

The Seunghwa Ceremony of Mrs. Mal Sook Lee (Sang Ryun Chi) Celebrated in MD

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Mrs. Mal Sook Lee, one of True Parents' earliest disciples, ascended peacefully into the spiritual world on Sunday, April 15, 2018. The following is a close look at the last few days of her life on earth, as well as her Seonghwa (ascension) ceremony.

ASCENDING IN PEACE

Over the last few weeks of her life, Mrs. Lee became progressively weaker, being cared for in a nursing home, before needing hospice care. During that time, Mrs. Lee's daughter Yesook, son-in-law Kenneth, and eldest son Jin Bok were always nearby and comforting her. Her youngest son, Jin Gil, was in Korea.



On the night of Saturday, April 14, True Parents' daughter In Jin Moon visited the hospice and offered a beautiful prayer. "Please bring peace to Yesook's Omma (mother)," she said. The hospice nurses explained to Yesook that Mrs. Lee might have been waiting for a sign in order to peacefully ascend to the spirit world. Yesook felt the sign had come with In Jin's visit and prayer.

Later that morning when Yesook texted In Jin that her mother had transitioned, In Jin texted back, saying that she had just been awoken by what she described as the firm hand of True Father: "I know my father's touch. Your mother is in good hands now," In Jin reassured Yesook.

Upon receiving news of Mrs. Lee's ascension, Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, Regional Chairman of Family Federation North America, informed True Mother in Korea who immediately bestowed beautiful calligraphy honoring Mrs. Lee as "A representative that earnestly devoted and sacrificed herself to regain God's homeland." She also verified that Mrs. Lee will be interred at the National Wonjeon at Paju, South Korea next to her husband.



A LIFE OF DEVOTION

Three days later, the Seonghwa (ascension) ceremony was planned and held at the facility of the New Hope Family Church in Bowie, Maryland. The ceremony was masterfully put together by the local Seonghwa committee members and the Lee family.

Dr. Kim delivered the main address at the Seonghwa ceremony, describing how she was always at East Garden praying for True Parents, particularly when True Father was in Danbury Prison. "Rain or shine, morning or night, she was there in prayer," said Dr. Kim. He also mentioned that True Father always called Mrs. Lee by her original name, Sang Ryun Chi. "When you read Mrs. Lee's biography you see the life course of a beautiful example set by one of True Parents' earliest disciples," Dr. Kim said. "Even though her husband Rev. Ki Suk Lee passed away 47 years ago, she continued with total faith and loyalty, love and obedience. Mrs. Lee was continually spreading that faith and love with kindness to all who came in contact with her."

Her passion and talents helped establish the Tarrytown Ji-A Korean Language School and Nursery at Jacob House, to which many elder children of True Parents and other Unificationist children attended with fond memories. Dr. Kim shared that while she was an itinerant worker for the Unification movement in the Chicago area, "She always greeted me with the question, 'How are your family and children?' This really moved me and you, too, probably never forget when someone remembers your family so sincerely."

Her loving, sacrificial heart was embedded in the testimonies that were offered. After being expelled from Ehwa Women's University for her Unificationist faith, she went on to forge a devoted life, never wavering in her love for True Parents.

Two of her granddaughters, sisters Hyang Sahn Lee and Hyang Choon Lee, took turns sharing personal feelings of affection for their halmoni (grandmother) followed by Jin Bok Lee, Mrs. Lee's eldest son, who was friends with the late Heung Jin Moon, True Parents' second son. "My mother just gave out love everywhere and all the time. I am grateful for all you in attendance tonight," Jin Bok told those in attendance.



THE GIFT OF LOVE

Yesook, Mrs. Lee's daughter, then spoke honestly about her relationship with her mother. She shared how she never really understood her mother's deep love of True Parents and her life of faith. It was not until a few weeks ago, when Yesook found a few of her mother's notebooks in which she wrote deeply about her family, that Yesook came to understand the depth of her mother's heart. "This was such a precious gift; the best gift ever," said Yesook.



"The last few months, my mother would often look up from her bed as I was feeding her, without being able to say much. But she would reach out, touch my face, and say, 'Yeppeuda.'" Tears began to stream down Yesook's face. "'You are so pretty,' my mother was telling me. I wanted to say, 'Mother what is

wrong with you? I'm not pretty at all.' But she kept saying it every time we met. Then, one evening, I leaned over and hugged her. Yeppeuda, she said once again. In my mother's arms, I realized then that she really thought I was beautiful, even when I didn't think I was. Feeling like the most beautiful woman in the world, I told her, 'Omma, I'm sorry I didn't understand you and your suffering. I love you.' And then she went to sleep. She didn't wake up after that for the last few weeks until her ascension. Thank you all for this beautiful offering and ceremony. My mother is happy for this."



The evening concluded with an offering of flowers by the Lee family as well as the pastoral leadership, and then a closing benediction prayer by Rev. Young Chul Jang, the current Korean Evangelical Association (KEA) Pastor of Washington, DC. Hearty Cheers of eog mansei (million years of victory) were offered powerfully by Dr. Chang Shik Yang, the Chairman of Universal Peace Federation South America.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, with a Korean folk song playing in the background, Mrs. Lee's loving spirit filled the room, as people hugged, danced, and laughed with one another to celebrate her selfless, devoted, and amazing life.

