

These are the words passed out in two brochures, one at the church meeting, and the other at the graveside of Sister Lee.

An Interview with Sister Lee

The following is a translation of an excerpt of an interview with Sister Lee by the Taiwan Academia Historica (the government-operated Taiwan Historical Society) in 2010 and published in Chinese in December of that year. The first part of the excerpt gives a detailed description of her life.

A. Anqing, Lanzhou, Beijing, and Xuzhou

Pao-Ye Lee (Sister Lee) was born in Anqing, Anhui Province—a cultural, historic city—on November 8, 1917. She completed her education step by step by first attending the elementary school affiliated with the local Women’s Normal College for six years and then the junior high school for three years. After graduating from the teachers’ department of Anhui Provincial Women’s High School, she began to teach at an elementary school. A year later, while the Sino-Japanese War was in full swing, Sister Lee fled with her second eldest brother to the inland provinces, passing through Hankou and Chengdu and ending up in Jiuquan, Gansu Province. For the sake of developing the basic education in the remote provinces, the Board of Trustees of Sino-British Gengkuang established the Hexi Middle School in the northwest region. Sister Lee’s brother worked as a director in the affiliated elementary school. Through this connection Sister Lee was also hired to teach in the same elementary school and kindergarten. In 1943 Sister Lee was admitted into the department of education at the Beijing Normal University, which had been relocated to Lanzhou. Three years later, after China won the Sino-Japanese War, she and a few classmates reported to the original school in Beijing, and she completed her last year in Beijing. She received a diploma from Beijing Normal University.

During the four years in college Sister Lee had a good friend and classmate, Fengying Nan (Miss Nan), who also had left her hometown and lived in the school dormitory. Like Sister Lee, she taught for a few years before going to college. Miss Nan, being a very pious Christian, preached the gospel to Sister Lee and led her to the Lord. After graduating from Beijing Normal University, Miss Nan was hired to be the dean of a school in Xuzhou. By Miss Nan’s invitation, Sister Lee also went to Xuzhou and taught in the same elementary school. Her family could not understand why she, as a college graduate, would want to teach in an elementary school. However, Sister Lee, who was a very simple person, was satisfied in her heart as long as she was able to teach and cultivate useful people for the country, not to mention that she could be with her good friend and go to the Sunday service every week. Recalling those days, Sister Lee said, “I did not understand anything, but I loved the Lord and loved to go to the meetings. I would go wherever there was a revival meeting.”

B. The Old Capital City of Southern Taiwan—a New Beginning

In 1948 she was hired to teach at Tainan Normal College. After going from her hometown, Anqing, to Lanzhou and Xuzhou, she never thought that she would end up in southern Taiwan. In this subtropical, old capital city, everything was different and new to her. Across the street from the school was a chapel, where the pastor spoke Mandarin, and her roommate, a school nurse whose last name was Liu, worshipped in this Mandarin-speaking chapel. Sister Lee went with her to the same chapel. Soon

afterward, Miss Liu married someone in Taipei, and Sister Lee would visit her in Taipei during holidays. Through Miss Liu's introduction, Sister Lee came into contact with the meetings of the local church in Taipei. After she went back to Tainan, she began to meet with the local church there. At that time the brothers and sisters in the church were very earnest in loving the Lord and were zealous in preaching the gospel. Sister Lee felt like "a fish in water." She joined the saints wholeheartedly in their pursuit of the truth. One day a responsible brother in the church in Tainan asked her if she would like to attend the full-time church service training in Taipei. She knew nothing about the training. After some inquiries she found out that the training was intended to help her to study the Bible, serve the Lord, and preach the gospel; she happily agreed to go without any hesitation.

The time of the training was right around the beginning of the school semester. She had to ask Principal Huisun Zhu for a leave of absence of three months. Principal Zhu questioned her out of a good heart what she would do if the position was no longer available when she returned. The young Sister Lee responded in a simple way, saying, "After I return, even if I need to do the laundry for everybody in the school, I can still make a living." Seeing that she was so determined, Principal Zhu approved her request.

