Biography of Zhu Sheng



Conversations Filled with Laughter

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Chapter 1
Wuhan: Her Grandfather's Ancestral Home and Her Childhood



Zhu Sheng, born in the 1970s, traces her ancestral roots to Wuhan, Hubei Province. Her family was well regarded in Taiwan, where her grandfather, Zhu Zhenhua, was one of the founders of communication studies as an academic discipline. He had also served as a Professor of Communication Studies at San Francisco State University.

In 1991, Zhu Zhenhua returned to mainland China and met his granddaughter Zhu Sheng for the first time in Wuhan, where she was studying in the Department of Ideological and Political Education at Hubei University. This was the first meaningful intersection of their lives. Until then, Zhu Sheng had grown up and received her education in Wuhan, perhaps possessing

only a vague understanding of her grandfather's academic reputation in Taiwan.

Zhu Zhenhua may initially have hoped that his granddaughter would follow in his academic footsteps. Her subsequent achievements, however, clearly exceeded his original expectations.

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Chapter 2
An Arranged Journey into Communication Studies (1995–1997)

In 1995, while many students were contemplating their employment prospects beside Sha Lake, Zhu Sheng was “compulsorily” sent to San Francisco State University for postgraduate studies, specifically in Communication Studies.

The expression “having it arranged for her” accurately captures how she entered the field of journalism and communication. Her grandfather, Zhu Zhenhua, was a Professor of Communication Studies at San Francisco State University, and this family connection opened the door to an American education in the discipline. Once she had entered, however, the path ahead was hers to navigate.

At San Francisco State University, Zhu Sheng received systematic training in communication studies. For a student who had transferred from the Department of Ideological and Political Education at Hubei University, this represented both a challenge and an opportunity. She needed to master the academic language of English, understand the theoretical frameworks of American communication studies, and establish her place within an entirely unfamiliar cultural environment.

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Chapter 3
Sing Tao Radio: A Founding Broadcaster and Conversations Filled with Laughter (1997–2013)

In 1997, Zhu Sheng began an internship at the North American edition of Sing Tao Daily. As it happened, the newspaper was preparing to launch a radio station, and she “quite by accident” became one of its founding broadcasters.

Surviving in the Chinese-language media industry in the United States was far from easy. At Sing Tao Radio, presenters were responsible for virtually every aspect of their programmes, from selecting topics and planning interviews to production and broadcasting. Even popular presenters such as Zhu Sheng had no assistants. A young woman from Wuhan had to build a radio programme from the ground up in San Francisco's Chinese-language broadcasting community.

The station created a programme specifically for her called Tan Xiao Feng Sheng (Conversations Filled with Laughter), featuring interviews with people living in or visiting the San Francisco Bay Area. Zhu Sheng offered her own distinctive interpretation of the programme's title: “The moment the live broadcast light on the wall switches on, my spirits immediately rise and I become completely animated. ‘Feng Sheng’ becomes ‘Feng Sheng’ in another sense, playing on my name and my lively personality. I love and enjoy being in that state.”

The studio where Tan Xiao Feng Sheng was produced and broadcast overlooked the Pacific Ocean, often shrouded in mist. Zhu Sheng frequently improvised poetic lines during her broadcasts, such as “Amid the slowly rising mist above the Pacific, I begin today's work,” and “The hazy scene before my eyes makes me feel...” Many listeners came to remember these phrases by heart.

For a radio programme to remain on air for fifteen years was remarkable in itself. For a programme to continue for fifteen years while maintaining a leading audience rating could only be described as legendary. Tan Xiao Feng Sheng and Zhu Sheng became something of a legend among Chinese communities in the Bay Area.

Over those fifteen years, Zhu Sheng interviewed a constantly changing range of guests, from governors of California and mayors of San Francisco to ordinary residents. Yet the programme's broadcasting location remained unchanged, as did her approachable, relaxed, and friendly presentation style. Equally consistent was her commitment to careful preparation and refusal to approach interviews casually. Film director Ang Lee particularly admired her ability to connect naturally with people.

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Zhu Sheng possessed a clear understanding of the role of interview programmes: “Chinese-language media in the United States largely involves the secondary transmission of information from mainstream American society. It is not simply translation, but interpretation of information from the perspective of Chinese people.” She believed that becoming a genuine friend to the Chinese community required discussing subjects closely connected to people's lives, understanding their experiences and emotions, and approaching conversations in a relaxed, informal manner.

