

YOUNG PEOPLE'S

Forward Movement for Missions

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Protestant Missions in Japan.

1859-1872.

The first period of missions in Japan (1859-1872) was a period of persecution and imprisonment. Intercourse between the missionaries and the natives was watched by Government spies. The missionaries, like other foreigners, were believed to have come to seduce the people of the God country (Japan) from their loyalty and to corrupt their morals. The man who killed a foreigner was a patriot, the more so if he put out of the way a teacher of the wicked sect.

Was ever a field so discouraging? When the profession of the faith is proclaimed a death crime by the rulers; when the lower classes fear, and the upper classes hate the missionaries; when they are themselves practically shut up as prisoners within the narrow concessions, what could they do? Two things they could do: slowly win the confidence of the Japanese, and learn their difficult language, yea, they did a third thing. Strangely enough, several daimyos, or feudal lords, suspicious as they were, yet eager to get the clue to the foreigner's knowledge, requested the missionaries to teach their sons. Even before the revolution, Drs. Verbeck, Brown, and Griffis laid the foundation of what afterward became the national system of education. This is unparalleled in missionary history, that from the very outset, while persecution was raging and the cross hated, so many young men, destined to be the leaders of the new era, should come under the training of the missionaries.

1872-1890.

Second period (1872-1890). Rapid and aggressive expansion. How strong the opposition was during the first period let the small number of converts answer—only ten converts in twelve years. Not until 1872 was the first little church organized. It was in Yokohama's foreign concession, under the American flag, and consisted of only twelve members. It was a mustard seed, but it began to grow, and will grow into a great tree, giving food and shade to millions of souls.

The Church of Japan was born in prayer. When Prince Iwakura's embassy returned from Europe and America (1872) a change took place among many leading spirits of the nation. The public edict-boards against Christianity were taken down, and many Japanese began to feel that the old system of things must pass away and a new policy and system modelled—not after China—but after the Western nations, must be adopted.

With a rapidity unknown before among the Asiatics, many great things were accomplished during this second period. Feudalism and daimyo rule over the clans were overthrown. The privileges of the two-sworded Samurai were abolished; the common people were emancipated from feudal serfdom; the central government, with its cabinet departments, was co-ordinated with the provinces, their respective governors appointed by the crown; a modern system of education under foreign auspices was organized; a modern police system, modern banks and coinage, post-offices and telegraphs, steamship companies, railways, mines and manufacturing, all according to foreign model and methods, were started and subsidized by the new imperial government. We doubt if

changes so many and so radical, in so short a time, ever took place in any other nation.

As for the missionaries, their schools were crowded to overflowing; chapels, torn up everywhere, regular churches were organized, native preachers were ordained, doors were opened on all sides, and calls from all directions for all sorts of work came thick and fast. With preaching, itinerating, teaching, writing, visiting, and reviving, interviewing, etc., the missionaries and their poor wives were kept on the run day and night.

In Osaka, in 1883, the General Conference of Protestant missionaries was held for a week. That was an epoch-making assembly, and the Holy Ghost presided over their spirits and melted all hearts into one sweet cup of brotherly love and peace. Revivals broke out, a great stir was made, and converts were multiplied by the hundreds. But as there was no adequate provision for conserving these results it was not an abiding change.

1890-1900.

Third period (1890-1900). Slower but healthier movements. The rapid advance of missions and the admiration for everything foreign reached their climax about the year 1890. There were causes of this: (1) The conviction of thoughtful Japanese leaders that Japan would soon be swept off her feet bodily, and into an untrod foreign sea. (2) The discovery that all foreign glitterings were not gold. (3) The bringing in of Unitarian, rationalistic, and scientific scepticism from Christian nations. (4) A strong rally of the conservatives, together with Buddhist priests, by appealing to Japanese patriotism touching the foreign treaties.

