

### WAS A JAP FIND AMERICA?

There Are Strong Evidences That He Did.

Ancient Relics Unearthed in City of Mexico Lend Plausibility to the Theory—An Inglorious Columbus.

What if Columbus did not discover America?

What if it was already discovered?

What if the little yellow men of China and Japan, who now serve us below stairs and are here on sufferance, were aware of the existence of this land, had visited it, had records of it, had exercised their influence on its religion and civilization, had engrained their characteristics on its people, ten long centuries before the white man landed?

This is just what the Buddhists of Japan are now trying to prove.

While over the length and breadth of our land millions of little children are daily piping in concert or individually, "Columbus discovered America October 12, 1492," that important and august body, the Buddhist Council of Japan, is busily engaged in trying scientifically and systematically to ferret out proofs that will convincingly demonstrate to the world at large what they believe to be true—that America was discovered by a Buddhist monk years before Columbus made known to Europe the existence of the Western continent, 1000 years before Queen Isabella so generously pawned her jewels to help him discover it.

The Buddhist Council of Japan stands about the same relation to Buddhism and the 40,000,000 of Japanese as the pope and the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda to the Catholic civilized world. It is composed of the representatives of the 12 great sects to which the Japanese belong, and it has ample means to carry on the most extensive research to establish a fact that would so redound to the honor of the Buddhists as the discovery of America by one of their followers at such early date.

The Rev. Shuye Sonoda, Ph. D., is making and directing Buddhistic investigations and researches to that end in this country.

The Rev. Shuye Sonoda, Ph. D., is the head priest of Buddhism in America, sent here by the Buddhist Council of Japan to establish missions, spread the light of the great Buddha and make converts, and he has but recently returned from a visit to Mexico, where he went to sift out from the dust heaps of time some trace of the Buddhist visitors who were there over fourteen hundred years ago.

In his efforts there he has had the assistance of Senor Batres, the archaeologist of the Mexican government, and Senor Walheim, the former Mexican minister to Japan. The Rev. Shuye Sonoda is very enthusiastic over the results of his visit. He has but lately sent his report of this visit to the Hon. Kozui Otani, high priest of the Shin-Shin sect at Kyoto, with which the Rev. Mr. Sonoda is directly connected, and he in turn will submit it to the Buddhist council.

The Rev. Mr. Sonoda is delighted with the progress he has made towards proving that the Buddhists were the original discoverers of America, and believes that before very long the Buddhists will have proof enough so logically arranged as to convince the enlightened world that their claims are well founded.

The belief and claim of the Japanese Buddhists are based on the story of the discovery of Fu-Sang.

The story of Fu-Sang trickled down through the ages in China and Japan until it came to be regarded more as a legend or tradition than a relation of fact. It has been the inspiration of the poets and fable builders of both countries.

Briefly, it is the narrative of one Hwei Shin, a Buddhist monk of the 11th century, who adventured, far upon the trackless waters to obey the command of Buddha to carry his word to the men, and who returned and wrote down what he saw and did.

The gist of Hwei Shin's story, gathered from his many disagreeing translations, is that he ventured forth presumably with a small company of monks, and made his way along the coast, southeast, then east, then south, to form a point on the Chinese coast opposite Formosa, around Korea, Japan, the Kurile Islands, Kamchatka, the Aleutian islands that hang like a string of beads between Asia and America, Alaska, and down the Pacific coast of America to Mexico. He tells us, on his way, he found a land of "masked bodies," presumably the people of the Aleutian islands, who still tattoo themselves, and still, as he describes them, mark their women with the lines on the chin. He tells how he came to a land where the people were not warlike, had no walled cities and no weapons, and where there were "rivers in which the water ran over pebbles."—presumably Alaska. He tells of Fu-Sang, that it is situated east

of the middle kingdom; that it contains many Fu-Sang trees, from which trees the country derives its name; that these trees are of great use to the natives; that they put out shoots like the bamboo, which are eaten; that they have a fruit that resembles a pea but is red; that a cloth is made from the bark, and also other stuffs with which the people clothe themselves; that they make a paper from the fibres of the tree; and that the people have a method of writing. The people, he wrote, have no weapons and do not make war. They have two prisons, one to the north and one to the south. They do not have iron, but use copper instead, and gold and silver is not esteemed of great value by them. Formerly the religion of Buddha did not exist in their country, but now they have been instructed.

