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CRAIG HOUSTON
PATTERSON

*MY
CHINA
THAT
WAS*

FROM THE BOXER REBELLION TO PEARL HARBOR

Second Edition, Revised



My China That Was

FROM THE BOXER REBELLION TO PEARL HARBOR

by

Craig Houston Patterson

Second Edition, Revised

Memphis • 1993 • Tennessee

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Memphis, Tennessee

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Foreword

The person writing these memoirs was for many years (1946-1972) pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Bluefield, West Virginia. His name: Craig Houston Patterson. His age: ninety-three. He started off life in mysterious Cathay on March 4, 1897.

I wrote the pages which will follow for friends and grandchildren. Perhaps I should tell you that I dictated the text on a portable cassette, after which it was recorded and copied by various parties. This might explain a certain freedom of style.

I wish particularly to express appreciation to Mrs. Brenda Jarrett, of Bluefield, West Virginia. It was she who last year put to me the idea of making some tapes about my experiences in China, and it was she who began the transcribing. Her suggestion and her excellent work have helped to make these memoirs accessible to many friends who might otherwise never have had a chance to see them.

My granddaughter, Mary Moore Patterson, persuaded me to write down some stories about China in 1975, some of which she will see reappear here. My sister, Margaret Mack, helped much with the typing of the tapes. My son, Bob, helped edit, got the text into a word processor, and made sketches. Finally, various members of the family read preliminary versions of the text and made suggestions. To all these people I say, "Thanks!" But of course, for what will now appear, it is I who must take responsibility.

Brenda Jarrett furnished the spark that lit the flame that produced this booklet. My one last request is that no one say it was a pity that the flame didn't burn the whole thing up!

Craig Houston Patterson
Sunnyside Presbyterian Home
Harrisonburg, Virginia

May 19, 1990

Editor's Preface to the Revised Edition

This new printing of Dr. Patterson's memoirs has permitted me to make some changes that I hope readers will find helpful.

- A new structuring of the text into five main sections should make Dr. Patterson's intentions stand out more clearly.

- Dr. Patterson's 1936 pamphlet, *The Mustard Seed Growing in Sutsien, Kiangsu, China*, of which I secured a copy only after the first edition had been printed, proved to be a valuable resource. Readers will see this most readily in the quotations from it now placed at the beginnings of various chapters and in the many small illustrations from it now inserted into the text. (For example, the miniature Chinese landscape of the Sutsien area, on the facing page, comes from it.)

- Finally, use of a different word processor has permitted greater flexibility in choice of type styles and the insertion of illustrations.

Many people graciously helped in the distribution of the first edition and in the preparation of this new one. To acknowledge them all by name would be difficult, but I do want to make explicit mention of a few. Thanks are due to Mrs. N. G. (Athalie Hallum) Patterson, the artist for many of the sketches that appeared first in Dr. Patterson's 1936 pamphlet and that now reappear here. She was Dr. Patterson's sister-in-law and one of his missionary colleagues in Sutsien. (See pages 19, 61, 62, 69, 73, 82, 95, 127, and 175.) Thanks are due, too, to Dr. Thomas H. Grafton, who thoughtfully provided information that has made it possible to correct earlier inaccuracies in the account of Dr. John Bradley's death. Finally, thanks are especially due to Miss Eleanor Hall, of Bluefield, West Virginia, for her help in getting the first edition circulated to those who wanted it.

When Dr. Patterson died, on November 18, 1990, he had been working on the memoirs for about a year. He made some final revisions just days before he died. It was his hope, all along, that the memoirs would serve as more than just a recollection of past events. He hoped that those who read them might find some present help for living in Christ's Kingdom in today's world. This new edition goes out with the hope that it may contribute to that purpose.

Robert G. Patterson
Memphis, Tennessee

March 1, 1993

Part I
Destiny at Birth



The Sutsien Countryside

The brush drawing on the previous page comes from the front cover of Dr. Patterson's 1936 pamphlet, *The Mustard Seed Growing in Sutsien*. It shows a bird's-eye view towards the north of Sutsien's suburbs and its surrounding countryside, as conceived by a Chinese artist. Sutsien stood more or less at the center of China's vast, coastal agricultural plain (see map, page 8). Three of its counties—some six thousand square miles—constituted the Sutsien missionary "field." Dr. Patterson commented in the pamphlet that the work in Sutsien was located "in the midst of hundreds of square miles of level plain, in the midst of hundreds of thousands of hard-working and struggling persons, in the midst of tens of thousands of villages and market towns." The waterway in the mid-distance presumably represents the Grand Canal, though it appears wider here than it actually was near Sutsien.

The Editor

Chapter 1 Birth in a Far Off Land

Point of Departure, March 4, 1897

“If the first missionaries, forty years ago, were not discouraged when the odds were one native Christian to a million, it ill behooves us to be faint hearted...”

The Mustard Seed Growing in Sutsien
Dr. Patterson (1936)

THE HINTERLAND of China in the 1890’s was a dangerous place for Westerners. When my parents arrived in Shanghai in the fall of 1891, they were foreigners in every way you can think of. Their foreignness was even more noticeable in 1894 when they moved to Sutsien,¹ the upcountry town that was to be their first permanent assignment. The people of Sutsien were not at all sure just why they had come. The color of their skin was different from anyone and everyone on the street. There was no hotel in which to live. Sutsien landowners selling property refused to sell to them, because neighbors threatened death if they sold to the “foreign devils” who spoke a strange language. The smell of their bodies and the color of their eyes made even the dogs try to bite. So it was open hostility into which my parents moved as they took up life among the crowds of people in the plains of North China—seeking to make friends, to learn the language, to understand the culture, and to be representatives of Christ’s church.

In 1894, the town of Sutsien, in northern Kiangsu Province, was home to fifty thousand people. The surrounding villages for which it served as the administrative and business center held an additional population of two million. Neither the people of Sutsien itself, nor those in the satellite villages, had ever before heard a Christian witness. The distance from

¹[Dr. Patterson uses the earlier International Postal Union spellings for place names. In the more recent Pinyin system, “Sutsien” becomes “Suqian.” Appendix A contains a comparative table of spellings for place names, using the two systems.]

[*Note.* When Dr. Patterson’s own marginal comments appear in the text as footnotes, they have been entered *without brackets*. Footnotes supplied by the editor, such as the preceding note, are *enclosed within brackets*.]

Shanghai to Sutsien is some four hundred miles. For travelers in those days, the first leg of the trip was easy enough. Steam driven passenger boats operated up the Yangtze River to Chinkiang and beyond.

At Chinkiang, those going to Sutsien would switch over to the Grand Canal for the final leg. The canal moved in a generally northwesterly di-



rection, parallel to the coast, and the remaining distance to Sutsien was perhaps two hundred and fifty miles. That part of the trip took a week or more. My family would rent a little houseboat, or as we in America commonly say, a “junk.” Sailors on those boats could skillfully navigate their wind-driven craft against the current, and if

it were necessary they were not above climbing out onto the canal banks and pulling the boat along with a rope. All told, the trip from Shanghai to Sutsien took almost two weeks.

My parents had been in Sutsien for about three years when I came into the world on March 4, 1897. Dr. Nettie D. Grier, a medical missionary and a friend who had originally shared the pioneering of the Sutsien station with my parents, had by then moved with her husband to the neighboring station of Hsuchowfu. She came back that spring to be with my mother during the birth of her first child. Some of you who read this account will remember how Mrs. Grier, located during her later years in Montreat, North Carolina, often told the story of going to Sutsien and delivering “the ugliest baby that I ever had anything to do with.” Be that as it may, ugly or not, when “Little Houston” was born and the neighbors saw that the baby had blue eyes and white skin like his parents, and when they realized that my mother and father were just like other people in the world, and that children also were born to them and did not come out of the clear blue yonder, it made this foreign family somehow more acceptable within the Sutsien context.

I lived in Sutsien as a child until twelve years old. When I returned to China in 1923 as a married missionary, my wife, Frances, and I were assigned there. It continued to be our mission station for the next eighteen years. In 1940, we were reassigned to the more northerly town of Tenghsien, in Shantung Province, but by that time Pearl Harbor and the American entry into World War II were imminent and our time in China was near an end.

From the Shenandoah Valley to Sutsien

My parents, Brown Craig Patterson, B.D., and Anne Rowland Houston, M.D., independently made the decision to go to China. They met on the boat as they sailed from San Francisco on September 17, 1891. In Shanghai, two years later, Dr. P. Frank Price, their fellow missionary, married them. They honeymooned in Nagasaki, Japan.

By the time I was born, they had largely established the pattern for their mission work. My mother, a medical missionary, had opened a clinic. Its stated hours were in the afternoon, but she was always on call whether the clinic was open or not. Anne Houston was the daughter of Dr. Rutherford Rowland Houston, minister for many years of the Fincastle Presbyterian Church near Roanoke, at the southern end of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. She was one of ten children, nine girls and one boy. Dr. Houston educated all of his children at home, all the way through college level, so they had few outside contacts.

For a woman to enter medicine in the late nineteenth century was a bold step, so Anne² was unsure how her father would respond when she told him that that was what she wanted to do. Dr. Houston, no doubt knowing already that she intended to go to a foreign land as a medical missionary, raised no objection. She earned her degree at the Baltimore Women's Medical College, a school which was shortly to unite with Johns Hopkins University to become part of the emerging Johns Hopkins Medical School.

My father, Craig Patterson, an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church, U.S., served in Sutsien as an evangelist. One of three children in a Scotch Irish farming family in the Shenandoah Valley, he grew up in the Tinkling Spring Presbyterian Church community, near Fishersville. While training for the ministry at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, then located in the town of Hampden-Sydney, he volunteered for the mission field. Lexington Presbytery ordained him at its meeting in the Mossy Creek Presbyterian Church in September of 1891, and within weeks he was on his way to China.

His first station assignment was Tsingkiangpu, a city on the Grand Canal. We used to refer to it as T.K.P. The town is probably best known in America today as the town where Ruth Bell, wife of Billy Graham and

²Her childhood given name was "Annie," but as an adult she always preferred and used "Anne."

daughter of Dr. Nelson Bell, Presbyterian medical missionary, lived as a child.³

My mother, still single when she arrived in China, went first to Sinchiang, a station near Hangchow in Chekiang Province, somewhat to the south. After my father successfully persuaded her to become Mrs. B. C. Patterson, she joined him in Tsingkiangpu. In later years, she often told in good humor how she had “become an asterisk.” Before her marriage, she appeared in the annual missionary roster as Dr. Anne R. Houston. After marriage, her name disappeared and an asterisk now appeared by the name of the Rev. B. C. Patterson to show that he was married. When she herself referred in writing to themselves as a couple (particularly when her own identity as a doctor was important, as in her missionary reports) she wrote “Rev. and Mrs. Patterson, M.D.”

The couple lived in Tsingkiangpu with friends, studying the Chinese language and looking to the time when they would move to a permanent station assignment. In due course, the North China Mission⁴ assigned them, along with several other missionaries, to go to Sutsien and initiate Christian work there. Sutsien was some sixty miles up the canal from Tsingkiangpu.

This move really thrust them into the struggles that were involved in those days when foreigners tried to break into areas of China where they had not been before. At the end of the nineteenth century, foreign powers had persuaded the waning Ching Dynasty to agree to the so-called “extraterritorial treaties.” By earlier treaties, foreigners had been able to live and do business in certain designated “treaty ports,” but the later “extraterritorial treaties” theoretically guaranteed foreigners the right to live and own property anywhere in China. Nevertheless, local opposition was still rabid. For example, when a house was first arranged in Sutsien for my parents, townspeople burned it down before they could get there.

So how did they ever buy a house? First, they rented. The yamen official in Sutsien, no doubt under pressure from the international treaties and perhaps from the U.S. consul in Nanking, decided to ease pressures all

³[See *Foreign Devil in China* (World Wide Publications, 2nd edition, 1989), a biography of Ruth Bell Graham.]

⁴[The Presbyterian Church, U.S., maintained two separate fields in China, the North China Mission and the Mid-China Mission. Dr. Patterson’s parents and also Dr. Patterson himself were associated throughout their time in China with the North China Mission—except for his mother’s initial language-learning year in Sinchiang.]

around by getting local people in Sutsien to find a house that no one wanted and that they would permit the foreigners to rent. The transaction went through and a small house and yard were found. My parents had been waiting in Tsingkiangpu for about a year when they finally heard that they could move. Their house in Sutsien had six or eight rooms and was in a very run-down part of town where nobody wanted to live. Being outside the city wall, it was only partially secure. Roughnecks on the wall could throw rocks down—on my parents, on their visitors, on the patients who came to my mother's clinic. The house was located in an area that had an obnoxious reputation. You and I in America would have called it the "Red Light District." Since the house had previously been a house of ill repute, the local citizenry thought it was an ideal place to put these intruders. My parents did not learn for some months the unsavory history of the location.

In 1896 the yamen official in Sutsien notified the U.S. consul in Nanking, who notified the U.S. State Department, that he had arranged for my parents to buy a piece of property. As my father said, "superstition and cupidity" both played a part in this transaction—superstition because the townspeople believed that a weasel which was residing under the house harbored a devil and thus made the house ripe to sell, cupidity because the owners wanted the money. So whom better to sell it to than these foreign devils? The property, inside the city, backed right up against the northern section of the city wall. My father gladly bought it.

After I was born, I never went back to search out the first rented quarters. In later life, when I was a missionary for eighteen years in that same city, nostalgia never took me back to rekindle forgotten headaches. Sometimes early beginnings are best forgotten! As for the second house, the one my parents were permitted to buy, missionaries lived in it for many years. It still stands today, now occupied by government agencies. (But don't try to secure a visitor's pass!⁵)

Marco Polo and Sutsien

You might not know it, but Sutsien is famous. Well, a little famous. Marco Polo visited there. Marco Polo lived just about seven hundred years

⁵When my granddaughter, Mary Moore Patterson, visited Sutsien in September, 1987, she was able to locate the house in which my son Bob, her father, had grown up. It was the house that my wife and I had moved into in 1929, located just across the street from the house my parents had first bought. She could view it from the outside, but she wasn't able to get permission to go through it.

ago and he was very much interested in the Orient, in the romance of the Silk Route, in India, and in whatever came from that part of the world. He set out from Venice, in 1271, and traveled through Asia Minor, then through where all the recent fighting has been in Afghanistan, and then on



Northeast China, showing Sutsien, the Grand Canal, and the former bed of the Yellow River.

into northern China near Peking. Marco learned the language and for fifteen years he served the Khan.

His account of his travels made him probably the most famous explorer the West ever produced. But what you may not know is that he also left an impression on the Chinese which they have never forgotten. What interested me most, personally, in Marco's account of his travels in China, was that he mentions going through a town where the commercial traffic on the Grand Canal met the boats on the Yellow River and exchanged passengers and freight.⁶ That town was Sutsien. In fact, the characters of the name Sutsien mean "portage."

It was a distribution point. Boats traveling the Yellow River were unloaded, the cargo piled on wheelbarrows and carts, carried about half a mile, and put on boats on the Grand Canal.

⁶[See Marco Polo's journal, Book II, Chap. 64. Marco calls the Yellow River "Kara-Murin."]

The Yellow River no longer flows near Sutsien. During the floods of 1853-1855, it formed a new channel and it now flows into the China Sea several hundred miles to the north. Its former bed, near Sutsien, is now dry, except for localized flood runoff. But since I grew up climbing the dry banks of the old riverbed and exploring the remains of piers that now stand among sand dunes, and since I have traveled on the Grand Canal all my life, naturally Marco's account interested me.

I have often wondered where he lived when he came. My guess is that he stayed for a couple of days very close to where *we* lived, because our property occupied the only high spot that was within a quarter of a mile of what used to be the loading docks on the Yellow River. It would have been the spot where businesses would locate in order to avoid the summer floods. So just don't forget when you read about Marco Polo that his travels took him right through the territory where I spent half my life.

The Boxer Rebellion

In 1894, the very year that my parents reached Sutsien, Japan started a war with China. Late in the year my parents were accused of being Japanese spies and had to flee the city, but two weeks later they were able to return. The war went badly for China, and by 1895 Japan had inflicted a disastrous defeat. Major European powers quickly took advantage of China's weakness to gobble up bits of territory. Throughout China, anti-foreign furor was high, and it continued to mount for the next five years.

An anti-foreign revolt broke out in 1899, instigated by a secret society called "The Patriotic Peace Fists," or, briefly, "Boxers." The Boxers were particularly hostile to missionaries and Christian converts, whom they took to be visible representatives of the aggressive foreign powers. Hundreds of missionaries were killed, including over one hundred associated with the China Inland Mission ("C.I.M.," an independent or nondenominational group). In mid-summer of 1900, an international force of troops arrived in Peking to rescue besieged diplomats. The Empress Dowager had to flee, disguised as a peasant, and the rebellion was over.

My parents were in Sutsien during most of this time.⁷ The main thrust of the Boxer movement had been in Chihli and Shantung provinces, just to the north of Sutsien, and remarkably no missionaries or converts were

⁷A furlough in 1900, back to the United States, gave a much needed break in the many tensions of this "Boxer year."

killed in Sutsien itself. But the people were extremely suspicious. One rumor that circulated during the early years was that this foreign woman doctor kidnapped little Chinese babies and stewed them at night to make medicine to sell to the people. My parents were very aware of this gossip because some friendly Chinese had already told them that they were sitting on a keg of dynamite. If something happened that made the people think that this might be true, it would arouse a mob to kill.

One morning the gatekeeper, his face pale, came running in, shouting, "Come, quick! Quick!" My father ran out, and there just inside our gate was the arm of a little baby. The arm had been chewed by a dog, and it was clear the child had been suffering from smallpox. But there the little

arm was, and without any question it was the arm of a Chinese baby. The gatekeeper asked in despair, "What can we do? What can we do? We will be accused of killing that baby last night. People will have this proof, which will be very difficult to disprove!"

Father said, "We will have to bury it."

"Oh, no," the gatekeeper responded, "that won't work. They will know something happened and they will dig it up—and that will be worse!"

They finally decided to have the gatekeeper wrap the little arm in some paper and take it to the other side of town and drop it into a ditch. Nothing ever came of this. But if someone unfriendly had seen it, my parents probably would have lost their lives.

Amahs

Westerners in China considered it absolutely imperative to have an amah to look after their children. If you had two children, the chances are you would have two amahs. Somebody had to keep an eye on that child every waking moment. Why? The reasons were fairly practical, in fact, very pragmatic. Those children were just as much strangers in a strange land as were their parents. Everybody that came in wanted to touch them or play with them or see what they did or said. My parents were convinced that it was easy for the child to be exposed to infection if somebody, merely wanting to elicit a playful response, touched its face or its mouth or its eyes. Probably their concern was realistic for the time.

American parents think nothing of leaving their children alone in little carriages in the supermarket, taking for granted that passers-by will not touch or pat them. But in a highly personal society like China, where everybody is able to touch everybody, especially children, that is not the

case. Therefore Westerners all had amahs to keep track of children, to keep them off the streets, to keep dogs from biting them, to keep beggars with all sorts of diseases from catching hold of their clothes. And to control



The West Gate of the Sutsien city wall, around 1910. The road continues westward to cross the former Yellow River bed. (From a photograph.)

people who sometimes would do things that were neither healthy nor proper for the child. I found it very difficult as a three year old, or even a four or six year old, to keep my clothes on as I should. There was always somebody messing around to see what kind of underwear I had on or what I looked like under my clothes. So that was one of the things the amah had responsibility for. I was to see all this from the parental point of view when I returned to China in 1923 accompanied by my wife, Frances Glasgow. It was a great assistance to her that amahs could help in the rearing of children. Frances, after all, would be rearing a family in a culture which was far more alien for her than it had ever been for me.

Pestilences That Walk in Darkness

When my parents went to China in the late 19th century, Western medicine had only a small part of the capabilities it has today. Doctors were able to scour open wounds to protect against infection. They could give vaccinations against smallpox. They had a serum for rabies. The only

disease-specific drug they had was quinine, for malaria. Otherwise, they mainly had to rely on supportive therapies and bed rest for the treatment of disease.

The best guarantee of good health was to avoid contagion in the first place. All through the nineteenth century scientists had been discovering the germs which transmit diseases. So although western medicine of the time did not have much power to cure, it could warn against contagion.

My parents saw sources of contagion on every side. Just be thankful that where you live you can drink water from the spigot without fear, eat a banana without anxiety, and rub an itching eye without apprehension. People these days generally consider thumb sucking by children to be a minor matter. But my parents saw our thumbs as having been on walls and doorknobs and railings and paper money, with who knows what contagious diseases being carried along. We were constantly warned to be careful about anything that went into the mouth or into the eyes.

We knew what might happen if we were careless. I still remember my deep sense of loss, at the age of six, when I heard that Mrs. John Bradley, the wife of our station doctor, had died. Mrs. Bradley was kind and sweet and always had a cookie or a game for us. She was coming back from vacation, traveling on a canal houseboat, and had eaten a banana with a little nicked place or spoiled place in it. Some fly had put his foot into that crack in the peeling, and the banana carried the cholera germ. Cholera is a violent form of dysentery that dehydrates the person who gets it. By ten o'clock that night, Mrs. Bradley was dehydrated to the point of danger. By three o'clock in the morning, she was dead.

Flies had carried the cholera germ from the diseased person to the banana, and the germ went from the banana to Mrs. Bradley. When I was in China, all fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, and fresh water was suspect. The law of survival was to boil everything first before it reached the mouth. Any M-K (missionary kid) who did not learn this lesson well is not here today.

Eaters and the Eaten

Famine periodically visited major disaster on our area, with tens or even hundreds of thousands of people starving. When famine struck, missionaries did their best to help. One of my earliest recollections is helping

my father to carry flour for famine relief.⁸ Floods from the Yellow River were a prime cause for famines. When heavy spring rains sometimes caused the Yellow River to burst its banks, the runoff water would seek out the former bed of the Yellow River as a path to the ocean, inundating the farm fields of our flat midland plains as far as the eye could see.

Not only floods but also droughts could destroy crops.

And so could locusts. The Old Testament often speaks of plagues of locusts, coming like clouds, descending like armies to destroy. We understood about that in North Kiangsu. When locusts came into our area, the first thing the farmers did was to dig ditches around their crops, about two feet deep. Then everybody in the household would take whatever noise makers he or she could find and go out and to frighten the locusts, to make them spring up from the crops and begin to fly. When the little cannibals flew up, everybody would swat them for all they were worth, using handkerchiefs or shovels or anything handy. The result was that many locusts would end up in the ditches, where the farmers would kill them.

When they had caught a basketful or a bagful, they would take them to the farmhouse and fix them for the evening meal. You could not eat the wings or the front half of the locust, so they would break the locusts in half. When they had a big dish full of the edible parts, they would fry them in oil. Along with everybody else, I used to eat locusts, and they really were fairly palatable. The supply was limitless. And every time you ate a mouthful of locust you were getting back, so to speak, a mouthful of the grain that they had devoured. So in a way things were working out and there was still hope.

By the way, if you ever have a chance to eradicate locusts from the face of the earth, don't let anybody stop you! Locusts eat enough food in the world today to support several million people. In case you really have no idea what the locust looks like, it is very much like a great big, long-legged, mean-faced grasshopper. Another thing I learned to my sorrow in later life was that a motorcycle rider had better keep his eyes open for those locust ditches that some farmer had dug across his property. Tires are important to you, but irrelevant to the farmer. When the front wheel drops into a locust trap, you are trapped.

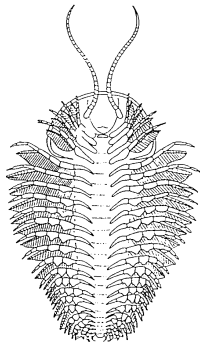
⁸[Probably the famine of 1899, when Dr. B. C. Patterson helped to organize an effort to distribute food.]

Speaking of food, dogs are good eating, too. The meat is very similar to the drumstick of the turkey. Donkey meat is very coarse grained by comparison, and also somewhat hard to chew.

Roads That Last

In Sutsien, the road that led from our house down through the business section and on out the South Gate of the city was laid several hundred years before we arrived. When I was there, it was still in use and was still perfectly good. I remember once walking with my father down the center of the main highway. (I use the word "highway" somewhat loosely. This particular road was only sufficiently wide to permit two wheelbarrows to pass, and even that was difficult if they had big loads.)

The road was laid with solid limestone blocks, originally about one foot square by six to eight inches thick. As we walked over those stones, we found that they had been polished by the sandals and bare feet of thousands and millions of people. My father would walk along, especially on rainy days, keeping his eyes on the wet stones. One day he stopped abruptly and said, "Look, son, look at that. There is something that happened millions of years ago and yet we are just able to see it for the first time."



Fossil trilobite

I looked carefully. Sure enough, there was the skeleton of a trilobite, a fossil that looks something like a crawfish. It was visible because the rainwater on the limestone had cleansed the surface where the footsteps had polished. There it was, just waiting to be seen. After that I noticed how often there was a fossil exposed. And

even when there were no fossils, there were the strata lines in the rock that showed the history of the world on which we were walking.

Our city of Sutsien also spoke to us of the ages. The house in which I grew up as a child was built soon after Pocahontas saved the life of Captain John Smith. It is no doubt still standing today and still occupied (perhaps by some government factotum?). We lived in it. Many others have lived in it. When we are gone, yet others will live in it.

When you live in a land like China, you realize that centuries are looking down upon you. You can hear the whispers of eternity in your ears. And if you care to, you can feel at all times the breath of the ages on your cheeks. ❀

Chapter 2 Along the Grand Canal

Childhood in North Kiangsu, 1902-1911

“Our cheerful home was truly an oasis, in the midst of a desert where the sand was people. One of the supreme joys of my life was when, on coming into the home courtyard after a trip out, the little ones would come running, to be held close...”

Memoirs

Dr. B. C. Patterson, Dr. Patterson’s Father¹

I WAS four years old when my parents had their first furlough back to America.² On our return to China, in 1902, I was to spend the next seven years of my life in Sutsien and the two years after that in Chinkiang. For me as a child, it seemed nothing out of the ordinary for those years to be spent in China. It was simply life. All around was Chinese culture. Like every other missionary kid, I learned to speak Chinese before English, played with Chinese friends, ate Chinese foods.

My parents were my most important link to Western and Christian culture. They taught me the Bible and the catechism. They saw to it that I had chances to visit missionary children in other stations. They ordered clothes and toys from Montgomery Ward in the United States, knowing it would take six months for the packages to come. They always spoke English with me in the home, and expected me to respond to them in English. My mother taught me the first six grades of school. She and my father never forgot that one day I would be going “home” to America.

My younger brother Bill was my constant companion. During my years in Sutsien, Father and Mother were stuck with two active boys who

¹[Dr. B. C. Patterson, Dr. Patterson’s father, wrote his memoirs in retirement, in 1951-1952. The memoirs were privately published in mimeographed form in 1952. Appendix B suggests locations where copies may be found.]

² My memory is very selective about that 1901-1902 visit. I can remember one incident out at our farm home, near Staunton, Virginia. I was holding the hand of my younger brother, Bill, until help came, while he, at age two, screamed in terror at a peacock over his head in a tree. The next recollection is on a boat, which I suppose means it was during our 1902 ocean voyage back to China. The incident I remember is that I was looking down brother Bill’s throat while my father tried to remove a fish bone.

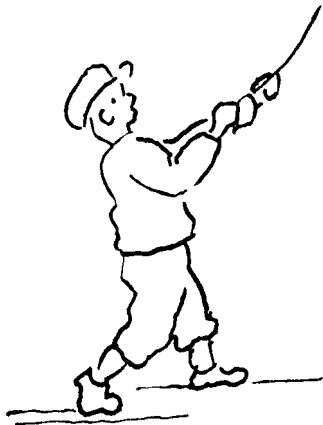
had time on their hands. Father was in his office until five or six o'clock, and he often went to the office again after supper at night. Mother, after trying to teach us in the mornings, went to medical clinics in the afternoons. So Father and Mother were busy all day. They were smart enough to know that two boys left on the loose in the middle of China would come up with some devilment that would be no credit to the missionary cause. Therefore they felt they had to help us find something to do.



Pastimes

My mother was very good at helping us get into the collecting of stamps. She also showed us how to write little articles for the *Christian Observer* and other newspapers back in the United States which printed news from missionary children. We read books, particularly by Henty.³ In fact, I learned how to enjoy by the hour the excitement given me by reading my friend Henty.

Something we really enjoyed during March and April was kite flying. We made our own kites, and some were beautiful. We made square ones.



Or we would cross the squares and have eight-cornered ones. Or we had round kites, or long centipede kites, or dragon kites. The Chinese had a little vibrator shaped like a bow that we could attach to kites. When it was high in the air it would hum loudly. So we would fly our kites and listen to their siren song in the sky. The wall that ran around our mission property included three little yards. All put together, they were about the size of a tennis court. Kite flying, and all our other children's activities, were carried on inside that wall.

Occasionally, of course, our string broke and we lost a kite. By the time we got to where it landed the kite was probably in somebody else's yard, and

³[G. A. Henty (1832-1902), author of *The Reign of Terror: The Adventures of a Westminster Boy*, a novel set during the French Revolution; *The Lion of the North*, about Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden; *With Clive in India*; *With Lee in Virginia*; etc.]

the last thing they were going to do was to open the gate to let us in their yard.

We had seesaws and swings, and anything else like that we could think up. And we had pets. My father bought a billy goat one year. Tying it to a fifteen foot rope out in the front yard, he told me that it was my responsibility to feed, water, and look after it. I think Father's real motive was that he wanted the animal to eat the grass off the front yard. Anyway, I didn't get interested in the billy goat. I let him stand around and baa-baa his head off. Finally, Father got rid of him.

We had canaries, pairs male and female, and we raised families in the spring. I never sold any canaries, but at least they multiplied. And we had little boxes on the walls for pigeons to come build nests. There were crows in the trees every night, and sometimes we were able to get a baby crow and train it.

When I was eleven and Bill nine, we begged for a dog. My father told us that there were two conditions that were mandatory. Number one, we had to look after the animal and be sure it was fed, bedded, and did not bite visitors. Number two, if it ever ran away from the yard and wandered in the street it had to be given away or put to sleep immediately. This last condition was really tough. What dog did not want to run around a little, even if it did nothing except follow its nose? Why under heaven did we have to give it up if it ran away for a few minutes and only circled the block? We were told that it was because disease was rampant. The dog might lick something and then come back and lick our hands.

How we loved to play with that little dog as it started to grow and get frisky! And how we watched to keep the gate shut so we could keep it inside the yard! But one day the dog did get out. It later came back. But who knew what it had licked and chewed? The dog had to go...but we understood.

Chinese Companions

We could have Chinese friends in to play with us between 3:30 and 5:30 P.M. The Chien boys, and other Chinese friends with whom we played, were not allowed to engage in overly active exercises. One reason was that their shoes were made out of cloth, and their parents didn't want them chasing all over rocks and scuffing them. I liked to climb trees and climb walls and swing and do things of that general nature. Wrestling, turning somersaults, and riding swings and seesaws could tear clothes. So

when playing with our Chinese friends, we settled pretty much for games they were used to playing.