C. Participating in the Church Service Training

In 1954 Sister Lee went to Taipei for the church service training. The main speaker of the training was Witness Lee. In addition to the teaching concerning the character of the serving ones and the principles of service, the content also included the study of the entire Old Testament, which could be seen as the initiation of the life-study training conducted later on. Because of the overwhelming response of the trainees, three months later Mr. Lee continued to conduct another study of the New Testament. During the three months of the life-study training of the Old Testament, Sister Lee felt that she had found the most precious thing. When she learned that there would be another life-study training on the New Testament, she immediately submitted her resignation to the school and remained in Taipei for three more months of training. Two terms of solid training on the Bible and the principles of service uplifted her spiritual life. Among hundreds of trainees, she was one of the younger and less experienced ones. Her background of diligent work in her school caused her to gladly embrace the new challenge. Several decades later she would recall those days of rigorous training and could not hide the joy that was in her heart.

D. Learning to Serve Initially

After the training concluded, she was getting ready to return to Tainan. After all, Tainan was her "hometown" (even though it is hard to count how many hometowns she had had). However, an elder in Taipei encouraged her to stay in Taipei to learn to serve. In her prayer she felt, "Since I am consecrated to the Lord, and there is such an opportunity to learn more, I should stay." She decided to stay in Taipei and began to serve the college students and high school students in hall three of the church in Taipei on Hoping East Road. The year was 1955. Among the many full-time serving ones in the church in Taipei, she was the youngest and the least experienced one. This caused her to become very exercised, and she worked diligently and responsibly.

E. An Unexpected Marriage

The first wife of Witness Lee, Rong-Xiang Lee, died of illness in 1959, leaving

eight children behind, with the youngest daughter being only in elementary school. Concerned that Brother Lee had to travel extensively for the churches and that it was unrealistic for him to take care of his children at the same time, the senior co-workers felt that they should find him a wife to relieve him of his family burdens so that there would be no setback to the flourishing work in both Taiwan and the Philippines. Two senior co-workers, after much consideration and fellowship, concurred that Sister Lee was the best candidate. They proposed the marriage to her. She was shocked when she heard it, because marriage was something very distant to her. She was then free and unoccupied. She told the two brothers honestly that she had to check with her own brother first, and she also wanted to consult with some older sisters before she would reply. At that time she was very busy with the hospitality service in the church. That evening Sister Ma, an older sister, came to visit her. Sister Lee was very happy within, because she wanted very much to talk with this sister regarding the marriage proposal. Upon confirmation from the older co-workers and the sister, she and Brother Lee had their first meeting. That day Brother Lee did not speak much; he only briefly introduced his family and expressed his sincerity, saying, "My family is simple: The older children have grown up. Only two younger daughters are still living with us. If someone can be my help in my service, that would be wonderful." Sister Lee also vaguely remembered that she did not say much. Brother Lee then said, "Can we pray together?" The two of them bowed their heads and prayed. On January 8, 1960, Brother Lee and Sister Lee were engaged. They were married on February 2. Brother Lee was fifty-five years old, and Sister Lee was forty-two years old. For the next thirty-seven years and four months, the two served and supported each other.

F. Learning Everything from the Start in the New Family Life

Sister Lee had lived in a school dormitory since the seventh grade. After graduation she also lived in the school where she taught. Except for the few days during winter and summer breaks when she went home, she hardly had any family life. While teaching at Tainan Normal College and even after attending the training in the church in Taipei, she always lived in the corporate living and never had the experience of cooking in the kitchen.

It was not until they moved to the United States in 1963 that Sister Lee took over the cooking in the kitchen completely. She said, "When I was young, I was a student; after I grew up, I was a teacher. I did not have to cook at all. After I was married and entered into the family life, I began to learn to cook. Fortunately, Brother Lee was never picky about his food and never made it difficult for me. He knew that I was not good at it, so whatever I cooked, he would eat. When we lived in Taiwan, I could always get help from someone. After we moved to the United States, whenever he had time, he would help me, such as doing the dishes, and he always did a good job." When Sister Lee mentioned how they lived in a small apartment when they first came to the States, her eyes beamed with love: "I learned to do all the house chores day by day, little by little. One time he saw me mixing flour. I looked exhausted because I was not good at it, so he made up a story to entertain me. He said, 'Once upon a time there was a man who was mixing flour in a washbasin. When the lump was too dry, he added more water. When there was too much water, he added more flour. In this

way he kept adding and adding and adding until the lump filled up the whole washbasin.’ Then he walked away laughing.”

