

## Pastor and People.

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THE CHILDREN'S PULPIT.

EDITED BY M. H. C.

When the Korean envoys came to Naniwa, Nintok sent them back to Oudzi and when the Loo Chooans arrived at Oudzi, Ratsongo sent them back to Naniwa. The ambassadors did not know what to do. Then a cunning officer, called Soukna, sought them out and said "leave the presents with me; this dispute cannot last long, and when it ends in one of the princes accepting the crown, I will give him your master's gifts." So the servants of the Korean king and of the monarch of Loo Choo, not knowing the kind of man who was speaking to them, agreed, glad to find some way of getting out of their difficulty. The Japanese historians say that Soukna was a monster with two heads, four arms and four legs. I suppose they mean by this that he was a crafty, double-faced man, and withal very strong and active. As soon as he got all the precious gifts in his possession he began to bribe the soldiers with them until he had a large number on his side whom he sent out all over the country to plunder the poor villagers and bring the spoil into his camp at Fida. All the gifts that were sent to the Dairi from foreign countries, and the taxes that were paid by the people at home, he took to himself. The villagers came to the princes complaining against the servants of Soukna, but Nintok sent them to Ratsongo, and Ratsongo sent them back to Nintok. There was no king in the land, so that Soukna did as he pleased. And to add to the troubles of the distracted kingdom, the Mosin, or hairy men of the north, began to plunder the Japanese settlements nearest to them. Often the brothers visited each other, lamenting the unhappy state of the land and imploring one another to sit upon the throne and judge the people. But it was of no avail. Nintok honoured Ratsongo above himself because he was his father's choice and Ratsongo honoured Nintok above himself because he was the firstborn.

Three years the dispute lasted, and even then neither brother would give way. The whole land was in a sad state. The soldiers having nothing to do and no one to provide for them, either joined Soukna or robbed the people on their own account. Foreign nations, hearing of the unprotected state of the kingdom, were threatening to invade Japan. And the Mosin had taken possession of all the northern part of the Isle of Nippon. One day a messenger came in great haste to Naniwa. The pin with which the Japanese fastened their hair on the top of the head into a plait he had pulled out so that his hair hung loose about his face. Nintok saw this from the balcony of his palace, and when the man came nearer he perceived that this loose-streaming hair was covered with dust. Then he knew that the messenger had bad news, and went down to meet him. The man fell at his feet, clutching two handfuls of dust from the ground and sprinkling them also upon his head while he cried "O Son of the Sun, the good prince Ratsongo has slain himself and your servants cannot even find his royal body." In great grief Nintok set out at once for Oudzi to seek his brother. The palace was just as he had seen it when last he visited Ratsongo, but nowhere in it or in the city could he find him whom he called the king. He sent his own servants over all roads, and travelled over many himself, seeking the lost Ratsongo; but all in vain. Many people came to him telling of the lawlessness of the land and praying him to become king over them. So he said "What I would not do while my brother was here, I will do now that he is gone. If you will help me to find my brother and my king, I will rule over you." Then the people came together at Naniwa in great numbers. They promised to search for the body of Ratsongo; they bowed before Nintok and hailed him King of Japan.

Now, hundreds of messengers were sent, some on horseback, others on foot, over the roads and into the mountains to get news of the missing prince. At last one party of seekers found a man who had seen Ratsongo the very day on which he disappeared, and who said he had news to tell the Dairi about him. They brought him to Nintok at Naniwa. He was an old man with a long, pointed white beard and close-cropped grey hair, wearing a long coat with large, hanging sleeves, wide trousers fastened at the ankles, little leather boots turned up at the toes, and having on his head a straw hat almost three feet in brim, with a high, sugar-loaf crown. From the hat hung on either side of his venerable face a string of large, white beads, and in his hand he carried a long staff. This was no less a person than the great philosopher Wonin, who had come from Corea during the reign of Osin to teach the Japanese wisdom. Nintok returned the old man's salutation and asked him to tell what he knew of his lost brother. "I saw him," replied Honin, "the day he disappeared, the excellent prince Ratsongo. He told me that while he lived you, O Dairi, would not consent to reign. Therefore, he said, that he was going very far away to a place where you would never find him. And he told me, should you begin to look for him, to let you know that not even his body should you find were you to search every corner in Japan. Yet some day, he said, he hoped to see you again." Then when the philosopher had ended, Nintok threw himself upon the ground and cried, "Alas, my brother and my king!" for he was sure that Ratsongo had made away with himself and that the

hope of seeing him again was not for this world, but for the next. So he ordered messengers to go over the kingdom telling the people to search no more and calling upon them to mourn with Nintok the death of the the Dairi Ratsongo, who had given up his life to get his brother a throne.