Just for fun, let me tell you one. Actually, it was a little gambling game. Everybody took a coin (usually a cash, which didn't amount to much).⁴ Going to the back of some house, we would draw a line on the ground about six feet from the wall. Then each boy would take a coin and bounce it off the wall to see how close he could get it to that line. The boy whose coin was closest picked up all the rest of the coins. I thought it was a right cute game. But when my parents found out about it, they thought it was gambling and forbade my enjoying this little method of collecting a dime or two on the side. However, we continued to play it. We just didn't collect any money at the end of the game.

Another game we might call jackleg baseball. With a knife, we shaved down the ends of a little stick until it was the shape of a small corncob with two tapering ends. I'll call that our puck. Then we took another stick, which I will call our bat, and we had a two part batting process. We would bat the tip of the puck as it lay on the ground. That would make it jump in the air about a foot or two. Then, while it was still in the air, we would use the bat to give it a real hard swat. Whoever could hit it the farthest would win that round. Of course, we had a little element of gambling in our game until we were caught by my parents. It was easy to leave out the gambling incentive, so all was well. But it did detract somewhat from the enthusiasm we had before being caught.

Another game didn't involve gambling, but it also drew some parental disapproval. We found that if we made a wooden pistol and bored a hole where the muzzle would be, we could put a firecracker in the hole. When we lit the firecracker and it exploded, it would pop out ten or twenty feet. We had a good time shooting at each other this way. We considered ourselves inner city bandits.

Many of the friendships of that day still linger. Let me just mention what the Chien boys went on to do. Chien Tsai Tien ("Value In Heaven," the Christian name that he adopted) was about two years older than I. He later attended Nanking Theological Seminary, became a theological teacher, and published a small Christian news periodical and commentary that made his name known all over the Pacific Islands area. In 1951, when

⁴The "cash" was the small bronze coin with a large square hole in the center that was widely used in China for two thousand years. Its value in my boyhood was perhaps one tenth of a U.S. cent.

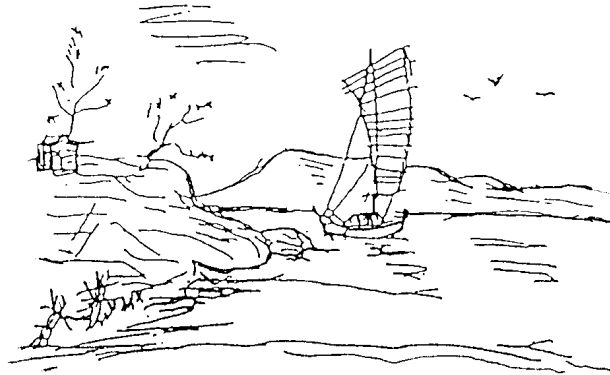
he was fifty-seven years old, he was called to Tsingkiangpu to rebuild the scattered church there.

His brother, Chien Ching Shan (“Vista of Mountains”), exactly my age, was known to us as “Hsiao Erh,” “Little Number Two.” He went on to become a physician and skilled surgeon, training in the Tsingkiangpu hospital with Dr. Nelson Bell. After Dr. Bell left China, Chien Ching Shan took full charge of that hospital and guided its operation during the war with Japan and through the beginning of the communist period.

A Close Call on the Canal

In my early years in China, a large part of the Grand Canal was in disrepair. When the Yellow River changed course in the mid-nineteenth century, it cut down the canal’s water supply, and much of the canal, including the northern section that went to Peking, fell into disuse.⁵ However, we regularly used the section near us. The water flowed south towards the Yangtze, so trips to the south went faster than trips to the north.

When I was about nine years old, my family was returning from the summer at Kuling. We had followed the Yangtze downstream to Chinkiang, and now needed to travel upstream along the Grand Canal to Sutsien. Rains had flooded the countryside, and lakes were over-



One of the lakes forming part of the Grand Canal along its route.

flooding their banks. The little old chug-chug launches, which usually pulled a passenger barge up the Grand Canal as far as Tsingkiangpu, dared not function. The current was too swift for them to make headway and also the people on the weakened banks would not tolerate the waves.

We had to get home to Sutsien because father had all his fall work to

⁵[The canal was overhauled in a project that began in 1958. It will now carry traffic all the way to Peking.]

get underway. There were no motor roads or trains.⁶ The only way was to rent a house boat (“slow boat”) and take two weeks to make our way on the flood. Two hundred and fifty miles can be a long journey in a boat trying to buck the current! Day after day we moved a few miles. The boatmen would hope for a favorable wind, but usually they walked the banks and pulled the boat.

It was about eight in the morning. The boatmen had tied up the boat while they ate their breakfast. My parents were inside dressing and cleaning up. I walked to the prow of the little boat and picked up the pole used to help maneuver our “floating tub.” How deep was the water? Down went the pole on the deep side, but it struck bottom after two or three feet. I tried again, pointing the pole a little further out in the boiling yellow flood water. Ha! Four feet deep there. How deep will it be a little further out? I pushed the pole outward and it kept going and going and going. Before I knew what had happened, I had gone after it. Down once. I couldn’t swim. Down twice. The current had me past the middle of the boat. The third time up I saw the Chinese boatman putting a long pole near my face. I grabbed for dear life and he pulled me out. My mother said later, “I saw it all and was praying you would have the presence of mind to catch the pole. That was your only salvation.”

Do you wish to learn the lesson it taught me? Jesus came to “seek and to save” the drowning. He puts out our “salvation pole,” but we have to do the catching. He does not lasso us.

Between Tsingkiangpu and Sutsien there were three locks, as we called them. These locks did not have gates like the ones you may have seen on the Panama Canal that open and close in order to raise and lower the level of the water. Rather, at each lock the banks of the canal were built inward in a kind of wedge, narrowing the channel and forcing the water to run through a barrier. The result was that the water upstream was about two feet higher than the water downstream. Houseboats going downstream simply let go and ran the barriers (leading to occasional disasters). Houseboats going upstream had to be pulled over the barriers by ten or twelve men turning winches. Because of the locks, that chug-chug launch and barge that I mentioned could only come up as far as Tsingkiangpu.

⁶The incident told in the text happened about 1906. It was about four years later, in 1910, that the railroad lines in our part of China were in process of building. I remember seeing them under construction when I was in Chinkiang [1909-1911]. Motor roads were slower in coming, but by 1935 auto roads, although still impassable in wet weather, linked most major cities.

Brother Leper

On November 19, 1899, during the Boxer uprising and some two and one-half years after my own birth, my brother Bill came into the world. Bill's life and mine were to be intimately intertwined through life, and it began from the very earliest days. During those years of our childhood, we loved to sit in the sitting room and listen to the grown-ups talk. They had plenty to talk about—banditry, thievery, rebellions, threats of revolution, diseases. But these never bothered us much. We let our parents worry about them and we went on about our business.

Bill had a good disposition and a rather simple faith in the goodness of human nature, which made tormenting him a rather easy pastime. Let me give a "ferinstance." He was seven or eight years old when this happened. We, meaning yours truly and various Chinese companions, persuaded him to shave off his eyebrows. The angle in this escapade was that we all knew that only lepers were minus their eyebrows. So we waited to see the reaction of other people.

For two or three days nothing happened. Then one evening our mother was seated in her favorite rocker when she glanced at Bill, paled, and again looked at her second son and said: "William, child, come here. How long have your eyebrows been like this? Did the hair fall out gradually? Do you feel any pain or sensation of any kind?"

She was terribly upset. Bill was too young to understand all the commotion he had created. I began to have second thoughts on the prank. How could I get out of the mess? Finally, when I saw Mother about to have a nervous collapse, I assured her that I had shaved off Bill's eyebrows. She had become so frightened at the thought of her son having leprosy that it was difficult to calm her!

Tempered Justice⁷

My mother used to tell a story on herself about one time when she punished "Little Houston" for something. She thought about this quite often, and I believe she always concluded that she'd done the right thing.

I don't remember what it was I had done that was bad, but, as we have just seen, I did occasionally get involved in mischief! Anyway, my mother decided that for supper on one particular night I should have only bread and water. In the meantime, "The Ladies"—two Scottish ladies, Miss Johnston and Miss McRobert, independent missionaries who lived in our

⁷My thanks to Margaret for this recollection.

station and with whom we were very close—the Ladies sent over a plate of scones. Now Scotch scones were something that the Pattersons never had except when the Ladies would make some and send them over, so this was a marvelous treat! My mother's dilemma was: should I have a scone or not? It was to be part of supper, which for me was to be only bread and water. On the other hand, her original plan of punishment had not included denying me this special treat of scones. So what should she do?

She said, "Houston, when I said 'Bread and water for supper,' I didn't know, of course, that the Ladies would send us some scones. We all know how special these are and I don't think I would be fair if I didn't let you have one. You understand, don't you, that I'm not changing the punishment, only letting you have the extra treat that neither one of us was expecting?"

So at supper that night I had bread and water while the family had tofu and corned beef, and then we all had the Scottish scones together. Perhaps there's something to be said for tempering justice with mercy!

Entomological Hazards

Once when I was about twelve, still in Sutsien, I respectfully pulled up my night shirt and knelt by the bed and started to pray. It was just a few moments before I felt a severe pain on my knee. I jumped up and realized that one of the centipedes that wander around at night had been offended by my knee landing on its back and had turned around and compensated for that pain by giving *me* a pain. The pain from that sting or bite, whatever it was, stayed with me most of the night. On due meditation, I decided that the Lord didn't expect me to put my bare knee on the floor after dark. I didn't think it was wise when I was praying to think more about a centipede than about what I was saying to the Lord. So, since then, I have gotten along very well using other methods for showing respect when a prayer is being offered.

Throughout my years in China, I always shook out my shoes before putting them on in the morning. Leather shoes are still warm when we leave them by the side of the bed. Scorpions like a warm place to cuddle up at night. When I would think of my shoes under the bed with scorpions walking around, I didn't want to anticipate having one misunderstand the purpose of my toe pressing upon him in the morning. So I just shook out the shoe first.

Lice are animals that were very common in the area where I operated. Elderly people would find a warm spot in the sunshine, take off their clothes, and carefully pick the lice from the inside seams. One way to dispose of lice that was considered effective was to put them between your front teeth and hear them crack. I never tried it, but I have seen it done often enough to know what it sounds like. By the way, there are various kinds of lice. Some prefer the body, under the inner layer of clothing. Some prefer the eyebrows or the hair on the head. Fine-toothed combs for the hair were supposed to help. One very satisfying aspect of lice is that boiling underwear eliminates both them and their eggs. Also, a little kerosene oil on the head will finish off any lice that have taken that spot for a winter vacation.

I will conclude this little entomological treatise by sharing with you my wisdom about bedbugs. Many of you may not know what a bedbug looks like. If you don't, congratulations. You may have seen one but just didn't recognize it when you saw it face to face. A bedbug is very flat unless it is full of blood. If he wants to go through a crack, he can do it if he is underfed. If he has gorged on your arm, he will not be able to get back out through the crack.

Bedbugs are about the color of a fishing worm, dark brown or red, and they are about the size of a green pea cut in two. They love to crawl on the skin of missionaries. In my later time in Sutsien, my wife, Frances, would boil my clothes whenever I returned from a tour of the country villages. That truly kills them.

My mother was really allergic to the bite of bedbugs. Their bites would leave her with large welts. She tried every device under heaven to try to stop them, but nothing seems to distract a bedbug when he's on the warpath. I was fortunate. Bedbugs seemed to stick their snout on my hide, and then get disgusted and turn around and leave. The best solution is to sleep in beds where other people have slept and the bugs are well fed. Even so they were irritating, because they walked on my skin and kept me awake a long time.

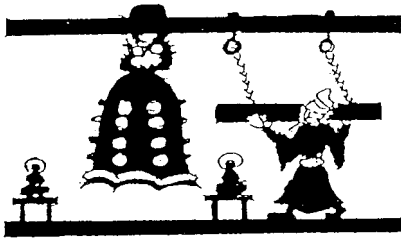
We found that if we put the feet of our cots in saucers of water, it discouraged the bedbugs from crossing over and climbing up. But some bugs are smart. I've heard it said, though I can't vouch from personal experience, that when they see you on the bed and realize that you are frustrating their just desserts, they will go to the ceiling and drop down on you. I can't prove this, but that's the story.

Chinkiang

When I was twelve years old and my brother Bill ten, our mother decided that she could no longer teach us. She sent us to the neighboring mission station of Chinkiang, four or five days' journey south along the Grand Canal. I attended the seventh and eighth grades there, and Bill the fifth and sixth. We lived with the John Paxtons of Danville, Virginia, missionary friends. In our school there were a dozen or more missionary and business children, all studying under the tutelage of a Miss Dougherty. She was a retired teacher from Boston, Massachusetts, whom the mission board had sent to China as a teacher for missionary children.⁸

Those of you who have read Pearl Buck will remember that Chinkiang was the town where she spent her early days. Her maiden name was Sydenstricker (the "S" of Pearl S. Buck), and she lived there with her parents for a number of years.⁹ Pearl was away in Shanghai at this time, in a school for foreign children. Her sister, Grace, was a sixth grader with us.

While living with the Paxtons, we noticed the bong, bonging of what seemed to be a great big bell, not too far away. We heard it every few minutes, all day and all night. One day we decided to go see where it was. When we found it, it turned out to be made of solid bronze and to be



hanging about ten feet above a platform located in a temple courtyard. It was obviously important equipment for that temple. There was no clapper, so the priest used a wooden beam about six inches in diameter and four or five feet long, suspended from the rafters. When

he wanted to ring the bell, he would pull the beam back eight or ten feet, then let it go so that it swung over and hit the bell. It could be heard all

⁸[When Dr. Patterson went through his mother's effects after her death, he found one of his early letters to his parents from Chinkiang. The letter is dated February 11 (1910), during the boys' first winter there. People named in the letter include: Miss Dougherty, their teacher; Mr. and Mrs. James McCutchan; Dr. Wade Venable, M.D. (on the field, 1893-1929), a medical missionary who along with his family returned on furlough to the United States shortly after the boys reached the city; the Wheelers; Mr. Newman (who, according to the letter, had a motor boat); Dr. and Mrs. William Malcolm, M.D. (on the field, 1909-1913); school friends Robert and James, whose parents were in the British business community; and school friends William and Charles Worth, whose parents were Presbyterian missionaries in Wusih. The letter also sends greetings to siblings Paul, Norman, and Margaret, still in Sutsien. In February, 1910, they would have been seven, five, and three years old.]

⁹[See Pearl S. Buck's reminiscences of her early Chinkiang years in *My Several Worlds*, Part I (Day, 1954).]

over town. The purpose was to call the attention of spirits to prayers that were pasted on the outside of the bell. Suppliants hoped that the spirits would answer the prayers in the affirmative.

Bells seem to have been a part of worship all over the world, for as far back as we have any information. Our church bells are supposed to be a sign of respect for a God who is listening. This Buddhist bell was to get the attention of a god who might be asleep.

• • •

During my seventh grade in Chinkiang, there was a famine one hundred miles away in the country. About 20,000 refugees packed up their belongings, put them on wheelbarrows, and came down and camped just outside the city. Every time we went to church, we had to walk by the three or four acres of hovels that the refugees put up. Their settlement was only a half mile from where we lived. Yet not once during that deadly and hopeless winter were we bothered by anyone trying to climb over the wall to steal. Also we felt quite safe, as children, walking by that gang of several thousand hungry people.

The Chinese are the world's best when it comes to patiently enduring tribulations of life which are insurmountable. In times of disaster, they will spread their hands and say *mei yu fa*, which is Chinese for "the situation is totally hopeless."

All of us, to a certain extent, are fatalistic. Even our good old Presbyterian Church has a doctrine that it calls "predestination." I will be speaking in the next chapter of a ten year period when I was back in America for education, when the conviction of God's ordering and providential presence was particularly important for me.



Chapter 3 In God's Providence

Preparation in America, 1911-1923

"The Lord will provide." Genesis 22:8

MY FATHER and mother returned to America on furlough for the second time in 1911.¹ I was fourteen years old. In the excitement of "coming home," I hardly realized that twelve years would pass before I would again see China. The family settled for the furlough year in Staunton, Virginia, and "Grannie"—Margaret Tirzah Willson Patterson—moved in from the farm to winter with us.

Staunton was where I had my first year of high school. In those days we had to learn the basics—English grammar, composition, Latin, algebra, geography. During that same year in Staunton, I made my first talk in public. The church we were attending had sent me to a rally, probably because nobody else would go. When I came back, they seemed to feel that since they had paid my way, the least I could do was to give them a speech. So I made my talk and told the people what I had seen.

It just so happened that the trip had taken me to Richmond, Virginia. I stayed in the home of an extremely well educated couple named Bemiss, members of the First Presbyterian Church. I did not know it at the time, but the visit in their home really changed the course of my life. I was hungry for some sort of assurance, and the welcome that this couple gave me was one of the stabilizing influences of my life. Furthermore, within less than a year, Mrs. Bemiss would be of real help once again, to both my brother Bill and me.

¹In his memoirs, my father spoke of his five "hegiras" (Arabic word: "flights") within or from China. (1) In 1894, he had to flee from Sutsien for two weeks because of unrest associated with the Sino-Japanese war (above, p. 9). (2) His furlough of 1900-1901, when I was four, was in part a flight from the Boxer Rebellion. (3) In 1911, at the time this chapter picks up, the Chinese Revolution which ended three thousand years of Chinese empire was under way. (4) In 1927, he and my mother—and, I might add, I and my own family also—had to flee from the violence associated with the communist-nationalist split within the Kuomintang Party (below, Chap. 5). (5) Finally, when he retired from the field in 1939, it was in the midst of the Sino-Japanese war which, as we now know, would lead shortly to the American entry into World War II.

"The Lord Will Provide"

When Abraham took that heartbreaking trip to Mount Moriah to sacrifice his young son, Isaac, as God had commanded, Isaac looked up into his face and asked, "Father, we have here the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb?" Abraham was on the spot. He could not tell Isaac the truth, and he could not lie to him. So he made a great statement of faith that people have used down through the years: "The Lord will provide" (Genesis 22:8).

I have always found Abraham's statement to be deeply meaningful. As I look at my life, there has never been a time when God has not provided what was necessary for what HE wanted to be done. Abraham's statement is the motto that could have been written over my way at every turn of the road.

By the fall of 1912, my mother and father had returned to China. There was no way that Bill and I could continue schooling at the station in China, so some other arrangement had to be made. One of my mother's older sisters was married to a physician, a Dr. Walter Plecker, and lived in Richmond. They had no children of their own, and they offered to provide a place for us to stay while we went to high school. When fall came, Bill and I landed on our aunt's doorstep.

What I needed at that point in my life was somebody who understood the needs and tensions of a fourteen year old boy, ten thousand miles away from home. The Pleckers simply weren't able to give the kind of understanding care that I needed. As a child on the mission field, I had lived in the midst of conflict. I did not need any more disappointment, or muddying of the water. I do not believe that the Lord Jesus Christ came to this earth to give people the excuse to castigate.

The Pleckers' apartment was in a building at 17 South Third Street, on a busy corner. They gave us a room, and we settled in and started to school. But, my! My! What are two young boys supposed to do, penned in by apartment walls and concrete sidewalks and busy streets? My parents and my younger brothers and sister had now gone back to China. There were no other children besides Bill and me in the apartment house, there was no playground attached that we could use. I was lost, and I mean L-O-S-T.

It was then that Mrs. Bemiss heard that we were there. She had many children of her own and knew what Bill and I were up against. The Y.M.C.A. was located just a few blocks from our home, and Mrs. Bemiss

sent us an envelope enclosing a one year membership to the boys' division. It actually saved our lives, or saved our sanity, or saved the sanity of Mrs. Plecker—you can make that decision. But, thinking of Mrs. Bemiss, let me say this: if you ever take a first year high school kid on a visit into your house, and are nice to him and don't forget him, you may never know what you have done for him!

Those days in high school, in spite of an occasional heartbreak, are very precious to me. As I look back, I realize that I was not only being looked after by my relatives and friends but by my God and Savior in heaven. My parents' prayers were being answered. Their dedication and sacrifice were working to my good. In spite of my ignorance and unawareness, their prayers were being fulfilled.



Washington and Lee University

I entered Washington and Lee University, in Lexington, Virginia, in the fall of 1915. In June, I had finished at Richmond's John Marshall High School. That summer I worked on my grandmother's farm, located in Augusta County a few miles out from Staunton, and in the fall I headed down to Lexington.

The university physician for Washington and Lee was a Dr. Robert Glasgow. He had worked in Fincastle, earlier, where he had known the Houstons, including my mother. So in a very natural way I soon came to know the Glasgow family. Their youngest daughter, Frances, entered Agnes Scott college that same fall that I went to Washington and Lee. She turned out to be the person who would become my wife.

The Glasgows were Scotch-Irish by ancestry, by blood, and by choice. The uncle for whom Frances was named, Mr. Frank Glasgow, a lawyer in Lexington, typified that attitude as distinctively and effectively as anybody else in the entire family. When I was a freshman at Washington and Lee, he had a Sunday School that he was running on Sunday afternoons, near a golf course out from downtown Lexington towards House Mountain. (The golf course is not there today; the club that owned it has disappeared. The Sunday School is gone, too.) Mr. Glasgow would come by to inform me that he was expecting me to help him in the Sunday School. I think

Mr. Glasgow knew that I had been doing this kind of work for my uncle in Richmond, at the Roseneath Chapel of Second Presbyterian Church, so maybe that accounts for his assuming that I would do it.

I taught for several years in that little place, and it was good experience. Later, in the winters, I preached several times for the Oxford Presbyterian Church, just three miles away from the Sunday School. It made me feel good to notice that the two elders who were in charge of the stoves would go sound asleep. I knew that they were satisfied with what I was saying.

When Frances and I fled China as refugees in 1927, we came back to Lexington. I served at Washington and Lee as secretary of the Y.M.C.A. for those two years. We lived with Frances's father, Dr. Glasgow, during that time. Frances's mother had died while Frances was still in college. In 1927, Dr. Glasgow was in poor health, and we were very glad to have that time to be with him. Shortly before we went back to China in 1929, he passed on.

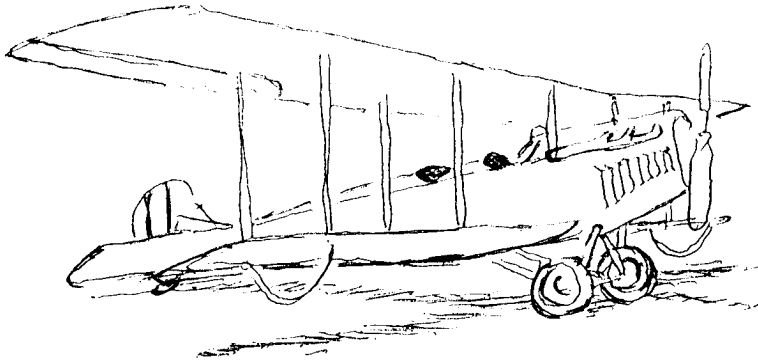
One last word about Washington and Lee. Some of you may check on the books and find that I have a Doctor of Divinity degree. Some may wonder where this came from. I do not know for sure, but I have a pretty good hunch. Some of my wife's first cousins were in high places in the church and community. The Glasgow name was much respected. Tom Glasgow and his various brothers and first cousins² were people that did what they thought was the right thing, and were able to accomplish what they set out to do. I believe it was somebody in this Glasgow crowd who decided that since their first cousin, or sister, or otherwise Frances Glasgow, had "gone off the deep end" and married this fellow, Patterson, the least they could do was to get him a D.D. So they went to the Washington and Lee trustees and talked it up. When I came back on furlough in 1936, it was revealed that I was supposed to go to Washington and Lee's commencement and receive a D.D. I was deeply grateful. That's the story...I think!

²Dr. Robert Glasgow, Frances's father, was a physician in Lexington. His son, Robert Glasgow, Frances's older half brother, became a businessman in Charlotte, North Carolina. Dr. Robert Glasgow's brother, Frank Glasgow, was the lawyer in Lexington whose work in the Sunday School I mentioned. Mr. Frank Glasgow's sons included Charles, a lawyer in Lexington; Thomas, who held a law degree but went into business in Charlotte, North Carolina; and Samuel McPheeters, a minister who held pastorates in Knoxville, Tennessee, and at the Independent Presbyterian Church in Savannah, Georgia. All of the Glasgows took an active interest in the life of the Presbyterian Church, and many of them provided leadership for Washington and Lee University.

God Puts a Finger In

At the end of my junior year at Washington and Lee, in June of 1918, the United States was at war with Germany and I was up for the draft. To escape this, and to do something that was really interesting, I signed up with the Marine Corps Aviation as soon as the school year was over. They sent me to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for ground school, and by the first of November, 1918, I found myself at the United States Marine Aviation base on the outskirts of Miami, Florida. The place today is filled with houses, but then it was occupied by sand dunes, rattle snakes, and everglades. Within a week after arriving there, we were flying the little two-seater Curtiss JN-4 trainers, an instructor in the front cockpit and the cadet, meaning yours truly, in the back.

After ten thirty-minute training sessions, my instructor told me to take it up alone. How I hated that cocky instructor. He had bawled me out, cussed me, tried to rattle me, and in general consigned me to the lower



The Curtiss JN-4, widely used in America during World War I as a training plane. It was called a "Jenny," after its identifying initials.

regions. I tried taking the plane up and bringing it back a few times. Every time the plane landed I was in for another cussing.

Towards the beginning of my second week of this solo work I made an unforgettable, unforgivable mistake. When our little planes were sitting on the ground, the engine stood so high that the pilot could not see directly in front. We were supposed to be sure there was no other plane in front of us when we took off. There had been none when my plane landed.

After a few minutes, I waved to the mechanic and he started the engine. I looked on both sides as best I could and then started off. What I didn't know was that another plane had pulled directly in front. After

running about one hundred and fifty yards, my plane had picked up enough speed so I could pull its tail up and look over the top of the engine. Immediately I saw, not fifty yards ahead of me, a plane with a pilot and instructor in it, talking to each other. They did not yet realize that I was coming one hundred percent straight at them and that my propeller was within seconds of cutting right into their plane and grinding up every piece of clothing on their backs.

I couldn't brake to a stop, since our planes had no brakes. There was not even any way I could turn right or left. Only air pressure on the tail flaps would turn our planes, and I wasn't going fast enough for that to work. There was just one possible thing to do, and I didn't think even that would work. I had to get going fast enough to jump over that plane. I immediately threw the throttle into full position. Our engines in those days were not too powerful, but they did have 130 or 140 horsepower. As soon as I threw the throttle, I could feel the plane make a surge forward.

The two men in that plane were both good friends. By the time I was about twenty or thirty yards from them, they had seen me, and I could see their faces turn white. I could see their eyes, too, and that I can never forget. I knew they were thinking that a terrible wreck had to happen. I thought so, too!

When I came to about fifteen feet from the rear of that plane, I pulled back on the stick just as hard as I could, and believe it or not, my plane jumped. When I got past it, in just seconds, I knew I had to do something quick or my plane would stall and crash, so I pushed the nose of the plane down until the wheels almost touched the ground again. By that time it had gained flying speed, and there was no problem to take it on up.

I went around the airfield once and then brought the plane in to land. The wheels had eased down to within a foot or two of the landing strip when I realized my whole nervous system was so "shook up" that I had better take it around again. By then, everyone knew there was big trouble. The next time round the field I saw the fire trucks and the ambulances pulling out to be ready. I also saw my beloved instructor standing and glaring.

I landed and sat there in my plane while my instructor walked slowly toward me. I waited for the lightning bolt. He came to the side of the plane, leaned over and said, "Patterson, the field captain wanted to ground you permanently, but I told him you were O.K. I said I would be responsible. Try not to do it again." And he walked off.

I can tell you that I really appreciated that instructor. He could easily have used up his whole stock of curse words on me, but he didn't. He patted me on the back.

I don't mind telling this little story because I feel perfectly certain it is one of the times that God stooped down and put his finger in my affairs and made life possible.

On November 8, 1918, the armistice between the Allied Powers and Germany had been signed and the war was over. We were called in by the commandant of our unit and told that we could have a leave of absence for the remaining term of our service (three and one-half years), or we could remain in the Marine Corps during our four year enlistment.

I was getting aviation experience that I believed was worth twenty times what I could make in any business, so I chose to stay in. But God seems to have known best. When the discharges came, my name was listed among those who were to be sent home. I knew that for some reason, God was changing my plans. In retrospect, most of the boys who stayed in got killed one way or another.

The Call to China

I will quote from a letter I wrote to my parents during my last few weeks in Miami, as I think it shows something about how I was thinking about God and God's purposes for the world and for me. The letter was dated December 8, 1918. Its address is given as "Marine Flying Field."

... The more I see of this world and man, the more pressing I believe to be the needs, opportunities and duties of all who know the name of Christ to teach the principles of his kingdom to all people. I came into this war because I believed that by making the world safe for Democracy, the name of Christ and the practical applications of Christ's principles could be put into effect more perfectly, and I sincerely believe and pray that the nations now are acting under the divine guidance of God... [Yet] the time when universal peace will become an actuality do[es] not seem to be any nearer attained than during the darkest days of the war. How long, oh how long will it be, before the spirit of Christ becomes such an actuality among men that all men will have heard of Christ and allow themselves to be guided by His teachings?

When my name was on the list of those to be discharged rather than among those who were to remain in the Marine Corps, I thought, yes, more than thought, I knew that God had put His finger in again and changed my situation for a reason.

My immediate objective was to finish at Washington and Lee. I had missed most of the first semester, but the University gave me partial credit for work in the Marine Corps, and I was able to graduate in 1919, on time. When I graduated from Washington and Lee, I had no clear plans—no job, no money, no home except relatives. What could I do? Where could I go? Out of the clear blue sky, one of my friends said, “I’ve just gotten the job of principal at the Danville (Virginia) high school. Will you come and be my assistant principal, teach science, and coach athletics?”

I felt it was the hand of the Lord. Of course I accepted. It changed my life in many ways. It was in Danville that I received a scholarship to Union Theological Seminary. Otherwise I don’t know how I would have gone. It was also in Danville that Mrs. D. A. Overbey and I became close friends. She was a distant relative and very active in First Presbyterian Church of Danville, and she would be a loyal supporter for me while I was on the mission field in China.

That summer, by the way, my parents came home from China on a “normal” furlough (no *hegira*). They lived in Lexington for the 1919-1920 school year. Bill was still at Washington and Lee, and the three younger children—Paul, then seventeen, Norman, fifteen, and Margaret, thirteen—attended school in Lexington. Frances Glasgow had just finished college and was in the first year of a two year appointment to teach in the Lexington High School. She had Paul and Norman as students in her classes that year, an experience that she would later describe as having been unnerving.

