

THE MEDIA WILL TAKE OFF AGAIN



“

STANDING

Tall

FOR JOURNALISM

SHERRY  
LEE



Veteran Journalist  
**SHERRY LEE**

## ““ PREFACE

*Freedom is the cornerstone of Journalism. Without freedom, a journalist is no different to a caged bird that cannot fly out. In the future, the Hong Kong Journalists Association will actively protect freedom of the press and freedom of speech, enabling the bird to be released, and fly off to present its work to the world.*

To carry out this belief I stand for, I decided to run for the position of chairperson of the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA).

## ““ WHO AM I?

I am a multiple award-winning journalist with nearly 30 years of experience in the media. I was drawn to journalism in 1996 when I first joined Cable TV English channel, Hong Kong Now. It was aired at the CNN channel of Cable TV for local viewers to know what was happening in Hong Kong. I was a general news reporter. In 1998, I joined the Hong Kong Standard as its features writer. Two years later, in 2000, I joined the South China Morning Post as its features writer. In the Post, I built my strength in writing about social issues. A year later, I was promoted to Senior Features Writer.

I value human rights, and put people at my heart in my reporting. It's because of my value on humanity, I won 11 journalism awards, many of which are related to human

rights, during my career as a journalist. In 2001, I won First Prize for the features section of Hong Kong Human Rights Press Awards for my feature "A wall of contention" on the need for election rights of Nepalese villagers in Kam Tin. In 2002, I received the same top prize for a feature on the lack of education for children of ethnic minorities. In 2005 I won the First Prize of feature writing for a body of my work when the Awards were broadened to cover Asia, becoming more competitive with numerous entries from international media such as the International Herald Tribune, BBC, CNN, and Times.

## ““ WHY DO I WANT TO JOIN THE ELECTION?

Being a master's degree graduate of the Journalism and Media Studies Centre of The University of Hong Kong in 2002, I have always been concerned about the development of the media profession and media ethics. I value the importance of integrity in journalism, the ultimate core of journalism that must be protected. I strongly believe that reporters must strive for the pursuit of truth without fear of reprisals, in other words be liberated under press freedom.

Despite being a veteran journalist, the thought of being Chairperson and running the Hong Kong Journalists Association, had never once crossed my mind...until now. Press freedom is the fundamental reason that has prompted me to run for the election of Chairperson. Hong Kong needs the HKJA as a representative voice of Hong Kongers, being a

forefront voice for press freedom, and I hope that by joining the association as its Chairperson, I would be able to contribute my ideas and efforts to strengthen its advocacy for press freedom, which is under threat in Hong Kong.

Resulting from the fear of the national security law, the media is restricted, carrying out self-censorship. Everyday the media runs trivial stories, flocking towards shallow entertainment. The media dares not report the truth that could potentially offend the government, and strays away from investigating sensitive issues related to the livelihoods of Hong Kongers. Media organizations only have a mere surface-level touch of issues that does not go deep to reveal the ugliness of those in positions of power.

## “ WHY DO I WANT TO JOIN THE ELECTION?

The phenomenon of the media running only trivial stories has greatly affected the standards of the local media, and as a result there is a growing audience that is beginning to question the importance and reliability of the news media. This attitude by the media is labeled self-destructive - in

the long term, readers would not bother watching, let alone reading the news, and the market of the media will inevitably shrink. This phenomenon reflected to me that the media has truly lost its direction.

## “ HONG KONG JOURNALISTS ARE NO LONGER EXERCISING THE FOURTH POWER

The situation is disastrous. Not only will media groups lose income, but the media business would simply undergo reduction with the continuum of the drilled practice of self-censorship, hurting the income and future development of journalists. This is only part of the woes. Journalists are unable to perform and write to their full potential because of the tight control by their news organizations that fear the national security law. They simply cannot follow their hearts in writing stories, and that is the core issue destroying the soul of journalism. The media is no longer courageous, something that was once tied strongly to journalism, and it has now lost its mission for society. Under this situation, journalists in Hong Kong are no longer exercising the fourth power to monitor the society, thus crippling its ability to stop problems and better the society.

The absence of the fourth power will result in an imbalance of power in Hong Kong, because government officials and legislators no longer fear public opinion reflected by the media, and they do not need to correct the mistakes and improve. This would directly feed into poor governance which many can argue is already happening. Then what difference does this make Hong Kong to third-world countries with corrupted governments that take zero action?

