

# Shu: A Mother and a Businesswoman

By Hong, Kily, and Ru



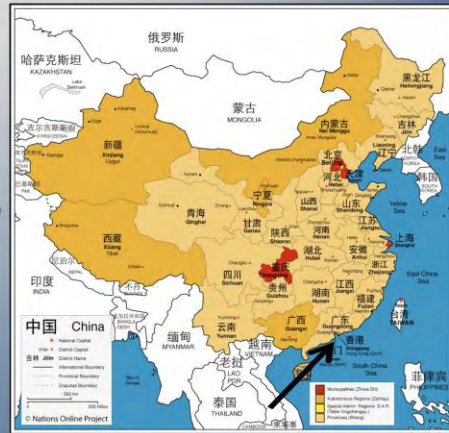
# The Interview



Detail how our interview went, experiences, thoughts....

# Personal Background

- She immigrated to America from Hong Kong in 1992, when she was twenty-one years old.
- She came with her parents, who were the ones who originally wanted to come. They believed there were more job opportunities and could have a better life here. "That's why they wanted me to come."



Continued.....

Analysis: She is a first generation Asian American woman. Her reasons for coming to America line up with the concept of the "American Dream." Interesting to see that she herself did not want to come though. Even if they seem like trivial reasons, they are legitimate.

➤ Shu recalls that there was a big difference between Hong Kong and America and that she didn't like it when she first arrived: "If they give me my own choice, I would go back to Hong Kong [...] Now, I get used to it."

➤ However, now that Shu has a family here, she will stay.



Analysis: She raises the concept of assimilation. Also, something to think about would be to what extent has she assimilated into American society—or is she still very dependent on the Asian American community.

# Family

- It has been almost twenty years since Shu first arrived in America. She is now married and has two daughters, ages fifteen and four. One daughter goes to MS 104, and the other attends Nest.



- She said that her two girls do not want to be working in this store when they grow up, and she will not force them to.
- Shu believes that both her daughters like Chinatown because they enjoy the conveniences of having Chinese food.

Analysis: Compare her family establishment to your own. Also, how do her reasons for liking Chinatown compare to yours?

## Work History

- Shu worked in a real-estate management office and a Chinese restaurant before. Finally, she opened this 99 cent shop five years ago with her husband.
- They opened the store with the help of a friend, who had owned a different store.
- When asked to describe her job, Shu said she likes it. she can see different people, different stories, and it's easy for communication. She explained that most of her customers are local residents--very few tourists.

Explain how her work history aligns with her personal development/growth in America? Her current role: a small business owner. Her interests and contacts in Chinatown are primarily the local residents. She provides them with a service—discounted goods. Consider the impact of her business on the community. Also, who might she appeal most to—and what might be a threat to her business (Walmarts, large business, etc)



# The Neighborhood: Chinatown

➤ Shu's fondest memories about Chinatown are about the neighborhood. She values the community because they are primarily Chinese. Thus, it is very easy for her to communicate with them because she herself primarily speaks Chinese. As a result, she does not face any language barrier in Chinatown.

➤ She also chose to have her business in Chinatown because of the community and familiarity she has after living here for a long time. In addition, Shu believes that having other local businesses around helps because they all help draw in customers.

Are there any factors that prevent her from fully assimilating into society? Or from allowing her business to expand outside of Chinatown?

# Theme: Gentrification

## Definition:

The physical, economic, and cultural process in which private developers, by city policies, invest in lower-income neighborhoods, causing high-income people to displace low-income people, often people of color, from their homes and businesses.



# Facts and Figures

## City District 1 (Where Shu's business is located)

- 29% of household incomes are less than ~18,000 USD
- The average household income is 41,000 USD
- Only 37% of apartments are rent-regulated

## Direct Evidence of this in Chinatown

- Shu says that "the rent is very expensive," and the prices of the inventory is also increasing: "the price is getting higher."

Fact that it was very difficult for her to identify factors that made it difficult for her to maintain her business—but she did identify one: rent control. As it appears, this is one of the most critical struggles for her—way we can help.

## Looking to the Future

➤ Her outlooks regarding the economy in Chinatown are grave. She believes that the business is not very good and that it is getting worse. Shu referred to 9/11 and explains that ever since, things have been very expensive. As a result, a lot of people don't come in from other states to shop in Chinatown. Thus, Chinatown is a bit quiet. "It's different from ten years before."

➤ Her hopes for Chinatown is that the business will get better and that more people will come to spend money.

Future of her business/Chinatown → hopefully, it will continue to grow and thrive. However, even in viewing her hope for Chinatown, one can read it as a double edged sword—very idea of gentrification???

The End



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