By the Land of Ten Thousand Lakes

跨大洋與人——機遇與探索

盧偉民



Presentation outline

- Adapting to a new land and culture
(Our Common Challenge)
- My personal journey
- Growing up in China
- Working and living in America
- What have I learned from life?
- Being a global person

Introduction

- Never easy to adapt to a new land and culture. Each of us has our own experiences.
- I am happy to share mine with you, and looking forward to our dialogues as well.

Never easy to adapt to a new land and culture

- Still remember my struggles with English, when I first came. Reading any book required almost constant use of dictionary. Afterward, I would have pages full of Chinese characters.
- Remember my struggle to find my first job, and then some of the challenges on the job.
- Remember vividly how my proposal for a neighborhood plan was shot down by one special group one night.
- Reflecting them, I realized how little I knew of American culture then.

One Memorable Experience

- In preparing a plan for S.E. Minneapolis, I had 500 meetings with neighborhood over 3 year, learning democracy at first hand.
- One night meeting turned rowdy, and review disrupted.
- One local leader apologized, complained to my boss the next day, and said “that Korean just didn’t speak English well”.



The world has changed so much in the last few decades

- U.S. and China normalized their relationship since '79
- China's economic reform and rapid growth
- Information revolution
- Changing time and distance perception
- Living in a Global Village
- "The world is flat" Thomas Friedman
- Facing enormous challenges and opportunities

A wide-angle photograph of a calm ocean under a vast blue sky. A soft rainbow is visible on the left side of the frame, blending into the horizon. The water is a deep blue with gentle ripples. The sky is a lighter blue with wispy white clouds.

My Own Journey

I. Growing up in China

- Grew up in Shanghai during the Sino-Japanese war.
- Life was difficult, hunger was a daily experience.
- Study almost got disrupted, as the school asked us to pay tuition by bags of rice, which we couldn't afford.
- Thanks to a scholarship enabled me to continue.



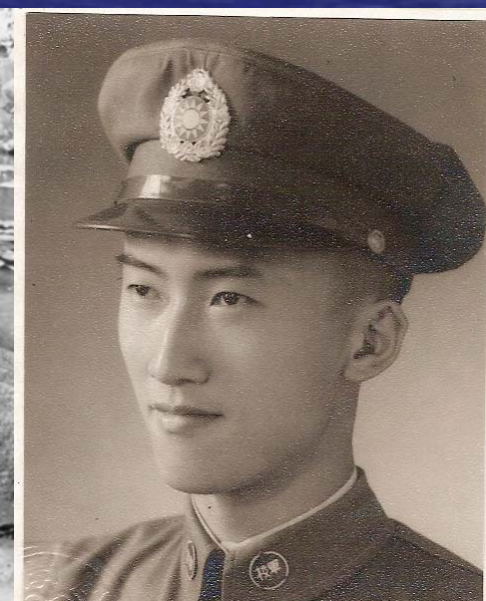
Studied at Jiaoda

- After the war, attended Jiao-Tung University for 2 years,
- Tough school, almost “riding night train” every night
- A tumultuous time, frequent demonstrations, arrests and disappearance, memorable experiences.
- Study interrupted when the University was shut down, as the People Liberation Army was approaching Shanghai.



Went to Taiwan

- Many tried to flee. Our family boarded on one of the last planes to Taiwan. Each of us allowed to carry only 44lbs with us.
- Admitted to Chen-Kung University, finished my studies in 2 years, but the school had 3 years min. residence requirement.
- I stayed in Taiwan, and worked for my father for a year.
- Ran into compulsory R.O.T.C. training, stayed for another year.



II. Coming to America

- Applied and got admitted to University of Minnesota. No scholarships, family savings not enough to support my study, had to borrow from friend and paid back right after arrival
- Needed 50 chops to get exit permit from Taiwan
- Must pass chest X-ray and English proficiency test for U.S. consulate
- Took 14 days to sail by a freighter to reach America



Studied at Minnesota

- Experienced Minnesota's winter, rooming house, joined a 'mutual hair cuts society'
- Finished my first graduate degree in 10 months, be sure not to run out of money
- Secured a part-time jobs drawing milk trucks, received a big ham in x'mas, made sandwiches with the meat, and soups with the bones, lasted more than a month
- Met my future wife Caroline Chang in a CAAM meeting.