These things and many more did Hwei Shin write down. He drew the long bow right royally, as travelers to strange lands have ever done since the world began; but through his story ran the thread of truth, and this thread has led back to Mexico and Central America, where it is believed Hwei Shin and his companions spread their faith.

The Fu-Sang tree that figures so strongly in the narrative is by some believed to be the magney plant; and as for the other points of resemblance it is believed that the people who were superseded by the Aztecs were an unwarlike race who placed little value on gold and silver. The distance Hwei Shin said he traveled, as nearly as can be computed now, would carry him to Mexico over the route he describes.

It is because of this chronicle of his, which was entered in the Chinese Year Book on his return to that country in the year 999 A. D., that the Rev. Shuye Sonoda has prosecuted his researches in Mexico.

"There are many things in the gathered lore of Mexico as well as in its wealth of relics," says the Rev. Shuye Sonoda, "to support the belief that Buddhism once had a strong footing in Mexico, so that the inference that Hwei Shin meant that land when he wrote of Fu-Sang is not a wild one."

"While I was in the City of Mexico Senor Batres, the archaeologist for the Mexican government, unearthed from some ruins of the old capital of the Aztec empire, Teotihuacan, in the excavations he is carrying on along Escalerillas street, an altar and about two hundred small stone beads as well as five-pointed stone balls and other relics of interest. I know of only two religions in which the rosary is used—the Buddhist and the Roman Catholic—and the inference from the beads find is that the beads constituted a religious symbol long in use by priests of a people before the expedition of Cortez of Mexico.

"I also visited the pyramids of San Juan Teotihuacan and Cholulaa, the ruins of Mitla and other places, and am satisfied with results of my trip. I am very much encouraged by both archaeological evidence and philological resemblances.

"There are many widely scattered indications of Buddhist influence on the peoples of Mexico," which when gathered together may prove a convincing argument in favor of our belief that the visits of the Orientals—of Chinese or Japanese—antedated by many hundreds of years the discovery of America by Europeans.

"It is an established fact that the voyage could be made in a small boat, or it would not be necessary to be out of sight of land, except one portion of the passage, and then only for a few hours.

"My zeal in this matter was aroused by reading a book by Prof. Arthur Lillie, M. A., on 'Buddha and Buddhism, in which in a chapter on 'Buddhism in America' he goes into the details of the Fu-Sang story, and calls attention to the fact that among the Chinese the name Fu-Sang has become synonymous with 'Extreme East.' He also points out that in an ancient Japanese encyclopedia, first brought to the attention of the occidental world by M. de Risny, it is stated that Buddhist missions had been sent to a distant land called by the Japanese Poo-Soo. He also recalls the fact that Pao Soidan in his Geografica de I-Peru asserted that Chinese taken to the province of Lambayque were able to converse with the natives.

"There are also puzzling points of similarity between the Mexican and Asiatic astronomies. The Mexicans had the twenty-eight mansions of the lunar zodiac which is far more ancient than the twelve houses of the solar zodiac. Humboldt observed the striking resemblance between the symbols of the Mexican zodiac and those of the Buddhist Tartars—the nine lords of the night, for instance, corresponding to the nine astrological signs of several nations of Asia (the seven planets and two serpents). Also in the Mexican zodiacs are the signs of the ass and the tiger, animals not indigenous to America; and the serpent; the rose and the Makara (cyclops) of Buddhism.

"The Mexicans had the Buddhist rites of bloodless oblation and baptism, little images of maize dough being used in the oblations.