“Every listener is my friend. Although we have never met, and many may not even know who I am, we communicate and converse every day.” After explaining this calmly, Zhu Sheng suddenly burst into hearty laughter: “I am the person from Hubei with the most friends I have never met in the Bay Area.”

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Chapter 4
Voices of the Bay Area: A Record of Interviews (2003–2015)

Zhu Sheng's Tan Xiao Feng Sheng programme produced a substantial collection of valuable interviews, which also documented the changing character of the Chinese community in the San Francisco Bay Area over different periods.

On 30 April 2003, Zhu Sheng conducted a live interview with Yu Xue, one of the founders of Silicon Valley Women, introducing a Mother's Day essay competition organised by the association. During the interview, Zhu displayed her characteristic relaxed and humorous presentation style, engaging her guest in a discussion about the organisation's purpose, membership, and activities.

On 26 October 2007, she conducted an exclusive interview with the “Daughter of the Yellow River,” who had established a high-end fashion brand in the United States. The conversation introduced listeners to her personal journey across professional and cultural boundaries.

In June 2012, serving as Programme Manager of Sing Tao Chinese Radio in the United States, Zhu Sheng interviewed a villager named Angdan at a pastoral settlement in Tangke Town, Zoigê County, Sichuan Province. She interacted with

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American listeners in the Tibetan language while describing the new lives of herders following their settlement. The interview crossed several linguistic and cultural boundaries: a broadcaster originally from Hubei communicated in Tibetan with herders in Sichuan's Tibetan regions, bringing accounts of changes and development in those communities to listeners in the United States.

In 2014, she conducted an exclusive interview with Dr. Liu Yang, founder of Suzhou Lianyi Information Technology, discussing his experiences of entrepreneurship overseas.

On 12 May 2015, Zhu Sheng invited a community representative from the office of San Francisco Assessor Carmen Chu onto the Bay Area Hotline programme to explain property assessments and property tax information to listeners. On 19 May, she invited Lin Zhansheng, founder of Silicon Valley Canteen, to introduce the concept behind a crowdfunding-based social platform.

From property tax policies to crowdfunding ventures, and from Tibetan herders to internationally experienced technology entrepreneurs returning to China, Zhu Sheng's interviews covered virtually every aspect of life relevant to Chinese communities in the Bay Area.

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Chapter 5
Honours and Broadcasting Style

Zhu Sheng received the Best Community Interview Programme Award from New California Media (NCM). Presented by an American mainstream media organisation, the award formally recognised her longstanding dedication to Chinese-language community interview programmes.

Her broadcasting style carried a distinctive personal signature. One colleague remarked: “Perhaps it was because her laughter was so hearty, uninhibited, and infectious, but in our otherwise quiet office building, Zhu Sheng's laughter seemed to have no volume limit whatsoever.” This openness and natural exuberance enabled her to establish trust quickly with interview guests and gave listeners an unusual sense of sincerity.

Her working methods also reflected the experiences of first-generation immigrants building careers overseas. She performed multiple roles simultaneously, managing everything from programme planning to broadcasting. This self-sufficient approach to media production was common within the Chinese-language media industry in the United States, but Zhu Sheng maintained it consistently for fifteen years.

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Chapter 6
Concluding Reflections: Laughter and Bridges

Zhu Sheng's life can be summarised through her own words: “I am the person from Hubei with the most friends I have never met in the Bay Area.”

From a student in the Department of Ideological and Political Education at Hubei University to a postgraduate student in Communication Studies at San Francisco State University; from an intern at Sing Tao Daily to a founding broadcaster of Sing Tao Chinese Radio; and from the host of Tan Xiao Feng Sheng to a familiar voice on Bay Area Hotline, Zhu Sheng spent fifteen years building bridges through conversation within the Chinese community of the San Francisco Bay Area. Her interviews connected governors of California and Tibetan herders, film director Ang Lee and members of Silicon Valley Women, bringing people from widely different backgrounds into a shared space of dialogue.

Her laughter became her trademark, her preparation remained meticulous, and her manner was consistently warm and approachable. Through a programme that continued for fifteen years, she provided countless “friends she had never met” with a reassuring and familiar voice, carried across the mist-covered shores of the eastern Pacific.

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