Thus Nintok began to rule over Japan. "As I have taken my brother's place," he said, "I must try to be as good a king as he would have been; and as he was so unselfish towards me though I was really only one of his people, I must strive to be unselfish towards his people, who have made me Dairi." First, he went over the land to seek out Soukna and the soldiers of whose robbery and violence the people had complained. But here was a marvel: not a soldier could be found in all the country. For many weeks none had been seen, so that the farmers could now till their land and herd their cattle in peace. Nintok went to Fida with a body of townsmen and country people whom he had hastily armed and drilled, looking for Soukna. They expected to have a terrible fight with the dreaded chief and his rebellious soldiers, but when they arrived at the camp, all was silent as the grave. There was only one soldier there, standing, as it seemed, before a wooden building, which had been Soukna's headquarters, but he did not move. Nintok went up to him and saw that he was fastened to a post and dead. It was Soukna himself, and on his breast there was a writing in the old Korean letters something like the strokes and pot-hooks you put into your first copy books, for the Japanese had not yet invented their first characters. The writing said, "The great Dairi Nintok, for the good of his people, has put their oppressor to death. Let the men of Nippon learn justice and be kind to one another." This was another surprise for Nintok. "Surely," he said to himself, "it must have been Ratsongo who did this, for who else was brave enough to meet and overcome the monster, Soukna?" So again he cried, "Alas, my brother, would that you were alive and king instead of unworthy me!" Then he went into Soukna's house and found there all the things, except the horses, that the ambassadors and people had brought to him and his brother as presents, and this made him wonder again, for he had learned that the wicked chief had given many of these things to the soldiers who joined his army. How, then, had they all come back into this place? "Do not wonder," said Wonin, who had accompanied the Dairi; "he who gives up his own for the good of another, will get it back again with interest." Nintok had to be satisfied with this answer. The stolen goods he ordered to be brought to Naniwa, and the placard taken from Soukna's breast to be carried at the head of his army of civilians, that all Japan might know the oppressor was dead.

Soon after his return to Naniwa, Nintok went with Wonin to a high hill near at hand from which a great part of the country could be seen. As he looked out upon the fields and then at the peasants' little huts in the midst of them, he saw how neglected they were, and that no smoke rose from the chimneys, although it was near the time of the chief meal of the day. Can it be, he thought, that these poor people have nothing to cook! Then Wonin said, as if he were speaking to himself, "Woe to the house where the full is the father of the empty; emptiness shall never depart from it. Happy is the home where the empty is the father of the full; fullness shall dwell there forever." Nintok said nothing until they were on the way down the hill. Then he asked Wonin what he meant by these words. Wonin pointed to a spring that bubbled up from the hillside and poured its waters down the slope into a little stream that ran through the fields, and then to a broad pond at the foot of the hill all covered over with green duckweed. "Which does most good?" he asked, "the one that empties itself or the one that would fain stay full?" Again on the way home they saw a field newly harvested and in a corner of it a stack of grain, while near by was another field in which a scanty crop, ruined by the weather, had been left standing. "Which field will be fullest next year?" asked the philosopher, "the one that emptied itself to fill the granary and give seed for the spring, or the one that remains full now?" When they arrived at Naniwa, Wonin asked another question of Nintok. "Shall I tell the Dairi where the full is that is father to the empty?" Nintok answered, "say on." So the Korean sage pointed with his staff to the palace on the one side in which were the people's gifts that had been taken by Soukna, and on the other to the royal treasuries in which were stored the grain and other products of the field which the Japanese were compelled to pay as a tax to the Dairi. "It is these full things," he said, "that have emptied the houses of the people and left them nothing worth putting smoke into their chimneys."

Nintok could not sleep that night. All the time he kept thinking: "My grandmother by her wars, my father by his building, have laid heavy burdens on the people, and still they think they are under these burdens and rob themselves to fill my treasuries. Ratsongo, who gave up his life for me, would not have allowed himself to be rich while his people were starving. And I, who wish to be what he was, must not be the full father of the empty." Next morning he called together his officers of state and told them that he had no need of them. "Go home," he said, "and cultivate your fields. I will have no more men living upon the goods of my people." Then he sent word all through the length and breadth of the land: "The Dairi sets you free from all your taxes, and moreover if there is anyone who has no grain to sow, no food in his house by reason of the burdens which I and my fathers have laid upon him, let him come to me in

