

TRENDING: Spiritual Mastermind Deepak Chopra On How to Create an ...

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FROM SIGHTLESS TO VISIONARY, DR. MING WANG IS ONE UNSTOPPABLE IMMIGRANT

Posted by Lacey Johnson | May 26, 2017 | Diversity, Empowerment, Faith, Spotlight | 0  | 



In the darkest days of his life, renowned ophthalmologist, scientist and founder of Wang Vision Institute in Nashville, Tenn., Dr. Ming Wang, was a 14-year-old boy trapped in the Chinese Cultural Revolution. He never imagined – in his wildest dreams – that he would one day immigrate to the United States and later create jobs for Americans.

This grim period was defined by the Chinese government forcing Wang to abruptly slam the books on his high school education. Because of



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Gigi Butler
"Off the
Rack" Part

this, he began waking hours before the sun rose each morning – filling the cold blackness with sonorous melodies from his erhu (chinese violin). His fingers maneuvered across its strings until rendered numb, swollen and bleeding.

His were never songs of pleasure and solace, sadly; instead, they were of sombering and sightless desperation. Becoming a professional musician was his only hope of being spared the devastating fate of deportation and, thus, a life sentence of hard labor and abject poverty.

Wang practiced his violin compulsively for 15 hours a day, curiously drawn to the music of blind composer A-bin – as though pouring his painful uncertainty into those notes and allowing the instrument’s vibrato to resonate as his heart’s cry. “I connected with A-bin’s music emotionally because, much like the composer could not see physically, I could not see any future at all,” said Wang.

Through every bow and strum, there amplified a deeply-held desire to one day dedicate his life to helping those confined to a life of darkness be granted the deliverance of sight.

Although his musical pursuits did not continue, the internal experience of that shadowed period would resound throughout his personal ambitions for decades into the future. Wang passionately ached to study medicine; even doing so privately and illegally while under the constraints of the government. And, he was determined to fulfill this unmet desire.

Once the revolution ended and Wang was permitted to finish high school and attend college, the whims of fate tuned to the vibration of his dreams, granting him an opportunity to impress a visiting professor from America. This led to him being offered a paid teaching

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assistantship with the University of Maryland in 1982, where he would earn his graduate degree in laser physics.

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But, his story would not become an unwavering anthem of celebration and victory from there. Further emotional hardships, loneliness and periods of adjustment would threaten to consume him.

“In my waking hours, I was in America studying, attending and teaching classes, and taking myself to the movies in order to learn the language and culture. But, every night in my dreams, I was always back home in China,” confessed Wang. “It was like living two lives.”

Although the early days of transition were difficult, he held tightly to his mission – a young man determined to further his education and “realize the American dream,” which – for Wang – meant devoting his life’s work to providing the visually impaired the luxury of illuminating their connection with the world.

Wang pushed forward, earning postgraduate degrees from Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (magna cum laude).

Since, he has built a remarkable career spanning more than two decades. Wang has performed more than 55,000 successful eye reconstructive surgeries (an approximate 4,000 of them having been on the eyes of fellow doctors), has taught 3D LASIK and cataract correction seminars and privately trained thousands of other surgeons all across the globe. Most astoundingly, he founded a nonprofit – helping countless blind orphan children see the world for the first time.

The aforementioned are only a fraction of his personal and professional accomplishments, yet the energy and tenacity sustaining



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his ambitions will not be taking a bow anytime soon. Rather, his drive is only increasing in volume and expanding its presence into yet another endeavor.

After a 15-year affiliation with Aier Eye Hospital – a rapidly-growing Chinese eye hospital chain, currently operating 154 hospitals in China and dominating 10 percent of the country’s eye care market – Wang decided to merge his already-successful practice, Wang Vision Institute, with the chain and launch a U.S. operation: Aier-USA.

“This is a unique project connecting two countries. For China, it is a huge investment opportunity which will improve education and technology for doctors. For America, this means Chinese money will be used to improve the U.S. economy by creating a huge number of jobs,” said Wang.

Though the financial investment will come from China, 100 percent of

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the workforce of Aier-USA will be American citizens – employing doctors, nurses, technicians, administrative and support staff.

Wang echoes an immense sentiment of pride to be the one heading the effort: “As a minority and an immigrant, I cannot imagine any better accomplishment than creating quality jobs for the people of my adopted country – a country I have come to truly love.”

When asked how many clinics were being planned for the Aier-USA project, Wang was not yet certain. Although acquisitions are being considered and planned for 2018, he warns that Aier’s growth in the U.S., while powerful, will not necessarily be resemblant of its trend in China.

“For one, not only are the countries’ governments different, but the healthcare regulations and eye care markets are different,” said Wang. “Also, the room for growth in China is much broader than it is in the U.S.”



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Wang Vision Institute will serve as the flagship and headquarters for all Aier-USA clinics he and his partners plan to gradually build.

Creating a mutually beneficial relationship between the country of his birth and the country of his adoption in order to synergistically improve the economy and further help the visually impaired is a grand culmination of Wang's already-extraordinary journey. "This is taking everything I have done professionally and bringing it to a higher level," he said, proudly.

As our interview was nearing its conclusion, I asked Wang why, in light of him having already achieved a level of prosperity many of his colleagues may never realize, he remains so driven and unstoppable in his efforts to continue being personally responsible for more and more eyes realizing the experience of sight.

He paused for a moment, glancing upward at the row of framed newspaper features, degrees and awards lining the walls of his office. With a blend of caution and vulnerability, he replied, "I think it is because, although my suffering was not physical, I remember well the hopeless feeling of being in darkness. I call upon that often, and am driven by it. In some ways, I am rescuing myself over and over again through my work."

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