When I went to seminary, I committed my life to God’s purpose. But during seminary years, I was still searching to know how that purpose would be expressed. There were no open doors. The world was not waiting for me to do something startling. Then I remembered a verse in the Bible about the woman who came to Jesus: “She has done what she could” (Mark 14:8). I knew that I could do something that not many other people could do. I could go back to my home country of China. I could go back to help disadvantaged people in this undeveloped part of

the world. I could go back. That I *could* do! God had placed the call to China on my heart.

Roanoke Presbytery carried out my ordination at its summer meeting of 1923. Even as recently as 1923, the church theoretically expected its ministerial candidates to write a theological thesis in Latin. My impression, however, is that none ever did, even though the Presbytery candidates' committee informed me that it was only as a special favor that they waived this requirement for me. That same summer Frances finished her master's work in religious education, and we were married in June of 1923. Within two weeks we had sailed from Vancouver on the *Empress of Canada*, a Canadian Pacific ship, looking forward to a trip of a little over two weeks across the Pacific.

An Ominous Earthquake in Japan

Just twelve hours before we had expected to dock in Yokohama, we saw a report on the bulletin board from the ship's radio communications room that Tokyo and Yokohama had suffered a devastating earthquake. Warships were rushing in to rescue whom they could. In northern Honshu Island, government operations had been demolished. Japan was at a standstill. We increased speed to get to Yokohama as soon as possible, to help evacuate refugees.

We pulled into Yokohama harbor at about breakfast time the next morning. The entire horizon, as far as we could see, was full of heavy black smoke, still boiling up in Tokyo, fifteen miles away, and all around the circumference of Tokyo Bay. Yokohama, although a far smaller city than Tokyo, had in some respects suffered worse, because there were bluffs behind the city that had crumbled and taken the houses with them.

We took more than fourteen hundred refugees aboard that day to carry them to Kobe, about a ten hour trip down the coast. When night came, we all doubled up and slept where we could. The refugees had nothing but the wet clothes on their backs. Frances used to tell how she raided her trousseau—the trunks she had brought along with clothes and shoes that were supposed to suffice for seven years—to try to give some help to those refugees.

The 1923 Japanese earthquake provided us with quite a welcome to the Orient. It also turned out to be extremely prophetic of later earthquakes from Japan that we would experience.

Coming "Home" to China

When Frances and I disembarked in Shanghai, it had been more than ten years since I had listened to or talked any Chinese. In trying to test out how much Chinese language I remembered, an immediate problem was that the people of Shanghai use an entirely different dialect from the North Kiangsu Mandarin I had grown up on. When the coolies on the wharf chattered to one another, it was completely foreign to me. But, much more discouraging, even when my parents started talking Chinese, not one word rang a bell. Naturally it seemed to me that I had forgotten everything.

Frances and I needed to head upcountry towards Peking, where we would be enrolling in language school. The first leg of the trip took us to that same Chinkiang where I had spent part of my boyhood. We stopped with some missionaries, who sent me

down to the railroad station to buy tickets to Peking. I took the mode of travel that was available in Chinese towns in those days, a jinrikisha. A jinrikisha is a two wheeled buggy that somebody pulls. As we were jogging



along the rikisha coolie bumped into a woman carrying a bucketful of hot water. You can imagine the language that popped out from both sides. The woman told the rikisha coolie what she thought of his ancestors, and he told her what he thought of hers. It was a first class ruckus, right in the middle of town.

Any child growing up in the U.S.A. knows bad words when he or she hears them, and any missionary child growing up in China knows the bad words, too. The interesting part to me of that whole episode in Chinkiang was that I understood everything they said. They were cursing each other upside down and backwards, and I understood every word because I had grown up listening to those gentle epithets.

Missionaries in China always referred to their furloughs in the United States as "coming home." But there on the streets of Chinkiang I realized that, for me, "coming home" meant coming home to China.



Part II
Mission in Sutsien



Chapter 4 Sutsien in the Warlord Era

Critical Circumstances, 1923-1927

“We are never out of sight of houses, never out of sight of people, never out of sight of graves. We are confronted by perplexing problems, economic, political, social, and religious. We are manacled by opposition and suspicion, both active and passive...[Yet we have] preaching points and chapels functioning on an average of every ten miles, north, south, east, and west, throughout our field.”

The Mustard Seed Growing in Sutsien
Dr. Patterson (1936)

THE North China Mission assigned Frances and me to Sutsien, the town in which I had grown up. But first we needed to study the language. We spent our first year, 1923-1924, doing that in Peking. Our living allowance from the Mission Board was minimal. To make ends meet, Frances and I took a job for the year as resident managers of a guest house where many of the language students lived.

Peking is a city of real class. The Temple of Heaven was there. Maybe it did not overshadow the Taj Mahal of India, but it tried. The Legation Area housed the ambassadors of many great nations—the United States, England, Germany, Japan, and one or two dozen more. It was only about ten years earlier, in the revolution of 1911, that the romantic and secretive forbidden city, suggesting the opulence, greed, lust, and ruthless power of five thousand years, had been opened to the public. The Lama temple of Tibet, the Buddhist temples of India, the mosques of Persia, the indigenous Altar of Heaven, covered only by the canopy of heaven, were all there to visit. Although we took off every Saturday for visiting, even so we never got much further than Moses did when he climbed Mount Nebo for a view into the promised land. Frances and I were always grateful, later, for this glimpse of the China that was and the China that could be.

• • •

When the time came actually to go to our assigned station, in the late summer of 1924, we soon discovered that Sutsien, by comparison to

Peking, was “backwoods”—isolated, poverty plagued, politically unstable, robber infiltrated, bypassed by any and all economic development which the uninitiated might assume to be essential. We had some electric light bulbs, but no electricity. We had water pipes, but no pumping station. The town had one telephone line, but it ran out after fifty miles. There were no sewer pipes. (There was a local market for night soil. The Chinese farmer was the world’s first and best recycler.) Meat was sold in the market, but the supply of beef was erratic, because no one knew just when some underfed cow was going to die.

By the time Frances and I reached Sutsien in 1924, my parents had been reassigned to Tengersien, but we looked forward eagerly to the association we would have with the other missionaries. One that Frances was particularly interested to get to know better was Mr. William F. Junkin, whom she had known as a child in Lexington. Another was Dr. Charles Henry Voss. Frances had a special reason to be thinking of him. We were expecting our first child in just a few months. Dr. Voss, with his wife, lived next door to where we were to live.

On leaving Union Theological Seminary in Virginia in the summer of 1923, I had intended to study on the side and qualify for a Doctor of Theology degree from the seminary on our next furlough. On reaching Sutsien, I tried for a few months to find time to study and then noted that my blood pressure was dropping to the danger point. Alarmed that because of weakness I wasn’t able to concentrate except a few hours each morning, I realized that I was simply overworking my body. It would have been foolhardy not to take stock and do some changing. So I sent the theology books back to America and haven’t tried that particular method of securing a graduate degree from that day to this.

Our station had a fairly large compound south of the city walls, out among the grain fields. We called it the “South End” (see map, page 72). Both the hospital and the middle school for boys were located there. Since my responsibilities that first year included administrative oversight of the boys’ school, Frances and I moved into one of the missionary residences in the compound. As a side benefit, we would be near Dr. Voss.

Our Firstborn

For me, coming back to Sutsien was coming to my old home. For Frances, of course, it was more traumatic, for she had to get adjusted to life in an entirely different environment from what she had known in

Lexington. However, she did a magnificent job of getting oriented quickly. Our first child, a son, arrived on December 17, 1924. We named him Craig Houston, Jr. My Chinese friends kept track of the astrological aspects of his birth, but as far as I am concerned, I never even looked up the star under which he was born. However, that doesn't mean that he was not somebody very special.

Smallpox was all around us, and we knew that visitors coming into our house would have been able to bring contamination. So within ten days we had the baby thoroughly vaccinated. We did not realize, at the time, that Houston, as a newborn baby, inherited immunity from his mother for a short time and that only after a few months had passed would he have been open to infection.

While still very young, Houston succeeded in breaking most of the bottles that his mother had prepared for him. But bottles that would fit the nipples we were using would have to be ordered from Shanghai, taking who knows how long. We were down to one bottle, so something had to be done. Since there was no other solution, the only idea that looked reasonable was to get a local craftsman to make a duplicate out of zinc. He made the metal bottle. Admittedly it was a little heavy, but it fit the nipples, it served its purpose all winter, and it made Houston happy. Pragmatic make-do has its place!

Aptitudes and personalities develop very early in a young child. Houston, from birth onwards, obviously liked to do things with his hands. He was still quite young when he started making things. Soon he wanted chemistry sets and carpentry tools. He liked puzzles of all kinds. Puzzles, a commodity for which the Chinese are famous, of course, were one thing we *could* get in Sutsien markets.

How can a parent ever forget a child that is born eleven thousand miles away from his ancestral home, and under circumstances that in many ways were very critical? That little youngster, whom I carried in one hand for the first week or two, is now ready to retire from a teaching position in McCallie School, Chattanooga, Tennessee, that he has held for most of his life. Life really slips by.

The Harley-Davidson

Once Frances and I had settled down in Sutsien, my main missionary responsibility was to oversee a "field" of twenty-two little churches outside the city. Some were located just a few miles from town, others up to forty

or fifty miles away. Getting around my field required a good deal of travel. During my work in China, I never owned an automobile. That kind of money just wasn't forthcoming. However, my good friend in Danville, Mrs. D. A. Overbey, knew I had a transportation problem. She wrote and asked, "How do you get over the country? You've got this field that is fifty miles each way, and that's a long way to have to walk every time you want to visit your people. How do you work it?"

The answer was that the only thing that could be used successfully would be a motorcycle. Mrs. Overbey wrote me to "go ahead and get yourself a Harley-Davidson," and enclosed a check for five hundred dollars. Needless to say, I was delighted.

Tell me, whatever happened to motorcycle sidecars? The one I used in North Kiangsu had a sidecar, but I haven't seen any of these on the roads in the U.S.A. for a long time. In my day, the sidecar was a life preserver. The dogs were always in front, on each side, and behind. They jumped up and if possible caught hold of your sleeve. I always strapped a box of my stuff on the back of the motorcycle, to keep them from nipping my coattails. I wore leggings to keep them from chewing my calves.

Obviously sooner or later the rider was going to take a "header." The sidecars held us up when dogs got in the way, or when they got under the wheels, or when they jumped up and tried to bite us on the back. A motorcycle holds itself up by locomotion, but in my situation it was really very important to have some additional way to hold the thing up under canine attack.

After I got my Harley-Davidson, I enjoyed taking Houston out in the country in the sidecar occasionally so that he could look around. Then, by the time he was six, he wanted to build motorcycles. In fact he once thought he had one built (using parts from a dismantled relic in Mr. Junkin's side yard), but it didn't work. Maybe this is one reason why he later insisted, even before he finished high school, that he had a right to ride a motorcycle. His mother and I were profoundly grateful that nothing really serious ever happened to him or to his younger brother, in spite of ever increasing automobile traffic in the United States during the years when they rode those machines.

Shrapnel and Tomato Plants

The spring and summer of 1925 was bad medicine, both for the people of China and for missionaries. The Warlord Era of 1916-1928 was the low

point in the twentieth century of Chinese political unity and national strength. Dr. Sun Yat Sen had been known since 1911 as the “Father of the Revolution.” When he died, on March 12, 1925, the balance of political power in China entered an immediate crisis. But even apart from Dr. Sun’s death, warlord factions in our area shifted every few months.¹

It was during this time that we in Sutsien actually came under shell fire. The time was in early November. My work had taken me away from Sutsien to a church thirty miles to the northwest. Word came to me by special messenger that retreating soldiers were on the rampage, that they were headed for Sutsien, and that I had better get home and help look after the family.



Rains had made the countryside a bog. Motorcycling was impossible, so I started walking. Later I found a little dirty, disintegrating boat on the canal and bribed the owner to take me to Sutsien. When I came to the place where one disembarked for Sutsien, I could see various companies of soldiers sitting around in the fields. They tried several times to bluff me by saying they were going to shoot to see how high a foreigner could jump, and I returned the bluff by jumping and waving. But nothing really happened.

Inside the city wall things were tense. Friends, neighbors, strangers, were moving into the missionary houses, which they judged to be the relatively safest place according to their best estimates in the area of the relative. The city fathers sent Mr. Junkin to talk peace with the military officers. Of course they wanted more money than the town had. Mr. Junkin came back about midnight and reported that the city would probably be shelled.

We all went into the cellar of our house, hoping for the best. We formed a really motley crowd. In the center was Frances, holding six month old Houston. Various friends were near by. Chinese visitors jammed into the room. All at once we were stunned by an explosion that broke most of the exterior glass on the south side of the house. A shrapnel shell had landed there. Even more grievous, it had landed in my precious little tomato plot in the middle of the yard. Things were tense for the next six or eight hours. Renegade soldiers did much looting in the town.

¹The looting soldiers with whom we had to deal in 1925 and 1926 may have had some loose connection with Sun Ch'uan Fang, a military governor, or warlord, operating from Nanking. As far as I know, Governor Sun was not related to Dr. Sun.

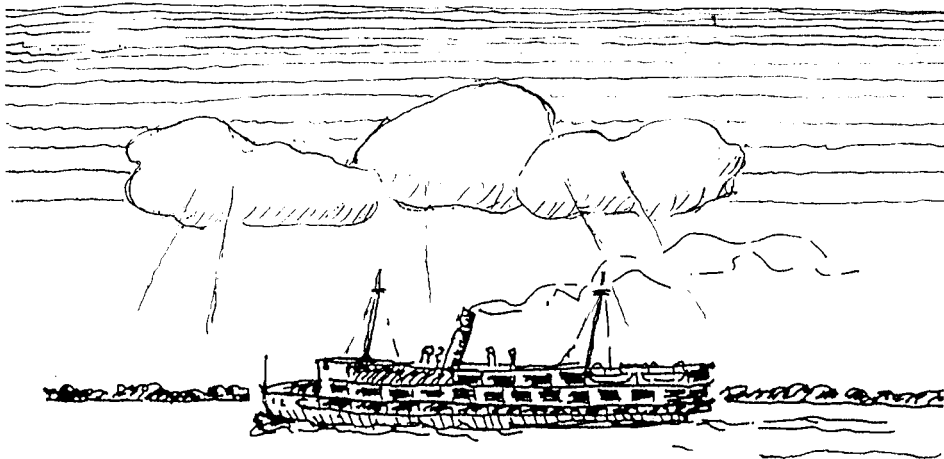
We were spared. But I never have quite forgiven the scoundrels for blowing up all my tomatoes for that summer...Oh, well.

Winter Cold

What do you do when you are about to freeze to death? The first winter that we were in our station, we stayed at home by our stoves most of the bad days. But by the winter of 1926, I had begun my itineration, and it was necessary for me to be in the country most of the winter. Sutsien weather is subtropical, but in the winter it gets cold. The temperature dropped to below 32° every afternoon and stayed around 25° until about 9:30 in the morning. It would then rise to about 35°.

When I was itinerating, I would visit Chinese friends and drink tea, morning and evening. The floors were dirt, and it was the custom to throw out the used tea leaves under the table. In the summer, the dirt floor absorbed the liquid, but in the winter it froze. Often there would be a slab of ice under the tea table.

When you have to sit in this temperature, hour after hour, you freeze unless you are prepared for it. My first year I had no adequate preparation. I thought an overcoat and undercoat and sweater would be enough. It was not. My arms had on them everything they could handle, but they were still cold. My fingers were blue. I put on three pairs of long woolen underwear. This helped the lower extremities, but the toes stayed cold.



A Yangtze River steamer heading upriver towards Kiukiang. (See page 46.)

That was my first year out in the country, and I was highly frustrated and determined to make plans for the coming year. Cold feet? Two or three pairs of oversized wool socks, fur lined slippers, and a pair of galoshes seemed to be the solution. Legs? Long johns and thick wool trousers. My American coat and overcoat were hung in the closet and left at home. Two or three sets of woolen undershirts, two or three sweaters and an oversized trench coat succeeded in keeping the top half warm. A Russian type winter cap with ear flaps took care of the head. For the motorcycle, a good pair of goggles helped. After my cheeks started to freeze, I wrapped my face with a long woolen scarf. So everything was all right—after I got some thick woolen gloves. On the mission field, you have to make-do or die in the process. I preferred to make-do rather than to die.

Hostility

Human hostility was surprisingly rare, but it also happened occasionally. When a milling crowd is told that foreigners are doing something atrocious, such as taking the eyes of their children to make medicine, passions can get worked up to where they are uncontrollable. For the most part, missionaries in China were not afraid of the government, nor even particularly of soldiers, but an aroused mob was something else. Some of our earlier missionaries escaped death in this way by very narrow margins. (Talk to Stephen about hostile mobs [Acts 7:54-60] when you see him in glory !)

Once, after a preaching service in Sutsien, I had a crowd of several hundred people face me. They were standing in the road outside the church. An imbalanced and drunk soldier was running up and down, accusing me of everything on the face of the earth. In particular he was accusing me of criticizing the Chinese army, of insulting him, and of insulting the whole nation. Therefore the nation should rise up against all Americans and especially against me.

The Sutsien preacher, Pastor Ch'eng, was a friend, and he went from one end of the street to the other, reminding people that they had been in the church, that they had heard everything, that there was no insult, and to please be quiet and go home. Being himself a Chinese person, he succeeded in persuading them to go home. But if it hadn't been for him, you might not be getting this little account.

Summer Heat

Bandits and marauding soldiers were always more active in the summer. Could it be because of the heat? Anyway, the summer heat in the stifling, humid plains of central China was severe enough to cause the deaths of a number of missionaries in years gone by.

From 1905 on, my parents were able to get away in the summers. They took a journey to the west to the missionary “hill station” of Kuling, six hundred miles away and located at a considerable altitude in the foothills of the Himalayas. I remember from my childhood that to get there we would travel up the Yangtze to the treaty port city of Kiukiang. Kiukiang earns its name, “nine rivers,” by being situated at the confluence of eight or nine lakes and creeks. Beyond Kiukiang, it was still a walk of twenty miles to Kuling, children and frail adults being transported up the mountainside in litters carried on the shoulders of porters. By 1924, my parents owned a summer house there, and when I went back to China as a missionary it was available for me and my family to use.

Particularly after Houston was born, Frances and I were delighted to follow my parents’ footsteps and go to Kuling. It gave the baby a break from the heat—and gave us a break, too. We were seated one afternoon in 1926 on the street that ran through the settlement when an old gentleman, a missionary, stopped and gazed for a time at the little child. We had never seen him before. After a while, he turned to me and said, “I have been in China thirty to forty years and have seen so many mothers and children die from disease during the heat. You don’t know what a blessing it is to you to be able to bring your wife and child to this summer resort and have three or four weeks of good sleep during such a deadly time.”

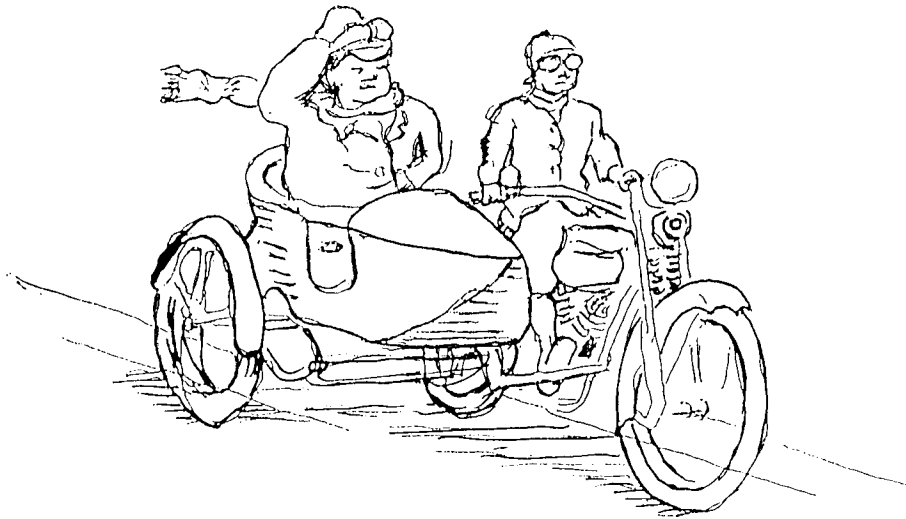
We asked him what mission he was with and he said the C.I.M. (China Inland Mission). Twenty-five years before, C.I.M. missionaries had suffered terrible martyrdom under the Boxers. Over a hundred were killed. This old gentleman had lived through those events. He loved his Lord, and he was happy to tell us how fortunate we were to have such a place for our beloved child.

The High Brass Visits

When anyone from Europe or the United States visited one of our mission stations, the missionaries were expected to entertain them. Every

few years the Mission Board would send out some member of the Nashville Committee to make a friendly inspection tour.

One of the grand old gentlemen of the Presbyterian Church, U.S., was Dr. Henry H. Sweets. He died in 1952, but back in 1926 he was in full possession of all his powers, enjoying life, and head of a major division of our Presbyterian Church. When he came to Sutsien in the spring of 1926,



"...I readied up my motorcycle, got Dr. Sweets into it, and we took off..."

the station assigned him to stay in our home. He was interested in all aspects of mission work, including country evangelistic work.

I asked him one night if he would like to go with me the next day to Tsai-chia-chi, a neighboring town that was to have a big market day. He immediately consented. In the morning I readied up my motorcycle, attached the sidecar, got Dr. Sweets into it, and we took off.

Riding in a sidecar, next to the ground, really gives you a good look at the country. Dr. Sweets was very cooperative and interested. I showed him the old Yellow River bed that had been dry for eighty years. We passed through a dozen little communities on our way to the market town we were heading to. We arrived about 10:00 A.M.

Tsai-chia-chi, surrounded by a crude mud wall, could not have been more than a quarter of a mile across. Inside there were perhaps seventy-five to a hundred little houses, all crowded close to the wall. The streets and the market area were crowded, and in China when things are crowded, they

are crowded. I spoke to a good many people and had one or two preaching sessions by the side of the road, much like the Salvation Army does in some American towns, and in general we were having a good time.

However, as I was talking to Dr. Sweets, I unwittingly made one mistake. We had been discussing bandits. I told him frankly that Sutsien was in the middle of bandit country, and that whenever I went out to my country churches it was through areas that I knew harbored bandits. I told him that every evening you could go out and hear gunfire, every day you could find somebody in our Sutsien hospital that had been wounded in a bandit attack. For us in Sutsien, this was all just part of life. After all, our mission property in the town had a ten foot wall, it backed up to a thirty foot high masonry city wall, and outside of that there was a twenty foot high mud wall.

About 1:00 P.M., Dr. Sweets came to me and asked, "Dr. Patterson, do you think there are any bandits here in this town?"

"Sure, Dr. Sweets," I said, "probably twenty-five percent are either bandits or married to bandits."

"Oh," he said. "Do you suppose it is safe?"

"I think so," I said. "Of course, there are plenty of bandits here, but I never have had any problems before."

We fooled around for another hour, and then he came to me again. "Dr. Patterson...I have been looking at this crowd and it is getting towards 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon. Don't you think we should be getting back to the station?"

"Is there any special reason? We have plenty of time."

"Well," he said, "if there are bandits all over the place, it looks a little risky just to keep on staying here asking for trouble."

"I have been back and forth here for a good many years," I said, "and I haven't had any trouble."

That seemed to satisfy him for about thirty minutes, and then he came back again. I realized that he was getting so fidgety that he was going to pop, so we got on the motorcycle and went back to Sutsien.

There was one thing about it that I never did tell him. I was not particularly uneasy about that town, because its mayor was a member of my church and kept me informed. The mayor was in close contact with all the bandits. When one of their members got shot, the bandits would bring the casualty to the mayor and ask his help at getting the wounded person admitted to our hospital. They figured that the mayor, being Christian,

could do it better than they could. So he was on good terms with the bandits, and he was on good terms with me, and he was on good terms with the church, and everybody was happy.

To be *totally* candid, I never was sure the bandits did not also have the mayor listed on their membership roll. But then, church rolls have never guaranteed heavenly rolls. I will call this ecclesiastical pragmatism. Do you have you a better rationalization?



Chapter 5 A Miracle Escape

Refugees to Japan, April, 1927

“Praying is something that has to be done beforehand. Action, rather than prayer, is what God expects of us when the crisis comes.”

From a Sermon Preached in Bluefield¹

Dr. Patterson

ALMOST exactly a year had passed since the visit from Dr. Sweets. The month was April and the year 1927. Our inland town of Sutsien was pretty well isolated, but we could get the *North China Daily News* by mail, and we could sometimes hear more timely news reports over shortwave (if you are willing to discount a pretty high level of static interference). So we knew there was trouble at the national level. We had been following the rise of communism and the influence of Russian advisors far to the south.² We had seen in the papers about Chiang Kai Shek, who at that time was a tool in the hands of the Russians to bring China under the sway of Moscow.³ We had heard reports about communist attempts to take over Japanese-owned textile mills in Shanghai, and it seemed clear that they would sooner or later find a way to confiscate property that belonged to anybody but the Chinese.

As for us, even though we knew that brigands roamed the countryside around Sutsien, life in the city itself seemed relatively normal. Doctors had changed in the interim. Dr. John W. Bradley had come back to his old stamping ground and Dr. Voss had gone to another station. There was a missionary nurse in Sutsien at that time, and we knew that Dr. Bradley had many years of obstetrical experience. We felt fortunate in this, because Frances was some seven and one-half months pregnant with our second child. We little realized that one of the most dangerous crises that we would ever face in China was rapidly approaching.

¹[Cited in “The Stories of Dr. Pat,” privately published, Bluefield, West Virginia, 1987.]

²[Notably Michael Borodin, probably the most prominent of the advisers. His base was Canton, and he was in China from September, 1923, through July, 1927.]

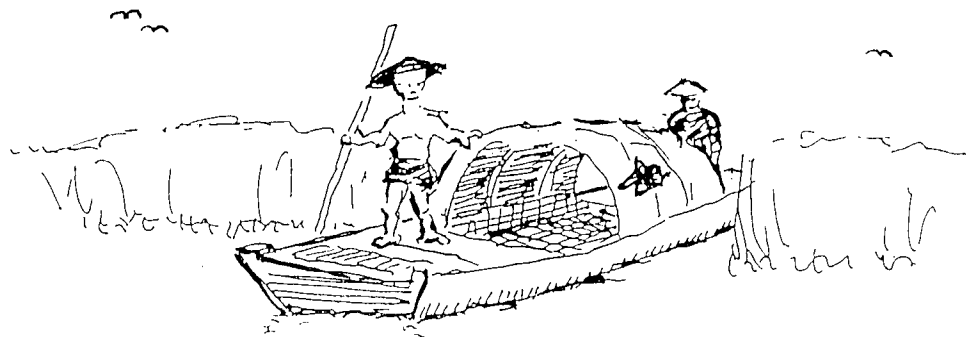
³[It is perhaps not widely known in the United States that Chiang’s son, Chiang Ching Kuo, later to be president for many years of the Republic of China in Taiwan, received his higher education in Russia and was married throughout life to a Russian wife.]

In early April, six or eight weeks before the date set for the new baby's arrival, we got an urgent message from the U.S. consul in Shanghai, via Dr. Bell in Tsingkiangpu, for everybody to *get out*. Dr. Bell's message came as a great shock to us. We had not heard of any specific anti-American activity, or of the actual killing of missionaries. However, those of you who can remember Nanking in 1927 will know that it happened. Soldiers raped the town, looted it, stole it blind, and killed any foreigners they came across. Quite a number were killed. And the same soldiers who had raped Nanking moved northward from there towards Sutsien.

The consul decided that finally the time had come for missionaries in his jurisdiction to be cleared out of China. His instructions were absolutely positive: GET OUT! Just two words. And go by the north, not the south.

None of us wanted to go, but the Chinese said it was necessary. We immediately called a station meeting, and the consensus was that I should get Frances out before there was need for a lengthy overland trip. We got ready within hours, and left. Little Houston was aged two. We had a house full of wedding presents, but naturally we just left those. We only took what we could put in our suitcases, a few knives and forks.

With Frances in the condition that she was in, the only possible way for us to leave Sutsien was to get a boat and travel up the canal ten or twelve hours to Yün Ho, a place about forty miles east of Hsuchowfu. where the canal intersected the Hsuchowfu-Haichow railroad line. There we would catch a train to go one hundred miles east to the coastal city of Haichow, where there was a mission station. From Haichow, we hoped to



"...We found a little wreck of a boat, hidden in some marshes..."

catch a coastal boat and go on up to north China.

The first thing we had to do was find a canal boat. We didn't really believe we would find one because most of them had been hidden from mutinying soldiers. But believe it or not, we found a little wreck of a boat that had been hidden in some marshes. The owner kindly brought it out and we rented it, got our stuff on, and spent the night about thirty miles up the creek.

The next morning we rose early, got going, and by about 12:00 arrived at Yün Ho,⁴ where the railroad station was, intending to wait for the 1:00 o'clock train. We piled out of our boat, took wheelbarrows, and went the half mile ride to the station.

Some of the train porters asked, "What are you coming here for?"

"We want to catch the train going to Haichow."

"There isn't any train to Haichow."

"What?"

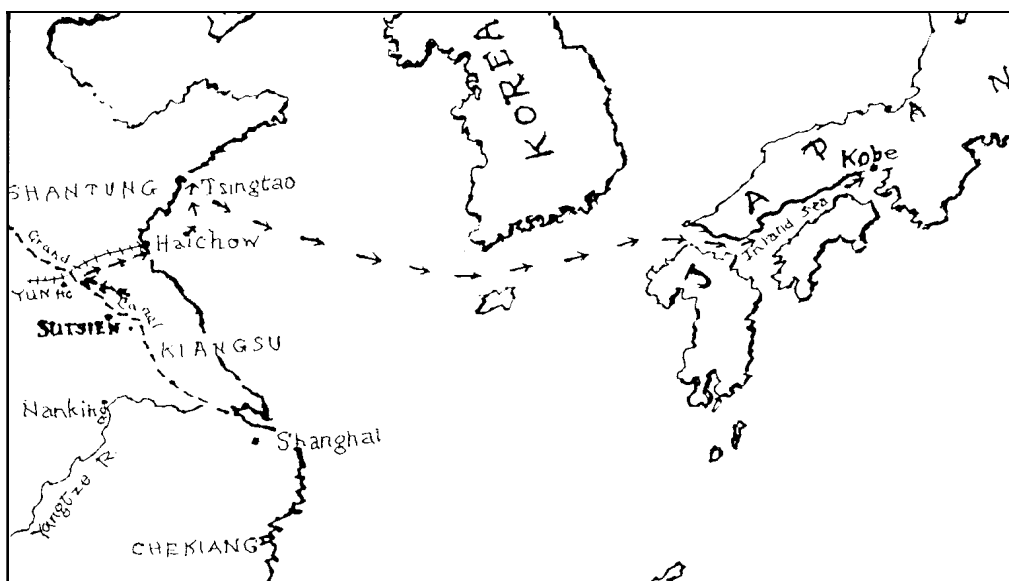
"No there hasn't been a train for two or three days. The soldiers are mutinying up and down the tracks and breaking things up. Nobody wants to be riding a train and have the engine taken. There isn't a chance of a train going out of here today."