With that, journalists cannot voice out for the disadvantaged, and injustice would spread to become omnipresent in Hong Kong. With the voice of the media stripped, the livelihood and fairness of Hong Kong would be challenged, and the reputation of Hong Kong would only continue to be shaken by the day, leading to the surging efflux of people with emigration, putting Hong Kong's economy at stake. Journalists also cannot monitor the implementation of the "One country, two systems" constitutional principle, even when it is out of track. The decline of "one country, two systems" will result in the loss of trust in Hong Kong's governance from the outside world.

Evidently, authorities ignoring the need for press freedom would in turn limit the roles of the media, hurting livelihoods, the economy, and governance. It is therefore shallow and foolish for officials and systems to undermine the value of the fourth power, and put journalists under threat. While security of a city is the fundamental cornerstone, the fourth power of the media is equally important for a place to prosper.

## “ WE JOURNALISTS CAN CHANGE FATE

Many believe that with the decline of the media in Hong Kong, it seems that the HKJA, being a representative body of the profession, would likewise be unable to escape fate, claiming that the role of the HKJA would be shrunk to a point that it would eventually die out. However, I believe that if a hurricane is expected to be coming, the situation can be reversed with the proper mindset. Logically, anything can change.

We journalists as leaders of society can change the situation with sheer determination and wisdom. I feel that if we have faith and take the righteous path irrespective of external forces, we would not only be able to save the HKJA from

decline, but resurrect it, change it and allow it to bounce back to a strong organization that shields journalism from deterioration by boosting the standards of journalism, further develop the media industry, and protect press freedom. Our ultimate goal is to turn journalists into the strong watchdogs of society, which would directly enhance governance and livelihoods, bettering Hong Kong.

*If we will it, by faith, we can absolutely achieve this mission.*

*Attached is my bio, which shows you my experience and how my passion for journalism came to be.*



## “ ELECTION PLATFORM

Below is my election platform for the HKJA's Chairperson, which is focused on protecting press freedom, sustaining the HKJA and raising the professional standards of journalism:

### 1 **Safeguard Press Freedom** Enabling the media to exercise its fourth power

I will actively speak out to defend press freedom, and respond to the unjustified suppression of journalists. As an experienced journalist, having won numerous journalism and human rights press awards, I firmly believe that only when Hong Kong's freedom of the press and expression are protected, can the media industry truly speak out for people, defend vulnerable communities, and unleash the media's fourth power to monitor the government and vested interest groups.

### 2 **Sustain the HKJA's Spirit** Enabling its survival

In the coming year, I will strive to raise funds and social support for the HKJA, so that the association can survive and develop in the current state of Hong Kong. I will actively promote the work and social functions of the HKJA in the media industry, to expand the members of the HKJA community to further strengthen the representation and power of the association. I will adhere to the original work of the HKJA, maintain its characteristics, and follow the unchanging impartial spirit of the association, so that it can speak up for our society.

### 3 **Raising the Professional Standards** For positive development of the media industry

In the coming year, I will advocate intensively for local media to adhere to objective reporting. We will explore cooperating with local universities to provide journalists with training in objective reporting, thereby improving the standards of the media profession. If the media industry can exhibit professionalism, the Hong Kong government's policies can be enhanced and people-oriented. This will lead to progress in society, and improvements in governance.

## “ CONCLUSION

The above is my election platform, and I believe that my proposed plans are all highly feasible. Once elected, I will propose the above measures to the HKJA committee and work out systems to implement them, bearing in mind that minor enhancements and adjustments would be needed to make them happen.



## “ STANDING TALL FOR JOURNALISM

I had joined Hong Kong Journalists Association in the late 1990s, and I still reminisce about the fond memories I had during my time with the HKJA. I remember the time when I was writing a heartwarming piece about the Macau trip the HKJA organized for us in its magazine, *The Journalist*.

I feel grateful to the protection the HKJA has provided to local journalists over the years, including myself - the equivalent of a guardian angel that watches over Journalism in Hong Kong. Established in 1968, the HKJA, through its advocacy work for press freedom and freedom of expression, had protected numerous local journalists, the media industry, and the public for decades. They are the unsung heroes that I recognize. If I am elected to be the Chairperson, I strive to sustain the good work of the HKJA, and draw even more support from the society to expand the function of the HKJA.

