

Joanna (Xueyao) Liang

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From Lost to Found in Translation,

Before I departed for the U.S., I constantly pictured myself the moment I land on the country. That excitement led to some unrealistic thought such as picturing myself walking out the plane and kiss on the ground. Despite all the concerns that poured into my head by my parents, I never felt so certain and prepared for this significant chapter of my life. After all the imagination and curiosity, I left my sheltered home, carried my big suitcase and walked into the Departure Gate waving to my proud parents. I teared up when I said “Zaijian” to my mom (“goodbye” in Chinese). Then the sadness from the sent off moment soon replaced by hopes and promises. After fourteen hours of flying, I finally arrived in the land of freedom and opportunity. Yet, the reality of a new culture and language soon hit me like a storm. The transformation from being a dragon to a Blue Hen has been filled with surprises, sadness, laughter, confusions, understanding and finally embracing.

The first storm that hit me took place in Saladworks on main street. I figured I wouldn't need to say much in the place like this. I kept my order simple as I was afraid of speaking English. When I finished my order, the lady looked at me and asked “Dressing?”. Right away I looked at my clothes, then I realized this might not be what she meant...it was so bizarre for someone to ask about my “dressing” when I simply wanted to purchase a salad. Thus I just nodded. “Dressing???” The lady finally had to point her finger to the dressing bars. Then she tried again, “Now here, point to me which one you want?” Despite my strong feeling of embarrassment, I learned my first new word “salad dressing”.

Ever since the “Dressing” incident, I became very aware of every word I hear from people. I often ask my American classmates “So why do you say this?” or “Why do you call it that way?” Most of the time they were not able to provide an answer as English to them is so natural. One time a girl in my World History class asked if I wanted to “Hang out” sometime. I was beyond confused since it was not the first time I ever heard Americans use this term to each other. I finally asked her “Why do people here like hanging themselves so much and like to do it with someone else? What fun is that?”. She immediately burst into laughter and explained to me what the term really means. With laughter, explanation and understanding, I survived my second storm.

Months passed, my world has been broadened as never before. I came to realize so many stereotypes I had on Americans are not true. For example, Americans don’t eat hamburgers or steaks every day and there are various of dining options on and off campus. What I impressed the most with students at UD is everyone I meet has great sense of curiosity towards my country and culture. At the beginning I felt quite shock by so many American students asked me questions like “Do you have McDonalds in China?” They were even more shocked with my answer “Oh yeah, it also has 24 hours’ home delivery.”

My hometown Guangzhou is known for its eating culture. One of our famous dim-sum dishes is chicken feet. It apparently isn’t an appealing dish to my American friends. Chicken feet is understandably considered something “disgusting” in here. The first time they learned about the dish was rather amusing. One of my classmates invited me and few other students to her house for dinner. She asked “Would you guys like chicken fingers for dinner?” I, along with the other American girls said “sounds great!”. No one at the moment would have thought what I was picturing in my mind. When I heard “chicken finger”, I immediately thought it was the delicious

chicken feet. I was quite impressed by my classmates' taste since I did not think most Americans could stand eating chicken feet. When I walked to the dinner table and saw a pile of yellow strips, I once again realized I had wrongly interpreted the word. Everyone laughed when I explained to them what I was thinking. That night, we talked and laughed for hours on all the things I misinterpreted when I arrived this country. I also surprised by how much I didn't know about "my culture" when the students asked me something like "Duck sauce" or "Fortune cookies". When they told me there is always a little note within the fortune cookies, with message of good luck or some positive sayings, I looked so terrified and they had to ask if I was feeling OK. I signed heavily and said "Oh no...when I went to the Chinese restaurant I ate the whole thing." With endless laughter and stories, I felt closer to these wonderful students who I now pleased to call them my friends. I also felt closer to this culture and slowly become a Chinese Blue Hen.

The journey of being a Blue Hen has been the greatest blessing in my life. From knowing nothing about the state of Delaware to now becoming a die-hard fan of Wawa and Brew Haha. From constant struggle of adjusting cultural and language differences to holding lengthy conversation with professors and friends. This has been a journey filled with every day surprises. I once lost in this culture and missed home constantly, yet I found in opening myself and allow others to learn from me, as well as I learn from them. The experience has enriched my life. I am now proudly sleep in my UD pajamas and call myself a real "Blue Hen".