

PROFILE

To Honor a Colleague and to Say Goodbye to a Friend

– Dr. S. Y. Lee, founder of the *Chinese American Forum*, was a visionary and doer.

By C. C. Tien

Two weeks ago, Dr. T. C. Peng called to tell me the sad news that Dr. S. Y. Lee had left us. It was a shock to me because he had told Jack Peng two months ago that he planned to visit Seattle this October. We were quite excited about the opportunity to see him.

I left Seattle for Washington, D.C. in the early morning of July 29. Prof. I.Y. Shen and his wife Verna met me at the Baltimore-Washington-International airport that evening.

The memorial service for Dr. Lee was held the next morning. It was a solemn and heart-warming ceremony full of love and respect for him. The hall was filled to its capacity with well over 200 people.

The service started with sober and touching remarks from Prof. S.M. Kuo, the master of ceremony. Then, I spoke, followed by Prof. I.Y. Shen.

I paid tribute to Dr. Lee's unique contribution to the Chinese American community through his founding of the Chinese American Forum and reminded ourselves that the best way to honor him would be to continue and support his endeavors.

Prof. Shen and Dr. Lee were close friends. They spoke by phone every week and often met at parks to chat. Prof.

Shen gave a short and moving speech on their friendship and a brief account of Dr. Lee's condition before his passing.

A singing duet of Dr. Lee's favorite song, *On the Song-Hua River*, was next. It was a magnificent performance, bringing tears to the eyes of many people in the audience.

After the song, many people came to the podium to express their thanks to Dr. Lee for his help and generosity in their time of need.

When the casket was moved to the burial site, a short prayer was said by his son-in-law, Franklin Tate. Then a reception in a restaurant followed. It was a heart-warming and proper tribute to celebrate the life of Dr. Lee.

The first time I had had the opportunity to meet Dr. Lee was at a conference in Stanford University, sponsored by the 'Global Alliance for Preserving the History of WWII in Asia.' We shared a hotel room in Palo Alto and talked into the night. At that same conference, I also met Iris Chang, author of *Rape of Nanking* for the first time. After almost nine years, CAF is saying goodbye to its friends, Iris Chang and Dr. S. Y. Lee, two outstanding Chinese Americans.