



Name in English: Rose Hum Lee
Name in Chinese: 李玫瑰 Simplified [Traditional]
Name in Pinyin:
Gender: Female
Birth Year: 1904-1964
Birth Place: Butte, Montana

Sociologist and Humanitarian

Profession(s): Sociologist, Professor, Author

Education: B.S., Social Work, 1942, Carnegie Institute of Technology; M.A., Sociology, 1943, University of Chicago; Ph.D., Sociology, 1947, University of Chicago

Awards: 1959, Women of Achievement Award for Greater Chicago, B'nai B'rith

Contribution (s): Before she was a sociologist, Rose Hum Lee worked in China during the Sino-Japanese War of the 1930s. She served on several committees, worked as a translator and radio operator, helped evacuate civilians from war zones, provided humanitarian relief to victims, and helped in hospitals and orphanages. As the war situation worsened, Lee returned to the U.S. with a war orphan she had adopted as her daughter. When she obtained her Ph.D. in 1947, Dr. Lee was the first Chinese woman to earn a doctorate in sociology in the U.S. In time, she became an influential sociologist recognized for her pioneering studies in the study of the Chinese in the U.S. Dr. Lee would continue breaking new ground when she began her teaching career at Roosevelt University in Chicago in 1945. From 1956 to 1961, she headed the sociology department as chairwoman, the first woman and first Chinese American to head a sociology department at a U.S. university.

Schooled in the prestigious Chicago school of sociology, Dr. Lee was a respected sociologist in the field of urban sociology. She built her career on researching Chinese immigrants in America, particularly how they adjusted to city life in the new country. Her most famous publication is considered to be “The Decline of Chinatowns in the United States” published in 1949. She was a huge supporter of Chinese assimilation into the American way of life. In 1960, she published her most famous book “The Chinese in the United States of America,” a comprehensive volume that thoroughly researched Chinese immigrants in their family life, social organization, religion, politics, health, and social problems, about how Chinese immigrants were treated in the U.S., and about the Chinese assimilation process. She continued writing publications related to aspects about Chinese life throughout her career. Dr. Lee not only shed light on the life of the Chinese American immigrant community but also influenced the fields of history, sociology, anthropology, and political science with her research.

Over the course of her career, Dr. Lee also lectured and taught, published books and papers, including children's plays, and was a popular speaker who frequently discussed a wide range of topics relating to China, ranging from Chinese art, customs, Christianity in China, to U.S.-China relations. She was deeply involved in civic organizations, especially those related to race relations, and was a member of Chicago Commission on Human Relations, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the American Sociological Association, and others. Her life was dedicated to bringing greater understanding between China and America and between all ethnic groups in the United States.

Publications/Patents:

- 1948 "Social Institutions of a Rocky Mountain Chinatown"
- 1949 "The Decline of Chinatowns in the United States"
- 1955 *The City: Urbanism and Urbanization in Major Regions*
- 1957 "Chinese Immigration and Population Changes since 1940"
- 1960 *The Chinese in the United States of America*

External Links:

<http://www.maiwah.org/rhlee.htm>

<http://www.answers.com/topic/lee-rose>

Kim, Hyung-chan. (1999). *Distinguished Asian Americans*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group.