Search for my first job

- After finished my degree, made calls to consulting engineers with a telephone directory from A to S without any response, only when I got to T, I found an opening at TKDA Consulting
- After an interview, I got a job offer, and started working soon afterward.
- My job was to draw railroad bridge and making some simple calculation on some concrete building. Rather boring. I also began thinking about my future.

Went to North Carolina

- Always interested in city planning, applied for and got admitted to Harvard, M.I.T., and University of North Carolina (UNC).
- Chose UNC because of assistantship, small department, excellent faculty, multi-disciplinary studies and internship.
- Returned to Minneapolis one X'mas through snow storm in the Appalachian, and got engaged with Caroline Ying Chang.



III. Started Working and Got Married

- After finished my study, got several job offers because of my teacher's reputation.
- Chose Kansas City, MO., worked for a year, and got married there.
- We worked and saved money for another year, planned to go to London to work and travel for a year.

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TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

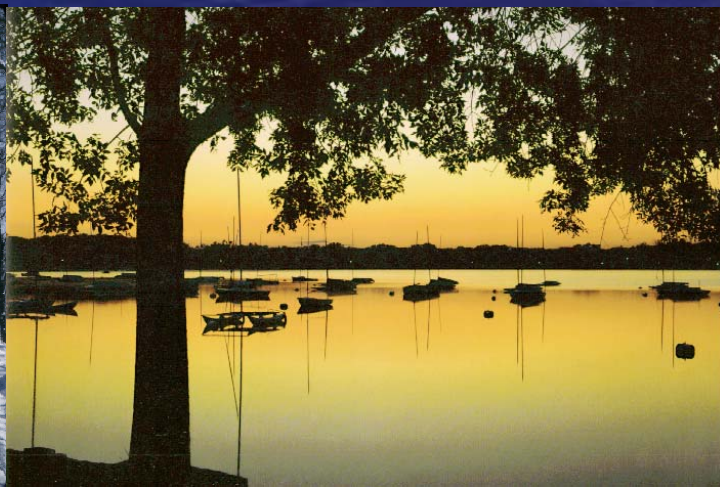
Travel and Study in London

- Passed British Civil Service Examination, got a job. But could not afford the high living expenses there.
- Thus, asked for 2 months internship, observed Great London Plan and New Towns.
- Then traveled to the Continent to observe rebuilding cities for 2 months.
- Learned a great deal from that travel and study. Since then went back there to observe the changes, and spoke to conferences a few times as well.



IV. Return to America

- Originally planned to go to West Coast to work.
- While stopping over in Minneapolis to visit friends, per a friend's suggestion, I did an interview with the City.
- Got a job as a planner, and worked for 12 years.



Envisioning Minneapolis

- Directed an City Wide Urban Design Study. Had exhibit at Walker Arts Center, filled the whole museum.
- Did a Downtown Plan, built Nicollet Mall, initiated skyways, set preservation and financing legislations. Won national award. Also participated in the first regional plan.

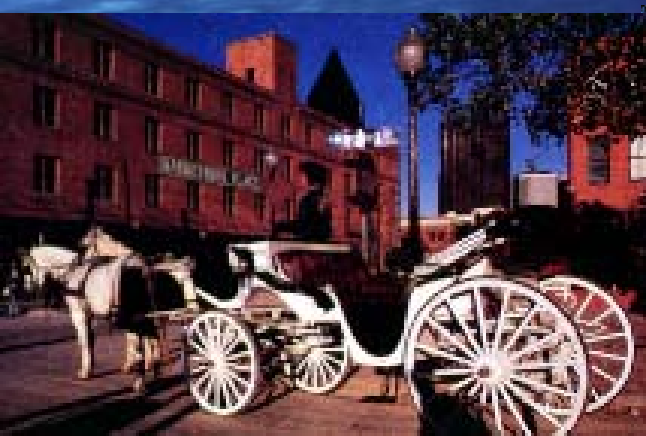


Success and Disappointment

- While work was successful and rewarding, promotion somehow was slow. Discrimination was subtle. I didn't quite understand it.
- When I was invited to speak to a conference, the director prohibited me to do so with little reason.
- Angry and depressed, took 6 months to recover.
- I decided to explore other job, and to pursue my growing interests in urban design.
- It was sad to leave Minneapolis, our second homeland. Yet, I had to do it.

