

I Miss Lucie ...
Renqiu Yu, Ph. D.

I miss Lucie. It was Lucie who introduced me to American culture and society, and it was Lucie who brought me to the United States in 1980, exactly thirty years ago.

I met Lucie in Guangzhou, when she and June Mei came to my Alma Mater, Sun Yat-sen University, to initiate one of the earliest academic exchange programs between the United States and China. That was in the fall of 1979, only a few months after the normalization of the diplomatic relationship between the two countries.

At that time I was a young graduate student and I was selected by my university to join the UCLA-Sun Yat-sen University research team to conduct field work in Taishan County in Pearl River Delta. The head of the Team was Lucie, of course. We spoke in Chinese. But soon Lucie gave me English articles and books to read after she found out that I could translate English documents - such as her proposal for the collaborative research project - into Chinese. After we finished the field work in Taishan and returned to Guangzhou, in early 1980, Lucie announced to me that she had obtained the permission from my university to make me an exchange student at UCLA, and she would help me get financial aid.

I was surprised, grateful, and moved. I was very impressed by Lucie's affection and her efficiency, and I was so grateful for her confidence in me. After more than two decades of total isolation from each other, many people in China as well as in America had reservations about a Chinese history student's ability to succeed in an American graduate school. UCLA did not accept any of the credits that I earned at the graduate school of Sun Yat-sen University. Many of my professors and friends advised me finish my MA program in China first.

Lucie never express any doubt that I would eventually succeed. After she told me her decision to help me to come to UCLA, she did not say much but keep working to make it happen: she sent me the application forms after she returned to Los Angeles, and she called the Chinese Embassy to help me get necessary documents when she learned that I had trouble with the Educational bureaucracy in Beijing.

After I came to America in September 1980, Lucie provided me very generous help, encouragement, and guidance. I completed the MA program in Asian American Studies at UCLA in 1982.

I will remember Lucie, and I will always miss her. It was Lucie's confidence in me that sustained me in those difficult early years in America and later inspired me to move up in my professional career. I remain forever grateful to her for her help and support.

Renqiu Yu, Ph. D.
Professor of History
Director, Asian Studies Program
Purchase College - State University of New York
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