If anybody was ever floored, that was yours truly. What on earth *could* I do? Two days trip from our station in Sutsien and ordered by our consul to clear out. No way to go north, because there was no place up north to which we could go. No way to go east, because the only possible way to go east was by horse cart or wheelbarrow, and I knew there was no way that Frances, in her condition, could live through it.

I have found that the best thing to do in situations like this is to put things in proper perspective. Look up first. Look up. Look up and ask God what it's all about. Talk things over with God and ask Him what you're supposed to do about it. Look up and ask God if you have strength enough to go through with what He's asking you to do. I looked up. True, I didn't get much consolation, but I looked up.

We went to the station, ate a little lunch, and sat down to think and talk things over. About that time we saw an engine backing into the station with two little cars and a gang of soldiers jumping off. One of the porters

⁴"Yün Ho" is simply the Chinese name for the Grand Canal. So the town we were heading for, which had grown up as a transfer point between the canal and the railroad, apparently borrowed its name from the canal.



Route of the escape: from Sutsien to Yün Ho, Haichow, Tsingtao, Kobe.

came over and said, “Why don’t you get on that train and ask them to take you to Haichow?”

I said, “That’s a military train and I don’t have a ghost of a chance.”

He said, “I don’t know. Check it out. Go see what you can do.”

So I did the oriental stunt. I sent the station master (after giving him a little present in his palm, which is also oriental). “Please go down and see if these fellows are going back to Haichow tonight, and if they are, whether or not I can take my family?”

He came back and said they were very agreeable, that they would be going in about an hour, and that I should be on the train. “You won’t even have to buy a ticket. The officer in charge won’t even look. He’ll just see that the coach stops at Haichow.”

If God ever answered a prayer, he surely did it that time, because we had absolutely no other hope in the whole wide world. We got on and the train got to Haichow, *and we were even met by friends in the mission station there!* Not only were we met, but there was a mission doctor who checked my wife. That happens to be the only time in my life that I was prepared to be an obstetrician. Dr. Bradley had given me a suitcase that I could open up and use what I wanted for any emergency. I’ve always been grateful that I didn’t have to open that suitcase, and I’m also perfectly certain that Frances was deeply grateful.

The missionaries in Haichow, among them Mr. and Mrs. Ed Currie, could not promise a boat to Tsingtao, one hundred miles up the coast. But the next day a smelly fishing boat offered to take the trip. Fifteen of us piled on. There was only one cabin, but it was too cold to stay outside, so everyone stayed in it. The fish smell did not help seasickness. We reached Tsingtao the next day.

We met my father and mother there. My mother of course was a doctor and had much experience with childbirth, so I was especially glad to see her. There seemed no way of leaving Tsingtao, since there were no boats. But that same day a passenger freighter from Japan dropped anchor, and we were able to get tickets for Kobe, Japan.

Refugees

Have you ever been a refugee? It is not a pleasant experience, except to feel that physically there is a brief respite from danger. How well we remember the bemused and surprised look on Mrs. Henry Meyers's face as she watched us debark in Kobe that April morning in 1927. War had never crossed the minds of missionaries to Japan. Plagues were barred from their ports. They had lived with the social stability and artistic beauty of the Japanese culture. Missionaries to China, on the other hand, had known nothing but civil strife, plague, famine, and social upheaval, for many years.

We were refugees from a land that was beginning to boil with communism. We had come as we were. We had been told to escape from China, and picking up what we could carry we had left. Two weeks of upheaval, uncertainty, danger, and discomfort lay behind us. We had passed through a no-man's land of disrupted means of communication and lawlessness. We had wired the Meyers that we were coming,⁵ and now here we were, refugees getting off of a Japanese freighter.

The smile on Mrs. Meyers's face was more than understandable. Our baggage was back country. A kerosene lantern and food cooking facilities were part of what she now saw. The best looking piece of luggage was a suitcase filled with emergency obstetrical equipment, since I was to be the doctor or the midwife, call it what you please, in case Frances got into trouble and Bob got underway. Frances was more than happy to be in

⁵Frances knew the Meyers family well. For most of her life they had lived in Lexington, Virginia, a few blocks away from her home.

Japan! There were about six weeks left to go before May 18th, 1927, the date of Bob's actual arrival. My mother and father had traveled together with us for the last leg of our trip, from Tsingtao. That had also relieved our minds considerably.

On landing in Kobe we rented a little six room Japanese house and learned the art of leaving our shoes at the door. I will never forget that house. There were thirty-seven places where it was necessary for me to duck or get my head banged. My mother never forgot because she had to step down two feet from floor and bed level to the kitchen floor level. With her weight it was something. Frances never forgot because she slipped and bounced herself step by step for ten steps as she was coming down from upstairs. Why the expected baby waited after that for May 18th, we could never figure. As for Father, he was the grocery man and used his Chinese characters to talk to the clerks.

In later years, we used to watch the Vietnam refugees on television. We could only watch so long. It hurt too much.

Sutsien While We Were Gone

As we refugeeed to Kobe, trouble continued to unfold in China, including among other things mutineering soldiers. When we were ordered out, we had left caretakers in every house to try to look after the property. This did not keep soldiers from walking in and taking over. They always felt that they were welcome to take over anything they wanted to take. Over the next two years, twenty-two different groups of soldiers came through and occupied our house—some just for one night, some for two weeks.⁶

When we finally got back to Sutsien, several years later, and went to our house, we would learn that the custodian had kept it from being occupied by drifters, but that he had not been able to control soldiers. We noticed that there were holes all around the wall where a hammer had broken through the plaster. There was also a hole through the flooring in the corner of the sitting room. We could only guess what had happened. The soldiers apparently had been tipped off that our walls were hollow

⁶[Dr. Patterson and his family returned to Sutsien in 1929. For several years after that, the turmoil continued. According to Dr. Patterson's pamphlet, *The Mustard Seed Growing in Sutsien*, written just a few years after these events, "Soldiers...between 1927 and 1931 constantly quartered themselves by force in many of our mission buildings."]

and that very probably we had secreted valuables behind the plaster. They found nothing.

But that hole in the floor? Those of you that know the customs of that day, know the Chinese drink tea out of the same cup that someone else had used but they always throw out the left over tea leaves in the bottom of the cup. This involves about a spoonful of tea. When the soldiers were sitting in our room, drinking their tea, they found we had wooden floors varnished with top grade Ningpo varnish, which was water resistant. Soon the soldiers got disgusted having wet tea all over the floor, so they broke a hole in the corner, and that is where they dumped the tea leaves.

While I'm talking about gatekeepers, let me just add a recollection about a man who did that and also helped me in my itinerating. He pushed a wheelbarrow and took my bedding and food from church to church, as I rode my bicycle and commuted. His job was to look after the stuff and keep it from getting stolen. Also he was to get boiled water that I could drink and cook what food was necessary. He wasn't much of a cook, but he cooked stuff that I could eat.

I left Sutsien with my family one summer for a month's vacation, and we had a boxer-like dog that my brother had given me to keep. We enjoyed it, and on leaving home I turned it over to him to keep while we were gone. When we returned in September, the dog was dead. This gatekeeper came to me, and I could see that he was in deep distress. He said, "Dr. Patterson, your dog died. I did everything I knew how to make him well, but he died anyhow. For two nights before he died, I saw that he was cold. He was shaking, so I took him in the bed with me in order to keep him warm. But he died anyhow."

He had done what he could. There was nothing more that he could do. What could I do but thank God for an employee friend like that?

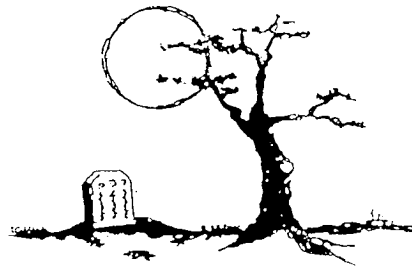
Seated by a Chinese Grave

In Kobe, Bob, our second son, duly arrived on May 18. In June, Frances and I, with Houston, and now bringing along Bob, left for America. When we came into port in San Francisco, the mail bags that hit the deck brought two letters from the Board of World Missions office in Nashville. One said we were to have a rest and should make no speeches for three months. The other, from the same office, said "please telegraph immediately the subject of your speech for the Montreat Conference next month."

People in the U.S. churches always used to assume that missionaries had as many good illustrations and gospel stories up their sleeves as a magician has rabbits. Maybe this was true of some, but not many grew in my mind. But I racked and ransacked my brain and wired back my subject: "Seated by a Chinese Grave."

One thought related to the Chinese custom of burning spirit money on graves. At the head of the grave is the little headstone with a shelf, on which the family comes month by month to burn spirit money for the use of the departed loved ones. But only ashes were ever left. I thought of the tremendous difference for Christians, who had the words of Christ to assure them that "I will receive you unto myself" (John 14:3).

Another thought centered around the tree which so often grows out of a Chinese grave. It was always customary to sink a pole at the head of the coffin. If the tree took root and grew, the family considered that they had received a very auspicious symbol of eternal life. I had often wondered what went through the minds of loved ones as they would come back week by week to see if there was a bud. I could remember having sat on a grave in a cemetery when the wail of some woman could be distinctly heard as she knelt by the grave of her parent or her husband and wept in hopeless loss. But the Christian message was one of hope and victory. We had the gospel of eternal life and the assurance of the resurrection.



The grave also symbolized the struggles that the whole of China was then going through. Many times, when I was itinerating in the country, I had gone for an evening walk and sat on some grave and pondered. On those occasions, I was acutely aware of the passing of the innumerable centuries in that ancient land. But sometimes, as I sat, I had felt under my hands the newly growing green grass and had seen the glory of the moon and the brilliance of the stars in the overhead nighttime skies. In the star-lit darkness of those nights I had known—and despite all that had happened, I still knew—that the buried dreams and struggles typified by the thousands of silent graves stretching so far, so far, throughout that Asian land, would one day be followed by a renewal of life in Christ, a redemption from God whose light would shine indeed on China, but whose light would shine also on America, and throughout the whole world. ❁

Chapter 6 Sutsien Again

Work in the Station, 1929-1936

“I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.”

Matthew 25:35-36

BY 1929, a new generation of leaders, encouraging the nation to adopt “progress” as watchword, had emerged. Dangerous bandits still roamed the Sutsien territory, to be sure. But a real effort to reform China was under way. Hundreds of temples in our area had been commandeered, cleared of their idols, and pressed into service as barracks, public schools, Kuomintang party headquarters, agricultural experimental stations, public parks, and other similar public uses.

One of the less admirable accompaniments of the new focus on progress was China’s stepped-up quest for modern arms. The government was taking subscriptions in every hamlet to purchase combat planes. A new word, “tanks,” had entered the common people’s vocabulary.

As former temple idols fell and public standards of behavior eroded, moral chaos threatened the very structure of society. To fight this peril the government inaugurated the “New Life Movement.” It emphasized clean streets and modest dress. More profoundly, it attempted to renew the honor given to traditional Confucian ethical ideals. This was one important dimension of the changing cultural environment within which our mission enterprise now needed to operate.

The Board judged in 1929 that the national political scene was sufficiently stabilized for Frances and me, along with our two small children, to return to China. We sailed that summer. Our term which then began was to last for seven years, until 1936. Looking back, I think it was probably my most fruitful period as a missionary. The transition underway in China gave both opportunity and seriousness to Christian work. As for me, I was more experienced as a missionary than I had been in 1924-1927. I was beginning to know the Chinese leaders in our field better. And seven

uninterrupted years of work afforded a relatively long time in which to build program. Those years provide the basis for much of what I will be saying in the next several chapters.

Probably many who read this will not have any very clear conception as to just what a missionary does. Let us consider what a missionary is commissioned to do and look particularly at what I, as an evangelistic missionary, did. Maybe that would be the simplest way to give you a cross section of the missionary's job without being too verbose about it. A description of my job could easily be divided in many ways, but one way certainly is to divide between *work in the station*, that is, Sutsien, and *work in the field*, that is, out in the country villages. I will begin with a description of work in the station and will take up the village work later.

I tried to spend at least half of each month at home in Sutsien. This was true despite the fact that the primary focus of my work was oversight of newly developing country churches out in the villages, some twenty-two of them. But it simply demanded too much of my wife and children for me to be away from home more than fifty percent of the time.

What did I do while at home? Work in the station included office work, counseling, discussions with Chinese ministers, ordering supplies, and writing reports for the American board. I also helped see to the upkeep of mission property and helped with all the things that people in a foreign land must do to keep things moving. Here, more specifically, are some of the things I would do on a typical day:

- *Study Chinese.* You may think that if I had once learned the language, that would be it. But perhaps you have never tried learning Chinese. I studied it an hour a day all the time while living in China, and still did not know enough to read the newspaper with any degree of intelligence. Pearl Buck really knew Chinese, and so did my friend and fellow missionary, James Graham. Like me, both of them were children of missionary parents, but they had given more serious study as children to the writing of Chinese. They could read the Chinese newspapers. My reading ability in Chinese as a child was rather superficial, and the superficiality wore very thin indeed after I came back to America to attend schools. So I made myself study Chinese one hour each day when I was at home in Sutsien.

- *Talk with visitors.* My field, which stretched over an area between one thousand and twenty-five hundred square miles, always had many people and many problems. Acquaintances would walk into town and put up in a

local hostelry, and wait for me to return. When I got back to town, they would be ready to present their problems. Most had to do with finding money to do something. But there were also other problems, many of them really difficult. After all, my limited knowledge of local customs made it hard for me to advise people who were natives of the culture and still were perplexed to know what they should do. But they would come to me and would sit and talk by the hour. Any way you took it, there was a two or three hour session every morning with visitors.

- *Spend an hour with a scribe.* The word “scribe” is the best way to designate my amanuensis. A preacher in America would call this particular individual a secretary. There were always letters that had to be written, and I was absolutely no good when it came to writing Chinese. My script was that of a second grader. The Chinese have little patience with people who try to write their language and make a botch of it. And so I had a young man, just beyond high school age, who was my secretary. His main job was to take dictation and write letters as they should be written. But part of his job was to keep in touch with local situations as they developed and keep me posted.

- *Work on construction projects.* We had to be architects and build our own houses. The masonry work we would hire out, but the carpentry work I enjoyed taking a hand in. You ought to see some of the houses where “yours truly” was chief architect. They’re still standing even after the Japanese fought over the terrain and after the Communists took over. They’re there today, in 1990. So if anybody asks me to build a United Nations Tower, I won’t hesitate to say “O.K.”

Mission Work in the City

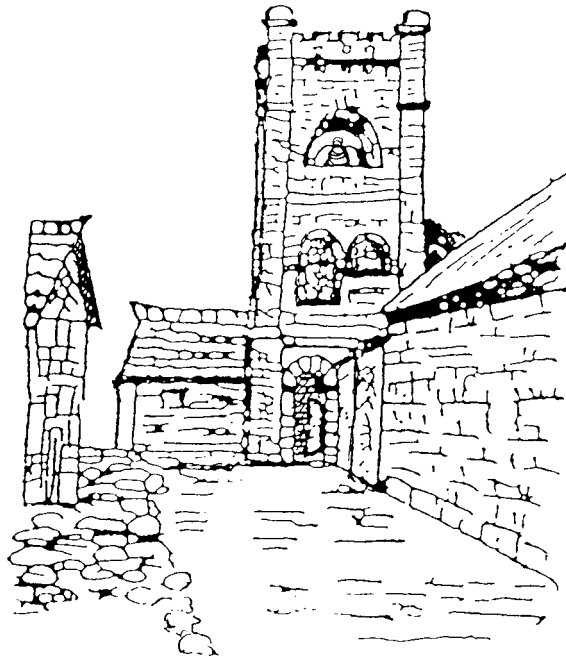
The most important Christian center in Sutsien was the city church. By the 1930’s it had become independent of the mission, meaning that it employed its own pastor and managed its own business affairs. At the time it also employed two home mission evangelists, supervised four country preaching points, and ran three country day schools. The building in which it met, located at about the center of what was then the walled city, still stands, used by the communists now for public meetings. As for the Sutsien Christian congregation, I understand that it still exists, though it meets now at a different location.

The Middle School for Boys was administered by the Rev. Hugh W. McCutchan. This was the school where I had served during my first year as a missionary, 1923-24, while Mr. McCutchan was on furlough. It was located outside the walls at the south end of town, so it was closed from 1927 through 1930 during the time of general troubles. For the most part, during those years, passing detachments of infantry and cavalry occupied the buildings. During the same period some of the buildings suffered tile-shattering hits from artillery. In 1930, despite its partly damaged campus, the school reopened. It made an important contribution to the education of boys in our area.

Miss Mada I. McCutchan, sister to Mr. McCutchan, worked with the Middle School for Girls. The school had begun when people in China—and for that matter, also in America—widely supposed that girls had too little sense to be worth educating. In spite of the violent anti-Christian agitation of 1927 to 1929, the school never closed its doors. In the spring of 1936, all its spaces were filled, fifty-six boarders and ninety day pupils. (This figure included primary as well as middle school pupils.)

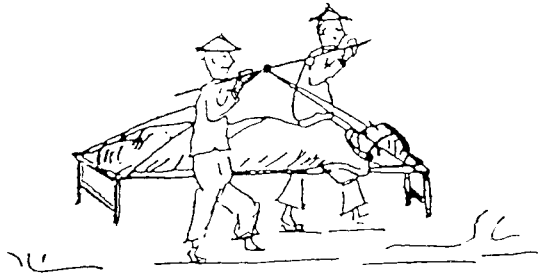
In 1931 we started a Bible School for Women on faith, which means without any appropriations or buildings. But the school clearly filled a need in offering education to adult women, and it rapidly got both buildings and students. As my wife, Frances, was very much involved with the Bible School, I will come back to it later (Chapter 7).

The Christian Hospital in Sutsien ran what was for the mission an enormous plant and program. By the 1930's, it had grown to over one hundred beds. To keep the work going at that size involved severe financial and other problems. Patients who came were too poor to pay large fees, or often *any* fees. The mission had no money with which to subsidize the cost



The Sutsien city church, entrance and bell tower.

of the hospital. Suitable and adequately trained physicians could not be found for many of the departments. The missionary doctor at the hospital during the 1930's was my brother, Norman G. Patterson, M.D. In 1936, Miss Margaret Wood, R.N, joined the staff.¹ This hospital was the only place in our territory of two million people where a sick person could find modern medicine being practiced. In 1936, over twenty thousand treatments were made and over four hundred surgeries performed.



Litter bearers

Extending a Helping Hand

Some of you who read these pages will have heard someone, probably someone who has never been a missionary, explaining that old-time missionaries were interested only in “saving souls” and that therefore they had no concern for the welfare in the present world of the people to whom they ministered. Let me agree, right on the front end, that we who worked in Sutsien, and other missionaries with whom I was closely associated, were in mission work because we thought that spiritual need is primary. But what happens when you minister to people’s spiritual need? In every instance that I knew of, when a Chinese person became a born-again Christian, he or she became healthier, happier, better dressed, more influential, better off financially. Don’t ask me how it happened, but that was the way it worked. I think God had a hand in it.

¹The reader may be interested to know the full roster of missionary personnel who were in Sutsien in 1936. For missionaries already mentioned in the text, the year of arrival in China was: Mr. McCutchan, 1908; Miss McCutchan, 1911; Dr. Norman Patterson, born in China; Miss Wood, R.N., 1935; my wife, 1923; and myself, born in China. Other Presbyterian missionaries in Sutsien in 1936, and their year of arrival in China, were: Mrs. John W. Bradley, 1904 (Dr. Bradley had remarried after his first wife died of cholera; for more about Dr. Bradley himself, who by 1936 had passed on, see Chap. 13); Rev. Wm. F. Junkin, 1897; Mrs. Nettie Dubose Junkin, born in China (see Chap. 13); Mrs. Athalie Hallum Patterson, 1929; Rev. Edgar A. Woods, born in China; and Mrs. Lydia Daniel Woods, 1931. There was also Miss Mary M. Johnston, an independent missionary from Scotland, in China since 1897 (see above, pp. 21-22). Miss Helen Bailey had become an independent missionary and left Sutsien shortly before 1936 (see Chap. 13).

The missionaries I knew worked hard to try to help people in very mundane ways. After all, Jesus himself fed the hungry and healed the sick. The small group of pioneer missionaries that opened up the Sutsien station included two medical doctors—my mother and Dr. Nettie Grier. In a few years, Dr. Grier moved on to Hsuchowfu and Dr. John Bradley came to Sutsien. It was he who oversaw the building of our mission hospital at the south end of town. We used it to minister to the needs of the sick during my time as a missionary, it was to be taken over by the Japanese and later by the communists, and I am confident it is still being used for the health needs of the Sutsien community.

From the very beginning, missionaries began to train Chinese nurses. By 1902, Dr. Bradley also had two Chinese medical students training to become physicians. By 1905, itinerant clinics, staffed by Chinese practitioners, were going to the outlying areas around Sutsien. Later, when my brother Norman came to Sutsien as station doctor, he brought in the latest methods of surgery and medicine. He pioneered treatment for kalaazar. He continued to recruit and train Chinese staff. Before he left in 1936, he set up a private electric generator and was able use an X-ray machine.

Norman, and really all of us, worked hard in the field of public health and preventive medicine. Why inoculate babies against smallpox? Why drink only boiled water? How does one disinfect a flesh wound? How can one rid clothing of lice? Why cook fresh produce before eating, and peel fruit? Why is it important for people on poverty level diets to eat brown rice instead of the polished kind?

Apart from health needs, missionaries worked to build educational program. We started grade schools and high schools for girls and for boys. The two year course in the Women's Bible School that Frances operated helped women to learn to read as well as to learn about the Bible.

We helped with many social needs. In schools, we trained men to become masons and carpenters. We had programs for distributing seeds to farmers. We worked hard to end the custom of crippling little girls by binding their feet. Through the Women's Bible School, we helped women find employment. Some of the young people were convinced that learning English would help them to get ahead in life, and through our schools we helped with that. In schools and churches we taught people about the meaning of Christian homes. When floods and famines struck, we did our best to organize food relief. At the level of national policy, we opposed

opium traffic, banditry, and the downgrading of women, in whatever ways were available to us.

As far as I know, the hospital we built in Sutsien, and other buildings constructed there by the mission, are still in use. Even more important, after missionaries were expelled (in 1949) the people we trained in medicine and in education were able to continue the fight against disease and against stunting ignorance. God intends for people to live in health and with the opportunity for fulfillment. I pray to God that the struggle to open such an opportunity may increasingly bear fruit for the people of Sutsien.

Poverty

During our time in Sutsien, poverty was desperate there. Of course, we had already seen poverty in Peking, while in language school. During the winter of 1923-1924, the newspaper routinely published the head count of frozen corpses picked up each morning by city refuse trucks. Often the count was between fifty and one hundred. Sutsien didn't have newspapers to report such counts, but the poverty there undoubtedly was worse than it had been in Peking.

I could not live with myself and not try to do something about it, but I didn't have any remarkable success. In one of my early years in Sutsien, I tried loaning a little "seed money" to a few people who seemed to be both needy and reliable. No "loan" was ever repaid, and, as far as I could see, the needy were just as much in poverty when my experiment ended as they had been before.

The acute poverty created almost insuperable barriers to the sharing of friendship and life, between missionaries and the people to whom they had come. I will give an example of the kind of difficult situation that came up again and again. One day a minister came to see me, a Chinese fellow whom I had helped to get an education—a nice, hardworking, conscientious fellow. He said, "Dr. Patterson, I really have to have ten dollars."

I told him that I did not have the money to give or loan. In terms of the funds that had been set aside for this kind of purpose, this was completely honest.

He sat there and talked, quietly and without rancor, from 10:00 that morning until noon, then again that afternoon from 2:00 to 5:00, then again that evening from 7:00 till 9:30, asking for ten dollars. I tried to explain that loaning money had to go through committees and through

consultations, and that I could not loan it simply as a friend. “How could I do it and not be unfair to others who also want to borrow money,” I asked.

“Dr. Patterson,” he said, “suppose you had come to me with the request that I brought to you, and suppose you were burdened with the need which I have, and which we both understand. If I had owned the pair of leather shoes that you are wearing, I would have taken them off and hocked them and loaned the ten dollars to you. You know that, don’t you?”

I said, “Yes, I believe that. And yet, your request for a loan, with all the problems involved, is something I cannot respond to. Please forgive me.”

Although we still worked together afterwards, I don’t think things were ever quite the same. The problem of relationships between haves and have-nots on the mission field is difficult.

The Wisdom of Innocence

Any number of examples of my ignorance in trying to work with Chinese churches come readily enough to mind. But one time, for sure, I was saved through ignorance. When Thomas Gray wrote, “Where ignorance is bliss, ’Tis folly to be wise,”² he had a profound point.

After I had been working in the Sutsien territory for about ten years, a friend in the United States offered me support of about US\$200 if I was interested to have a tent evangelistic ministry, that is, one that could move from town to town. It would be a different approach, and our work in evangelism was sufficiently well understood so there would be no unexpected fallout. I accepted.

As I considered which minister in my area was best qualified to lead such an innovative effort, I thought immediately of a man named Sung. He had ability, personality, training, initiative, leadership. I went to him and explained the project, and he accepted without hesitation. We set a date three months later for him to leave his church of several years and begin the new ministry. I found a fine, dedicated replacement for him. At the end of three months, all took their new jobs. Six months went by. No new financing came for the tent ministry, so we had to close it down. Mr. Sung got a job elsewhere. It was then that the ticking bomb was finally exposed. One of my trusted ministers, located in a town near the one that had been pastored by Sung, came to see me one day. He waited until we

²*Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College.*

were alone. Then he erupted: “Dr. Pu (my Chinese surname), how did you manage it? You had me scared to death. You were playing with hand grenades and did not seem afraid. What you did to get rid of Mr. Sung was a stroke of genius. One false step and you might have been assassinated.”

“Mr. Chang,” I said, “you talk in riddles. I do not comprehend.”

“Do you mean you did not know Mr. Sung fronts for the local robbers?”

“I did not even suspect.”

“His three brothers are robber chiefs. They held secret conclaves in your church at night. If you had openly fired their brother, they very likely would have arranged your death. I thought you were in an impossible spot. But the Lord saved you!”

Yes, He did! The Lord protected one who, in this case, was naively doing his job and totally unaware of what was known to most people in the area. I finally understood why Mr. Sung had always been able to laugh at local danger.

Jackleg Make-Do

Somebody on the mission field had to direct the repair work for our buildings and equipment, and locally there was nobody. If you wanted a plumber—there was none. If you wanted a mason, he could lay bricks—maybe. If you wanted a carpenter, he had the same tools that his ancestors used in the first century. If you wanted to buy things at a hardware store, there wasn’t any, at least not any that sold what you would recognize as hardware.

I’ve always enjoyed tinkering. Never regret your farm background or the simple skills you learned if you grew up there. On the mission field, such skills were essential. If we didn’t do the needed work, there was nobody to do it. I’ve always been delighted to be at least jackleg carpenter, a jackleg mason, a jackleg cook, a jackleg administrator, a jackleg doctor, a jackleg mechanic, a jackleg sailor, a jackleg farmer, or a jackleg CPA. What would the Mission Board have done without its jackleg missionary? A lot of our jackleg make-do had to do with the ordinary living of life. For instance:

- *Kitchen stove.* Electricity? We had none. Gas? We had none. Coal? To cart a coal stove from the U.S. to China would be difficult, and once there, there were no local chimney builders and coal was hard to get. So in our house for the 1924-1927 period, we built a charcoal burning kitchen stove

out of some red clay, some tin and scissors, and a piece of iron we could set the kettle on. We even built an oven. The stove worked perfectly, our Chinese cook understood it perfectly, and we never heard him berate the idiosyncracies of some foreign devil machine.

- *Tub.* When it comes to getting grime off the skin, I suppose the regular male missionary could get along very well with a dish pan and a washrag. But I discovered that Frances wanted a tub. The tub I had used as a child, an oversized roasting pan with about two inches of water in it, parked in the winter in front of the living room stove because that was the only warm place in the house, didn't thrill her. More than once, Frances said that she thought I could do better.

About 1931, she found an acceptable tub in Shanghai, dickered around, bought it, and had it shipped to Sutsien. That's quite a process, by the way—a river steamer to Chinkiang, a canal boat to Sutsien, a gang of local stevedores to carry it on poles over their shoulders to our house. Then, before they left, we had to wangle it in the back door, up the steps, into the bedroom and into the little bathroom.

Now, how use to it? The only way to get water was to have a cistern in the attic, hand filled by water carried up the attic steps. And a drain plug? We knocked a hole in the outside wall and put in a pipe. The waste water drained into a ditch by the side of the house and went on over into a neighbor's yard. Hot water, the ultimate luxury, had to be carried from the kitchen, downstairs. Say what you will, we had a bathtub and running water. It was the only one within a hundred miles.

- *Christmas trees.* We had Christmas trees, but we had to make them out of tree limbs. There were so few trees in our part of China that to cut one down would have been really inexcusable. To go into a cemetery and cut a tree was almost a capital offense. So we asked our gatekeeper to find people who would be willing to sell him branches. This was always successful. With those branches that he brought, and a stick and some wire, we made nice little trees. I might say this: the mission board may have wondered about their jackleg missionary, but the jackleg missionary never wondered about the jackleg tree. He knew it was a good Christmas tree.



Excursus: Sutsien's Public Bus

“Auto roads, although still impassable in wet weather, link up our main cities, and busses serve travelers with quick, though uncertain and nerve-wracking transportation.”

The Mustard Seed Growing in Sutsien

Dr. Patterson (1936)

THERE was one gas powered passenger bus in our area, a relic of Shanghai traffic, a discard by Shanghai business executives. Only those who have at some time been on a bus when there were more people crowded into it than can sit or stand in any conceivable space will understand the problem that we commonly faced when we tried to ride it.

It was announced that there would be a bus leaving for the railroad station, about seventy-five miles from Sutsien, in the morning. I knew that these busses were usually overloaded if one didn't get there early, so I got there early. I not only got there, I was seated, an hour ahead of time.

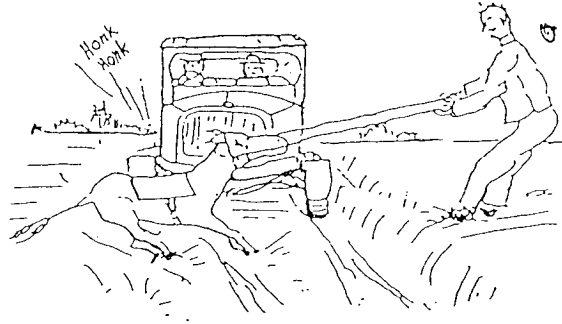
I saw the sign, “Only sixteen passengers allowed.” When I got on, there were already more than a dozen, and within the hour they kept getting on. Five more than sixteen, then ten more, then sixteen more. A farmer and his big rooster and a big bundle of grain got on. The people saw his accoutrements, so they squeezed over and let him on. When he got inside he saw that there was no place to sit except in the driver's seat, so down he sat, hanging the chicken by the legs over the gas lever and parking his bag of grain on the steering wheel. I sat there, wondering how our crowd could manage the ruts and holes from Sutsien to the railroad town.

