

Previous to 1879, as has been said, little progress had been made in planting the Gospel in the Brec country. A few churches only had been gathered on the borderland, while the heart of the country was almost unknown. In that year the Spirit of God rested upon a young man named Soo-Yah, who had recently graduated from the training school in T'oungou, and called him to work among the Brecs. He set out on his journey alone, with only his hymn-book and Testament. Climbing the great range of mountains, he soon passed through the narrow belt of the Brec country, already occupied for Christ, and took his way through the forests over an unknown road into the heart of the country. Losing his way, he finally reached Sau-pe-le-cho, a village famed far and wide as the haunt of a notorious band of robbers; but God was with him, and was leading him in answer to his prayers. On reaching the village, he was at once surrounded by a band of savage and angry men, who drew back their spears and lifted their long knives, crying, "Kill him! kill him! He is a spy sent by our enemies! Cut him down!" Soo-Yah stood unmoved in their midst, and when he could make himself heard, said: "Do men of war do spies go about unarmed and openly as I do? See!" and he opened a bag which he had hanging on his shoulder, showing his hymn-book and Testament. "See! Are these the weapons of bad men?" The people had not yet recovered from their amazement when he opened his hymn-book and began to sing to them one of the sweet songs of Zion.

Never before had this poor people seen a book or heard anything in music but their own discordant battle cries or rude attempts at song; but here was a wonder before them almost as if an angel had descended from the sky and stood in their midst. They listened entranced; and having won their attention, Soo-Yah boldly declared to them the message God had given him.

The Gospel of Christ had come to these savages and taken hold of them. As they listened to Soo-Yah's singing, they said: "This cannot be a bad man; we never saw bad men do this way;" and they received him to the best they had, and listened to his message gladly.

Sau-pe-le-cho comprised four villages near each other in a natural fortress, numbering not far from 1000 souls.

In 1882, while attending the meetings of the Karen Association, on the western slope of the water-shed, the mission party were surprised one day by the approach from over that range of an armed band of wild men with drums and horns, as if approaching for battle. As they marched up the hill into the circle of the encampment they proved to be two chiefs from Sau-pe-le-cho, with their followers. They said they had heard the Gospel from Soo-Yah, and of this great meeting of the Christians, and had come for a teacher, that they might learn how to worship the living God.

The spokesman was their principal chief, a man of gigantic stature named Ho-Wee, or "the blessed"—a strange name for a man who after-