

Richard Dong

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My name is Richard Dong. I'm Chinese and I'm from China. In 1999, I came to Canada.

On leaving China

In 1991, I left China. First I went to Europe and I traveled to many countries including Russia, Hungary, ex-Yugoslavia, etc. [01:00:37]. Then I went to Italy and worked there for eight years. After eight years in Italy, I found that the immigration system in Europe is not very good. It's difficult to establish an immigrant life. So I decided to come to Canada [01:00:59]. So in January of 1999, with my wife, we came to Canada.

Choosing Canada

I heard about a lot about Canada, Canada's system, the equality, the system for the immigrants is much better than the other countries. So we did some study, we did some research [01:01:29]. I found that it was good and we could have a good future. So this is why we came to Canada.

For the medical profession, every country has different laws. In Europe, it is difficult to have a degree recognized so it is not easy to establish yourself [01:01:56]. We had some difficulty just opening an acupuncture studio. So then after a year or so, I decided to leave Europe to come to Canada. We knew the North American system is much better for immigrants, but here, in Canada, the law is much different. It is more open for immigrants [01:02:31]. Here we have more opportunities for everyone. Our democratic system gives newcomers the chance to establish their lives. After we came here four, five years, most immigrants I saw, including my friends, were Chinese [01:02:59]. And I saw many immigrants of other nationalities, including Italian people, established in Canada very well.

The Canadian Experience

In the beginning when I came here, I didn't know anybody in Toronto. I got to know a lot of Italian people at the Italian Community Center [01:03:28]. I could go there on Sunday, go to the coffee bar, drink a coffee and watch the Italian soccer game on TV. Some often say hi, but they talk to me in Italian. They think I don't understand Italian and say "If you're not understanding, why do you come here and watch the Italian soccer game?" When I heard that, sometimes I was a little bit, not upset, but I'm feeling this is not nice because you don't know I can speak Italian [01:04:05]. So I said "My Italian might not be as good as yours, but I know much more about soccer than you!" In the beginning, working with the Italian community, I found that many, many Italian senior people, they are very happy that I can work with them in my profession. They just say, "Oh, our community, we really need you [01:04:30]. We have many senior

people.” They have a lot of health problems and they really like having someone in my profession who can speak Italian and work with them. They are very happy actually. And I started, in the beginning, working with the Italian community and many, many Italian people came to me and to tell me how my work helps them. They helped me to establish myself and [01:05:05] they introduced me to CHIN Radio.

Dr. Dong became a regular health contributor on CHIN Radio in 2000, serving Toronto’s Italian language community.

Advice to Newcomers

I have been here almost 14 years. I saw a lot of the newcomers [01:05:29]. Canada is the best country for newcomers and for immigrants. After a few years, I saw that most newcomers can establish their lives very well. In the beginning, one year, two years; two, three years it may be difficult, but after a few years, the majority can have a good life [01:05:57]. I would suggest to the newcomer, in the beginning, just take it easy, relax. Don't be rushed. It takes time. You can have your chance. You can have your opportunity and you can have a good future in Canada [01:06:20].

Sharing Stories

With my own experience, if I can help some newcomer, one or two, if they hear of my history, if it helps them feel better, just feeling more positive in the future and gives them hope. If they can start to change the way to thinking, they can become more positive and open-minded and find a new job or find new friends. They can change their life in the future [01:07:00]. If my personal history can help some people, that is my great hope, because many people when they came to Canada, don't know how to establish their life and how to start a new life in Canada [01:07:25]. They cannot find the way, they cannot find the key. To share my personal experience and to let the newcomer to know Canada is the greatest country for the immigrant. You know, just take it easy with time. Everyone can establish themselves very well [01:07:54].

[End of recorded material]

Dr. Richard Dong practices acupuncture in Toronto and has been featured on OMNI TV and in Canadian Immigrant Magazine.