Soon the driver came and saw the situation. I never heard any one cuss more fluently than this driver did. Nobody in that part of the country could miss the fact that there was something wrong. Finally someone stuck his head in the door and told the farmer he had to get off. Everybody was eager to get started, so each moved an inch or two, giving the man room to get out over thirty-five people, taking his grain and catching the chicken when the driver hurled it after him.

I never rode on a bus anywhere in the world that shook my teeth as this bus did. I couldn't imagine what had happened to the springs. After keeping my teeth together for seventy-five miles, and after reaching my place of debarkation, I looked at the springs. I found that the driver had

known that the bus would be overloaded and that the springs would probably break, so he had put a chuck under the springs on top of the axle, which meant that we were bumped to high heaven every time the bus hit a rut or a rock.

I've been amazed at the ingenuity Chinese chauffeurs have in being able to coax something that is obviously dead into some



sort of life, even though there may be a good deal of sputtering. The Chinese are practical people. They usually get where they want to go, maybe a day or a week late, but they get there.

• • •

Busses that occasionally ran from Sutsien to our neighboring town of Hsuchowfu, ninety miles away, were very infrequent, but there were some. They were also castoffs from the bus system in Shanghai. When they became so decrepit that the metropolitan drivers wouldn't drive them any more, the company sold them to places like our town.

There were no cushions on the seats or springs on the axles. When you ride in a bus without springs and cushions, you can imagine the difficulties. I saw advertised in a magazine an air cushion that was guaranteed to absorb shocks. I sent off for it with some of my hard-saved money and bought it. I took it along, on the next bus trip, and laid it on the hard seat that was to beat my behind all the way to Hsuchowfu. There was no particular fanfare audible to the other passengers when I took my seat on top of this cushion, but in my heart the soaring notes of trumpets sounded.

We took off. Alas, before we had gone many miles, I once again felt my back teeth cracking against each other. I knew something was wrong. I pulled out the cushion and found it as flat as anybody's door mat.

What could be wrong? I put my hand down on the bottom of the seat and there was a half inch nail sticking up. My air bag had been punctured twice. Knowing that there was no healing for such a wound, I simply threw it away and realized that it is one of the privations that we have to put up with when we think we are so smart as to overcome something which we would otherwise have to endure. ❀

Chapter 7

My Partner in Life and in Mission

Frances Glasgow Patterson

"Christ, by His apostles, has instructed those who enter into [the relationship of marriage] to cherish a mutual esteem and love; to comfort each other in sickness, trouble, and sorrow; in honesty and industry to provide for each other, and for their household, in temporal things; and to pray for and encourage each other in the things which pertain to God."

The Presbyterian Book of Common Worship

FRANCES Thomas Glasgow and I were married in Lexington, Virginia, in the summer of 1923. She accompanied me to China and stayed with me through all the years of work and children and refugeeing and relocation. When she died, on January 12, 1975, we had been together fifty-two years.

Dr. Robert Glasgow, her father, began his career as a physician in Fincastle, Virginia. He later moved to Lexington, in Rockbridge County, and it was there that she was born. Her mother was Nancy Morrison. Frances attended the Lexington High School. She graduated in 1919 from Agnes Scott College, in Decatur, Georgia, and in 1923 earned a Master of Religious Education degree from the Assembly's Training School, known today as the Presbyterian School of Christian Education, Richmond, Virginia.

While Dr. Glasgow had been in Fincastle, he had known my mother, Anne Houston, as a daughter of the manse, a friend, and occasionally a patient. So when I went to Washington and Lee, my acquaintance with the Glasgow family came about naturally.

For as far back as she could remember, Frances had always wanted to be a missionary. She was a fourth generation descendent of Mary Moore of Abb's Valley. In 1786, a Shawnee raiding party had captured Mary Moore, then a child of ten and living on the frontier in a place that would later be part of Tazewell County, Virginia, and carried her off to the

Chillicothe area in the Ohio River Valley. Mary Moore was sold as a slave in Canada, but eventually she was rescued. Frances grew up taking pride in what that little girl had endured and how God had blessed her, and how God had blessed the man who was later to become her husband, the Reverend Samuel Brown.

In addition, the stories of John G. Paton, a missionary among the cannibals of the South Pacific, were lodged among Frances's earliest memories.¹ When Frances learned that her father had known my mother, a missionary to China, and that my early life had been on the mission field, she felt that in some way the Lord was bringing us together. I will not try to answer how she came to agree to marry me, but she did, and I am deeply grateful.

Perhaps with John G. Paton in mind, Frances had an idea that missionaries would face terrible privation, little hope of creature comfort, and quite possibly martyrdom. When she reached Sutsien and found that people could live fairly normally, in houses that we might describe as more or less rustic American in comfort, she was surprised and gratified.

Frances was a musician to the tips of her fingers, and she had a remarkable natural ear for the piano. One of her real gratifications in China was that we were able to have a piano, sent to her by her father, brought up the canal to Sutsien.

Making a Home

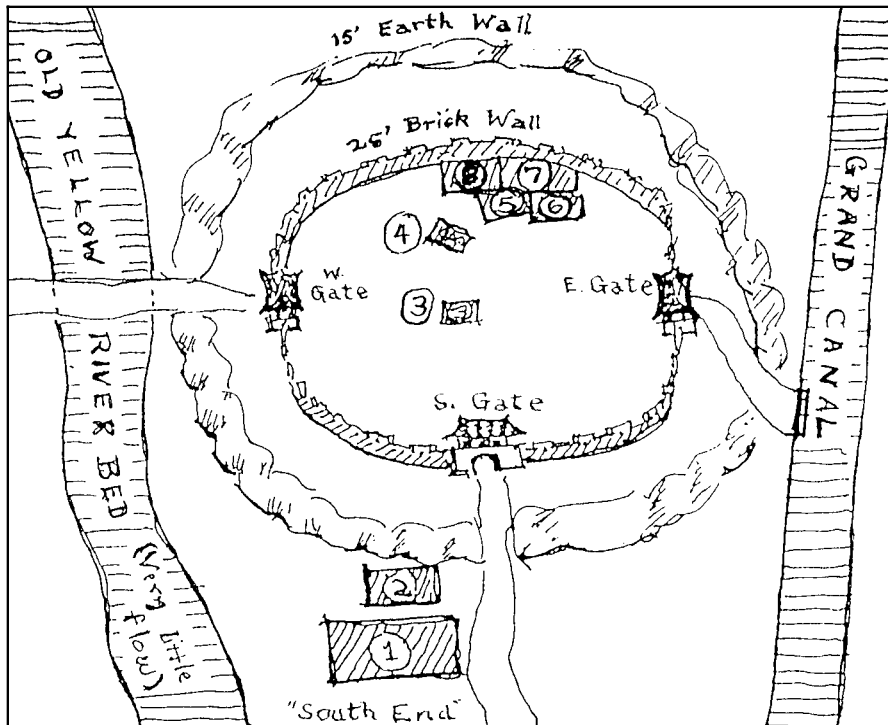
The job of any missionary is difficult. Frances bore burdens that were very taxing. I am fully aware that one cannot put fifty years of married life into a few capsule compartments with any hope of presenting a full portrait. The job of a missionary wife has its own special tasks and difficulties. Let me at least mention some of the things for which she was responsible in Sutsien.

Foreign missionaries live between two cultures, so making a home on the field is an absolutely crucial task for the missionary wife. Frances made our home—first in the Peking hostel; then, in the 1924 to 1927 period, in a house in the Sutsien South End which was connected with the Boys' High School (#2 on the accompanying map); then in a two story house inside the walls (#4 on the map). This was just across the street from the

¹[John Gibson Paton (1824-1907), a Scottish Presbyterian missionary to the New Hebrides. His first wife and their infant child were killed on the field. When Paton visited the United States in the year 1900, church audiences widely acclaimed him as a pioneer missionary.]

old converted Chinese house in which I grew up (#8). Finally, she made our home for a year in a two story house in Tenghsien, the building of which, about 1930, had been supervised by my father.

At the most basic level, she needed to make sure, for the sake of our health, that the house was clean. Insects, including scorpions and periodic



SUTSIEN AND ENVIRONS

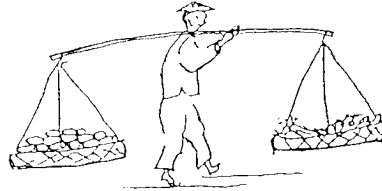
Scale: 2 inches = 1 mile (Lots not drawn to scale)

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 1. Hospital | 4. C. H. Pattersons | 7. Junkins |
| 2. Boys' school | 5. Clinic | 8. Bradleys |
| 3. Church | 6. Girls' school | |

visits from fleas and lice, were part of the daily routine. Flies were everywhere. People visiting in the house were very poor and sometimes brought contamination that could not be avoided.

Food was a daily responsibility. The first time Frances moved "inland" from Shanghai to Sutsien, she had to order a six months supply of tinned foodstuffs before she had ever managed a home. She had to buy food, sometimes having to allow two weeks for it to come, in a situation utterly different from the one in which she had grown up, and she did an excellent job.

One of her responsibilities was to oversee the cook. Let me say a word about missionaries and servants. People in the United States have multiple servants but they just don't recognize them. Americans have police, telephones, grocery stores with prepared foods, water pipes, sewage lines to dispose of waste, washing machines—all servants. In China, there were no city police, so we had a gate man. There were no water lines, so if we were going to have water, someone had to walk a mile to the canal and carry it back in a bucket. There were no telephones, so messages had to go by courier. And so, on and on. We were there to work as missionaries. The way Chinese themselves got things done was to have servants in the home. So that's what we did.



Vegetable vendor

That meant that Frances had responsibility not just for the cook but also for two or three other servants. She supervised them and handled everything that concerned them.

The homemaker bears a major share of responsibility for personal ties. Until things fell apart in Sutsien after 1936, there were four or five missionary families there. Frances was excellent at keeping us in touch with the other missionaries who were working in the hospital, in the high schools, in the outlying village churches.

Finally, but certainly not least, she kept us in touch with our home families back in America, both hers and mine. For any remote foreign missionary family, this is a function of high importance. In our particular case, with various grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters, and, later, children off at school in a variety of different places, the families always were scattered. Frances was marvelous in her thoughtfulness and in the correspondence by which she kept up with all these people.

Children

Children born to missionary parents are hostage to their parents' chosen way of life. Frances and I knew this. Her way of putting it was, "Our three children are also treasured for God." I was completely away from Sutsien about half the time, itinerating in the country, so much of the discipline of the children was in her hands. Normal difficulties of discipline were complicated by the fact that we were missionaries, guests in a foreign culture. If a child fights with another child, that is one thing. But

if it is a missionary child who fights with a Chinese child, that complicates it considerably. The task was one that sometimes could be very unsettling for Frances.

There was no English language school for children in Sutsien, so Frances ordered the Calvert System from America and taught all three of the children through their early grades. Ask any of them and they will tell you that she did an outstanding job.

A study made in 1910 showed that children of missionaries died from health problems in significantly higher proportions than the children of parsonages in the United States. We knew this at first hand from the deaths of children in our friends' families, such as the Curries and the Hopkins. I myself had a younger brother whom I never saw. He died as an infant, in 1910, while I was in Chinkiang. In our own family, Frances carried the major load of our attempts to safeguard health. Sure, the children regularly picked up ring worm, and of course malaria, and Bob got amoebic dysentery. But they were spared the deadliest diseases that might have taken them away from us.

The most demanding test of loyalty and mission for Frances came when she found out for sure that both boys, at ages eight and six, had developed tuberculosis. She had experienced tuberculosis in her own family back in the United States, and she knew that it devastated families and could lead to death. Imagine having no effective medication and fighting this disease amidst the back eddies of life in a strange and isolated country. She completely reorganized the family routine and the routine of her own life. Two restless boys were put into twenty-four hour bed rest for eight months (and this while our youngest child, Anne, was a one year old toddler, with the need to try to keep her from the risks of infection). The joy was indescribable when finally, for each boy separately, temperatures returned to normal. Frances won this battle alone!

The Women's Bible School

After the children were older, and after Frances's ability to use the Chinese language was well along, she took over and ran the Sutsien Women's Bible School. The Women of the Church in America provided the funds through our Mission Board. It was a highly demanding job. She saw to the erection of its buildings, she recruited the faculty, helped with the teaching, and participated in the running of the school. Besides Frances, there were two or three Chinese Christian women teachers; and

there were about two dozen women students living as residents on the campus, and other women who came in by day. It was a twenty-four hour job, involving every facet of existence. Not only did she do an excellent job with the school, she also kept the Mission Board and the church women in America in touch with what was happening.

The need for this school was staggering. My mother, Mrs. Junkin, Mrs. M. A. Hopkins, and others, had all had their turn in the struggle to bring into the emerging Chinese Christian community the presence of the Christian wife, the Christian mother, the Christian home. With rare exceptions, Christian women, even the wives of our Christian ministers and teachers, were unable to read the Bible. Husbands were not prepared to undertake to teach their wives to read. The church's day schools were mostly for children under the fifth grade, and they would not permit adult women to enroll. What Frances was doing was giving a new dimension to evangelism. It brought hope and light and understanding and life in the midst of bleak deserts of spiritual ignorance and superstition. It began to give a real chance to counter the ever present soothsayers and magicians. Through the work that Frances was doing in that school, God was beginning to move mountains.



In a later chapter, I will be telling of the remarkable village work done by one graduate of the school, Mrs. Liu, of Bu-Tzu.

Interface of Work and Home

Whether Christian missionaries like it or not, their homes provide an important demonstration site for the meaning of the gospel. In our experience, the lives of missionaries were almost entirely open to the community. When we were outside the home, we were foreigners and were constantly stared at with unfeigned curiosity. Within the home, resident servants became intimate members of the family and could see whatever there was to see. So how we lived in our homes was known, and it had a definite interface with the message we were seeking to propagate.

Frances and I experienced this most directly in an incident that happened towards the end of our time in China, after I had gone up to

teach at the North China Theological Seminary in Tenghsien (1940). Compared to martyrdom or death by disease, the issue was minor. But it illustrates the interface of mission work and home life. The issue was a refrigerator.

The lack of refrigeration had been a noticeable deprivation in our earlier home life in China—food spoilage, warm water to drink. None of the towns we lived in had electricity. But when we returned to China in 1939, Dr. Samuel A. Anderson, my roommate for four years at Washington and Lee University, gave us a kerosene burning refrigerator. We made arrangements with a moving company in Manila to ship our refrigerator into China through an office in Shanghai. Rev. W. F. Junkin accompanied it on up into the interior. When it got to us about the first of October, we immediately set it up, and it worked just fine. One gallon of kerosene oil would run it for a day, in summer weather.

We had been using it for about three weeks when, one day, Dr. Chang, the Vice President of the Seminary, paid me a visit in my home and told me that it was his duty to convey an extremely difficult message. “The students have heard that you are using a refrigerator, and that its purpose is to keep your food cool. The students feel that this is a very inappropriate use of money, for the cost of a gallon of kerosene each day for a month would be enough to keep a student in the seminary for an entire term.” By implication, the cost of the fuel for two months would support a student for an entire year’s work, the cost for twelve months would support no fewer than five or six students who could not otherwise afford to attend the seminary. Dr. Chang added that he was personally grieved to have to convey the message, but he did not know what else to do. We had a prayer, and he got up and went back to the seminary.

I immediately talked it over with Frances. We both realized that the situation was grave. Only a matter of enormous urgency would cause a Chinese person to come to a fellow member of the faculty and convey a message which amounted to a rebuke for selfishness. I realized that our whole usefulness in the school might be permanently jeopardized.

So, not having any other options open to us, we told the local mission hospital they were welcome to the refrigerator if they wanted to use it to keep medicines cool. They immediately sent over and got it, and as far as I know they used it until the Japanese occupation forces liberated whatever they wanted out of the hospital, presumably including the refrigerator.

People sometimes ask me if, as missionaries, we ever really sacrificed anything for our Lord. This was one thing that we laid on the line. We told our Lord that we were giving it up because this was the only way that we could continue serving Him as missionaries, in that land and in that place.

“If God Asks Martyrdom of Me...”

Frances never clamored for public recognition, but she was a person with deep convictions. Her ancestry was Scotch-Irish, and she came by her convictions through blood, through family, and through home life in Lexington. She manifested them in her strength of character.

She often told me, “I do not want to stand in your way.” She never once objected to being left when I had to go to my country field. She never complained about financial inadequacies. Once or twice, when Sutsien was being attacked, people thought that our house might be a relatively safe place because we were foreigners. Our entire house, upstairs and down, was packed with people. She accepted these wholly unexpected visitors with grace and understanding, and was a wonderful missionary. She never objected to returning to China, even though over and over the home that she had worked for was no more. And she accepted also putting our children into the hands of God as part of our commitment to be missionaries.

More than once she said, “If God asks martyrdom of me, so be it.” We looked at potential death so often that we almost accepted it as part of living. I remember one night in Sutsien when we had been told rabble soldier-bandits were going to loot the town. She brought up to the bedroom half a pillowcase of silver wedding gifts we had received and said, “You take it and drop it in the cistern if we have to run.” Then she went to sleep. Another time, in the winter, we heard the sound of gun shots as soldiers were dropping three-inch shells on the town. Frances put on her thick clothes in case we had to flee in the cold, wrapped the baby Houston in warm clothes, and we sat it out. Frances expected sacrifice, and she got a great deal of it. I’m extremely grateful that the soldiers for whom we cocked our ears never came.

Frances was understanding, patient, brave, and sometimes long-suffering. She was a wonderful mother, a God given friend, a pillar of strength. She proved by what she did that the blood of martyrs was in her veins.

Women in Mission

When Frances went to China in 1923, educated Chinese women were just beginning to emerge from behind the doors where they had been hidden for centuries. In fact, the Chinese name for “wife” was “inside person” [*nei jen*]. As a minister in China, I never remember talking to any Chinese woman alone. It just was not done. Any man in those days who counseled a woman behind closed doors in the church was soft in the head or simply crazy to begin with. We fully understood where the Apostle Paul was coming from when he advised the church at Corinth about their meetings with women in a suspicious social environment. Because of this situation, my mother, my wife, and all the women in mission in China had a special role.

Whatever I experienced as a missionary in China, Frances experienced with me, directly or indirectly. She and I were at most times together, sometimes isolated together, sometimes separated, but always employed by the same board and always interested in doing the same job. I think this is one great reason why I have never objected to the ordaining of women ministers. I have an innate “gut” feeling that a person ought to be recognized for what she is worth, not rejected because of somebody’s interpretation of rules. Those of my friends who may disagree with me on this point may feel like writing me off, but let me remind you that the Lord just might take pity and write me back in again!



Chapter 8 Out in the Villages

Work in the Field, 1929-1936

“All honor to those co-laborers and faithful servants of the Lord, the Chinese pastors, preachers, teachers, and leaders, with whom we work daily, and without whose help all the work which we do would be a failure. In many cases they have suffered more than we, in many cases endured more than we.”

The Mustard Seed Growing in Sutsien
Dr. Patterson (1936)

THE OUTLYING territories of the Sutsien “field” stretched for about fifty miles from the city in each direction. In the 1930’s this larger field had seven Chinese pastors who had moved beyond dependence on the mission and now belonged to the independent young Chinese Church, and twelve church sessions that had taken the same step. In addition, over fifty small unorganized churches were still developing under direct missionary supervision. Mr. William F. Junkin and I shared the job of helping these small churches. We used the Grand Canal as an approximate marker to divide up the area, he going to the north and east, I to the south and west.

Our job was to help these churches find and keep ministers so that Sunday services could be held regularly. We also helped them to find and keep teachers who could live in the chapel communities and run day schools during the week. And we tried to help them work through the problems of what it meant to be a Christian church in the midst of the overwhelmingly non-Christian rural area of China.

Itineration

When missionaries went on trips into the countryside to visit outlying churches, we called it itinerating. Such trips sometimes lasted for weeks at a time. Usually my itineration started in the middle of September and ran to the middle of December and then, in the spring, from the middle of February until about the first of June, that is, until wheat harvest. The

purpose was to go to every one of the chapels, spending perhaps as little as one night or sometimes as much as a week, to get reacquainted with the minister, to visit everybody on the roll of the church, and, in conference with the minister and church officers, to solve, as much as we could, any problems the church faced.

Money was a common source of problems—sources for money, its allocation, its use for benevolences. Another source of problems, as in churches anywhere, was human relationships that had become strained. Still another was the recurrent conflict between Christian moral teachings and Chinese social customs. In my father's earlier days as a missionary, a big issue had been sabbath observance. In my day, pressing issues included polygamy, the question of whether burning incense in the home on an ancestor shelf is idolatry, and later, under the Japanese, the question of whether Christian schools would remain open if emperor obeisance were to be required.

Going to see everybody whose name appeared on the church rolls was a big but rewarding job. Being a pastor no longer was just a figure of speech. Of course, it did have its difficulties. All village dogs were guard dogs, and they could be rather vicious. An outsider was never able to go into country villages without taking some local person along, because the dogs, on smelling a stranger, would become very savage. Dogs are fine companions, but only if they do not have the wrong idea as to the nutritive value of a preacher's trousers.

The Urgency of Self-Support

It took the violent nationalistic upheaval of 1927, when communism tried to seize China, plus the aggressive anti-Christian propaganda which followed, plus the budget cuts resulting from the depression in the U.S.A., really to convince Chinese Christians—and missionaries alike—that the Chinese church must learn to be self-supporting. When the Great Depression hit in America in 1929, funds for foreign missions were cut to the bone. The Board in Nashville wrote that we would have to cut down expenditures drastically, cutting down, among other things, on funds that we had been using to employ Chinese assistants in the work. They also declared it to be absolutely imperative that the native church start supporting itself. Therefore, “as missionaries you are commissioned and urged and otherwise encouraged and ordered to make the churches as much self-supporting as is possible.”

The effort to do this required hard work, patience, firmness, and earnestness. But it could be done. In 1925, local contributions towards preachers' salaries were negligible. Within just ten years, by 1935, an average of forty percent of salaries was being contributed. When the Japanese, and later the communists, completely cut off support from abroad, these earlier beginnings towards self-support in the Chinese church turned out to have been providential.

Have you ever tried to get people who have no money, really *no* money, to contribute to the church? My Chinese preachers were very frank with me. They said that "the people are so poor that no one can go and ask them to give over and above what they are already voluntarily contributing."

I said, "All right, but somebody has to do something."

So we set up a rule of thumb. Any church that had one hundred members on the roll had to pay one half of the preacher's salary. Churches with fewer than one hundred were to pay a proportion. A church with twenty-five members would pay one quarter of one half, that is, one eighth of their preacher's salary. As I visited every person on the church rolls, in the fall and again in the spring of all those years, 1930 through 1932, one of the things I was talking about was what the rules were. If their chapel wanted a preacher, they had to contribute at least that percentage.

Some cases were pitiful beyond expression. One church member had nothing—and when I say nothing, I mean nothing. When I visited in his home, he was seated on the floor weaving a reed mat. When I asked how long it took him to weave it (it was about six by six feet square), he said, "Well, I can usually finish one in one day."

"How much do you get for it when you sell it?"

"I sell it for anything I can, and the reeds cost me just a very little bit." The reeds, of course, grew in marshes, just like the reeds grew in the marshes of Egypt in the old days when the papyrus boats were being built. He went on, "I cut the reeds myself and they don't cost me much. I have some on my own property. I can sell the mats for about twenty cents each."

I was startled. "Twenty cents? Listen, you can't even eat one day for that. If that is all you get, and you've got to eat, you don't make anything."

He looked at me patiently. "Oh, yes, I make part of my food money. If I didn't get the twenty cents, then I would have to find it somewhere else. I can add my twenty cents to what my wife can collect from her sewing

and darning. Also my children go around and pick up trash of various kinds and make a little bit. We were able to save some wheat and corn from the summer harvest. When we put it all together, I have enough to live on, and that's all that I can ask the good Lord to give me."

"Well," I said, "are you going to contribute to the church?"

He said, "Oh, yes sir, I'll give what I can."

"Are you going to be able to give a tithe? If you give a tithe that will be one tenth of twenty cents—two cents a day."

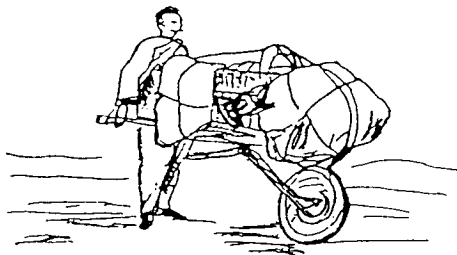
"Well, I'll try. That's all I can do. If I can't give the two cents, I'll borrow it from somebody and be able to give it. Or maybe I'll just save it and make it up, but I'll do what I can. Don't you worry, preacher, don't you worry."

A fellow with an income of twenty cents a day, willing to tithe! How many people get hundreds and hundreds of dollars a month, and yet claim they do not have enough money to give God a percentage!

Exposed to Tuberculosis

In our day, there is no excuse for tuberculosis to continue. There are good medicines. Nevertheless, it continues to devastate the poor and the underfed all over the world. In the China that I knew, coughing and spitting by those who had the disease was present everywhere. It blew in the dust, it lived in the walls. Our own two boys came down with it.

I was rather shocked one day to realize just how much exposure I had had. When I went out on itinerating trips, I would take along my own cot and bedding and food. Or, to be more precise, I had a wheelbarrow pusher who would trundle them along to the places where I was going and who would look after my personal affairs while I was visiting in the community.



My wheelbarrow pusher. Note the kerosene lantern strapped to the side of the load.

My bedroom was a spare room wherever it was convenient, usually in the church. Once, for several days, I was in a room with mud brick walls, dark even at midday. I could see, though, that there were some kind of whitish trails down the wall that looked perhaps like snails had crawled up and down. In fact, I looked for snails for several days, but never saw any.

At the end of my visit I had a chance to ask the local minister what the lines were. He shrugged and said, "For the last year there was a poor old fellow in there with consumption. Those lines you saw are where he coughed and spit on the walls. We are hoping someday to get some lime and whitewash it, but we haven't had time yet."

So that was that. I didn't get tuberculosis, and the next time I slept in a different room.

We ran into such situations constantly. The people among whom we were living simply did not have Western ideas of hygiene and sanitation. My own two sons, Houston and Bob, both caught tuberculosis and were down with it at the same time, when they were eight and six. They caught it from a real nice woman who was working in our home. We found out why she had such a bad cough only shortly before she died. Prior to World War II there was no specific medication for tuberculosis. The boys were in bed and in their mother's care for over a year before they stopped running daily fever.

Famine

I remembered from childhood that my father participated in organized famine relief in 1899 and again in 1907. My turn came in 1935. The Yellow River burst its banks two hundred and fifty miles to the northwest. The waters, sweeping in our direction, inundated six hundred square miles of our territory, flooded fifteen of our churches and chapels, and threatened the food supply of three hundred thousand people.

It was a major catastrophe. We missionaries and the Chinese church leaders cooperated with several international famine relief agencies, doing whatever we could to help alleviate some of the suffering. Within the church community itself, we circulated appeals to Christians in both China and the United States. Of relief monies which church people donated in response to this appeal, sixty percent came from church groups in China. We found in this encouraging evidence of growing independence in the Chinese church and of the Chinese Christians' growing willingness to share the burdens of others.

The hardships caused by the floods and famine sometimes became real to us in very personal ways. I remember one day I was walking up the bank of the canal, going to one of my little churches. As I looked out across those flat plains without a mountain in sight anywhere, quiet yellow water covered the fields and stretched mutely to the horizon. Many people had

taken refuge on the canal bank. I didn't know any of them until all at once a fellow put down his wheelbarrow and came over, bowed, and spoke. I recognized him immediately as one of the Christians from a little church not far away and I asked him what he was doing there.

"Dr. Patterson," he said, "the water is all over my fields. It has come to the door of our house. The fall crops are ruined. The only thing we know to do is pick up our things and move for a while to where things may be better. I have heard that things are a little better south of here one hundred miles. If we can get there, and if things really are better, we can beg through the winter and then come back here next spring. It is almost a hundred miles to go, and I haven't eaten since yesterday. Could you possibly give me a square meal so that I can push my wife and child on this wheelbarrow and go another ten or twenty miles?"

I told him that of course I would.

It wasn't far to a little food shop, where we went in. He must have eaten five soup bowls of noodles. When he was filled up, he thanked me and said, "I think I can make it now. God sent you to me."

I never heard from him again. But maybe the Lord will not forget that sometimes I did what I could.

A Schoolboy and a Solomonic Decision

During my time in the Sutsien field, there were no public schools in the city, and certainly none out in the villages. We tried to have an elementary school with a resident full-time teacher in each of the country churches.

In the peasant, agricultural China that I knew, organic fertilizer, including human waste, was prized, and there was a market for it. A church is a public meeting place and has rest rooms. So every church had a decision to make about the disposal of its waste products. In one of our village day schools, the teacher took the proceeds from the sale of the school's waste products to pay for the boiling water that made tea for visitors. He had made a rule that pupils had to stay in the school from their arrival in the morning until their departure at night. They were not allowed out on the street. You would think this was a good rule, wouldn't you? But one of the parents resented it profoundly.

When I was at the church one day, the teacher told me that I would have to solve an unsolvable problem. A certain father was adamant that his son had to come home when he had to use a facility. He was not about to

let the church and this teacher get the proceeds from his son. But the teacher's side was, "I am not letting the boy go home, because discipline in the whole school would be disrupted."

The problem was laid at my feet. What solution could there be? It occurred to me that Solomon once had a similar situation when a little baby was brought to him with two women claiming to be the mother. I thought perhaps that was something the Lord had put into my mind to guide me. So I told the teacher and the parent that I thought the only solution was to divide. If the child felt it was necessary to go home in the morning, he should be allowed to do so. If it was afternoon, he would be required to stay in the school and accept whatever discomforts would be involved. This seemed to satisfy all parties, and I never heard anything more about it.

The DKW

I finally had to give up the Harley-Davidson that I had used since 1924 for itineration. The Harley-Davidson is air cooled. It does not run well unless one can maintain a speed of at least thirty or forty miles per hour. With the roads which we had, and the ruts and the sand and the rocks and the people, we often had to run in second gear. Second gear burns up the piston rings. 'Nuff said.

About 1935 I had a chance to change to a much cheaper and simpler German machine. The company that made it was DKW.¹ I rode that little DKW until I left the mission field in 1941, and right now I wish that I still had it! That motorcycle had no gas intake valves, no gas exhaust valves, no oil intake. It was the ideal locomotion for somebody in a country like China.

