

Document 6.5: Letters from Southern Baptist missionary Lottie Moon, published in the *Foreign Mission Journal*, October 1888 and June 1898

Lottie Moon (1840–1912), the daughter of a wealthy plantation and slave owner in Virginia, was thirty-two years old when she first set sail for China as a Southern Baptist missionary. Only 4 feet 3 inches tall, she was passionate in her efforts to win souls and in her efforts to increase women’s participation and voice in missionary work. A prolific writer, many of her letters appeared in religious publications back in the United States. Unlike some involved in missionary work, Moon took to wearing Chinese clothes, adopted Chinese customs, and gained respect for the culture.

Tongzhou¹, October 10, 1888

JIANGSU

The name of this province is taken from the first syllable of the provincial capital and *Su* of Suzhou, the chief city. It is bounded on the north by Shandong, on the east by the Yellow Sea, on the west by Nanjing and on the south by Zhejiang. Its area equals that of Pennsylvania in square miles, or England without Scotland and Wales. According to Williams’ Middle Kingdom, “the staple productions are grain, cotton, tea, silk and rice, and most kinds of manufactures are here carried to the greatest perfection. The people have an exceptional reputation for intelligence and wit, and its cities present a gayer aspect and are adorned with better structures than any other in the empire.”

“Probably no other country of equal extent is better watered than Jiangsu. The Great River, the Grand Canal, many smaller streams and canals, and a succession of lakes along the line of the canal, afford easy communication through every part. There are three large lakes in the province, while a third lies partly in Jiangsu and partly in Zhejiang. Nanjing is the capital of the province. The largest seaport in Jiangsu is Shanghai, now become one of the leading emporia in Asia.”

¹ Now called Penglai in Shandong Province

Zhenjiang, our most recently established mission in Jiangsu, is situated at the junction of the Grand Canal with the Yangzi River. "Its position renders it the key of the country, in respect to the transport of produce, taxes and provisions for Beijing. The country in the vicinity is well cultivated, moderately hilly, and presents a characteristic view of Chinese life and action."

In a province of this size, Southern Baptists, having entered more than forty years ago, have two mission stations, neither one of which is properly manned. In Shanghai, we have one family and Mrs. Yates; in Zhenjiang, two families. The Southern Methodists, besides their very strong force in Suzhou, their flourishing work in Hanjiang and the newly opened station at Kading, have in Shanghai alone three families and six single women. They are about to build a large training home for unmarried women in Shanghai. At the four stations just mentioned, they have fourteen single women, one of whom is a doctor in charge of a hospital for women. In a recent "Woman's Missionary Advocate," I note the appointment of another young lady for China. And still the call goes forth for more workers and Southern Methodist women respond nobly to every demand from China.

In Zhenjiang, the Northern Methodists have two families and two single women, while another unmarried woman is expected to join them this fall. The Presbyterians have one family and one unmarried man in Zhenjiang. Practically, as opposed to Baptist principles, Methodists and Presbyterians are one. We may say then that while we have in Zhenjiang two families, the Pedobaptists have four men and five women. This disparity in numbers ought not to be allowed to continue. After nearly fifteen years experience in China, I am convinced that the minimum force at any station should never be allowed to fall below three families. It is absolutely certain that there will be sickness, breaking down of health, it may be death, in the course of even a few years. At least three men are needed in any given station, to accomplish anything bordering on aggressive work. To expect one man, or even two, to build up a strong local church, to itinerate in the neighboring country, to push out and start new stations, to plant scores of infant churches in the villages around

the mission station, is simply to demand impossibilities. In Zhenjiang to-day we should have not less than three families and two single women.

Our brother Bryan's heart turns eagerly to Yangzhou, that great city, famous in ancient annals of China, and now one of the wealthiest and most populous cities of Central China. It is situated on the Grand Canal, about twenty miles from Zhenjiang. From a Chinese standpoint, Yangzhou is a place of great importance on account of its wealth, its trade, its literary men, and its being the residence of so many officials. It is supposed that the first great railroad in China will run from Beijing to Zhenjiang by way of Yangzhou. Should this be the case, the importance of the latter city would be greatly enhanced and its commerce largely increased.

At present, China Inland Mission is the only one working there. The Inland Mission, while undenominational, is largely Baptist in principles and practice. The Methodists have bought land in Yangzhou, but have not yet settled there. The Southern Presbyterians are planning to begin a mission there at an early day.

It would be wise should our Board grant at once our brother Bryan's request for four families and two single women for Yangzhou. The sooner we get a settled work there the better. The mission in Central China should work north to meet the Shandong mission working south, on the same line. The two missions are united in policy and could work harmoniously together.

L. Moon

June 30, 1898

Tongzhou, China

Dear Dr. Willingham,

I have visited during this Quarter [three months] twenty different towns & villages. At many of them, I remained several days. At others, I have made but brief visits, going out after dinner & returning about sun-set. I hav [sic] had much to encourage in the work. The people are very friendly & more ready to listen to the gospel than I hav ever known them to be. In two places, there are, apparently, some genuine inquirers. I have been pressingly invited to go to a new village to visit a family said to be very favorably disposed to Christianity & I hav promist [sic] to go. It is a source of sorrow that I cannot meet the numerous calls. I hav simply to decide what cases & places most urgently demand attention & to neglect many others to which I would gladly go, were I free to do so. We need at least three more single women here. Miss Hartwell is doing noble work in the school, but, thus far, this year has been unable to leave the city. There are about thirty towns & villages connected with the Tongzhou station, that ought to hav visits of several days duration, at least twice a year. With our present force, this is simply impossible.

We are rejoiced at the good news from the Convention. To hav that awful debt rolled off, what a blessing.

With best wishes & earnest prayers for a blessing upon your labors,

Yrs. sincerely,

L.Moon.

Sources: Lottie Moon to Robert J. Willingham, 30 June 1898. *Lottie Moon Letters*, ed. International Mission Board (Southern Baptist Convention), accession no. 192.

Lottie Moon to *Foreign Mission Journal*, 10 October 1898. *Lottie Moon Letters*, ed. International Mission Board (Southern Baptist Convention), accession no. 259.