V. Guiding Dallas ' Explosive Growth

- Dallas was searching for a Director of Urban Design. After an interview, City offered me the job, and many architects urged me to accept.
- I moved there, and started a new program, worked with many partners.
- We saved the Texas School Depository, created the art district, protected escarpment zone, neighborhood rejuvenation, and many other initiatives.
- Our works won awards, and was featured in a film for the UN Habitat Conference. Many considers then as a “golden period” for Dallas planning.



Success and Disappointment

- Unfortunately, our success also caused jealousy by some colleagues, and concerns by others for our environmental initiatives.
- When a developer was elected as Mayor, our department was hastily reorganized under a manager with no planning experience, both our staff and program were cut back.
- It was most difficult to work in that hostile environment. Many able staff left. I also started searching for a new job.

VI. Return to Twin Cities

- To my surprise, Lowertown Corporation in St. Paul approached me and offered me a job for 3 years.
- I first hesitated, but my wife urged me to take a look. I went, like the challenges, accepted the offer, and happy to return to the Twin Cities.
- After 2 1/2 years, my boss resigned. I didn't want to work for others again, sought and got the job, then reorganized the Corporation.



Building An Urban Village

- Over 26 years, my corporation through partnership with others, has attracted more than \$750 million investment, and transformed Lowertown to a new Urban Village.
- We won Presidential Design and other Awards, and happily shared them with our partners.



Vento Sanctuary

- We worked with neighborhoods, foundations, City, State and Congress for 8 years, created a vision for a brownfield raised 5.57 million, acquired the site, transformed it to a new park, then dedicated it to the City.



Depot and Riverfront Development

- Cutting through some political struggles, we persuaded Post Office to relocate, secured \$50 million from Congress, are ready to restore the Depot for Amtrak and LRT, and to develop more housing, marina, winter garden on riverfront.
- With our mission accomplished, we decided to close our corporation and set up a Lowertown Future Fund to nurture its growth, for at least the next 10 years.



VII. Sharing my Experiences

- As a national model, I was asked to advise other American cities: Reconstruction of South Central L.A., rejuvenations of South of the Market in Frisco, Seattle, Providence, Chattanooga, Fort Worth South, helped raising \$ 40 million, supporting partnerships





Yearning to serve fellow Chinese

Return to Taiwan

- Advised UN Team in Taiwan on new town, regional plan('69)
- Served as advisor to three Taipei Mayors ('70-'88), helped redesign of provincial capitol ('95-'96), organized workshop led to the creation of science park in southern Taiwan
- Developed plan for a megamall on Kaohsiung ('97-'98)



Singapore, Korea, Japan

- Advised Singapore in rebuilding Chinatown('85)
- Advisor to MIT East Asia Architecture and Planning Laboratory
- (held waterfront, housing conferences in Korea, Japan, and U. S.)
- Participated in Olympic Planning Conference in Seoul, Korea ('88)
- Visiting Professor, Tokyo University ('91)
- Advisor, Columbia U. "East-West Cities Program" ('97)



First return to China '79

- Hosted Chinese Mayoral Delegation's visit ('78)
- Helped National Committee for US-China Relations organizing first U.S. Planner Delegation to China ('79)
- Advised U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in its exchange programs with China



Reunion with relatives and friends

- Revisiting old places were emotional experiences
- Cultural revolution barely over, and life was still difficult
- Few dared to speak of sensitive political issues



Passing of Zhou En-Lai

- Much moved by reading the outpouring of sorrow in poetry for the passing of this highly respected and loved leader



采桑子 (二首)

一

广场雄碑人如潮，不似往年，胜似往年，
悲歌回旋动地天。 人人心怀敬、爱、
哀，情似东海，深过东海，滔滔不尽有人
骇。

二

天地昏暗心哀痛，伴送严冬，迎来清明，
怀念总理更悲恸。 悲愤呐喊声声重，
恰似雷轰。胜似雷轰，妖魔一枕黄梁梦。

St. Paul/Changsha Sister City Committee

Hosted Mayor Wong Ka-Yin's visit of St. Paul,
and accompanied Mayor Latimer visit of Changsha