You mixed oil with the gas, poured it in, and the DKW was ready to go. It had a little enclosure around the engine to circulate cold air. You could put the machine up on a stand, start it, let it run for forty-five minutes, and the engine would not even get hot. All the German ingenuity that made Hitler what he was entered into that DKW. As I say, I wish I still had one to play with.

¹[DKW was the trademark for both the company and the small two-cycle-engine motorcycle that it produced. The company began producing a motorbike in 1921 and called it "DKW." Apparently the letters were intended to mean "Das kleine Wunder" ("The Little Wonder").]

Repairs were no lighthearted matter if your motorcycle went bad while you were out among the upcountry villages, thirty miles from home in Sutsien, and five hundred miles from the repair shops of Shanghai. I remember one Sunday evening when I was about twenty-five miles out in the country. Such a distance meant, over our roads, and with luck, that the trip to Sutsien could be made in about two hours. I had set my heart on getting home. So I started off at approximately 4:00 P.M., expecting to be home for supper.

Unfortunately, when I had gone only about five miles, the motorcycle quit functioning. The engine ran. There was gas. But the engine and the back wheel had lost their connection. Obviously the trouble was with the clutch. When I opened up its housing, which was simple, I could see that the clutch was composed of two flat, hard-pressed pieces of something that looked like cork, and also that those pieces were no longer working right.

It would take three weeks to order a new set of clutch plates from Shanghai. That was out of the question. But desperation has a way of coming up with a solution. There was a village church nearby. After due meditation and accumulated exasperation, it occurred to me that the backs of old Bibles were hard. Perhaps they could be cut to serve as clutch plates? We took a discarded Bible, cut a couple of saucer sized pieces from its backs, and fit them into the motorcycle clutch assembly.

I realized, of course, that if the make-do clutch held without slippage, all would be O.K., but that if there were any slippage between the plates, in only a few miles there wouldn't be any clutch to talk about. But what does one do? I took off. In a little over an hour, the walls of Sutsien loomed into sight, and everything was all right.

When the roads were muddy, motorcycles were a poor bet. A person just stayed put or walked. Many times I slogged the ten miles, twenty miles home, because it had been raining for a day or two and there were water-filled potholes all over the roads. No motorcycle could negotiate that.

Besides the motorcycle, and besides walking, the bicycle and the wheelbarrow were our best bets to get around. Roads were narrow and rutted. Army trucks could navigate them, and there was an occasional bus, but the roads really were totally inadequate to accommodate an auto chassis. The age old solution had been to build indestructible carts—slow, heavy, unwieldy, but durable. We ruled these out for personal use. They would either make you swear (in an ecclesiastical context, of course) or drive you mad.

A Visit from Dr. Darby Fulton

Dr. Darby Fulton became Executive Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions in 1932. A year or two later, about 1934, he came to China and included a stopover in Sutsien as part of his visit to the mission field. I still had my Harley-Davidson with the sidecar, and I invited Dr. Fulton, as I had done before with Dr. Sweets, to take a ride through the country. Between hitting bumps in the road and being charged by overexcited dogs, he counted one hundred villages with over three hundred people each that had never heard the gospel, all within sight of the road.

Twenty years later, in 1950, the year that he retired from the Board, Dr. Fulton was invited to lecture at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. He very graciously referred in the lecture to “the rural outpost work around Sutsien” as being “in the best shape of any in China.” If such credit is to be given, high on the list of those deserving recognition is my co-evangelist in the Sutsien area, Dr. William F. Junkin, a person inflexibly loyal to “the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14).



Excursus: The Constant Battle Against Disease

“I would register thanksgiving to God for God’s care over us and our children and their families, saving us from the numerous pestilences that walk in darkness.”

Dr. B. C. Patterson, *Memoirs*

I HAVE TOLD how our family became involved with tuberculosis. Later I will be telling of Bob’s round with amoebic dysentery and of my own contact with leprosy. Many of our missionaries came down with one or another disease, despite knowing the need to avoid contagion. A major priority of the missionary program was to work with the Chinese people, seeking to make treatment of disease more available and prevention more effective.

Let me give you the names of some of the other various diseases that we battled all the time in the North Kiangsu area. We can be grateful that today in the United States these diseases are almost nonexistent, and they are certainly under better control today in China than they were. But fifty or seventy-five years ago they were rampant here, and they were certainly rampant there. Most Chinese families that we knew had lost from two to five children to disease.

- *Cholera.* Cholera was a violent and virulent form of dysentery. I told earlier of Mrs. Bradley’s death. A main cause for cholera epidemics was a contaminated water supply. It was also carried by flies, because flies put their feet in everything and anything.

Every time I took a trip in China during my eighteen years of service as an adult missionary, I carried along a bag with about a quart of kaopectate. Kaopectate is a kind of powdered clay. If and when we came down with cholera, and it wasn’t difficult to diagnose, we would load up on clay. Otherwise, all liquids would drain out of one’s system within four or five hours. Eventually we got an antitoxin for cholera, but in my early days there no medication of any kind. If you caught it, you probably died unless you had your clay.

- *Trachoma.* This is a disease of the eye. The underside of the eyelid becomes very sensitive and bleeds. Eventually the scarring of the eyelids leads to a scratching of the iris, and the eye is blinded. Today there is a cure, but in those days there was none. The infection (a virus?) did not

respond to medications that were then known. The only way to avoid the disease was to avoid initial infection, so our parents tried hard to keep us from ever putting our fingers in our eyes.

In those days, and no doubt still, it was a courteous and refreshing Chinese custom, in homes or at inns, to offer guests a hot, steaming cotton towel so they could wipe off their faces and make themselves comfortable after coming in from the dusty street. However, since one knew the towel had been in the eyes of many people, some perhaps with trachoma, it was difficult to know how to handle the situation without giving offense. We learned to wipe our brows and cheeks without touching the eyes.

- *Malaria*. Another disease that was extremely common was malaria. The name “malaria” comes from two medieval Italian words, *mal aria*, meaning “bad air,” or “swampy air.” People in the middle ages knew that summer swamps were bad for malaria, though they didn’t know why. By the time my mother went to China, she knew as a doctor that malaria is carried by a certain kind of mosquito, the *anopheles*. Unfortunately, the *anopheles* is found in abundance wherever you find mosquitos.

Throughout my childhood, I got malaria every spring, summer, fall. By the time I took enough quinine to hold down one attack, some generous mosquito had given me reason to have another. Actually, malaria is a generic name for a group of diseases. There is two-day malaria, three-day malaria, four-day malaria, five-day malaria, and half-day malaria. The distinctions refer to the fever cycle. Quinine does quell the disease (and today doctors have other drugs that are in some ways preferable). However, people today still don’t want a contribution of my blood because they claim that the infection of malaria, once it gets in, stays for life.

- *Bubonic Plague*. Bubonic plague was widespread in our area, especially in the summertime. The plague is carried by rats because rats carry fleas. Fleas that are carried on rats jump on humans, and they are the host for the bubonic plague virus or germ or whatever. It is very hard to avoid fleas, so our best hope was to avoid areas where the plague was spreading.

- *Kalaazar*. Another disease very common was kalaazar. This is located in the spleen. In case you don’t know what the spleen is, you have one and it wouldn’t hurt you to find out more about it in the dictionary. It is a neighbor living near your liver. Kalaazar is a tropical disease carried by the sand mite. During most of my missionary life, there was no cure. Your abdomen swelled up and gradually turned blue and then turned white and

then you died. It was only in the 1930's that our hospital in Sutsien finally got hold of a cure, and we were the only place in our district of two million people where there was any hope for a person with this illness.

- *Diphtheria*. This was quite common. I had it myself once, as an adult. I was out at a village church, and I woke up one morning and found myself hardly able to breathe. After sleeping and tossing on my cot for two days, I finally got strength to find my way back to Hsuchowfu. Dr. A. A. McFadden, the station doctor there, diagnosed it for me. How could I know that there seemed to be a white fungus growing on my tonsils? If I could have looked down my own throat, I might have known what the trouble was. Diphtheria today is under control, but in those days it wasn't.

- *Typhus*. This is another vicious fever. The method of transmission is by body lice. When we would go out to distribute famine relief, it was impossible not to come in contact with somebody that was carrying lice. There was no immunization for typhus, so we had to try to avoid picking up the lice. We would tie our sleeves securely, put on a tight necktie, tie our pants at the ankles, and then spray kerosene oil over all these spots, hoping that if contaminated lice got on us they would get discouraged when they tried to walk through the kerosene oil fumes. Speaking of cultural differences, I wonder what those country people thought of our getup! In most cases we lived to tell the tale. I did.

- *Smallpox*. When our daughter, Anne, was less than a year old, we discovered that her nurse, who looked after her and carried her around all day, was also looking after and carrying around her own six month old child each night, and that her own child was just then virulently sick with smallpox. We, of course, had previously vaccinated Anne for smallpox. But still, if there is such a thing as smallpox being contagious, that certainly opened a real good door. Smallpox was all around us. To have had Anne's nurse that closely involved with it is something that has stuck in my mind!

- *Venereal Disease*. Venereal disease was rampant in China, of course, just as it is everywhere. Usually missionaries were spared catching venereal disease because they were not supposed to conduct themselves in a way that would expose them to this particular risk. However, you realized that every time you picked up a hot washrag or every time you slept on a hotel pillow that somebody else had used, there was danger of contagion of one kind or another.

Valetudinarianism

Some of you will think I am trying to “pull your leg” as I close my remarks on disease with this seventeen letter word. However, this particular word happens to suit our theme.

There are people in America who are almost irrational in their fear of diseases and dirt of any kind. If you transport these people to China, they still have the same mentality. In fact, some of the earlier missionaries were so irrational in their fear of germs that they couldn't carry on their mission work at all. The mission board in America eventually learned to evaluate candidates carefully on this point before sending them out.

People living in China needed to be alert about germs, but not obsessive. If we had done nothing but spend all our days worrying about the possibility of contracting some disease, we would have been better off to leave the mission field, go back home, and start plowing corn and milking cows.

I'm very happy to report that my immediate family escaped everything except tuberculosis, diphtheria, malaria, amoebic dysentery, impetigo, and various skin infections, and trachoma (my brother, Paul). We have always thanked God that boiling water was able to handle most things, good disinfectants were able to handle many things, and avoiding contagion was able to handle many things. And when all is said and done, trusting the mercy of God helped us many, many times.



Chapter 9 People Problems

Difficult Questions for Young Christians

“For it has been reported to me...that there are contentions among you, my brethren.”

I Corinthians 1:11

YOU CANNOT be a minister in the United States without facing church problems. They come from many angles: fellow ministers, city politics, newspapers. Your job also brings you close to the problems that people have in their own lives. Now, what about the mission field? You might think that you would spend all your time on your knees. But actually, on the mission field as in the home church, you would spend much of your time facing problems or helping people work through problems. Let me illustrate some of these for you from our country churches.

Bigamy and Beyond

There was a nice church in a nice community about thirty-five miles from Sutsien that I enjoyed going to very much. In the community was a young and attractive business man by whom I was very much impressed. He was clean, intelligent, aggressive, able to handle difficult situations, and effectively managing a good business. But just when I was hoping I could receive him into the church, one of my colleagues, Helen Bailey,¹ held a Bible class for women in that community. She came back and told me that I had better be careful. The man had two wives.

The next time I was out at his town, I asked him to come around and talk. We looked for a private spot, but there is no such thing in China. There is someone looking at you morning, noon, and night. The only reason they don't look down your throat is because you sometimes keep your mouth shut. I told him that I was sorry, but that with two wives it was difficult for me to receive him into the church as a full-fledged member.

¹[For more on Helen Bailey's life and work, see Chapter 13.]

He responded that the reason he had two wives was that the first wife had given him no son, and he was hoping the second one would. (In China, property, money, assets and liabilities, go to the firstborn *son*.) “Someone needs to inherit the store. Someone has to look after the mother, if something happens to me. So I thought the wise, kind, responsible thing to do was to get a second wife.”

Actually, the Chinese Presbytery had taken an action that allowed a church to receive a person with two wives if the marriage to the second took place before the person became Christian. So I received him and thought everything was fine.

The only trouble was that I didn’t know as much as I thought I did. The next time I went out to the town, the minister told me that my friend with the two wives now had three. I asked the man to come talk.

He promptly came by, very gracious and friendly. “Dr. Patterson, you really don’t understand my problem. I have been up against a hopeless situation. My second wife had a child last year, and it was a girl. That didn’t help at all. I was hoping she would conceive again, but she hasn’t. I thought the only way I could plan for my demise was to have *another* wife who could give me a male child.”

“I understand your problem,” I said. “But let me put it this way: I have a problem too. People are snickering at me because I thought you were not going to take another wife, and you did. You make my face look ashamed. I don’t like to lose face any more than you do.”

“I hadn’t thought of it that way,” he replied. “But my third wife is an accomplished fact, and I think she’s pregnant. I hope she will bring me a male heir. I know you will take my name off the roll, but may I keep attending church and keep contributing?”

I said, “You’re welcome to, but you cannot consider yourself an enrolled member or vote on church business.”

“That’s all right,” he said. “I know that the Lord would understand and put my name on the roll if I could talk to him.”

Abraham’s God and Abraham’s Concubines

The daughter of the minister of one of our country churches, a beautiful high school girl, found a teaching job in a neighboring town and seemed to be happily located. In the town to which she went, she lived in a room in the church. The minister of that church, who was himself married but whose wife was back on the farm, also occupied a room in the church.

Human nature being what it is, the pair decided to live together. Why use two beds when one would work?

He put out word all over the country that his first wife had died, and I heard that he had married the young teacher. But I just happened to know that his wife had not died. So I leaked the fact that I knew it, in ways that I was perfectly confident would get back to him.

He was furious. He wrote me a letter a yard long, saying that he believed in the God of Abraham and I didn't. Abraham had concubines, so why should I come from America and tell him he could not have a second wife when Abraham could? What was I to say? You tell me the answer to this one.

A Man with Leprosy and a Communion Service

Leprosy was such a dreaded disease that mission organizations in many lands established special hospitals or "colonies" for people with the disease. About all that could be done was to offer treatments with chaulmoogra oil (Bengali name) and to give the poor, deformed, outcast and dying victims a place where they could live. Sometimes the treatments helped; sometimes they just prolonged the agony of dying.

Early in the decade of the 1930's, I went out to one of my village churches one weekend and the preacher told me that Communion was to be served the next day and that there was a little problem which he hoped I could help him solve. This was clearly a red flag, so I asked him what the problem was.

"Well," he said, "a leper has started coming to our church. Our people want to be friendly, but they are squeamish when it comes to leprosy. Tomorrow we have Communion, and everybody drinks from the same cup. If it is all right with you, I will put him by you and ask you to handle the problem for me."

I accepted this as part of my job, and chose the seat by the man at the service next day. I think I was hoping that I would get the cup first, and pass it on to him. But it didn't work that way. The elder gave him the cup first, and he passed it on to me. With embarrassment, the secret is now to be told. This missionary noticed which side the man drank out of, carefully turned the cup around and drank from the other side, and passed the cup on to some other unsuspecting worshipper.

In self justification, let me say that leprosy is not easily contagious. People must be associated closely for up to a year to catch it, as in a family,

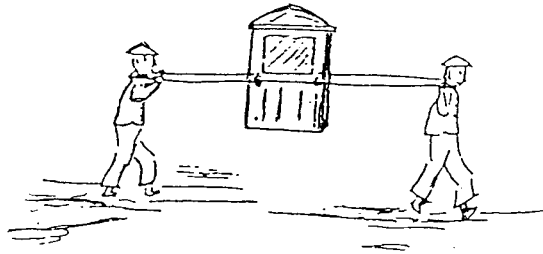
and then sometimes they don't. So our reaction of fear about being near an actual leper was more a matter of feel than a matter of fact. Still, for some time afterward I checked my lips rather carefully to see if there were any signs of the disease.

One Preacher Too Many

Weddings in China, along with funerals, are occasions when a family must splurge, even if it is left pauperized. A proud old elder in one of my churches, the mayor of the village, was marrying off his son. Arrangements between the groom and bride had been made when the children were babies. In the meantime, the mayor and his family had become Protestant Christians and the girl's family had become Roman Catholic.

All the guests had been notified of the wedding. Food had been bought, and the cooks had arrived to prepare the feast. Tables had been borrowed, chairs arranged.

The yard and the rooms had been swept and new red paper mottoes pasted on the door panels and lintels. Firecrackers had been stashed away for the arrival of the bride and bearers employed to carry the bride from her home to that



Bridal palanquin, with bearers.

of the groom in a palanquin. The bedroom for the bride and groom had been refurbished with whitewash, colored banners, and new doors.

But when the great and final day came, there was a hitch. The father of the groom had his protestant Presbyterian marrying parson present for the ceremony, and the father of the bride had overstepped protocol and showed up with a Catholic priest to do the job. Obviously, with two stubborn characters having their authority challenged and the "face" of their church threatened, the situation was slipping past the point of friendly communication to unfriendly confrontation and angry confusion.

My good old elder saw the difficulty, and with the will of a John Knox and the wisdom of a Solomon he stood up and announced to the wedding crowd: "The bride has come. Continue your feasting. God made man and woman long before the church got around to making her ecclesiastical rules. Take the bride and groom and lock them in the rooms prepared. As of tomorrow morning, *I* pronounce them man and wife.

It was so done. Everybody was happy as they guzzled the goodies and celebrated the happy nuptials; and the last I heard they were living happily ever afterward.

A Burned Church

I was at home in my Sutsien office, one morning, when a minister from Tsao Hu, a town about fifteen miles up the canal, walked in. He was accompanied by a rather questionable looking character (at least, in retrospect I think he was questionable looking). The minister said, "Dr. Patterson, this is Mr. Tu. He has just moved to our town. He heard the church had some space it wasn't using, and he thought it would be a splendid idea if he could rent the back half for his own use, and help look after the building."

The preacher seemed to be sincere in his recommendation. And the Tu fellow seemed to be honest enough to be trusted. So I said, "Okay, as far as I am concerned."

The two went off. Not long after, someone came and told me there were problems in the church at Tsao Hu. The man to whom I had rented the back half of the property was a local gangster, a criminal much feared by everybody, and he was using the back half of the church as a brothel.

It wasn't long before I saw the minister of Tsao Hu again, and I read him the riot act. "Why didn't you warn me? Since you got me into this, now I want to ask you to straighten it up!"

He looked at me with an expression of aggrieved embarrassment. "Didn't I sit here, right in the presence of Mr. Tu, and recommend him to you? If he had been anything but a dangerous individual, do you think I would have made such a point of speaking to you openly, before his face? When I realized that you did not ask me on the quiet, afterwards, whether everything was on the up and up, then there was nothing left for me to do but accept your judgment."

In China, business rentals are always handled by a trusted middle man. I had consented to this property rental with no middle man and no behind the scenes consultations. I asked my ministerial colleague if he could now handle the problem, but he said there was no way, that his life would be on the line. I finally had to recognize that I was the goat.

I prayed and mulled and stewed. I wrote a letter to Mr. Tu, but he just shrugged it off. So I got on my motorcycle and went to the church. Mr. Tu was not at the church, but the whole back yard was occupied by

various young women in brightly colored clothes. They had a certain come-hither look which made their profession obvious.

Since Tu himself was not there, I decided to put on an act that I knew would be remembered and quoted. I stamped my feet, I waved my arms, and I shouted with my voice: "I wrote him to get out, and he hasn't done it. Now I'm going to officials. I'm going to the American consul. I'm going to national leaders of the church in China." And I probably made other threats that I can't remember now. The girls stood around smiling at me, but I knew they would remember and quote everything I had said. Then I got on my motorcycle and came home.

Well, Mr. Tu and his entourage moved out.

But that wasn't to be the end of the story. Three or four days later, Tu walked into my front yard in Sutsien, got down on his knees and butted his head on the ground, and said, "Dr. Patterson, you must let me have that property. It's as much as my life is worth. I *must* have it!"

With what is referred to among preachers as righteous indignation, I pushed him out the front gate and told him, "Get out! Get out now! And stay out!" Then I told the gatekeeper to bolt the gate and not let that scoundrel in again.

I now realize that I handled Mr. Tu wrongly. I should have invited him into the house, served him tea and cookies, and talked to him until he dozed away and had to go find some place to sleep. I should at all costs have avoided giving the appearance of insulting his dignity. Before very long, I was to learn this lesson.

About a month later I went to the Tsao Hu church for several days to hold morning and evening services. Mr. Tu was prominent in the audience, both times. After the night service on the second or third night, I headed for bed in a back corner of the church yard. I hardly had gotten under the covers when I saw a red glow that was obviously a fire. I jumped up, pulled on some clothes, ran out, and saw that the straw roof of the church was in flames from one end to the other.

I rushed out, yelling "Fire!"

I had hardly yelled it when a man came in the front gate of the church yard, carrying a bucket of water. As he got close, I realized it was Tu. He stopped and said to me, "Isn't it terrible that there is a fire? When I saw the disaster, the first thing that I thought of was to fill a bucket and rush over and see if I couldn't help you put it out."

Then he smirked at me, poured the water on the ground, and walked away. That was the last I saw of him.

The church roof was destroyed. I was thankful that I had enough money put aside in reserves to buy new roofing poles and straw, so the life of the church could go on. Mr. Tu had gotten his retaliation. Apparently he considered it sufficient, because as far as I know he never tried to injure me personally, or my family. And me? I had learned my lesson. Whatever you do, particularly if you are dealing with somebody's public reputation, you can be sure of retaliation. It is a deep-seated and instinctive reaction.

A Mother's Curses

Many of our missionaries did not know any Chinese curse words at all. The language teachers were simply too embarrassed to include them in our language lessons. The only missionaries I knew who understood curse words were those who had learned them natively by growing up in China. As a child I had no trouble knowing which words my parents found unacceptable, and I had no trouble understanding the curse words.

One day when I was out at one of my country churches, I was called on to baptize a young man of about thirty and receive him into the church. After the service, the minister asked me to accompany the young man home and let him introduce me to his mother. Along the way, both of them warned me that the mother was elderly, that she had an acid disposition, that she was very short tempered, and that I had better expect the worst.

The walk to his home was about a mile. As soon as the woman caught sight of her son in company with the minister and me, she put her hands on her hips and started cursing the young man from the south pole to the north star, and all in between.

Why is it that curse words in our country usually deal with God and Christ, whereas Chinese curse words deal almost altogether with one's mother and one's ancestors? I suppose it is just a fact of life that people created the language of cursing by drawing on things they hold sacred. When we want to curse in America, we take over words from our religious life and use them to express personal hatreds. Chinese, too, use words from the area of life they consider most important when they want to beat someone over the head. For them, that means primarily ancestors.

When the Chinese curse, you don't hear them calling on God or threatening damnation. What you hear is *ni mama*, "Your Mother!" If

you hear that on the street as the beginning of a sentence, you can be sure the end of the sentence will be a disreputable reference to the person's birth. I have listened to Chinese curse one another steadily for thirty minutes, hardly stopping to take a breath.

This young man's mother started off with "*ni mama*." Of course, the fact that *ni mama* was the same as herself didn't seem to cause any conflict in her mind. She said *ni mama* is a dog, *ni mama* is a cat, *ni mama* is a weasel, *ni mama* is a prostitute for bandits, *ni mama* is the vilest whelp on the street, *ni mama* is the devil himself. She went on for about sixty minutes without a breath, or at least not one I detected.

After a while, I just said, "My good friend, you sound like you're upset."

That teed her off for another twenty minutes.

"My dear lady," I said, "what is it that is so upsetting to you?"

She turned on me: "That miserable skunk that calls himself my son has joined your church. Now there will be no one to put food and money out to keep my spirit happy in the next world, and I will be a beggar when I go to be with my ancestors!"

Well, she was having a total spasm. I didn't know what to do. She was making life very hard for this young man, but there was no way to talk to her. Finally I realized that something had to be done, so I stuck my neck out. "Lady," I said, "what you want your son to do doesn't have to be done by him at all."

She stopped her tirade and glared at me and snapped, "What do you mean?"

"You want him to burn paper money so it will be waiting for you in the next life. Why get all upset? You can burn it yourself and it will be there waiting for you. Just go into town where a dollar or two will get you thousands of dollars of devil money [that's what they called it]. Go to the place where you will be buried, burn the money, and let the spirits collect it. Then it will be waiting for you when you get there."

She narrowed her eyes and looked at me for several minutes and didn't say one word. I thought perhaps I had finally made a point. But I was mistaken. After a pause she raised her head and said, "No! No! No!"

I asked, "What's wrong?"

"Of course I'm not going to send my money in advance of my arrival. All those little devils running around know who I am, and they will take that money. And when I get there, there won't be a red copper left."

I do not know whatever happened to that man or that woman. She, I know, is long since dead. As for her money, I will let the little devils argue it out with her.



Chapter 10 A Deepening Faith

The Holy Spirit at Work, Mid-1930's

“Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest.”

John 4:35¹

ABOUT 1935 a real evangelistic fervor began to move through the Chinese church. Outside of the church, economic and political disorder threatened destruction of the nation. But within, God was leading to a deepening prayer life and to ever more serious Bible study.

A spirit of intercession was increasingly present in most of the church groups that we worked with. Every day, at various times of day depending on local choice, groups of Christians would come together for prayer meetings. This happened even in the smaller villages. Prayer groups would visit in homes in the presence of sickness or disaster, to bring comfort. The Sutsien city church organized a “Watch Tower,” assigning different hours during the day to different persons in an attempt to have someone praying for definite objects twelve hours each day, seven days out of the week.

Chinese Christians carried over into their practice of public prayer a custom they had learned in school. The pupils in Chinese schools study out loud. In many church groups, when united prayer was announced, all would pray at once, quite vocally, in their own individual words. The effect for the uninitiated foreigner could be quite disconcerting. But far from lessening the power of group prayer, this method seemed to enhance it.

We could tell that a new day was dawning in the way that God’s Word was being studied, too. Chinese Christians were beginning to show a distinct hunger for personal study of the written Word of God. Christians everywhere had begun discussing how to interpret scripture and apply it to life. Where the explanations of the missionaries had earlier been accepted without discussion, now Christians were studying their own Bibles and thinking through for themselves the implications of the truths that they found.

¹[This is one of the Bible verses that Dr. Patterson chose as a thematic verse for his 1936 pamphlet, *The Mustard Seed Growing in Sutsien.*]

Mrs. Liu, Demon Exorcist

One manifestation of the power of the gospel at work in the life of the church were instances of Christ's power over demons. Many Chinese undoubtedly were attracted to the church through a desire for deliverance from demon possession.

In the United States, too, many people are the devil's slaves, and in at least that sense are demon-possessed. But what about the kind of demon possession that the Bible describes? The Bible talks about a deadly combination of satanic impulses and emotional instability. Being that kind of mixture, it becomes an interesting subject for argument, belief, disbelief, and a great deal of scientific and psychological speculation. If you say that a certain person is "possessed of a demon," you can bring forward many reasons to justify it. But if you take the same person and describe his or her condition as a "psychological problem," you will again be able to bring forward many reasons to justify it.

Let me tell you about a demon exorcist in the territory where I worked. Old Mrs. Liu lived about fifteen miles south of us when we were in Sutsien in the mid-1930's. Her home was in a smaller town called Bu-tzu, a hamlet that was truly in a no man's land, situated in a section of the country actively infested with robbers and brigands of all descriptions. We had not seen her for two years when she showed up in Sutsien one day and urgently asked that I come out to her home town to hold a meeting, receive members, and serve communion. I had supposed at the time that the Bu-tzu church had become defunct.

If I were to come, was there danger from bandits? She admitted that if I came by motorcycle, its noise might broadcast my arrival too boldly. But she told me that if I would come by bicycle and come between 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M., I would be safe. The bandits all slept during those hours.

How could I do anything but go? Mrs. Liu had come into Sutsien and attended the Bible school run by my wife, Frances, and then gone back to her home in the south country. There she started having prayer gatherings for the sick and the demon possessed. Soon dozens of sick, blinded, deranged, dangerous people were flocking to her for help. God was answering her prayers in a remarkable way.

I reached the church by bicycle. As I came closer to Bu-tzu, I could see that at least half the houses had been either torn down or burned to the ground. Of those that remained, most of the straw roofs were burned off. I couldn't even find my way around in the ruins of the little community.

Mrs. Liu met me and led me to what had been the church. Its roof was gone, and we met inside the walls, under the blue sky. Soon a group gathered—seventy-five or a hundred! When our meeting began, I was in the middle of the first prayer when we heard two rifle shots. Before I could open my eyes, the church was deserted and the preacher left standing alone. False alarm: it was only someone testing out his ammunition. Soon the people all came back.

Mrs. Liu invited members of her group to come meet me. There was a young woman of about thirty who said she had had a fire devil inside her. She had been a pyromaniac. The first time she came, she had been trundled in on a wheelbarrow by her father-in-law, her arms tied behind her back. They prayed for her in a meeting, and she seemed to listen. The next time she came of her own volition. After that she was so much better she was free to go and come inside of her own home and village. Her pyromania reportedly was gone. They all said that it was a fire devil that had left her, and who am I to argue?

A woman was there who had tried to poison neighbors and family. She previously had been chained. She was now cured.

One fellow was there who still had bone exposed above the wrist. He had been bound in chains so tightly and so long that the skin and flesh had worn off. Mrs. Liu said he had been really dangerous, and had been chained as a protection for the people of the village. But he had come to church, sung hymns, prayed, and he could now thank God for deliverance from the bondage of Satan.

Many with terrible eye diseases were well and happy. Another with internal bleeding of some kind had come and had gotten well in about three weeks. Another who formerly had been a bandit and a cutthroat had begun to attend the group, had learned to pray, and had reformed his life. Another young man had been highly unstable and had run from village to village, screaming and shouting. He had been caught and tied and brought to the church. They prayed over him and soon he also was healed.

Whatever you may think about all this, there was no doubt in the minds of the victims that the power of the devil had been broken, and the door to a new life opened. The healed people were extremely loyal Christians who would not miss a service or a prayer meeting for anything in the world. Also, they gave a wonderful witness to the people in the community who might formerly have thought that the church was just a front organization for some American scheme.

The bandits left me alone as I came from Bu-tzu back to Sutsien. Amazement still grips me when I go back in memory to the blackened ruins of that town and to the ragged people who were trying to make out a human life in the midst of that hopelessness.

The Power of Christ

At about that same period in the mid-thirties, I witnessed Christ's power in the life of a woman who had been given over to demon worship. I was out in one of the little country churches. Actually, the church was in a small town—perhaps five or six thousand people within the walls. It was a Sunday afternoon, and the morning service that day had been a good one. Many had come with diseases for the Lord to heal. Others came with what they, like the people in Mrs. Liu's village, called demon possession. They hoped that through prayer and the support of the church they could overcome the power of Satan in their lives. I was the only missionary there, but the Chinese pastor and many local friends were present.

The pastor said, "Dr. Patterson, a woman here is in desperate need of blessing from the Lord and would very much like to talk to you."