But let no one suppose that during this period Christianity made no substantial progress. A sifting was needed, in which the faith of some did collapse, but that of many was the more confirmed. The converts were fewer, but more intelligent, and thoroughly grounded; revivals were not so sweeping, but less sensational. Real fidelity and self-denial were tested, the spirit of self-apostrophe developed, and the moral influence of the Christians became more potent in the nation.—Dr. Newton, in an address at the New Orleans Conference, 1901.

Some Incidents of the Recent Great Forward Movement in Japan.

A FIVE-MINUTE SERMON BY A JUVENILE PREACHER.

Public speech seems a natural gift in Japan. One is often astonished at the readiness of school boys in addressing audiences. We heard a five-minute sermon on the street one evening just before the hour for the service, from a mere lad, not more than fourteen or fifteen years of age, who hit upon the salient points of Christian doctrine in a few chosen words—a theologian could not have done better—while his companions, some with banners bearing the name of the church to which the band belonged, some with bundles of tracts and hand-bills stood around him. His hearers, men, women, and children, listened respectfully to the end, and we hope some of them found their way to the church near by. Certainly they all heard something of the great fundamental truths of the Bible. May we not expect that of the large number of young men and boys who have taken part in the street preaching many will feel the call to themselves to the ministry of the Word, and prepare themselves accordingly. We know at least one young man who has been led by these meetings to abandon his cherished plan of a

distinguished professional career in order to give his life to the work of the Gospel.

GESOKUBAN; OR, SHOE CARETAKERS.

One of the indispensable functionaries in every Japanese audience room is the Gesokuban (caretaker of foot-gear), who takes charge of the sandals, overshoes and umbrellas of the audience. The lack of such an attendant (in a large audience several are needed) would be a serious hindrance to the gathering of an audience. This position, however, is considered a very menial one, and not a little money would be required to employ gesokubans for such meetings as we have been holding. In these campaigns every penny is needed for tracts and other necessary implements of warfare. Much surprise and admiration has been called forth from our Japanese brethren by the fact that in their zeal to work for God, the women of the churches, many of them students of the higher schools, and many women of high social position, among them the wife of a nobleman, have been acting as gesokubans at the church doors, and as ushers. Others were fanning the people as they sat on hot nights during the summer, or listened to the Gospel. An evangelist reported with unbounded admiration that he had seen a foreign missionary lady helping in this fanning process.

WHAT A CHRISTIAN WOMAN DID.

Early in the Kyobashiku campaign the workers found that the tracts available for distribution were not written in sufficiently simple language for the masses. This fact was reported at the union prayer-meeting. The next day a manuscript leaflet was presented and unanimously approved, the work of a Christian woman, who withheld her name, and who accompanied the offering with five yen toward the expense of printing. A large edition of this leaflet was printed immediately, and put into the hands of the volunteer bands for distribution. By this means this woman, who was an invalid and unable to attend the meetings, has been telling the story of Jesus and his love to multitudes of her countrymen. The woman who rendered this valuable service, we have learned since, is Mrs. Ando Ando, wife of the well-known temperance worker. Her husband was himself unaware of her authorship of the tract, and spoke strong words of approval when he heard it read. This is but a single instance of the many in which faithful women have rendered signal services in this great work.

Things to be Remembered About Japan.

That Japan is about as large as the State of California.

That though beautiful, it is so mountainous that only about one-tenth of it is under cultivation.

That in this space live 45,000,000 people, 42,000 of whom are Christians.

That though there is no immigration the population is rapidly increasing.

That the Government is a constitutional monarchy, the Emperor being assisted by a Cabinet and by a Congress chosen by the people. Suffrage is limited by property qualification.

That as a whole the country is well governed. Life and property are as safe everywhere in Japan as in America.

That Japan has railroads, steamships, an army and navy, electric telegraphs, telephones, street railways, sanitary regulations, an excellent school system, and everything that marks a civilized, progressive community. Letters are delivered at the same rate all over the land.

That notwithstanding all this, heathenism is still strong in Japan. Many of the more intelligent are utterly indiffer-