

## LUCIE & the FIRST JOINT-UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PROJECT

June Y. Mei, Ph.D.

UCLA's Asian American Studies Center's "Toisan Project" was--if not the first, at least one of the earliest (late 1970's)--research projects undertaken jointly by an American and a mainland Chinese university (Zhongshan University in Guangzhou. More significantly, this joint research effort was to involve fieldwork and interviews in China.

Our research focus was the impact of emigration on the home communities of the emigrants and covered many very different aspects of this emigration, e.g. the outflow of so many young men and its sociological consequences; the absorption of English words brought back by emigrees into Toisan dialect; how the money remitted home from the US was used, etc.

We lived for 3 months in a prewar house built by an emigrant (rented by us) and became part of the local community.

The work involved both taped oral interviews and collecting materials such as copies of the answers emigrants memorized in order to pose as "paper sons."

The one very funny personal memory I have of Lucie from this period is that she was really afraid of live chickens, but often we had to interview people in their homes, where chickens ran freely all around us. Ever the trouper, Lucie would curl up onto her chair whenever a chicken came near, but continued the interview without missing a beat!

**June Y. Mei, Ph.D. 梅纘月**

Interpreter & Consultant

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