"The best proof of Buddhist pre-emption—the Buddhists were the first who ever sought to carry their religion to other peoples—is found in the pic-

tures and statues of the Mexican Buddha. This Prof. Lillie calls attention to in his work. He is called 'Xaca,' which word can without an im- possible flight of the imagination be identified with 'Sakya,' the name of the Hindu tribes of which the father of the sage, Gustama Siddartha, founder of Buddhism, was king.

"At Uxmal in Yucatan there has been found sculptured the Buddha of Java, seated under the head of a Hindu deity, Siva—a circumstance, in the light of what we know, that can hardly be attributed to coincidence.

"In Mexico there are ancient ruins with pillars and columns decidedly Oriental, being without base, pedestal or cap.

"Many names, apparently corrup- tions of Sanscrit words, are to be en- countered. The high priest of Mixteca had the title 'Taysacca,' and the word 'sacca,' evidently, from the Sanscrit 'sakya,' would naturally be applied to a monk. Then there are Oa-xaca, Xaca teca, Xacatepec, Xaca-tlan, the word being, remarkably common. Guatemala is thought to be a corrup- tion of Gautama-tina, or Guatama-land.

"In my own observation I found that the old palace ruins invariably faced toward the south, which is dis- tinctively Oriental. Again, in the mosaics at Mitla I saw numerous forms of the cross, the vertical and horizontal lines crossing at the middle, like the common cross of Tibet, which is the abbreviated form of the Buddhist symbol.

"There are, in fact, evidences in- numerable in the ruins, the monu- ments, the stone images, the shards, in what these things tell of the customs and religious beliefs, in the now cor- rupted names, in the language of the native Indians—even in their present customs—that go to show to one who seeks with open mind and such knowl- edge of the distant past as is recorded, that the stamp of the Oriental and of Buddhism was on the ancient people of Mexico and its vicinity. On how much more of this country, who shall say?"

The Rev. Shuye Sonoda is not only the one who has been so impressed. Eminent scholars have considered the story of Fu-Sang seriously, and dis- tinguished travelers have found in Mexico traces of what they believed was an Oriental civilization.

It is not generally known that Mr. Edward P. Vining, the superintendent of the Market Street Railway Com- pany, is the author of a book on this

subject. But he was so impressed by the narrative of the Buddhist mariner- monk Hwei Shin, and by his own ob- servations in Mexico, that he wrote a book of nearly 800 pages, setting forth the claims of the Orientals to the dis- covery of America, and gave it the significant title, "An Inglorious Col- umbus." In this he brought together everything bearing upon the subject that had up to that time been printed, and quotes such authorities as Prescott, Humboldt, Neumann, D'Hervey, D'Eichtal and De Guignes (who was perhaps the most enthusiastic of them all), all of whom found something worth serious consideration in the story of Fu-Sang.

Mr. Vining writes: "There exists in Mexico a tradition of Hwei Shin's visit. This gives his name and title of Hwai Shin, bhikshu, as Wi-Shi-peco-sha; tells the district of the Pacific coast upon which he landed; describes his complexion, his beard and his dress; relates the doctrines that he preached; mentions the success that he met in his mission, and states the reason for his return to Asia. \* \* \* The religious customs and beliefs of the nations of Mexico, Yucatan and Central America, their pyramids, their architecture, their arts, their calendars and almost innumerable practices of their daily life, as they existed at the time of the Spanish conquest, show such surprising coincidences with the details of Asiatic beliefs and Asiatic civilization that many independent observers who have either known nothing of the history of Hwei Shin, or who have paid no attention to it, have become convinced from these coinci- dences alone that there must have been communication of some nature between the two regions of the world, and that this communication had probably taken place since the beginning of the Christian era."

Rev. W. Lohscheid, whom Mr. Vin- ing quotes, gives it as his opinion that the American Indians are apparently one race with the Japanese and Eastern Asiatics. It is his belief that many Chinese and Japanese were swept in their junks to where the trade winds and currents carried them toward Mexico or Lower California, where they laid the foundation of that kind of civilization which resembles so closely that of the Chinese and Japanese.

Examiner.

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