

March 24, 1985

Mr J Y. Lai
40 Twin Circle Dr.
Arlington, Ma 02174

Dear Mr Lai,

Thank you for your letter and history of Christians in Taiwan. Concerning Dr. _____, you should contact his nephew, Dr. _____. I came to the U.S. in July of 1938 to study at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago from which I received my Master of Arts (1940) and Bachelor of Divinity (1941).

My father had encouraged me to apply for a scholarship in the U.S. after he and mother went to see my brother, Ai Li in Hong Kong in 1936. Ai Li took them to the mainland and father came to the conclusion that war would occur between the U.S. and Japan within a few years. He felt that I should go to the U.S. to study so I consulted with the dean at Doshisha University where I was studying and he wrote an application on my behalf. The scholarship came within six months and I thereupon applied for my passport. This was in 1937. In March 1938 I was graduated from Doshisha and returned to Tainan to wait for my passport. In May Ai Jin and I went to Taipeh (Taihoku) to see the officer of the Foreign Service office. As it happened he was a friend of Ai Jin's since Shanghai days. We were told that the Japanese government had stopped issuing passports about two years earlier to Taiwanese who wished to go abroad. I was asked if I were a Communist. I assured him I was not. He then said that if Ai Jin could guarantee the fact that I was not and never would be a Communist he would do what he could to get the passport. He went to an inner office and called Tokyo. A half hour later he returned to tell us that we could return in about four days to pick up the passport.

In July of 1938 I left Taiwan for Yokohama. I had passage on the Taiyo Maru and arrived in San Francisco in August. I spent two weeks in San Francisco with Doshisha friends and then went to Chicago, enrolling at the University. During my student years I was asked to be pastor of a small group (about 12) of Japanese Christians and we met in a small apartment on Oak St which had been rented by the Japanese Mutual Aid Association and used as office space during the week. When war broke out the FBI forbade us to meet as a group so church services were discontinued. Some of the members tried to attend Caucasian churches but found language to be a barrier. Six months later we were able to continue worship services in one of the chapels in the large Fourth Presbyterian Church on Michigan Avenue. I was ordained there in November of 1942.

My future wife, a Japanese American born in San Diego had been able to leave California "voluntarily" with her mother and two brothers. They arrived in Chicago in June after a three months' stay in Texas. I was told of them by a member of our church and paid a call to invite them to my church, which at that time was in the Japanese language only. Because of the evacuation of the Japanese from the west coast states, many Japanese both issei and nisei were arriving in Chicago. The church grew rapidly and later services were held in both English and Japanese.

The Navy Dept had been looking for Taiwanese to work on a project set up at Columbia University in New York. I had been approached to join it in 1943 but because of my commitment to the church I felt I could not leave my calling. However, in 1944, as the plans for the invasion of Taiwan became critical I was again asked to join the project, that having a native Formosan could result in reducing the loss of life and property there. After consultation with those who had encouraged me in my ministerial endeavors, I finally made the decision to join the project. After less than a year, however, it was decided that the Navy would by-pass Taiwan which was heavily fortified and attack Okinawa instead. I was told that the War Dept. needed Japanese language translators in their map division so I then moved to Washington, D.C. with my family of wife and daughter. When the war finally ended I was asked to join a team as interpreter for the Strategic Bombing Survey. In October I accompanied them to Japan. Their mission was to study the effects of the fire bombings of Tokyo and Osaka and the holocausts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

After returning after two months I heard that the United Nations was seeking relief workers to go to China. As my intention was to return to Taiwan eventually to continue my ministry I felt that this would be an opportunity to observe the field before returning with my wife and daughter. Also, a former China missionary was head of the Shanghai office and encouraged me to go. Because I still had a Japanese passport I was considered eligible to serve in China. China, of course, now included Taiwan. I was sent there as a Reports Officer and worked closely with Allan Shackleton from New Zealand. I was in Kao Siung on February 28, 1947 and had a very harrowing experience, which is another story. I was able to return to the U.S. as an immigrant (not on a student visa) and was called to the Japanese Congregational Church in January 1948. I resumed my ministry and continued until December 1978 in the same church for thirty-one years. I am now retired but preach occasionally at one or the other of five Japanese Protestant churches in Seattle. I also go to the Keiro Nursing Home for Japanese elderly about twice a year, taking turns with other ministers. My wife, also retired, has been working on a photographic exhibit of the Japanese immigrants in the Northwest from around 1885 to 1942. The committee of retirees has just had the opening on March 17th. Enclosed a copy of the newspaper article of that event.

1965
1962

Of our children, three girls and one boy, our eldest, BiHoa, graduated from UC in Berkeley, then joined the Peace Corps in and taught science and math in a girls' convent. After she returned she taught in the Seattle School district and is now Vice-Principal at Asa Mercer Middle School. Her husband, Henry Caldwell, now retired, was a school administrator. They have a son, Mark Ming Chih, now $6\frac{1}{2}$ years old. Our second daughter, BiLin, is in Duluth, Minnesota. She took her undergraduate degree at the U. of Chicago and her PhD at the U. of North Carolina. She has been teaching physical chemistry in Duluth at the U. of Minn. and is also part time Associate Dean in the College of Science and Engineering. Her husband, Donald Poe, is also a professor, of analytical chemistry in the same school. They have a 2 year old daughter, Sarah LiHoa and expecting their second child in April. We shall be leaving for Duluth on April 16th and return the end of May. Our third daughter BiSim, has an MBA from the U. of Washington and is working for the Arthur Andersen Co. Her husband, Larry Lee is with a paper company. They have a daughter Kristi, now almost 4. Our son Peter has his MA from the School of Social Work, U. of Washington and is working for the city of Seattle as a social worker. His wife, Joyce, is a pharmacist at Providence Hospital. They are expecting in July.

We wish you success in your research and hope we may someday meet. God bless you and your family.

Sincerely yours,