



The
InsightBureau

LIJIA ZHANG

AUTHOR OF "SOCIALISM IS GREAT"
AND "LOTUS"

INTERNATIONAL WRITER & COMMENTATOR

*An inspiring speaker whose life story
reflects the phenomenal changes which
have occurred in*

LIJIA ZHANG

Author of *"Socialism is Great;
a worker's memoir of the New China"*

A spirited memoir by a former Chinese factory worker who grew up in Nanjing, participated in the Tiananmen Square protest and ended up an international journalist.

As a teenager Lijia Zhang worked in a factory producing missiles designed to reach North America, queuing every month to give evidence to the "period police" that she wasn't pregnant. In the oppressive routine of guarded compounds and political meetings, Lijia's disillusionment with "The Glorious Cause" drove her to study English, which strengthened her intellectual independence—from bright, western-style clothes, to organizing the largest demonstration by Nanjing workers in support of the Tiananmen Square protest in 1989. By narrating the changes in her own life, Lijia chronicles the momentous shift in China's economic policy.



Lijia's memoir "Socialism is Great!: A Worker's Memoir of New China" was first published by Atlas and Co. in New York in 2008, and then by Random House in 2009. It a best-seller which has been translated into various languages around the world.

LIJIA ZHANG

Author of an upcoming novel *Lotus*

Lotus is Lijia Zhang's first novel, set in the southern Chinese city of **Shenzhen** – which is infamously known as the 'city of sins'. This is the story of a young sex worker and a photojournalist, torn, like the city itself, between **past traditions and modern desires**. Based on **real facts and characters**, *Lotus* deals with prostitution in China today, which at the same time illustrates **the sexual revolution** that has taken place behind the Great Wall over the last 25 years.

Lotus will be published in early 2017 by Henry Holt and Company



“The reason I wrote the novel is that I have always been fascinated by the subject of prostitution, ever since I learned that my own grandmother was a working girl.”

Today, the vast majority of working girls in China are migrant workers originally from rural China; they are fully educated but ill-prepared for the city life. And because of the Hukou family registration system, job options are very limited. For me, coming from a journalistic background, prostitution is actually a window to see the tensions brought by the reforms.”

LIJIA ZHANG

key facts

Currently ...

- **International Writer and Commentator** on **Social Issues in China** who describes herself as a communicator between China and the World.
- Author of "***Socialism is Great***"
- Her first novel "***Lotus***" on prostitution in China, to be released in 2017.
- A professional **speaker** and **moderator** about **contemporary China** at international conferences
- Delivers **lectures at universities** around the world.
- Voted one of the "40 Beijing Heroes" by TimeOut Beijing, 2008
- Subject of a **BBC documentary**, *Peschardt's People*, May 2009.
- Recipient of the prestigious **International Writer's Program**, University of Iowa, sponsored by the US State Department, 2009
- Holds a **Masters degree** in Creative and Life Writing at Goldsmiths College, **University of London**

Flies from **Beijing** and speaks to business audiences around the world, addressing conferences, client forums and management meetings

"An inspiring example of promoting the understanding between China and Britain."

Tony Blair, then UK Prime Minister during a State Visit to China in 2008



Sample speaking topics:

Socialism is Great! With insight and humour, Lijia tells about her coming of age, illustrating from where China has come and its pressing issues.

A Frog in a Well: Taking a famous Chinese story by the ancient philosopher Zhuangzhi, she talks about the Frog, trapped in a well, unable to see the great world beyond the patch of sky above, yet finding the inspiration to make the jump.

China's Cultural Evolution: How changing values, the revival of Confucian ideology, the return of religion and a new role for women combines to reshape China's society.

The Changing Role of Women in China: Stories that illustrate the changes Chinese women have gone through, what the Chinese Communist Party did for women and the setbacks brought by recent reforms.

LIJIA ZHANG

Her Inspiring Journey

Lijia has a remarkable story to tell – how a **rocket factory girl turned writer** and international **journalist and social commentator**. Born in 1964 and raised on the banks of the Yangtze River, she was **dragged out of school** at 16 to work at a factory that produced inter-continental missiles. Her **escape route was teaching herself English**, and after leaving for England in 1990, **she dared to pursue her childhood dream**; journalism. Back in China, she started a career as an assistant to foreign journalists before **becoming a journalist** of her own right, often featuring on very **human stories about the plight of China's "little people"**.

Today, she is regularly published in *South China Morning Post*, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, *Japan Times*, *The Independent*, *The Observer*, *Newsweek* and *The New York Times*. She gained wide acclaim for her English-language memoir, **"Socialism is Great!"** chronicling her experience at the rocket factory and **her subsequent journey** from a worker to a prominent social commentator. And indeed, this journey **reflects the great transformation undergone by China** itself. Lijia is asked to speak about her experiences and is both **an inspiration to people**, especially **women, to follow their dreams**, and also provides **a fascinating look at how China has developed**.



Useful links for Lijia Zhang :

- TIB Speaker Web Page >> [Go to Webpage](#)
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thought-provoking ▪ dynamic ▪ inspiring



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