Advising Governors' Trade Missions to China

- Hosting visit by Shannxi Governor
- Advising Ventura and Pawlenty's Trade Missions to China



Serving Chinese Community

- Twin Cities Chinese Christian Fellowship, CAAM, CAAPAM
- Founder, Minnesota Chapter, Organization of Chinese American
- Advisor, Chinese American Dance Theatre



Joined the Committee -100

- Served as its Vice Chairman for 5 years, focused on improving U.S.-China relation, authored its position paper ('91-'96)
- Visited China with Chinese American Committee of 100 in '94
- Hosted visits by Chinese Vice Premiers, Mayors, Planners since '78
- Appealed to national leaders to maintain peace over Taiwan Strait



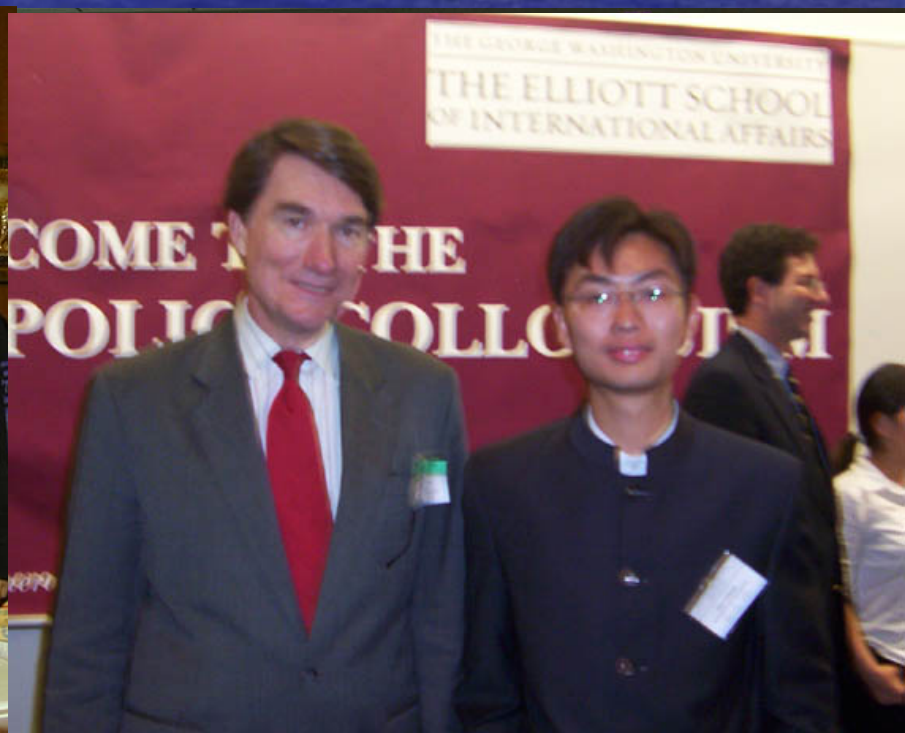
Hosting Many Delegations

- From North America, Europe, Asia, Africa
- Mayors, planners, architects, developers, educators, trade officials, poets, artists, composers



Mentoring to Chinese Students

- Sharing experiences, introducing them to congressman, and judges, attending their graduations, counseling jobs
- Recommending them to Loeb Fellowship, Young Leaders Forums, Foreign Policy Colloquiums