I said I would be delighted. So the old lady, poor, shriveled, illiterate, trusting, came to ask a favor. Usually, of course, it would have been for money. But she surprised me. She told me that she was a widow and that her son had died. She went on to tell me how she had been coming to the prayer services for some time and how the Lord had healed her other child and also herself. But one hurdle was more than her faith could surmount.

For many years she had been worshipping a snake devil, an image of a black snake, burning incense before its picture, bowing before its presence. She now knew there was a true God, but still she was frightened to touch, much less remove, the picture of the black snake which had adorned her central wall for many years. Once before she had tried, and her house had caught fire and burned. She couldn't stand another experience like that. Would I come and take it down? Would I let my hands do what she knew her hands should do but dared not touch?

"Do you really want to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," I asked.

"They tell me that the power of Jesus Christ is greater than the power of the devil," she replied. "If this is true, please let me be one of your Christians."

"I'll be glad to come to your house," I said, "but don't ask me to take the picture off the wall. You take it down, and I will take it away."

I knew that if I took the picture off the wall and anything happened to her, she would hold me responsible. Beyond that, it clearly was important that she herself be involved, that she use her own hands to make her final break with idolatry.

She agreed, and I went with her to her hovel of a home. All the neighbors were around, of course, to see what would happen. The black snake picture, made of flimsy paper and about a yard square, was exceptionally vivid. She went in, pulled it down, brought it out, and gave it to me.

As I was rolling it up, I noticed another object that was part of the devil rituals she had been doing. Underneath the picture, on what we would call the mantelpiece, was a grimy pot that she had used to burn a little incense each day for years. It brimmed with heavily scented ashes. I said, "What about the incense pot? Will you get rid of that, too?"

She went back in and picked it up and put it in my hand. (I should add that the pot was no valuable antique. It looked like, and was, an old earthen container.) We had a prayer, and I left with the picture and the pot. As far as I ever knew, the old woman's bondage to the snake image ended there and she remained a steadfast worshipper in her Christian community.

I returned to the church, intending to destroy everything. But then I had another idea. Why not wash out the incense pot, drill a little hole in the bottom, and plant a living flower? So that is what I did. For many years afterwards, as I would look at the beautiful rose blooming in that pot, I would think of what it had been. God's new life in the rose gave it a glory that the burned out incense could not possibly give. That was our mission, too, in China!



It is wonderful for us not to be bound by the chains of superstition. The chains are not easily broken, but the gospel of Christ does it!

Speaking in Tongues

Some Chinese Christians carried out healing ministries, some cast out devils in the name of Christ, some saw visions—and some spoke with tongues. These various gifts of the Spirit are recognized in the Bible, after all, and many churches had leaders committed to this type of evangelism.

For some time, the Chinese Christian community had included groups who claimed that God had given them the gift of a special language. On

the face of it, this was very surprising. Stoic demeanor, reserve, and self-control are strongly characteristic of Chinese culture. If there is any place in the world where you would not expect to find glossolalia,² it is China. One would think that no Chinese church group would have any desire to receive the gift of tongues. But the unbelievable happened and speaking in tongues began to occur in the Chinese church. As part of the 1930's spiritual revival, influence from tongues-speaking groups began to infiltrate the churches in our area of North Kiangsu and on further north into Shantung Province.

A stranger came one night to one of the churches where I was. Afterwards he asked to talk to me, and I readily agreed. He told me that what he wanted particularly was to get me started speaking in tongues. "You will be a better minister. You will be in the hand of God. God will be able to speak more easily through you. Just let me show you how you can talk with tongues."

"Well," I said, "I don't feel the need for it, but if you want to, just go ahead."

"Kneel down. I will pray, and you do as I say. You must say exactly what I say, and it won't be long before you are talking in tongues."

So he bowed his head and started by saying, in Chinese, "Hosanna! Praise the Lord! Hosanna! Praise the Lord," over and over, faster and faster. After about five minutes, his mouth was getting so twisted that he didn't know whether "hosanna" came first or last, or whether "praise" came before "the Lord" or afterwards. He got so totally confused that he just took off and started babbling.

When he got up, he asked, "Dr. Patterson, did you do what I did?"

"You speeded up to the point where you couldn't pronounce very distinctly," I answered, "and when you slipped over into some sounds that I wasn't able to follow, I couldn't say what you were saying."

He wasn't discouraged. "Dr. Patterson, you will find that if you practice doing that, you will soon be talking the language of angels."

All I had to do was say something over and over again until my lips and tongue didn't coordinate properly, and I would be speaking in tongues.

Here is another illustration. A certain Mr. Chu, from Shantung Province, had come to one of my country churches and was trying to teach

²[Derived from two Greek words, "tongue" and "speech, dialect." The word means "speaking in tongues" or "speaking in the tongues-dialect."]

all its members how to speak in tongues. Being good, practical country people, they asked him what this language was that he was teaching them. He told them it was *La-ding*. That threw me for a while until I realized that “La-ding” was the Chinese way of saying “Latin.” If you will take the word “Latin” and change *t* to *d*, you will see what he was saying.

I listened to him for a while, and then I said, “Mr. Chu, I have studied Latin for six years, and I have to tell you that what you are saying does not sound like Latin.”

He answered: “I have no control over what you may think. But what I am saying, and what I have learned from my teacher, is that *La-ding* is what the Lord would like his people to use, and particularly those who are sensitive enough to enjoy the Kingdom of Heaven. Even though you do not understand this language, the Holy Spirit understands. So if you can teach all the people in your church to speak it, you will be cooperating with the Holy Spirit.”

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Ever since the first century, some sincere Christians have deeply desired the gift of speaking with tongues (I Corinthians 14:1-33; Acts 2:4-11). Our earliest records of Christians speaking in tongues show that it was indeed perceived to be a gift of the Holy Spirit. But Paul made it clear that to be filled with the Spirit also means that a person is loving, concerned, helpful, willing to let his or her life be a blessing to others (Galatians 5:22-23; I Corinthians 13). I have no personal fight with any people who claim that the Spirit of God leads them to speak with tongues. But we do know that some factions in the early church claimed special spiritual superiority because they had this gift. It is only when people use this gift as a way to boost their own ego or a way to beat me over the head that I have sincere misgivings.

The Area Evangelistic Meeting of 1935

As I traveled to small and scattered churches in my area, it occurred to me that we should get everybody together at least once a year so that everybody would know that we were all back of each other. I began to think in terms of some kind of meeting for all church leaders in the district. Several years earlier, while back in America for two years, I had worked at Washington and Lee as Y.M.C.A. secretary. During that time I had an excellent chance to see how a big convocation can open doors for evangelism.

The Bethel Group, an evangelistic group headquartered in Shanghai, were excellent at holding meetings and they spoke our dialect. They agreed to send two or three members to our station in the spring to conduct a revival. The actual out-of-town leaders who came, in March of 1935, were Mr. Chao Shih Kuang, evangelist; Miss Sophie Graham, daughter of the James Graham family with whom my mother and father had stayed when they first came to China in 1891; and Mr. Robert Gillies.

We planned for an eight day Bible study and evangelistic conference. I spent the winter telling people to keep that week open. In Sutsien we secured every available room in every available house. We arranged kitchen facilities for those who brought their own food. We prepared for three hundred delegates from the country districts, and we did everything we knew how to accommodate them.

We asked every church to send at least one or two representatives. As it turned out, some sent five or six or more. In fact, over eight hundred people trudged in over dusty roads and overwhelmed the reception committee. In spite of innumerable discomforts, everyone was highly enthusiastic. We had a wonderful meeting. The Bethel people did a good job. It was really inspiring. In fact, it was a landmark in our church's effort to reach the entire area.



My mother was then living in Tenghsien, about a hundred miles to the north. After she heard the details of this meeting, she wrote me, "What you have done is what held me close to my Lord thirty years ago. In 1907, I was desperate, depressed beyond expression. I didn't think I could stand it. Then God let me have a dream. I dreamed of a great revival, with people coming from all over the area. It was so vivid that I was sure I had actually attended it. What you have written is the fulfillment of that promise that God gave to me in that dream thirty years ago!"

You can imagine the satisfaction that this made me feel.



Part III
Christ &
Chinese Culture



Chapter 11 Religion

Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Animism

“As I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.”

Acts 17:23

AS FRANCES and I prepared to go to China, we often heard friends refer to the Chinese as “heathen.” But I have come to quite a different attitude on this subject—partly, I suspect, because I was reared in China, partly because after I went back to China I studied Chinese religions, but probably most of all because I had many Chinese friends whom I didn’t consider to be heathen.¹

Of course the Chinese as a nation are not Christian. They don’t believe that Jesus is Christ or that Scripture is the Divine Word of God. They do not find the Jesus Christ who came to earth two thousand years ago possesses anything in particular to commend him over the religious leaders whom China herself has given her own people through the ages.

But there were important ways that the church in China could use the religion and morality that was already present in the culture to help people understand Christianity. I think you will see this as I turn now to the three recognized religious traditions of China, referred to by the Chinese themselves as the “three teachings”: Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. After telling some of my experiences with those three traditions, I will consider finally what is the oldest and probably still the most widely practiced of all the Chinese religious tradition—China’s native animism.

Of the three recognized traditions, the most important, according to the Chinese, is Confucianism, so I will begin with it. Confucianism is probably also the most important tradition from the point of view of Christian missionaries. Traditional dates for Confucius are 551 B.C. to

¹[The *Oxford American Dictionary* (1980) defines “heathen” as a person who is not a believer in any of the world’s chief religions.]

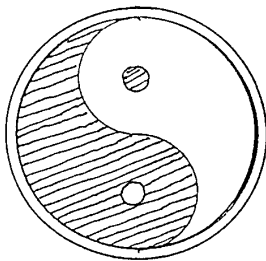
479 B.C. Most Chinese, as well as most non-Chinese students of oriental culture, consider him to be the single most outstanding spiritual leader that China ever produced.

Confucianism, Vehicle for Morality

Confucius was a teacher who specialized in morality and ethics. There was a rule for everything and Confucius did not hesitate to define it. There was a rule for living, a rule for marriage, a rule for children, a rule for funerals, a rule for study, a rule for walking. Fundamentally, the teachings deal with three great institutions of life:

- The relationship between *citizens and their rulers*. Responsibility to the nation as a whole was important for Confucius.
- The relationship between *a son and his parents*. Responsibility of the son for his father and mother carries on even after they die and go into the next world. As between the son and the father, Confucius gave honor to the older generation, because older people have gained broader understanding through having had more experience.
- The relationship between *wife and husband*. Confucius is the one that defined the family and gave the husband and the wife their respective roles.

The whole family life of China is based on Confucian ethical concepts.



Yin/Yang, the symbol for cosmic harmony.

The core writings of Confucianism are known in China as the Four Books.² Taken together they are almost as big as our Bible. The primers which Chinese children used to study in school, beginning at the first grade, are fundamentally quotations from the writings of Confucius and from his most prominent successor, Mencius. As a child I learned the Confucian-based primer, *San Tzu Ching* (“Three Character Classic”), as did all the other children of my age. I can still quote those first few lines. Would you like to hear them? Well, okay, here is the way I would do it. When my teacher called on me I would stand up, fold

²[The most fundamental of the Four Books is *The Analects of Confucius* (306 pp. in the Legge edition), the work containing the traditions about Confucius himself. The other three are *The Great Learning* (40 pp. in a the Legge edition), *The Doctrine of the Mean* (81 pp.), and *The Works of Mencius* (586 pp.).]

my hands, sometimes close my eyes, usually turn my back to the teacher (which didn't imply any disrespect—only that I was concentrating), and then just start reciting from memory, “*Jen chih ch'u...*”³

You can't put that into English very well and the person that copies this for you to read will not be able to put it into letters very well, but what I have just chanted for you to hear is the beginning of that primer, three little characters (or words) that go together to form a phrase. The Chinese text then continues with another three-character phrase, then another, and so on. What the text says, and therefore what children used to learn at the very beginning of their school, is that “in the beginning every person was good. People were good in their hearts. But then evil desires and evil temptations came in, and people were led astray.” This is certainly close kin to what you find in the first chapters of our Bible.

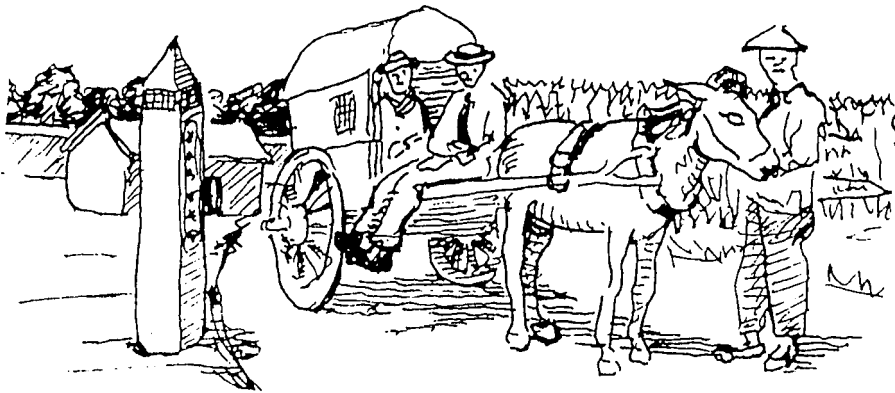
Worship of Confucius. The philosophy of Confucius is still studied, all the way up through the university level. At a different level of culture, popular religion, Confucius has flourished as a figure in cultic worship.

In my years in Sutsien and Tenghsien, it became obvious to me that devotees of the popular cult considered Confucius to be a god, attributing to him very much the same status that Buddhists give to Buddha or that Taoists give to their founder, Laotzu. In Sutsien there used to be a temple honoring Confucius. People came to pray to him. There was a bell to ring with prayer significance for the spirit world, rung whenever someone had a particular request to make to the spirit for whom the temple was built. There were feast days to memorialize the birthday of Confucius and other important times in his life. So Confucius, who was revered by his followers in his own day, is now idolized by the multitudes.

In the little town of Chufu, in southern Shantung Province, you can visit his birthplace. Frances and I, the first year we were in China, accompanied my father on a twenty-four hour visit there (see illustration, next page). A beautiful temple stands in that small town, erected in Confucius's honor. There are images of Confucius before which you can burn incense, which certainly suggests that somebody thinks his spirit is cognizant of what is going on. Near the temple you will find the house of Confucius's ancestors, occupied by the family from 700 to 550 B.C. It has been kept as a shrine for the descendants of Confucius from that day to this.

³[Literally “humans/(possessive indicator)/beginning...” So the meaning is “humans, at the beginning...” or “humans, in their original condition...”]

On another occasion when I was visiting my father in Tenghsien, in 1934, I had the opportunity to meet a young man named Dr. Kung. “Kung” is the Chinese surname for Confucius. At that time, Dr. Kung was the only direct descendent of Confucius generally recognized as authentic. He could trace his progenitors back generation by generation all the way to Confucius, and in fact past Confucius to Confucius’s grandfather. When



Frances and Father in a cart, with an attendant, on the way from the railroad to the birthplace of Confucius in Chufu, September, 1923. (From a photograph.)

we went into his sitting room, I saw the genealogical tablets on his mantelpiece where he kept the names of the Kung ancestors as far back as anybody knows them—every parent, every grandparent, back to 700 B.C. As I remember, there were seventy-seven generations.

Chinese respect for their ancestors is amazing. I know of nobody anywhere else, no matter how big an international figure he might think he is, who knows who his great, great, great, great, great grandfather was, much less who his grandfather was before Columbus discovered America, and before King Arthur lived in England, and even at the time when the Vikings were wandering up and down the icy floes of Norway. The Chinese are a great people and an old people and a proud people and may God bless them.

While at Chufu, I drew some water on a rope out of the well that old Confucius used when he needed to draw water for his parents. It was exactly the same well that Confucius had used, in exactly the same place, and they have been using it from that day to this. Don’t think this idea is too farfetched. The well that Jacob dug on the foothills of the mountains of Judea towards Gaza was still there eighteen hundred years later when Christ drank water from it. And it’s still there today, just about the same

age as Confucius's well. The Chinese people as a people respect Confucius, one hundred percent, and admire him and try to obey him, and, as I have shown, also worship him.

The Confucian ethic of ancestor respect has spread powerfully to Japan. It helped to give a national basis for the kamikaze pilots who were committing suicide during World War II. They were promised a short cut trip to their ancestors. It is clear that the Japanese absorbed much of their present day adoration and respect for their ancestors from the Confucianism of China, which was just next door.

Christ and Confucius. We missionaries tried hard, in our preaching and teaching, never to shortchange Confucius. We genuinely respected him. But we were conscious of one fundamental difference between the ethics of Confucius and the ethics of our Bible. The difference lies in the actions and characteristics of our God. We have a God that communicates with us, that talks with us, that sends His Spirit to dwell in our hearts, that is able to reveal Himself to us. But the Chinese, so far as I have been able to find out, have no such concept given in the ethical writings of Confucius.

Our point of view regarding Confucius was really just what Confucius had said about himself: "I don't know anything about the gods. I know people; I don't know gods."⁴ The missionary says, "We come to tell you about God. Go to the Bible and you will find the nature of God, the purpose of God, the plan of God, the future that God has created for the world. As we understand what God wants us to do, then we are able to follow in God's footsteps."

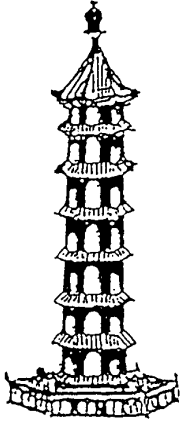
Confucius led the Chinese people to know the difference between right and wrong and between good and bad, and he led them in the direction of the right and the good. But he was never able to connect them with that spiritual divinity which is able to lead us, and which some day will bring this entire world into God's own heart and mind and fellowship.

Buddhism and the Quest for Serenity

The pagoda is the main symbol of Buddhism. You cannot get on a boat and enjoy going up the Yangtze River without seeing beautiful pagodas at every turn. Indeed, pagodas have become so much a part of Chinese architecture that they now symbolize more than just Buddhism and have

⁴[See *Analects* xi.12 (or xi.11, in some editions).]

become a symbol for China itself. Every city has one pagoda, often two or three, and usually with temples built around the lower story. You see them with fifteen, twenty, sometimes as many as thirty little sections or stories as they build themselves up from the ground to a point in the sky fifty or eighty feet above the earth.



Chinese people by and large do not take the time to read Buddhist literature. Because Buddhism came from India, its literature sounds foreign to the Chinese ear and it has a specialized vocabulary. Ordinary Chinese just don't read much of it. If you ask the ordinary people of China about the theology or the main motivation that drives a Buddhist priest, not many are very familiar with it.

But they certainly know about the practice of the religion. Every town has Buddhist priests. There are Buddhist feast days, Buddhist temples, Buddhist images. Everybody knows the word Buddha and has seen his images. Many people burn incense at the feet of this Buddha.

The training that the novitiates and priests receive makes them more informed than the laity about the history and teachings of their tradition. A novice is a young man who has committed his life to the temple and intends to become a priest. The head of the novice is closely shaved at the time of his ordination. If you look at his scalp carefully in later years, you will find nine little circular burn spots that were put there by coins that had been heated almost white hot and then laid on the head. The coins sizzled on the flesh, and the burns left permanent scars. I've heard that sometimes one can even see the individual characters that the hot coins once bore, but I have never examined a novice's scalp carefully enough to be sure. The burn spots are a test for the novice and a means to startle him into a deeper awareness of the frailty of the flesh and the importance of spirit.

After the Buddhist priest has been confirmed and after he has accepted his position of lifelong celibacy, he will put on saffron robes, shave his head, get those burn spots strategically scattered in various places over the top of his head, and then join up with a temple somewhere, preferably in a very secluded place. There he will spend most of his waking time for the rest of his life in prayer and meditation.

Tibetan Buddhism is quite distinct from the main body of Chinese Buddhism. From time to time during our year in Peking, we saw the priests who were in residence at the Tibetan temple there. The Tibetan priests we saw kept themselves separate from human clash and conflict and gave the impression of being totally dedicated to their spiritual goal. In Tibet itself, reincarnated living Buddhas are still revered. Such a living Buddha is known as a *lama*. When the lama dies, there is a tremendous furor trying to find a baby that will fit into the harness politically, religiously, socially, and who will be recognized as the new reincarnation. Tibet has been reoccupied by China in recent years. In the native Tibetan struggle for political independence, thousands of these Tibetan priests and monks have been murdered.

As you go up the Yangtze River you will see not only the pagodas but also the temples, usually painted red, perched precariously on hilltops or on precipices or on small and lonely islands, isolated in the river. A Westerner would see the sites as ideal for a getaway house. And getaway is just what the priests want. They choose those out of the way places because they seek seclusion.

For several hours in the morning, and again at noon, and again at night, they will kneel or sit cross legged, intoning Buddhist sutras or praying, occasionally tinkling a bell by their sides in an action equivalent to prayer. They will repeat the prayers that have been formulated by the sages of old. (Try repeating *O mi to fuo*, "I call on the Buddha," one thousand times a day!) They discipline themselves to forget the world and to reach out to that spirit world of which, by their own admission, they know nothing, but which they envision as a beautiful place where everything is pure and holy and good.

You may ask what idea they have about punishment of sin. Confucianists, of whom we were speaking above, believe that sin will be punished in the next world, although they are not too sure what kind of punishment it will be. They have pictures of people being beaten and tortured and burned, but they are not really sure. Confucius never clarified this question. And old Buddha, so far as I know, never dwelt on it much either.



Meditating monk

The founder. If you are really interested in studying this remarkable religion, the place to start is with its founder, Gautama Buddha. He was a real person, a native of northern India, estimated to have lived about 563-483 B.C. That would have been during the time when the Jews were in their Babylonian exile, so Buddha was approximately contemporary with Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The dates for Buddha in India coincide almost exactly with those for Confucius in China (551-479 B.C.). Laotzu, the founder of Taoism, lived in the same period, if we are willing to follow traditional dating. (This would make Laotzu the elder contemporary of Confucius.) It is really amazing how these great religions of the Far East and Near East all started at pretty much the same time in history.

One somewhat amusing story that is general knowledge in the Orient is that every pagoda marks a spot where some bone is kept that came from the skeleton of Gautama Buddha. Since I have seen pagoda after pagoda in city after city and realized there must be thousands upon thousands of them, I often used to wonder what kind of dinosaur or centipede poor old Gautama must have been in order to leave enough bones to sanctify that many pagodas! However, this is no joking matter to Buddhists, and maybe I should not have mentioned it at this point.

Let me try to put in a capsule the general ideas of Buddhism as Gautama taught it and as Chinese followers embody it in their lives. We are in a world of sin. We all realize that we are not morally perfect. The whole motivation of Buddhism is for the individual gradually to become more and more holy like Buddha. When we become like Buddha then we will have escaped the entanglement of sin. In order to accomplish this goal the individual tries to do good deeds. These good deeds are a very practical part of Buddhism. A beggar will always look forward to getting a little handout from a family that is truly Buddhist, for such a family will turn no hungry person away empty handed. A true Buddhist will try to save life.

Buddhism is a religion where the individual is trying to escape the entanglements of this life in order to become perfect. Buddhists say that the purified soul, when it finally achieves perfection, will fall into the vastness of eternity "like a drop of water falling back into the ocean." The perfected soul will become part of that great unknown blessing which every Buddhist looks forward to as the culmination of his or her efforts and sacrifices in this world.

Reincarnation. But how can such moral and spiritual perfection be

accomplished in the brief span of one earthly life? The Buddhist answer is a doctrine called “reincarnation” or transmigration of souls. When death comes, my soul transfers (“migrates”) to some other living organism, whether it be an ant or a dog, a cat or a lion, or perhaps a human being, whether beggar or king.

You may ask, “Can I know anything about the shape or form I may take when I come back into this world?” Well, we can’t really know how we will come back, but the Buddhist teachers suggest there may be a certain logic. If I’m a glutton in this life, I may come back as a pig, and be eaten. If I’m a thief, I may come back as a fish and be hunted. If I’m a murderer, I may come back as a fly and be swatted. I will keep on coming back until I have suffered enough to atone for my sins.

In Buddhist teaching, my life begins again in that new incarnation. I will have a chance to suffer, and through suffering to pay back for my sins to the infinite god that is ruler of all. Perhaps then I can hope that in my following incarnation, or the one after that, I can be perfect. When that time comes, I finally can be like that drop of water and fall into the ocean of God’s eternal providence.

When flies bother us, most of us will get a fly swatter and let the fly know what we think. But a good Buddhist will hesitate a long time before doing that. You don’t know who that fly might be. She may be your grandmother, or he may be your great, great grandfather. You don’t know! If I am dealing with life that has come back again, and if by killing it I would earn demerits in my own life, how can I kill it? Buddhists try to be good to animals—to dogs and cats and fish. They try to get farmers to treat their animals kindly.

Some of the kids in Chinese villages have a good time with this. In most villages there is a fish pond. It’s usually not more than fifty feet long, so when it dries up people can go pick up the fish. Some of the boys in Chu Tsun,⁵ a village that I visited, used to enjoy teasing an old gentleman, a confirmed Buddhist, who lived beside the pond. They would catch a fish and take it to him while it was still alive and offer it for sale. On the chance it might be his great uncle, he would always buy it and put it back into the pool. Of course the next day the boys would catch the fish and sell it to him again. This was the joke of the village, but the poor fellow didn’t know what to do.

⁵ “Chu Village.” “Chu” was the family name.

Christ and Buddhism. Since I was preaching in China to people who were definitely more familiar with Buddhist teachings than with Christian, I spent much time trying to understand Buddhist thinking. Christianity, after all, also talks about “rebirth.” Jesus said to Nicodemus, “You must be born again” (John 3:7). Nicodemus must have thought that Jesus was talking about some sort of transmigration: “Can a man enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” (John 3:4) So what did the people on the benches think when I got up to talk about being “born again”? Did they have a vision of an old gentleman who thinks that a fish is his relative?

When I looked at my Chinese congregation and they seemed attentive and seemed to understand, it made me happy, although I had to weigh this against the fact that the Chinese are very polite. They will sit on a hard bench without any back rest and look at the speaker for an hour and a half, even though what the speaker is saying doesn’t make any particular sense to them. Anyway, I did the best I could to preach to them the gospel of rebirth. If you cannot shuffle off evil desires and feel that you are perfect, then what can you do? Christians, of course, believe that “Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe.” If I believe in Jesus then I believe he has borne my sins and forgiven my trespasses.

Buddhism has been dying out of China for the last four hundred years. To be perfectly frank, I knew very few converts who came from a strong, practicing Buddhist background into the churches in the area of north China where I was, because there were very few such Buddhists around. But let me tell you about one Bible passage that Buddhists who come to Christ find very meaningful. It is the story of Jesus standing in the boat and calming the storm. Buddhists see our present life as stormy, as filled with suffering. They want to find serenity. It is a great joy for them to learn of the Jesus who even today is able to still the storms that fill our lives and able to bring us to serenity.

Taoism and Immortality

Popular Taoism, the kind of Taoism that I ran into all the time in Sutsien, occupies a very special niche in Chinese life. The priest, often a blind man, would come along the street ready to tell my fortune. If I stopped him and made him a little gift of money, he would be glad to oblige. He would begin by asking after my birth date so he could check on my astrology, and he would inquire about my position in the community and everything that he could find out about me. Then he would undertake

to advise me about days that would bode well for me to enter into a property transaction, or what place would be lucky for me to go at a certain time, or in what direction to locate a part of the house if I was planning to build an addition. He would tell me what was a lucky star and what was unlucky. He would advise me when a daughter or a son should be married. He would tell me just what kind of dangerous places to avoid and how to overcome the problems of disease. He would advise about the appropriateness of a certain marriage with people born under certain stars. He would discuss and pass judgement as to whether the architecture in my house was or was not consistent with the wind and water (the *feng-shui*), that is to say, with the fortunes of life, which overrule my future.



*Heavenly ordainer, turtle,
the Big Dipper*

This Taoist priest would probably have at least some rudimentary education in the scriptures of Taoism. He would have contact with a Taoist temple. He would be part of a minor clique in the community that considers itself to be loyal Taoists. The members of the clique would not fight or argue with other religions, but they would have a deep loyalty to their own group.

Feng-shui (Geomancy). The Taoist priest, as we have seen, tells fortunes by inquiring about birth dates and birth stars, and he may also juggle bamboo sticks. All through this process, he draws on *feng-shui* theory. The words separately mean “wind” and “water.” Together, they refer to the powers and harmonies that are moving through the universe at all times and with which our own lives must be in harmony if they are going to be successful. A Taoist practitioner gives a reading from the waves of the cosmos in order to help his client have good luck or good fortune or propitious circumstances.

The advice of the *feng-shui* practitioners was taken seriously. For instance, Sutsien’s city wall had three main gates, to the east, south, and west, but no gate to the north. I grew up two or three hundred yards from what would have been the north gate. We could climb up the embank-

ment on the inside, and look over at the houses on the outside thirty feet below. But there wasn't any north gate. Why? At some time in the past the *feng-shui* practitioners had pronounced that having a gate to the north would let in disease, enemies, and manifold disasters. Good luck would come to those who listened and obeyed. So there was no gate.

The afterlife. In my experience, dealing with the afterlife was a specialty of popular Taoism. When you go to a Taoist temple you will find a good section of it dedicated to the suffering of sinners in various hells. Their depictions are very vivid and very painful. The function of the priests was not just to scare people about the judgement on the wicked that will be coming in the afterlife, but also to perform rituals that might help. These included the well known Chinese practice of burning "ghost money" so that the departed souls in hell would be able to grease appropriate palms. Funerals are pretty well recognized as a specialty of the Taoist priests.

Christ and the Tao. What I have been talking about is popular Taoism as we saw it in Sutsien. Let me turn now to the more literary or philosophical side of Taoism. As you will very soon see, that is the place where a surprisingly clear link comes into view between Christ and Taoism.

Let us go immediately to the word "Tao." If we know what it means, we will have captured the very heart of Taoism. The ordinary translation for *tao* is "way." What kind of moral "way" will our lives follow? What kind of power may be available to help us along this way? Both the meaning of morality and the meaning of power are implied in the word *tao*.

John 1:1 reads: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." That "Word" was Jesus! John 14:6 records Jesus's saying: "I am the way, the truth and the life." If you take those two verses and blend their teaching, you will find that since Jesus who is the Word is also the *way*, that the Word is also the *truth* and the *life*. "Word" and "way" and "truth" and "life" become so intermingled that each one covers something in the other. That is exactly what we find when we start talking about the *Tao*.

When translators of the New Testament into Chinese came to the Gospel of John, they ran right up against that statement about Jesus in the first chapter, "the Word was *made flesh*." How on earth should they put this special meaning for the word "Word" into Chinese? What kind of a letter, what kind of a word, what kind of a character should they use? They plunged daringly and chose this word "tao." "In the beginning was the

Tao, and the *Tao* was with God, and the *Tao* was God...And the *Tao* was made flesh!" This is exactly the same *tao* character that is central to any discussion of Taoism.

