

HSIA, Shu Ting (Liu). September 25, 1903–August 16, 1980.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN (BS 1926, MS 1927, PhD 1930).

Shu Ting Liu was born in Beijing, China, the eldest of several children of Shien-Ying Chen and Te-Yuang Liu. In 1925 her father was described as a railroad engineer. One of her siblings was a foreign minister in the Taiwan government until after 1967.

Apparently her precollege schooling, and possibly some university education, was obtained in Beijing before she came to the United States. It appears that she entered the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in 1923 and remained through August 1929. In 1923 she listed as guardian Mrs. Heking, a former dean of Peking University, who at the time was living in Ann Arbor. Shu Ting Liu attended Michigan as a holder of a Barbour Scholarship for Oriental Women, from a scholarship program funded by Levi L. Barbour and established by the university in 1917 for women from Asia who planned to study medicine or education. At the same time, Barbour donated money for the building of the Betsy Barbour dormitory for women, where Liu lived for at least two years as a graduate student. She was a member of the Chinese Students Club at Michigan some years as an undergraduate and graduate student.

Shu Ting Liu earned a bachelor's degree in 1926, a master's degree in 1927, and finished her work for the PhD in August 1929. In 1927 she was paid \$75 to work as an assistant in the electrical engineering department. Despite the title of her PhD dissertation, "Theory of periodic orbits for asteroids of integral types," her degree was in mathematics; her dissertation gave "the construction of periodic solutions of the differential equations for the plane motion of an infinitesimal body subject to the attraction of Jupiter and the Sun." The doctorate was conferred in March 1930.

Liu was a substitute instructor for an ill faculty member for two months in 1929 at Colorado College in Colorado Springs. In December 1929, Liu married Pin Fang (also "Pinfang") Hsia (1902–1970) in Colorado Springs. Hsia, born in Anhui Province in eastern China, attended Tsinghua University in Beijing before coming to the United States as a Chung Hua scholar from Beijing and graduating from Colorado College and then from the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration in about 1929.

In April 1930, the Hsias were living in Detroit, Michigan, where he was working with stocks and bonds. That summer they returned to China. In November 1930, Shu Ting Liu Hsia reported to the Michigan alumni office that she was a teacher in Shanghai College. On November 24, 1931, Yujen Edward, the first of their two children, was born in Shanghai. Their daughter, Lucia, was born June 9, 1937, also in Shanghai. Soon thereafter the family escaped to Hong Kong, presumably at the time of the Battle of Shanghai, which began in August 1937. A short article in the *Colorado College Alumni News* in December 1941 notes, "Mr. and Mrs. Hsia lost all their household furnishings . . . in a raid by the Japanese before the couple returned to the United States" (Colorado College Archives).

In August 1939, the Hsia family arrived in the United States, where they remained until 1946. During that period Pinfang Hsia was manager of the Bank of China in New York. In 1944, Shu Ting Hsia reported that, in addition to caring for her children, she was also engaged in teaching. She was listed as a temporary,

part-time instructor at Hunter College for the academic year 1944–45. In 1944 her husband went to Canada to set up a branch office.

In 1946 Pinfang Hsia was transferred to the branch in London, where he was resident manager of the Bank of China and was responsible for major expansion into Europe. Shu Ting Hsia and Lucia returned to New York in 1950 after the government changed in China. Yujen Edward Hsia was, at the time, a student at Oxford University. Lucia Hsia attended Wells College and married in 1959; she later divorced. Pinfang Hsia stayed on in London until the legal question of bank ownership was resolved. He later became alienated from both the nationalist and Communist headquarters of the Bank of China, submitted his resignation, and returned to New York, where he worked for Magnus Mabee & Reynard, an oil firm, until his retirement.

After Shu Ting Hsia returned to New York, she did some statistical work for the city of New York. Her application for a social security account number in 1957 indicates that she was then working for the New York City Youth Board.

Pinfang Hsia died in New York in December 1970, a year after becoming a US citizen. At the time of his death Y. Edward Hsia was an assistant professor of genetics at Yale University, and Lucia Hsia Chinn was living in San Antonio. Y. Edward Hsia has since retired from the University of Hawaii, where he specialized in pediatrics and medical genetics; Lucia Chinn died in California in 1995.

In an e-mail to one of the authors in June 1998, Y. Edward Hsia wrote about his mother: “My mother . . . enjoyed working in mathematics, and I believe she enjoyed teaching, but her primary commitment must have been to establish a home for her family, which prevented her from pursuing a more formal career in mathematics. Interestingly, she was always interested in contract or tournament bridge and was trying to become a master after she retired.” He continued, “My mother was a rare example in her time of someone with a fairly classical Chinese upbringing – as a woman – who took the exceptional course of venturing to [the] USA for higher education, and was able to win a scholarship and earn a doctorate. She remained, however, a little uncomfortable with American mores and idiom.”

After her retirement Shu Ting Liu Hsia moved to New Haven, Connecticut. Having been in ill health for some time, she died, possibly from aplastic anemia, at age seventy-six in West Haven, Connecticut, in 1980. In 1981 a gift of \$8000 was made to the University of Michigan from the estate of Shu Ting Liu Hsia. A share of this was to augment the Barbour scholarship fund, “as an expression of [her] gratitude for the scholarship given to [her]” (University of Michigan Alumni Records Office).

Dissertation:

1929 [Lui, S. T.] Theory of periodic orbits for asteroids of integral types. PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, directed by Louis Allen Hopkins. Typescript. PhD 1930.

Other sources: application for social security account number 1957; private communication with Yujen Edward Hsia, June 18, 1998; University of Michigan Alumni Records Office; communications with Colorado College Archives, University of Michigan Archives and Records Program, and with Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; “Pinfang Hsia, 68, Bank of China Aide,” (Obituary) *New York Times*, 23 Dec 1970; US Census 1930 MI; SSDI.