G. A Close-up View of Brother Lee—Regularity

Sister Lee briefly spoke about how regular Brother Lee was in his living: “Over the years he built up a good habit in his living. Every morning he woke up early. In order not to wake others up, he remained in bed to contemplate on the Lord and on the word of the Lord. That was the most precious time between him and the Lord. Many spiritual revelations and light were gained from the Lord during this period of time. Around six o’clock he rose up to wash himself, make his bed, and tidy up the room. He was always properly dressed when he walked out of the bedroom. From there he went into the bookroom to have morning revival, read the Bible, and pray. He took his meals at set times. He ate breakfast at eight o’clock and then started his work without any waste of time. If there is one word that describes Brother Lee’s living, it is regular.” Sister Lee recalled that after Brother Lee started the Life-study training of the New Testament twice a year in 1974, writing occupied most of his time. Every morning he would have all the books and materials ready and would wait for his helper, Sister Felisa Lin, to come. After they started working, they would set themselves to their task in a focused way. During that whole time, not one idle word could be heard. Initially, Brother Lee would speak, and Felisa would write the words down by hand. Later she switched to using a computer. At around ten thirty, when Brother Lee took his first short break, he would either walk around the yard or do some exercise. After the break he would return to the bookroom on time and continue the work until noon. After lunch he would again take a walk and then rest for an hour. After the rest time he would return to the bookroom and continue the work. After dinner, if there was a meeting, he would go back to the bookroom to prepare for the message; if there was no meeting, he would tend to some personal affairs, such as making phone calls, replying to letters, or writing. At around ten thirty he would go to bed. This was his daily schedule; every day he did everything regularly according to the schedule. Of course, there were exceptions. For instance, when Brother Lee was working on the New Testament Recovery Version in his eighties, he would rise up at dawn and work until eleven or twelve at night. Sometimes, when the fellow workers in the bookroom had to continue all night long to finish their work, Brother Lee would stay up late with them, fighting with them shoulder to shoulder. A number of times he went to the office after one o’clock in the morning just to check on how his fellow workers were doing. Under normal circumstances, however, he adhered to a very regular schedule.

1. Attire

Sister Lee recalled, “Brother Lee was dignified, frugal, and tidy in everything, including the way he dressed himself. Even when he stayed home all day, he would never dress improperly outside his bedroom. If there was a meeting in the evening, after dinner he would put on a tie and a jacket and tidy up his dress. Realizing that he was a servant of the Lord, he exercised great care about his speech and conduct, including his clothing. His choice of clothing was not based on his preference; rather, it was based on his sensitivity to the saints’ feeling.” In his closet there was nothing excessive or expensive. His shirts, ties, shoes, and socks were proper in color and conservative in style. Even the old socks, pants, and shirts with patches were folded and placed in an orderly way in the closet.

2. Eating

Brother Lee ate in a simple way. Sister Lee said, "His breakfast was a bowl of oatmeal with milk, a bowl of chicken soup, some fresh vegetables, an egg, sometimes a banana. Lunch was steamed buns, fish, with two kinds of vegetables. Sometimes, it was a bowl of chicken noodle soup, two green onions, a piece of fish, with two kinds of vegetables. Dinner was rice in moderate amount, a piece of chicken breast, and two kinds of vegetables. If there was a meeting in the evening, he would drink a cup of milk after he came home."

Because Brother Lee had a gastric ulcer in his middle age, greasy or hard-to-digest food was not good for him. At home Sister Lee always took care of him carefully, and the food was very regular. When he traveled, however, it was easier for his stomach to have problems. The saints everywhere loved him very much. When they heard that Brother Lee loved dumplings, they sometimes fed him dumplings three meals a day. When they heard that he liked dessert, they gave him a lot of dessert. He was always considerate and rarely went against his host's wishes. Many times the food was hard on his stomach and intestines. Sister Lee would care for him in a tender and thorough way by keeping him away from these foods.