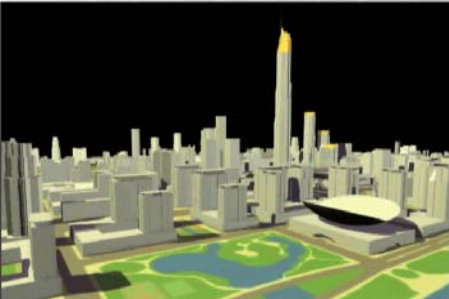
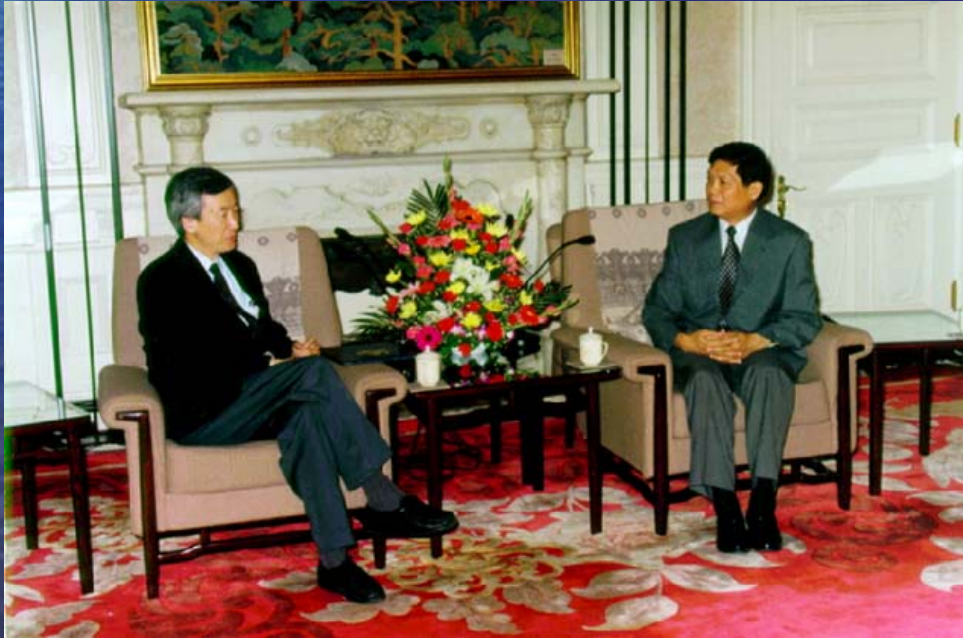
Sharing My Experiences

- Speaking to universities, conferences here and abroad
- Contributing to publications in English, Chinese, and Japanese (translated from English)



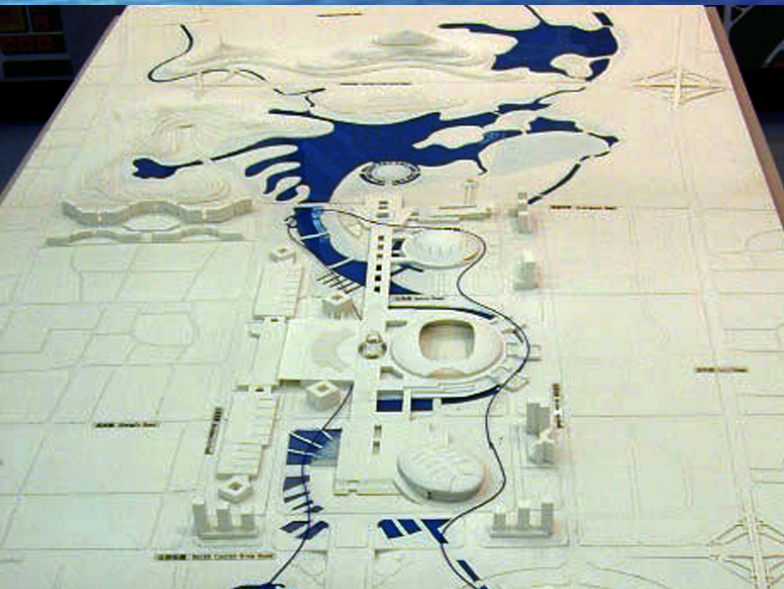
Planning Advisor to Beijing

- Served in various advisory roles with the City since '79
- Appointed as an Advisor to Mayor of Beijing '99
- Served as Jury for International Design Competitions for CBD in '01, and for Beijing Olympic in '02
- Field trips and workshops on many planning topics



Beijing Olympic

- Served on the International Design Competition Jury
- We reviewed 87 entries from 24 countries
- We set criterion to judge the entries
- I made a presentation on Shan Shui tradition in Chinese garden and city planning to the Jury



Winning Entry

- The design by Sasaki Associates and Hwa Hui set the framework for new venues, and reserve room for future expansion. Happy to see it embraces the Shan Shui spirit as well.



