

SOME WORDS FROM EVERYDAY LIFE IN CHINA

This is to my friends assembled for a mission meeting in the **Winnebago Congregation** in the fall of 1915.

With your friendly permission I shall tell you about some everyday experiences in the mission field.

There was a great occasion in Suiiping when last fall we returned from our summer vacation and arrived with a son. Sons are of great significance to the Chinese. A man who has no sons is considered impoverished even though he owns extensive land. For this reason it is common in China that men who have no sons with a first wife will move on to wife number 2 or 3 to achieve that result. The hearts desire is to have male children and women who do not bear sons go regularly to the local temple to burn incense for the idols. The folks say that Pastor Lei (Lei is our Chinese name) is certainly a fortunate man because last fall brought him a wife and this fall brought him a son. He certainly must have high favor with the gods! People came in crowds to see the new person on earth. They not only wanted to look but were eager to feel the new baby. "This is a little Chinese said one with great conviction – just look at his black hair." "Certainly not said the next person, just look at his white skin." "Will he learn to speak Chinese?" said the next person. And so they came with gifts; caps, silk clothing, silver decorations, rice, chickens, eggs, cakes etc. But what was expected next from Pastor Lei cost far more than the gifts offered; following long established custom all who brought gifts would need to be invited to a feast and it was likely the feast that the most had been planning on all along!

Not many days ago an old man came to the mission with an empty bottle and said that he had heard that we had holy water for sale which had the capability to drive out devils. He further said that his 10-12 year old daughter was possessed by devils and he was in serious need to find a medium against the devil's might. Yes, friends, the Chinese are plagued by the devil but the medium for cure is not in their knowledge. We must hurry to bring them the holy water.

I have heard many peculiar customs among the Chinese but until last winter I had not heard of marrying off the dead. A girl of 16 had just died. Her parents were moved through a dream to find her a mother in law. They then went on to a Mr. Wei whose son had died 8 years earlier and was unmarried. After appropriate arrangements the young girl acquired a husband and a mother in law for her afterlife.

One of our Christian men from a prominent family, who is also prominent in his own right, says that people spy on him and when he seeks quiet time for prayer he may be mocked. The Chinese Christians are thus still subjected to indignities by their own people.

Hearty greetings to all our mission friends in the Winnebago congregation from your loyal workers.

Danielle and Hans M. Nesse