"I am not good at cooking at all, but he was never picky," Sister Lee recalled. Like everyone else, Brother Lee had his preferences, but he never picked the food that he ate. He always ate happily whatever food was placed before him on the table. On her part Sister Lee was never concerned about the color, the smell, or the taste. She was only concerned about whether the food was nutritious, healthy, fresh, and easy for him to digest. "I never bought any expensive food. I only cooked fresh, simple, unprocessed, homemade dishes every day. What matters is to eat at set times and in fixed amounts," said Sister Lee seriously.

3. Housing

In his work Brother Lee traveled extensively. Wherever he went, he was able to enjoy peace and rest. After he moved to Taipei in 1948, he lived on Linqi Street and 2 Ren Ai Road. After he moved to the United States, he lived in an apartment on Westmoreland Avenue, which was not far from Elden hall in Los Angeles. It was not until 1974 that he settled down in the house on Ball Road. He liked his house in Anaheim very much, because it was built by the saints. He lived there for more than twenty years. He always did the watering, cleaning, and gardening work in the yard himself. He was familiar with every plant and every tree in the yard; the stone trail and steps were the place where he took his breaks from work. During these times with the Lord, he would contemplate on the word of the Lord. Today the flowers and the trees are the same in the yard; it is as if we can still see him walking among them.

4. Transportation

Because Brother Lee did not drive, during the first few years after 1962 Samuel Chang and his wife would drive him to visit the churches and the saints in different states along the West Coast. Sister Chang once said, "Brother Lee adjusted to the environment very well. He would fall asleep right after he got into the car, and he would start speaking right after he got out of the car. Wherever he went, he was always energetic. Wherever he lodged, he was always restful. He ate and slept well on the road." Many people remember the 1988 blue Ford Crown Victoria that he rode in to and from the training center in his later years, driven by Andrew Yu. Some people felt that the

ten-year-old car was not very presentable, but Brother Lee did not mind it at all. In all the details of clothing, eating, housing, and transportation, his living was like his work—modest, simple, and dignified...

As the golden setting sun beamed over the wall of the courtyard of Mr. Lee's former residence, Sister Pao-Ye Lee led us through the walkway she had trodden endless times. Upon our insistence, she stopped and sent us forward with a smile. We

gently shut the old wooden gate behind us, yet we could not shut out that deep warmth lingering in the heart of each of us visitors—how blessed and heartwarming it is to hear one elderly person speak of another elderly person. Seeing the fresh and appreciative love in Sister Pao-Ye Lee's eyes, we were speechless as we left.

Our late father's younger sister, our beloved auntie, is now resting in the bosom of our Lord. We are joining here with all the brothers and sisters to mourn her passing and to celebrate her life—a life of faithfully serving our God, His servant, and our church; a life with His word as daily supply; a life that was truly following His teaching of “always rejoice, unceasingly pray, in everything give thanks”; and a life that changed us by bringing us to believing in God, to understanding His words, and to living our lives as Christians. This life change is the inheritance from her, which we will treasure forever.

Our mother and our two brothers in China, and we two sisters here would like to express our deep appreciation to the church for all those years of great care for her and all the arrangements of this memorial service. We thank those dear sisters: in His love you gave your tireless and patient service during her illness. We are touched by all our relatives in the Lee family for your ongoing support.

Auntie, we will remember you as a tiny person with tremendous strength, as a sweet lady with strong faith, and as a dear auntie with God-given serenity and a loving heart. We will miss you

THREE LETTERS FROM SISTER LEE

Letter #1

Jiahui,

It is wonderful to learn from your letter dated December 27 that you, as a newborn babe in the Lord, were able to drink the milk by yourself. The font size of that

Bible is not large; read only one or two verses each time, musing upon and masticating the word, and conversing with the Lord Jesus based on the word.

Example 1: Matthew 4:4 – “But He answered and said, It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God.’”

“Lord Jesus. Amen. Amen. What You say is true. Today I shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through Your mouth. So, I love to read the Bible. ”

Example 2: Matthew 11:28 – “Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.”

“O Lord Jesus, thank You. You are so good. You know that I have been toiling and burdened all my life, but now I come to You to enjoy the rest that You give.”

Because the font size of the footnotes in the Bible is even smaller, you can spend

less time reading them. Protect your eyes. It is more worthwhile to be able to use the eyes for a few more years. Now I gradually reduce the amount of reading and writing; I spend more time listening to audio tapes.