The Hun Qiao Concert

in remembrance of the Asian Holocaust during WWII

- Worked with Yo Yo Ma and Chamber Music Society of Minnesota for 6 years, commissioned new works by Chinese, Korean, Japanese and American composers, premiered in St. Paul in '01
- Nationally broadcasted by NPR on International Peace Day in '01
- Performed again on Pacific Music Festival, Santa Cruz, CA. in '05
- Served as jury for an International design competition for the expansion of the Nanjing Massacre Museum in 6/05



音樂可替代詩詞
突破國界
呼風喚雨蘇醒山靈

但願遊魂早歸
仇恨日滅
今晚
為未來築橋
子杯萬代永除戰爭



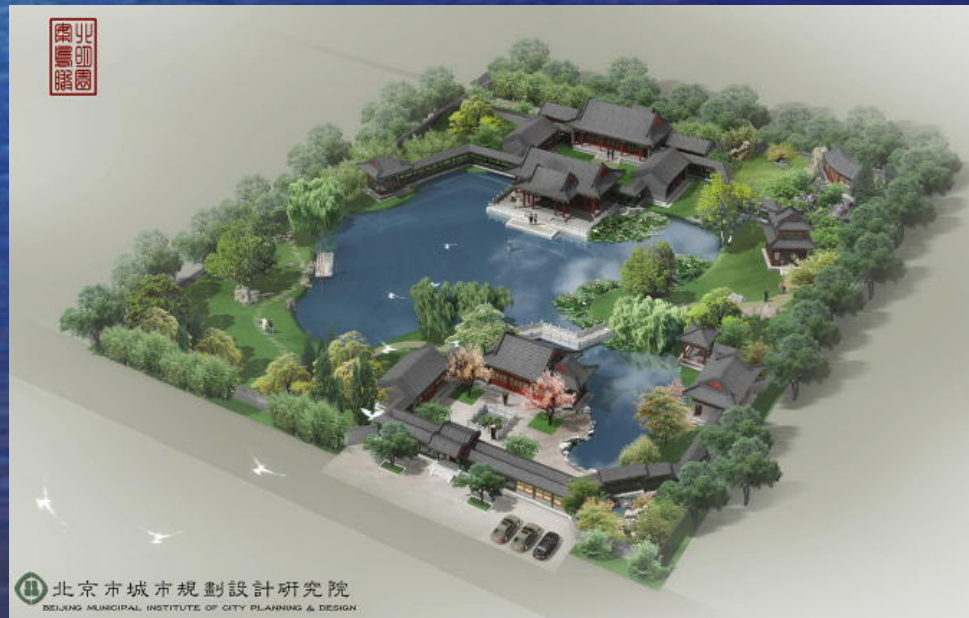
- Transcending poetry,
Crossing national boundaries,
Calling up wind and bringing down rain,
Music can wake up the dead.

May the wandering souls soon return,
Hatred be diminished day by day.
Building bridges for the future this evening,
May war be abolished forever for our children and grand children,
generation after generation.”

Hun Qiao (Bridge of Souls) by Weiming Lu

Chinese Garden Proposal

- Advising U.S.-China Friendship Association on their Chinese Garden project, and assisted their meetings with neighborhood, city staffs, and the Minneapolis Foundation
- Helped them connect with Beijing Planning Institute, and with noted architect Zhang Gin-jiu in Xian



Martin Luther King Memorial

- St. Paul held an International Stone Carving Festival in '06. Noted sculptor Mr. Lei of Changsha came and did a fine sculpture. He was interviewed by CBS with my interpretation.
- Chief Architect of King Memorial visited the Festival, met Mr. Lei. Again, I helped to build bridge for Lei with the architect both here and D.C.. Happy to see King's Memorial has since engaged Mr. Lei to do a sculpture of Dr. King at the Memorial





What Have I Learned from Life?

A serene ocean scene with a blue sky and a rainbow on the left. The text "A. Facing One's Destiny" is centered in the middle of the image.

A. Facing One's Destiny

1. Life has its ups and down.

Always be prepared to meet changes.

