



# COMING TO MY Ancestors' Aid

**By Louise Skyles**

*I was amazed at the guidance I received as I searched for my Chinese ancestors.*

**B**efore I joined the Church I would often look up at the sky when I was alone and feel that there were people there who loved me and wanted me to reunite with them in a wonderful place. Later, after I joined the Church, I started wondering if those people were my ancestors and if this wonderful place was heaven.

When I was 22 years old, I received my patriarchal blessing. When the patriarch placed his hands upon my head, I could feel Heavenly Father's love pouring into my heart. My blessing described the work I would do as I searched out and united my ancestors through temple ordinances.

I didn't do much about this at the time. I was the only member of the Church in my family, and because of a lack of understanding, my parents—especially my mother—did not want me to “disturb” our ancestors.

Another challenge was that because both of my parents were adopted, it would be difficult to research my biological ancestral lines.

Eventually, I was able to collect four generations of my father's adoptive parents' line. By then my brother had joined the Church, and I asked him to submit this information to the Taipei Taiwan Temple. But the temple workers told him the information was incomplete and couldn't be submitted. We knew we needed to do more before we could proceed.

## **My Turning Point**

One night, however, I dreamed that a group of people dressed in white came toward me and asked, “Why haven't you done the work for us as you promised?” I woke up in the middle of the night and realized that these people were my ancestors.


Then in the summer of 1999 my brother was to be married in Taiwan. I was living in the United States and had a family of my own, but I made arrangements to return to Taiwan for the wedding. My friend encouraged me to pray for an opportunity to learn



more about my ancestors, since many relatives would be at the wedding.

When I arrived, I found that my father's biological brother had come for the wedding. This was surprising because my father's biological family lived far away and our family had little contact with them. I begged my father to ask his brother for any information about our ancestors. Amazingly, my uncle said that in their ancestral temple there was a book containing the records of our ancestors going back 4,000 years. Unfortunately, my father would not be able to go inside that family temple because he had been adopted out of the family, and only direct family members were allowed to go in.

I asked my father if one of his relatives could get me a copy of the book. He said he would try to call his nephew, who lived only a couple of hours away from that location. I had only one week before I returned to America, and my father said he didn't know whether his nephew could do it for me in one week. But I was constantly praying that a way would be opened, and I asked him to make the call.



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Three or four days later, I received a copy of all the records. I found out that my father’s nephew had taken a day off work to go to the family shrine and make a copy for me.

### **Opening Another Line**

My mother had been reunited with her biological family, and I wanted to find information on her side of the family. Just a couple of hours before the wedding, all of the relatives got together at my parents’ house. I thought I should ask each of them if they knew anything about their family history.

Then I remembered that my mother didn’t like me to talk about her ancestors, so I decided to ask my relatives after the wedding. But in that moment I felt the prompting, “Talk to them right now.” As I turned around, and my mother and I looked at each other, I thought once again about waiting until after the wedding to ask. The prompting was firmly repeated: “Talk to them right now!” I knew I had to listen to the Spirit and ask them immediately.

It turned out that one of my uncles owned a book that contained the records of 120 generations of my mother’s family. He said someone had sold it to him for a couple of dollars, and he agreed to make me a copy.

Later, I learned why the Spirit had prompted me so strongly to talk to them before the wedding. When I awoke the next morning, I was surprised to learn that they had all left early that morning to return home. If I had waited to ask them about our family history, I would have missed my chance.

### **The Last Steps**

Since then I have spent much of my time reading Chinese microfilm and connecting the names in many

family books to my lines. At one point I calculated that I had connected more than 100,000 names to my ancestral line. After that I stopped counting.

I began to submit the TempleReady electronic files to the San Diego California Temple, which was closest to me at the time. Then the Church released a Chinese version of Personal Ancestral File (PAF), and I was able to send the TempleReady files in Chinese, with Romanic translation, to the Taipei Taiwan Temple and the Hong Kong China Temple. As is the procedure, these temples created family file cards for me from the TempleReady files and sent them to me. There were far too many for me to finish the work myself—no matter how much I wanted to do it. I knew I would need help.

I took the cards to the Portland Oregon Temple (closest to where I now live) and explained that I needed help. I left them at the temple. After hearing of my dilemma, the temple president called and said that while he was looking at the cards, he felt impressed that many of my ancestors had already accepted the gospel. So he proposed an idea: he would call my stake president and ask him to help me do the ordinances for my ancestors by arranging a special stake temple day. This occurred on November 12, 2004.

I have received so much help from people in my stake and other stakes as well. I believe the Lord is blessing the people who have come to my family’s aid. I am so grateful to be able to help my ancestors with the work they are not able to do for themselves. I believe that one day I will reunite with them and we will enjoy the blessings of salvation together as a family, just as I envisioned when I used to look up at the sky those many years ago. ■