I know that two old classmates are enjoying a comfortable life and playing mahjongg together. I do not envy such a life. This is not the purpose of God in creating man; thus, it is not the meaning of human life. I would rather be busy all day long, grasping every opportunity to minister to people the Christ whom I have....

LETTER #2

Brother and Jiahui,

Human life is a journey, traveling from the present age to eternity. Before us lie two ways: one leads to eternal life; the other leads to eternal perdition. Those who have been saved cannot help but cry out to their relatives: Make a wise choice! Make a firm resolution! Believe in Jesus! Walk up here! Walk up here!

(1) Jesus Christ Is the Savior

Jesus is the Son of God. He came down to the earth to become a man. For our sins He died on the cross to accomplish redemption. Then He rose from the dead and became the life-giving Spirit. This Spirit will enter into man to be his life, which is eternal and incorruptible.

(2) How Can a Person Be Saved?

He who opens his mouth to call on the name of the Lord Jesus shall be saved.

“O Lord Jesus, You are the Savior. I am a sinner. I need You. I receive You.” Immediately three great things will happen to this person: 1. All his sins will be forgiven;

2. the blood that the Lord Jesus shed on the cross will cleanse him from every sin; and

3. the eternal life of God will enter into him.

(3) Believe in the Lord’s Word

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him” (John 3:16-17).

“That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart there is believing unto righteousness, and with the mouth there is confession unto salvation... For ‘whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved’” (Rom. 10:9-10, 13).

(4) What Will Happen in the Future?

“When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory” (Col. 3:4).

“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are living, who are left remaining unto the coming of the Lord, shall by no means precede those who have fallen asleep; because the Lord Himself, with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are living, who are left remaining, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we will be always with the Lord” (1 Thes. 4:15-17).

Letter #3

Brother and Jiahui,

The temperature has been low everywhere this winter. It also seems to be much

colder here than in previous years. Until now, it is still quite cold at night. Of course, it cannot compare to Nanjing. Fortunately, it is already the ninth day of the first month according to the lunar calendar. I hope that Brother can already feel the freshness of the spring.

The magnifying glass is for reading the Bible. If you can make good use of the flashlight, it would be much more convenient. I bought a new one from the store. The salesperson said that what I bought the first time could be returned for a refund. Please remember to ask Changning to bring it back. There are also some printed fabrics, a box of protein bars [lit., dried protein], a few cans of nutrition powder, which I will give to Changning to take home with her.

Recently, I heard that an acquaintance was going back to Shanghai to visit his family. I want to send one copy of the English Bible to Xiaoyong, because he should be able to understand those English Bible audio tapes by now. I hope that he can enjoy them too. I was told that to mail things in China requires a zip code, so please let me know the zip code in a letter.

At the beginning of April, we will make a trip to Taiwan and return in four weeks. During that time I can let you know the recent situations of some family members. Has your denture been made yet? How is your health? Now Mercy is eating with you in the house every day; do not tire yourself out. Just cook as usual and do nothing special.

There is a way of reading the Bible called pray-reading, which mingles reading the Bible with prayer. Stanza 7 of Hymns, #586 says,
Feeding and drinking, Lord Jesus, of Thee,
Feeding by reading, and drinking by prayer;
Reading and praying, I eat and I drink,
Praying and reading—Lord, Thou art my fare.
Example: John 1:12-13

As many as received Him. Amen! They are those who believe into His name.
Amen! I receive the Lord Jesus. Amen! I have believed into the name of the Lord Jesus.
Amen! To them He gave the authority. Amen! To become children of God. Amen! Oh, become children of God. Amen! Hallelujah! Become children of God. Amen. Amen.
Who were begotten not of blood. Amen! Nor of the will of the flesh. Amen! Nor of the will of man. Amen! But of God. Amen! But of God. Amen! Of God. Of God.
Amen! He who is begotten of God has the life of God. Amen! Thank and praise God!
SISTER LEE'S LETTER TO HER BROTHER & SISTER-IN-LAW — (LETTER C) 20I am begotten of God. I have the life of God. Amen! I am begotten of God. I have the life of God. Amen!

Pray-reading in such a way can be likened to eating peanuts: put one in your mouth and chew on it again and again. It is flavorful, easy to digest, and nourishing.
I wish you well.

Ye

March 14, 1990