Naniwa, and I will [open] the treasuries to provide for his wants." Now, the people rejoiced when they heard this proclamation. Many that were really poor, and many whom Nintok turned back because they were lazy drones who would not work while they could beg, came to get rice and other grain for food and for seed. The royal treasuries were emptied. Even the gifts of the kings of Corea and Loo Choo were sold to great nobles who had plenty of money and the price of them was lent to farmers whom taxation had made too poor to work their farms. Nintok gave liberally and asked for nothing. He lived upon the humblest fare that he might be able to sympathize with his people, and at the same time keep down his expenses. When his clothes were old he had them patched, darned and cleaned rather than raise taxes for new ones. When his wooden palace began to suffer from the weather, to leak with the rain and to warp with the heat, he left it so rather than call the people from their fields to mend it. He went on foot over a great part of the country to find out for himself how the people were and to give them all the help in his power. "Never," said the Japanese, "in the whole history of our nation, has there been such a king as the Dairi Nintok." But Nintok was ever saying to himself, "If Ratsongo had only been in my place, how much better everything would have been."

It was the custom that the Dairi should ride on horseback or be carried about in a *norimono*, which was a chair of state, borne upon two long poles. It had also been the custom that whenever he met any of the people, whether high or low, they should stand aside and bow themselves to the ground while he passed. But Nintok gave away all his horses to the farmers to help them in ploughing the land and carrying home the harvest; and the chairs of state he gave to the old people and the sick who were not able to walk, that their friends might carry them about to enjoy the open air and see the world. He went on foot like the humblest of his people, and when he met a loaded cart, or a man with a burden or a woman or a child, it was he who stood aside and prayed the Lord of heaven to bless them. There were no soldiers in the country, and there was no need for them. Strange to say, the Mosin had disappeared from the north of Nippon and the kings of Corea and Loo Choo and distant China, so far from sending armies against Japan, as they had threatened, sent ambassadors to make a lasting peace. For the ambassadors who had been there before spying out the state of the land, had told their masters that the king of Nippon was so poor that it would not enrich them to conquer him and so good that the vengeance of heaven would surely fall on anyone who did him harm. All the people worked; the nobles and those who had been tax-gathers and policemen, in their fields, their factories and workshops, in the mines and fisheries, with none to disturb them or take away their gains. And Wonin went about from place to place, teaching lessons of wisdom, and everywhere repeating his favourite text, "Happy is the home where the empty is the father of the full." So it happened that if any poor or sick person came to those who were well off, the rich emptied their purses and grain bins to feed and help their poor brethren, until there was only one empty house and pocket in all Nippon. And that house and that pocket belonged to the good Dairi Nintok.

Three years had passed since Nintok and Wonin viewed the country from the hill-top, and learned how poor the people were. Once more they made the ascent together on a fine summer day, and looked round about upon the scene below. What a change met their eyes! All the fields were under cultivation and green with abundant crops. Large, new barns bore witness to the fertility of the former years and the wealth of their owners. Doves of cattle and sheep filled the pasture fields. Here and there, dotted over the country, were busy manufacturing towns and villages. The old houses had all been neatly repaired and painted, and many new ones had been built, and from the chimneys of all rose columns of blue, wood smoke. Then Wonin looked at the patched dress and clouded sandals of the Dairi, and said, "O, Wonin, you are the empty to day, but you are the father of the full." The Dairi's face fairly shone with joy as he answered, "It is worth while going empty all one's life to behold such a sight as that." When they had filled their eyes with the view, they descended the hill, and Nintok went home to his empty and decaying palace. But Wonin went away on a long journey. Wherever he met with people, in the fields, on the road, in the market-place or in their houses he preached on his favourite text. Most of his hearers listened to him gladly. Some told him how they had tried to act out his sermons by helping others. But they all said, "What more can we do, for there is not a poor person in all Japan?" "Yes there is," answered Wonin, "there is one so poor that his clothes are old, his house is fallen into decay and there is no smoke in his chimney. It is the Dairi Nintok, the son of the rich Osin, and grandson of the conquering empress Singou. He has emptied himself to make you full." When the people heard this, they were greatly concerned. "We have been very ungrateful," they said, "it is not right that the Dairi should be the poorest man in the kingdom." So many of them went to Naniwa to see for themselves, and when they came back they told the others how true were Wonin's words, that the Dairi's gardens were neglected, his fences broken down, his palace was falling into ruins and no smoke rising out of its chimneys. No horses were in his stables, no cows in his pastures, no grain in his barns, no money in his treasury, and his clothes were old-fashioned, faded and patched. Then all the people cried, "Alas for the good Dairi, the generous Nintok, the father of the full, and shame to us whom he has made so rich!"

(To be continued.)