- Life is unpredictable. Never expect that I would go to Dallas, then return to Twin Cities. I tasted both successes and disappointments.
- As an old Chinese saying “As willow trees darkened, flowers blossom (in another land), we enter a new village”
- I also discover the worst of times can also be the best of times. When people recognize your ability, they will come to your door to ask for collaboration.

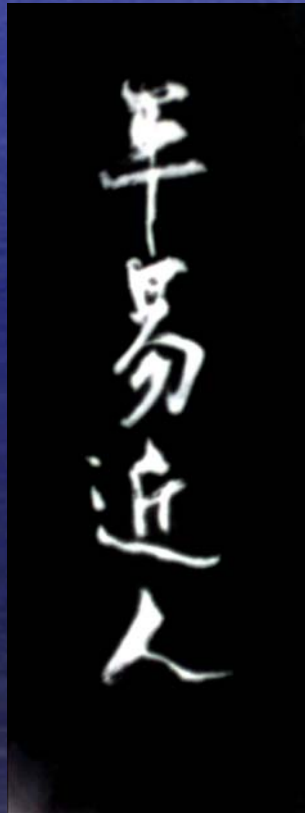
柳暗花明又一村

2. Learn from past mistakes, determined not to repeat them

- Everyone makes mistakes in life.
- Not to be discouraged by them, but determined not to repeat them.
- Learn from them, and do it differently next time.

3. Skillful communication helps foster comfortable relationship with others.

- Recognize the importance of verbal communication skills in U.S.
- Make people comfortable to work with you
- As one Chinese saying, “Being simple, easy and approachable” would also work in U.S.
- Earn people’s trust by being honest and sincere
- “Entering a country, learning her culture.” is the key



4. Beside hard work, networking is another way to help you succeed

- We can't rely on old family, and school connections in this new land. We must develop new on our own.
- My own network extends to many fronts enabling me to work with HUD, NEA, National Trust, MIT, Tokyo, Beijing, Taipei over the years.
- Network may be built from collaborative works, mutual trust with friends over the years.
- As you succeed, more people want to network with you. However, be selective also in choosing your partners.

5. Always ready to share credits, when you accomplish something

- Great work require team effort. Be ready to share credits when you accomplished something.
- When we won Presidential design Award, I invited eight partners to go to White House with me to share the honor.



6. Don't be shy

- Don't be shy, or too modest, people may mistaken you as lack of confidence.
- Also be sure not to be overly aggressive.
- Seek a balance to be modest, and be able assert yourself when needed.
- Must have self confidence. It came from hard work and accomplishments.
- Never be conceived after experienced a few successes.

不卑不亢

7. Overcoming prejudice

- Not to be deterred by prejudice. Work with others, not everyone is prejudiced.
- Be prepared to work twice as hard.
- Change venue, if you have to.
- Fight prejudice with other concerned and enlightened friends and leaders.
- Make sure you yourself have no prejudice against others.



II. Family Life

1. Life is not just work

- Family, friends, hobby, social activities, volunteer services are all important to me.
- Beside work, my own activities include:
 - volunteering for Chinese-American community,
 - improving U.S.-China understanding and relations,
 - enjoying arts, music, dance and calligraphy,
 - sharing my experiences, and serving on civic boards.

