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She was the first to discover Ang Lee's directorial talent. She introduced actresses Gong Li, Joan Chen and Vivian Wu to Hollywood, assisted China Central Television to cover the Oscars for the first time and helped the Shanghai International Film Festival to invite prestigious international jury members.

For decades, she personally interviewed a host of Hollywood stars and introduced Western films to Chinese audiences. Some say that without Lu, the prosperity of the Chinese film industry might have been delayed by years.

In the late 1970s, Lu gradually focused on cultural exchanges between China and the US. She indigenized the Western plays of "The Gin Game" and "Plaza Suite," which were then performed by the Beijing People's Art Theater. She made three trips to China's Tibet Autonomous Region to produce the TV series "The Lost Kingdom of Guge," which shows the world the really beautiful area of China.

Lu and her fellow Peking Opera enthusiasts also established the Luo Anqi Chinese Opera Club and gave performances and lectures on Chinese culture at US universities. She translated popular Chinese plays into a book, "The Romance of the Jade Bracelet and Other Chinese Operas," which was very well received. She recently put a reprint of the book on her agenda with some new elements, hoping to attract more young Americans to appreciate traditional Chinese culture.

'Passionate about the future'

Lu's performances have spanned more than half a

century and covered both the Eastern and Western hemispheres. She has participated in more than 300 films, TV shows, stage plays and dramas, earning numerous awards and honors. Despite her past successes, she continues to look eagerly for good scripts and roles.

Lu now lives with her daughter Loretta in Los Angeles, and spends her time cultivating herself and translating scripts. She said her current goal is to finish translating Tracy Letts' play "August: Osage County" and stage it in theaters in China.

"Occasionally, I receive invitations to perform in plays, cinema and TV programs, which brings me great joy to continue working," Lu added. "I remain passionate about the future, and I am eager to keep acting as long as I am able."

She was excited and proud to talk about the development of Chinese cinema.

"The continuous rapid growth of China's film market cannot be achieved without the support of the government and the long-term efforts of Chinese film companies and filmmakers," Lu said.

"I am very optimistic about the future of Chinese cinema and look forward to young Chinese filmmakers taking their achievements to the world. I hope that young people will work hard and win for China," she added.

"The Shanghai International Film Festival is also coming, and I look forward to more surprises that this year's festival will give us."

Wang Xincan is a PhD student at the Shanghai Film Academy of Shanghai University and a research scholar at Dartmouth College in the US.

THE 96-year-old Chinese-American actress Lisa Lu, or Lu Yan, is widely known as the "Light of China" for her remarkable performances in cinema, theater and cultural exchanges. The versatile actress has portrayed a number of impressive roles on the big screen, garnered many film awards and introduced many other talented Chinese film professionals to the world.

In a recent exclusive interview with Shanghai Daily, the elegant and amiable artist talked about her deep love of Shanghai, the cultural roots she treasured in the brilliant traditional culture of China, and her keen faith in the younger generations of Chinese filmmakers and actors.

Lu also wrote a sincere message in both English and Chinese to our readers, such as "Arts illuminate life. Loving cinema. Loving Shanghai."

"艺苑之燕，海天任飞" — this calligraphy which translates as "the swallow of art soars freely in the sky" hangs in Lu's living room in Los Angeles, and perfectly captures her busy and fruitful life. Despite her advanced age as she approaches 100, one cannot detect any hint of weariness in her, only youthful energies and hopeful anticipation for more great works in her future.

To Shanghai Daily Readers:

艺术点亮生活

爱电影 爱上海

An Illuminate Life

Loving cinema

Loving Shanghai

卢燕 Lisa Lu

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Lu's sincere message for Shanghai Daily readers



Lu was described as a combination of "beauty, glamor, opulence and majesty." — Ti Gong