I encourage all members of the HKJA to vote for me. If I am elected as the HKJA Chairperson, I will actively defend the freedom of press and speech in Hong Kong in the coming year, so that the media could be the voice for people. I will guide Hong Kong's media workers to speak up courageously, leading Hong Kong's media industry to walk confidently towards a bright future.

If I am elected, I urge everyone of you to join hands with me in the coming year to jointly defend press freedom, sustain the HKJA and its traditions, and raise Hong Kong media to new levels.

Let us rely on faith and persist for Hong Kong's media. With persistence, we will certainly see the light in darkness and continue to move forward!

# “ SHERRY LEE BIO

Sherry Lee is an experienced journalist who has worked in the media for over two decades. Graduated with a master's degree in Journalism from the University of Hong Kong, Sherry has worked in a variety of electronic and print media, including Cable TV, The Standard and the South China Morning Post. As a previous freelance writer, she has written for global media organizations including The Guardian, Asia Times, ABE Radio, CBC TV, and Singapore's Business Times and Straits Times. An avid writer since childhood, Sherry has published the book "*Hong Kong Past and Present*" packed with the rich history of Hong Kong. One of her articles on social injustice was also published in the Chinese book "Local Bulls and Evil Gentlemen".



Prior to joining the media industry, Sherry worked at the Hong Kong branch of an American television station and was in charge of post-production. In 1996, a friend introduced her to work at Hong Kong Now, an English news channel of Cable TV, as a part-time production assistant. Although this job provided a monthly salary of only HK\$5000, which was one third of her monthly salary at the time, she didn't think twice and immediately agreed to take the job. Till today, Sherry didn't know what drove her to take the job, but what was certain was that she was determined to be a reporter. During her time in Cable TV, Sherry had grown increasingly immersed with the work of reporters, especially captivated by the daringness of journalism. However, after working for around two years, Cable TV closed its English news channel, and with limited experience back then, it wasn't easy to find a job in the media industry.

One day, Sherry found that Hong Kong Standard was hiring a features writer, and she took a leap of faith and applied for the job. The powerful, raw but compassionate art of storytelling unique to her penmanship left a lasting impact on the editor during her interview. She soon received a call and was hired. Sherry recalls that many of her colleagues were shocked that she had managed to secure this highly competitive position. During that same year in 1998, she joined the newspaper as their features writer. At the Standard, Sherry gained a lot of opportunities to sharpen and hone her writing and interview techniques more intensively. She was exposed to numerous social issues deeply rooted in Hong Kong, and naturally, Sherry found that she enjoyed writing about people's stories and social issues. Over time, Sherry formed a writing style that captured the deep and emotional chords of personalism through a distinct manner of directedness and baldness in expression.

In the year 2000, Sherry moved to the South China Morning Post as a features writer, in which she was able to further improve and refine the foundations to her writing. Her articles are often written through the lens of the human eye. With this candid perspective in mind, Sherry places herself in the shoes of the interviewee to fully experience the feelings of what the individual is going through. When reading an article by Sherry, readers are able to feel as if they too have personally experienced the situation. They're able to understand and know the interviewee, experiencing the joys and sorrows of the person. Her articles have the power to stir the readers' souls, allowing them to reflect on social issues, sympathize and take action for often overlooked disadvantaged groups. "My mission as a journalist is to help people," she said in an interview. At that time, her Australian editor often joked "Sherry is the queen for the poor!".

With an unchanging spirit to better society, Sherry has never failed to exhibit an unparalleled level of courage and determination in her eventful career in Journalism. Her numerous achievements include winning the Human Rights Press Awards organized by the Newspaper Society of Hong Kong, and winning the Human Rights Press Awards multiple times, and the SOPA Awards prove just that.

To this day, Sherry's fiery enthusiasm for media work has only grown to become stronger than ever, embarking on her next goal of joining the Hong Kong Journalists Association. She passionately strives to play her part to rebuild and improve Hong Kong's media, enabling the media profession to take off again!



***The HKJA Chairperson Candidate***  
Veteran Journalist | Sherry Lee

***Art and Photography***  
Photographer | Samantha Sin  
Designer | Deon Chan

Email : [sherryopenmedia@gmail.com](mailto:sherryopenmedia@gmail.com)  
Mobile : 61587494