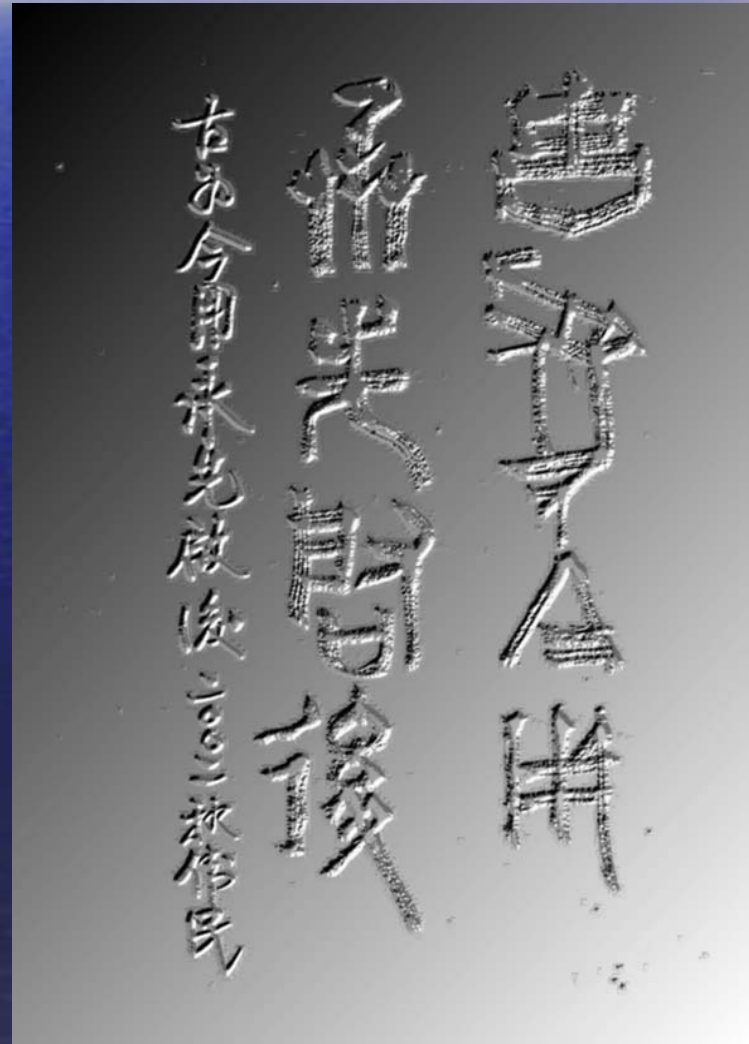
2. The blessing of a supportive lifetime partner.

- I have been blessed to have met and married Caroline, who has been most supportive to me, a fine mother to our son, and a kind care taker to my mother during her sunset years. I can never thank her enough.
- Above all, she has been a guiding light for me especially at critical and difficult moments of my life.



3. Having some hobby

- Having some hobby helps one to make one's life meaningful.
- Calligraphy has been a way for me to find my roots, and to explore new brush spirit.
- Exhibit at Chinese National Academy of Arts in '97 and '05.
- The acquisition of my work by Minneapolis Art Institute in '04 also encourages me to explore further.



Exhibited at China National Academy of Arts in 1997 and 2005

盧偉民電腦書法展
王天爵題

人生如夢
一瞬即逝
樂天無畏

錢賓四

4. Learning is a life-time experience

- Never stop learning, especially in today's information era, one's education can easily become obsolete.
- Learning can also be a joyful and enriching experience.



III. Being A Global Person

1. What are the difference between Chinese and American Culture?

- What does each culture tend to stress?
- Verbal vs. written expression
- Straight talk vs. “beating around the bush”
- Extrovert vs. introvert personality
- Horizontal vs. vertical relationship
- Individualistic vs. family orientation
- Community services vs. family loyalty

2. Learn the American Culture in depth

- As new American, we need to learn the American culture in depth, its strength and weakness
- Not just superficially its commercialism, Hollywood, Disneyland
- I appreciate the arts and music, science and technology, its cultural values, its pursue of excellence, its spiritual value, “One does live on bread alone.”
- Making money isn’t important to me.



3. Value our Chinese Heritage

- I believe in respecting our own Chinese heritage is a step toward self respect.
- I also believe as an American, finding an effective synthesis of the east and west is also important.
- We should neither be a “prodigal son” (once one learn the new will drop all one’s heritage),
- or a “filial son” (only hang on the old, never accept anything new).



4. Being a Global Person

- Having global view, being a global person. Contributing to America, China, and the rest of the world is important to me.
- I believe being a bicultural person give us some advantage., and some responsibility as well.
- What could each of us in a small way do our part in promoting better understanding and relations between China and United States, and in building a peaceful and prosperous world?

Thank You

把潔淨還諸天地
將愛心留在人間



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- Presentation Record

- Before Career Counseling for Chinese, Cambridge, Massachusetts, March 19, 2005
- Before Nanmo Classmates in Beijing and Shanghai, June, 2005
- Before Chinese American Professional and Academic Association in Minnesota, October 15, 2006
- Before University of Minnesota Chinese Students. December 8, 2006