Laotzu's writings⁶ discuss the *tao*. The whole thrust of his teaching is that it is the *tao* which is the way, which is the truth, which is the life, which is God's plan for eternity, which is your hope for the future. At its highest level, that is the purpose of original Taoism and that is what they seek to reveal to people.

It was a concept, then, which our translators of the Bible into Chinese could take over and use directly in communicating the meaning of Christ.

Age Old Animism

Traditional practices of Chinese popular religion are more ancient in origin than any of the three "higher" religious traditions, and they are even more pervasive in their influence. To give this aboriginal tradition a name, it is animism. You may well ask, what is animism? Animism is anything that has to do with the worship and propitiation of spirits on the loose. Long before Laotzu or Confucius or Buddha, this animistic tradition was there, and it was still very powerful when I was in China. We would call it superstition.

In the part of China where I was, the people's constant awareness of the spirit world always intrigued me. With great confidence, the uneducated person of fifty years ago attributed whatever distress and woes he had in life to the devil, or perhaps I should better say, to a myriad of devils that occupied every cranny of heaven and earth. So it only made sense for him to take whatever precautions he could to ward off those evil spirits.

Chinese protection rituals date back to long ago, so the original reason for a particular custom has sometimes dimmed and been forgotten. To be perfectly frank, I sometimes found it hard to tell which customs were mere cultural hand-me-downs that had lost whatever protective meaning they once had, and which customs were still really superstitions.

We can illustrate this difference I'm talking about in America. Some of our cultural habits still retain religious significance, such as our Christmas celebrations and our marriage customs. But we have pretty much forgotten the reasons for some of the cultural customs that have come down from

⁶[Eighty short poems, forming a thin volume known as the *Tao Te Ching*, "The Classic of the Way and of Virtue."]

our ancestors. For instance, when we “tempt fate” by making some prediction of future success, why do we say, “I had better knock on wood”?

Anyway, let me go ahead and talk about what I have observed in the Chinese approach to the spirit world. Almost anywhere in China, you will run into these ancient customs at every turn of the road, and they can be most intriguing.

Demon Capers. When you walk down a street in China you see that many of the well-to-do homes have a free standing brick wall in front of the front gate, ten feet or so high. Nobody standing on the street can see into the front gate until they have walked around behind that freestanding wall. You might think that its purpose is privacy, but you would be wrong. Its purpose is devil protection.

Often the wall holds Buddhist sayings, or quotations from Confucius, or Taoist good luck symbols. But these are secondary. The real protection from devils grows out of the fact that devils do not run in circles, devils go in straight lines. When a devil takes off, he ordinarily will go perfectly straight until he hits something and has to turn. (Who it was that told the devil to go in straight lines is past my ability to explain!) As the devil floats along over the city and dives down to take a look at this rich man’s residence, if there is a wall to stop him, he won’t go in that door.

What difference does it make if the devil does come in the gate? Beware! A devil may do you harm. He will set the house on fire. He will cause someone to have an accident and give them a broken leg. He may even enter into a person and cause the person to die.

My brothers and my sister and I, as children, used to fly kites. But watch out if your kite developed a tailspin and landed in some neighbor’s yard. That spelled bad luck. Some demon was riding on the wing tips of the kite and made it spin down because he wanted to get into that particular home! Woe to them, and woe to me!

The roofs on the houses around where we lived were usually tile covered. You would think that rain would run off faster if all the tiles slanted downwards. But no, it wasn’t done that way. The last corner tile before the water dripped off the eave had to point up. It took me many years to discover the rationale for this. The little devils of the spirit world were supposed to enjoy sliding along on their bottoms. When landing on a roof, the ridge tiles presented an ideal sliding board. By having the last tile turn up, the little rascals were diverted from sliding down into the yard,

where the family would have been vulnerable, and instead would hit the upturn and shoot over the wall into the neighbor's yard.

Now you tell me, are the curved tile roofs merely Chinese aesthetics? Or are they a habit passed down from ancestors which has lost any real religious meaning and which we might describe as "quaint"? Or is this a superstition to be overcome by the gospel?

Names That Camouflage. The common farm laborers that I knew in North China were religious through and through. They believed everything had invisible spirits. Devil's eyes were everywhere, looking, spying, contriving.

One of the special objects of attack involved little boys. As in all oriental lands, the little boy was especially treasured because he would carry on the family name. Since boys were so valuable, the air devils, the night devils, the disease devils, and others, would certainly be on the lookout to spot them and possess them. For this reason, the devils must be fooled.

Therefore the little boys were not called boys' names. Hundreds of nicknames were used to throw the devils off the track. A mother would not think of going to the door and calling her son by his real name. Instead it was "Little Puppy," or "Little Headache," or "Kitty," or "Bear Cub," and so forth. As an additional disguise, winter caps were made to look like a puppy or a lion or a cat.

Demons and the Art of Motorcycle Riding. What makes a Chinese peasant woman out on a dusty road insist on jumping across the road in front of my motorcycle? I knew why the chickens did it: to hear themselves squawk. I knew why the razorback hogs did it: to throw me off my machine. I knew why the heavily loaded donkeys did it. They were watching me with one eye and running at the same time. This meant they would cross in an orbit in front of me while they kept up their frightened braying. But why did the poor woman do it, carrying a handkerchief full of eggs? It took me some months to figure this one out. One day I tried putting myself in the shoes of that peasant woman going to market and I came up with an answer that has stood the test of reflection through the years. Her thinking must go something like this.

"I am surrounded by demons," she thinks to herself. "When I was married, they fired twenty strings of firecrackers in order to scare the demons away from my marriage. When we built our little adobe house, we had to locate the door carefully so that the devils would skip past. I hung a

lucky cash made from a temple bell⁷ around my child's neck to divert the demons. Even when we buried my grandmother, we used candles, priests, and firecrackers to warn away the evil spirits. Now here, down the road, comes that incarnation of the white devil, thundering out his unintelligible roar of imitation machine gun fire. Behind him trails a spume of dust and dirt reaching up into the heavens. I will wait and watch. At the last moment, when the devil chasing me today is least aware of my intentions, I will jump across the road, and the foreign devil with all his awe inspiring racket will sever the path of my devil forever!"

Chinese Religious Tolerance

As missionaries in China, we found it to be utter nonsense to fight a religion. There is more conflict between the denominations in America, supposedly all Christian, than there is between the separate religions in China. There is nothing in China, for instance, that would compare with the proselytizing of church members that I have experienced as a minister in Presbyterian churches in the mountains of West Virginia. I have never run into this sort of infighting and animosity in China between the great religions. In fact, I have never known an individual Chinese person who was not part Confucianist and part Buddhist and part Taoist. The Chinese by and large are very ecumenical and broad-minded.

It was also my experience that they were willing to tolerate the preaching of Christianity. As a minister preaching the Christian gospel, I was never stopped once by communists, bandits, rich or poor, priests of Confucianism or Buddhism or Taoism. They were perfectly willing to listen to the gospel. They were pragmatic in their approach. If it was worth listening to, they were glad to listen. If it wasn't worth listening to, they could always go about their business.

The Moslem religion in some parts of the world has shown an intolerance and antagonism to other religions that makes it almost impossible to do mission work in Moslem countries. But in China this is not true even of the Moslems (there are some fifty million of them). You can go all the way from Western Tibet to Singapore and back to Japan and find the doors are open for you to preach and teach as long as you abide by

⁷[In 845 A.D., a Tang Dynasty emperor destroyed 40,000 Buddhist temples. Confiscating the bronze images and bells, he had them melted down to make cash. Because of their religious origin, the cash of that reign are considered particularly auspicious.]

the rules of the government. Even today we find in China that Christianity can be preached, if you make it a reading of the scripture or a teaching of the Bible. They do not want evangelism in our sense of that word, but even so they allowed Billy Graham to come and conduct services in both Peking and Shanghai.



A Chinese gentleman of the old school—“part Confucianist, part Buddhist, part Taoist.”

Chapter 12 Language

The Gospel in Pictographs

“We continue to enjoy preaching Christ ‘as unknown, and yet well known’ [II Corinthians 6:9].”

The Mustard Seed Growing in Sutsien
Dr. Patterson (1936)

ONE OF the greatest difficulties for Westerners in China is the Chinese language. It is so entirely different from English that to the English speaker’s ear it sounds impossible to reproduce, duplicate, or pronounce. The only comparison to make between Chinese and English is that both languages are formed by the human voice, spoken through the human mouth, and meant to convey ideas that are generated in the human mind. But the language itself, for English speakers, is utterly unfamiliar. One result is that most American business people or government officers assigned to China do not even try to learn the language. They rely on interpreters.

At the time that Frances and I went to the field, missionaries normally expected to spend the remaining years of their lives at work in their chosen part of the world, so they made a real effort to learn the people’s language. We spent our first year in China studying Mandarin in Peking, the place where that dialect is supposedly spoken most purely.

Growing up in China as a child, I accepted without question my environment, and it had been no trouble for me to learn Chinese. In fact it was easier to talk Chinese than it was to talk English. For one thing, it was monosyllabic. (Compare that with Russian, English, German!) Chinese was the first language I spoke, beginning about age two. When I began to speak English at about age three or four, it was only because that is what my parents taught me. When I returned to China in 1923, I had forgotten much of my Chinese vocabulary, but I had no problem hearing and pronouncing words. My mouth and vocal chords were attuned to making the Chinese sounds. My ears could pick them up because they were familiar from childhood.

The Chinese spoken language is based upon what we call tone. If you will listen for your tone when you hit your thumb with a hammer, you will understand something of what we mean by the word. Spoken English uses different levels of sound to mean different things, as in the various tones we use when we say the word “Hello” (neutral “hello”; questioning “hel-lo?”; startled “*hel-lo!*” etc.) But in Chinese the very meaning of *every* word is determined by the tone in which it is spoken.

An adult learning Chinese finds it very difficult to learn how to talk this new way. But a child growing up in the culture finds hearing and speaking the tonal language to be perfectly natural.

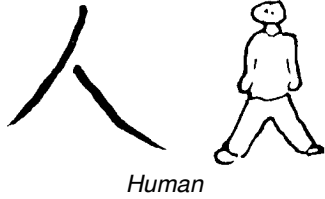
Pictographic Writing

The written language was something else. When we were children, my father had realized that we had a great deal of afternoon time with nothing to do and he decided to have us learn some Chinese script. Would that he had been more insistent! Some of my good friends in China, of my own age, were able to read simple Chinese by the time they left to return to America. This always remained a futile hope for me. Among my friends, Pearl Buck was the only one who really had this skill. If I had learned as a child to read Chinese, it would have made a real difference in my understanding of what was going on in the thinking of the populace.

The characters we think of as Chinese have now spread throughout Eastern Asia. In Japan, for example, one sees Chinese characters all over the place—in the names of stores, in the titles of books, on movie theater signs. When my father, who could write Chinese fairly well, evacuated to Japan during the communist upheaval of 1927, he was able to communicate with the people in the stores by writing Chinese characters.

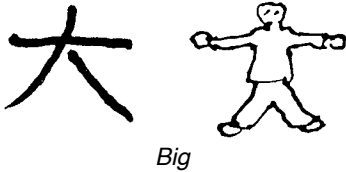
How far back in history do the Chinese characters that we use today reach? A person who knew only today’s characters would find characters written two thousand years ago, at the time of Christ, difficult to decipher but not impossible. If you go back another five hundred years, to the time of Confucius, the characters then in use would require special knowledge for a person of today to read, almost as if it were a different language. But notice that I said “almost.” The highly pictographic characters of that day provide the fundamentals for the characters modern people still use. You can readily recognize the picture meaning still contained in some of the simpler characters.

For example:



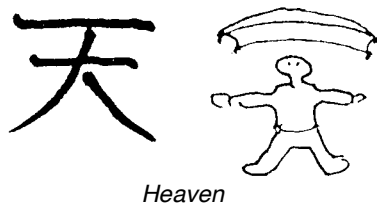
Human

A *human* has two legs—which differentiates the human from cattle and horses. The Chinese symbol is simply two lines separated like two legs.



Big

When they wanted to write the word for *big*, they took a human and stretched the arms out with two fists. One cross line and two legs made the character.



Heaven

If they wanted to write a character for *heaven*, they carried the same symbolism still further. They took the human with outstretched arms, meaning “big,” and put a cross stroke on top of that: “The great big canopy that’s up on top.”

And so we have in these pictographs the original basis for much of their writing.

Components of Characters

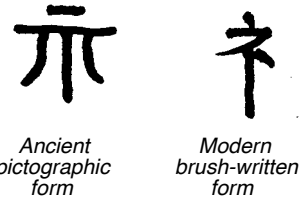
As the writing system grew more complex, most characters came to be interpreted in three distinct ways. You might think of each character as two component parts, and then as one whole character.

- One part, the *classifier*, gives a general indication of meaning.
- The second part, the *phonetic*, gives a general indication of sound.
- Finally, the two parts put together, the *character as a whole*, sometimes yields a pattern which you can interpret as picturing the character’s specific meaning.

(1) *Classifiers*. The classifier gives you a hint as to what the character means.

For example:

If the character has to do with God or Divinity, there is a classifier called *shih* which we may translate “influx from heaven,” that is, auspicious sign revealing the will of heaven. Though there is some uncertainty about the literal meaning of the ancient symbol, our illustration of



it may show a three legged altar table with a sacrifice or incense on top. The modern form is simply what rapid brush writing has done to the



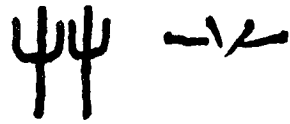
“To pray”
(classifier is to the left)

ancient form. In our example, “to pray,” the divinity-classifier makes up the left side of the character. The remainder of the character is called the “phonetic” and occupies the right side. It has nothing to do with the meaning of the word, “pray,” but rather gives a clue about the *sound* with which the Chinese say the word.

If the character has to do with grasses of the field, trees, living plants, the classifier *ts'ao* shows a picture of a couple of plants, possibly bamboo. The character “flower” will give a modern example of this classifier in use. Note that the classifier appears at the top.



“Flower”
(classifier at top)



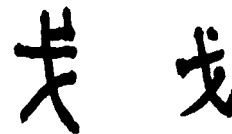
Two plants
(ancient form) (modern form)

If the character has to do with armaments and fighting men, the classifier *kuo* shows a kind of sword, with a hook or crescent on the top, a cross bar, and a halter for hanging. As you can see, the



“Halberd”
(classifier to right)

brush-written modern form does not differ markedly from the ancient form. The character for “halberd” (a weapon combining spear and sword) illustrates use of the armaments-classifier. The classifier appears on the right.



Kuo
(ancient form) (modern form)

Two thousand years ago, Chinese philologists arranged the entire body of their written characters (fifty thousand?) under two hundred and fourteen of these classifiers. Changes in language over time often now have made their original choice of certain classifiers puzzling. But many more

are the times that the classifiers will still tell you at a glance the general idea of the character.

(2) *Phonetics*. A second and important component of the written character gives a hint about the sound or vocalization. As we have already noted, philologists call this component the “phonetic.” Here again, the passing of time often has made the phonetic symbols obsolete. Still, the phonetic indicator, combined with the classifier and with the context in which the character appears, often will give you a clue to the meaning of a character you don’t know.

(3) *The character as a whole*. When you put the classifier and the phonetic together, that gives you the character as a whole. Taken as a whole, the character often lends itself to an abstract or allegorical interpretation.


The Gospel in Pictographs

Chinese scholars loved to make such allegorical interpretations, and Chinese Christian scholars sometimes did it from a Christian point of view with remarkable results. We often were able to use their suggestions in preaching and teaching. For instance:


“Boat”


Raft


Person
(mouth)


Eight

Their character for “boat” is made up of three parts: a “life raft,” the number “eight,” and a symbol for “persons.” Every time the Chinese write this character, it contains these three elements. This goes back to the one time when God saved eight people on the ark which Noah built. Through thousands of years, God’s testimony was hidden in this character for those to understand the secret who knew God’s Word.

Another historical record preserved for us in the age-old Chinese character is their way of writing “righteousness.” When we sing the hymns, “Saved by the Blood of the Lamb” or “The Old Rugged Cross,” we are saying that Jesus, the Lamb of God, stands between us and eternal death. In Old Testament days, people offered the lamb as a sin offering for the purpose of being righteous before God. The lamb in the Old Testament, the Lamb of God in the New Testament, stood between me and God’s judgments and made me righteous. Believe it or not, the

“Righteousness”

Chinese character for “righteousness” is made of two parts, *The Lamb* on top and *Me* underneath. Imagine these characters, which date back to the time of Abraham and before, keeping for us this witness to God’s method of salvation.

Lamb

Me

The character for “home” used to be a roof plus a pig under it. Christians have changed this character now to a roof with God under it!

• • •

If you have a good visual memory, enabling you to recall pictures distinctly, you would make a good Chinese scholar. There are no more than a few dots, squares, half-moons, straight lines, and other things that they put together into these pictographs. When they combine them, they form unlimited thousands of perfectly comprehensible pictures. Then you memorize the characters and pronounce them.

It sounds simple. But, “Woe is me!” I tried, year after year, and still usually ended up a despairing visionary flat on my face. However, give me some credit with the epitaph on my tombstone, “He kept on trying!”

The Language of Nonsense

Mr. Martin Hopkins, a missionary friend and a faculty associate at the North China Theological Seminary during my year in Tenghsien, had given serious study to the Chinese language and was really an excellent sinologist. Occasionally we would walk together into the town of Tenghsien. Once we saw a group of people gathered around a street entertainer who was trying to collect a little money from a monkey act. Everybody laughed as he talked to his monkey and put it through its contortions. But

Mr. Hopkins could see nothing the least bit funny in what was being said and couldn't even make sense of it. Finally he turned to me and asked, "Pat, how in the world can you see anything funny in what has no sense?"

I laughed. "The reason you don't see anything funny is that all you know of Chinese is what you have studied in books. They don't put puns in books. If you knew Chinese from the grassroots like I had to as a kid, you would have no trouble at all."

The Chinese language happens to lend itself particularly well to the making of puns. It was no surprise that everybody around the entertainer found his palaver to be so entertaining. But maybe Mr. Hopkins really wasn't very deprived in not being able to understand the puns—you can be sure that they were not spiritually elevating!

During my life as a missionary, Chinese friends or acquaintances would often invite me to attend a feast or some other kind of gathering where after dinner speeches were in order. My Chinese friends seemed to be easily able to make impromptu speeches that would cause laughter. But my anecdotes and jokes on these occasions, particularly in my earlier years in China, seemed all too often to fall flat. It upset me no end. After a while I realized that what I was doing was trying to take an English language joke and tell it in Chinese. Much, if not most, humor depends on some form of pun. But a pun doesn't translate into another language.

If you tell a joke that is based on some human situation that happens anywhere in the world, you can be fairly sure it will go across, even if you have to translate the language. Even so, when you are crossing between two cultures, you have to be very careful. It is humiliating to finish your story, expecting to see people laugh, and then just have them hang an open mouth.

The following little story, if told to the right audience, will almost always bring a laugh. The story claims to relate the experience of a relatively new missionary trying to learn how to adapt himself to local situations.

You must first mentally transport yourself to a congested city in China and realize what they face. When there is no sewage system, waste has to be carted out in some way. Night soil is usually carried off in liquid form in big wooden barrels. Sanitary workers push the barrels through the streets on wheelbarrows until they get outside the city walls. Then they either dump it into a depression or sell it to somebody that wants to spray garden vegetables.

Pushing that wheelbarrow over the bumps that are normal to stone paved city streets in China can be rather hazardous to passersby if they do not take precautions against splashing. Therefore, the wheelbarrow pusher customarily calls out loudly, “*Fen shui! Fen shui!*” (“Sewage water! Sewage water!”).

The new missionary of our story saw that when this phrase was called out, the crowd would quietly part and move to the side. Where there had been great marketplace congestion, *mirabile dictu*, there would now be open space. So the missionary said to himself, “Ah, ha! I have found the secret word for asking people to open up a passageway.”

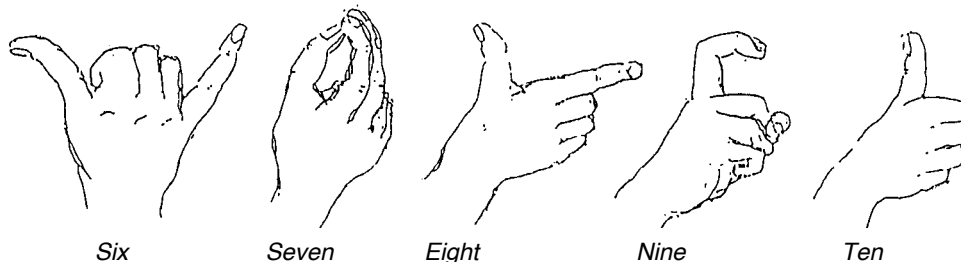
Whenever he found himself blocked by a crowd as he walked along, he started yelling at the top of his voice, “*Fen shui!*” Sure enough, the crowd would part and he could walk through. He came back and told his fellow missionaries what a wonderful discovery he had made. No longer would he be bumped by so many people, because when he yelled those magic words, everybody stepped aside without even looking...

Well, if you tell that story to a group of missionaries who have been struggling for years to try to learn Chinese, it really strikes home. But I warn you in advance, don't try telling it in America. It won't cause even a ripple of mirth.

Finger Language

What does it mean when people refuse to say certain forms of speech in words? The Chinese always count on their fingers when they are bargaining over price. They will not say a price to you, but will show it with their fingers.

I found their finger language for numbers to be quite convenient for me personally was when I was teaching a class, or in some other situation where I wanted to remember a number. I would put it on my fingers, and then forget it until needed. Do you want to know how to make numbers



with your fingers? Well, the hand has five fingers, so there are the first five. For “six,” you hold out your thumb and little finger, and fold the other three fingers down. “Seven” is when you bring your thumb and first two fingers together into a point. “Eight” is your thumb and index finger held out, and the others folded in. “Nine” is when you take you index finger and curl it, making something that looks like a “nine” and that *is* a “nine.” “Ten” is simply the thumb or index finger held up. The idea is that if you don’t have the sense enough to know the difference between a “one” and “ten” and “a thousand,” then just go ahead and be a dumbbell.

Chinese Loanwords in English

As I have learned more about English and Chinese and other languages over the years, various things have been of great interest to me. English, of course, incorporates many loanwords from Latin and Anglo-Saxon and French. Someone might wonder if it has taken over any Chinese words this way. The answer is that it has—but only a very few! Probably the average English speaker uses no more than a dozen or so Chinese-derived words.

One example is *typhoon*. It means a hurricane in the South China Sea. “Typhoon” is simply the two Chinese words, *ta feng*, meaning “big wind.” When old Portuguese sailors started going to South China, they asked some of the local sailors on board what that thing was that was blowing their ship to pieces. The Chinese said it was “a *big wind*,” and the sailors got the word typhoon. Portuguese taught the word to Anglo-Indians, and from the Anglo-Indians the word came into general use in English.

Some Loanwords from Chinese

<i>amah</i> , “nurse”	<i>kowtow</i> , “knock one’s head on the ground,” grovel
<i>chop, chop</i> , “fast, fast”	<i>tofu</i> , “bean curd”
<i>chop suey</i> , “miscellaneous pieces”	<i>typhoon</i> , “big wind”
<i>chow dog</i> , “dog” dog	<i>wok</i> , “pan,” frying pan
<i>chow mien</i> , “fried wheat”	<i>yin/yang</i> , metaphysical symbols, “feminine/masculine”
<i>coolie</i> , “hard laborer”	<i>zen</i> , “meditation,” Japanese form of the Chinese word <i>ch’an</i>
<i>gung ho</i> , “good to the highest degree,” top effort	
<i>jinrikisha</i> , “man-powered vehicle”	

Another example: Lake Tahoe (south-east of Yellowstone Park). Chinese *Ta Hu* means “Big Lake.” It is clear that during one of the ice ages there was a land link between Asia and North America across the Bering Strait, and that American Indians came originally from Asia. Until it is proven otherwise to me, I believe that the name for Lake Tahoe still embodies a linguistic recollection.

By the way, do you know where the word *coolie* comes from? Etymological dictionaries say it comes from the Hindi *quli*. But whatever the dictionaries say, I know what it means in China. It is a combination of two

words in Chinese, one meaning bitter (*ku*) and the other meaning work (*li*), together meaning “bitter work.” Most of the labor done by farmers and by factory hands was without question both hard and bitter. Their pay was what one man could live on for one day. If they got more, they were particularly pleased. If they got less, all they could do was not work and starve. I have seen rikisha pullers without sufficient clothing running and pulling somebody for an hour, and then being left out in the cold, slowly freezing. The customer would pay the puller a minimum amount and then



go inside to enjoy warmth and friendship and food. China in those days had no labor unions or government standards about wages. So when we refer in Chinese to bitter labor, “coo-lee,” we are talking about hardship and desperation.



Part IV
People in Mission



Chapter 13 Co-Laborers with God

Some Who “Did What They Could”

“All honor to those co-laborers and faithful servants of the Lord, the Chinese pastors, preachers, teachers, and leaders...All honor, too, to our fellow missionaries and the work they have done.”

The Mustard Seed Growing in Sutsien
Dr. Patterson (1936)

CHINA was home to more than a few Christian martyrs. These included both Chinese church members who were our friends, and missionaries whom we had known. Their lives stand a witness “well attested by their faith” (Hebrews 11:39).

But not all heroes of the faith are martyrs. Sometimes they are little people who “do what they can” (Mark 14:8)—little, but deeply meaningful, things, often sacrificial. All of us witness things that other people do that touch within us some very deep and responsive chord. One of the real privileges of the missionary’s life is that these revealing moments come often.

Let me collect a few examples that after all these years still rise up vividly in my memory. Over and over again we would find Paul’s words coming to mind, that Christ could be preached and glorified by followers who are “*as deceivers and yet true; as unknown and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things*” (II Corinthians 6:8-10).

*“As Dying, And Behold We Live”:
John and Betty Stamm*

John and Betty Stamm were graduates of the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago and had volunteered to go out to China with the China Inland Mission. In 1934, in company with their small baby daughter and a middle-aged Chinese amah for the child, they were travelling through the Yangtze River valley. They were in the mountainous territory of central

China. The situation was bad, and they knew it. Communist soldiers and renegade nationalist soldiers were known to be roaming through the region. Yet the Stamms needed to return to their station and felt that they must do so.

They stopped at a little town near the city of Wuhu. During the night communist soldiers came into the town and found these missionaries in the hotel. They announced they were going to take them out in the morning and execute them publicly. The Stamms realized that, humanly speaking, this was the end of the road, but they wondered if they might come up with a scheme that would save the life of the little baby. So they desperately asked the amah to take the baby and hide her as best she could. If they didn't themselves make it beyond the dawn of the new day, they asked the amah, after the soldiers had left, to take their daughter to a neighboring town and give her into the keeping of some missionaries who were there.

When morning came, the soldiers returned, dragged the couple out, humiliated them, cursed and laughed at them, took them outside the city wall, and finally killed them. A poem written about the incident by one of our Presbyterian missionaries, the Rev. E. H. Hamilton, received wide recognition and acclaim. The opening verse ran:

Lai, lai, lai ["Come! Come! Come!"],
 See the foreign devils die!
 All the hate in hell
 Did swell in that accursed cry!¹

What was the end of this major tragedy that involved so many people and so many hopes? Providentially, the amah was able to get the baby to safety. Soon she was in the loving care of her dead mother's sister, Helen (Mrs. Gordon) Mahy, a China missionary of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. Some of you who read this will have met the Mahys, who have been working for many years at Warren Wilson College, Swannanoa, North Carolina. The baby's uncle and aunt adopted her, giving her a Christian home in which to grow up, and also giving her a different name, highly to be desired in view of the international publicity.

And what of the work at the station where the Stamms had been? The Stamms, of course, could not go back to their station—they had made the supreme sacrifice. But their mission told us that when the report of it came

¹The opening lines of "Via Crucis," in E. H. Hamilton, *Afraid? Of What?* (privately published, 1960).

back to America, hundreds of Christian students volunteered to go and take the place of John and Betty Stamm. Hundreds willing to go! Hundreds prepared to do what they could!

*“As Sorrowful, Yet Always Rejoicing”:
An Elder in Lu-tsun*

I had an elder in the church in one of the villages I visited, Lu-Tsun, some forty or fifty miles from Sutsien. When I was in the church one day while itinerating, he asked me to come by his home. There he showed me his fourteen year old daughter who was suffering from kalaazar, a disease of the spleen. Without proper treatment, death was inevitable.

I said, “You must take this girl to the hospital.” He was rather noncommittal. Other business in the church got our attention, and his daughter’s sickness slipped my mind.

A few months later, when I was back in the village, I stopped by the elder’s house to talk. I noticed that his daughter wasn’t there, and I asked how she was. He told me she had died.

“Did you ever take her to our hospital?” I asked.

“Dr. Patterson, there was no way I could take her to your hospital. I have three other younger children. The only way I could have had the money to get away and take her to the hospital would have been to sell some of my two or three acres that give us food. We have no other income. If I had sold the land, the rest of the family would have starved. As I looked at my daughter and looked at my family, we had no other choice. It was either let her die or let the others starve. What could I do? I did the only thing that I knew to do.”

He did what he could, and when he could do nothing, he accepted what had to be. But where it comes into my life is that I know that I could have used one less coat or one less shirt and have saved that little girl’s life. I didn’t do what I could—but he did what he could, and God knows it!

*“As Unknown And Yet Well Known”:
A Prayer Circle in Washington, D. C.*

When I have a job to do and am not able to do it by myself, when nobody will help and there is no money, and when discouragement looms ever darker, I like to come back to the resurrected Jesus’s word to Mary as she stood weeping in the garden where the tomb was laid. Jesus just said her name: “Mary” (John 20:16). It is as if he were saying to her, “Mary,

you are blinded by your tears. Lift up your eyes to *see*, and you will no longer be discouraged.” This passage has always meant a great deal to me.

At the depth of the depression, the Mission Board in Nashville cut off almost all the money that we had for our work in our churches. On the human level, we should have been discouraged. But when we went to God, who was already preparing an answer to our need, God said to us, “Don’t worry.”

Just in that time of need, a prayer circle in Washington, D. C., one that we had never heard of, learned about our work and sent us US\$200 a year for several years. The rate of exchange at that time turned that into \$2000 in China, enabling us to carry on a large section of our work. Before it happened, nobody would have dreamed this possible. The words Jesus said, “Lo, I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20), had found vivid fulfillment.

We obtained the promises of God for our work. Just as much, I fully believe, that prayer circle in Washington obtained the promises of God. Their faith was fulfilled that God would use their gifts for the work of the Kingdom. They did what they could, and God blessed their gifts.

*“As Chastened And Not Killed”:
Nettie Dubose Junkin*

All the people of my generation remember Nettie Lambuth DuBose, later Mrs. William F. Junkin. Her father and mother, Dr. and Mrs. Hampden C. Dubose, had gone to China in 1872 and as senior missionaries had accompanied my parents as they traveled to China by train and steamer and as they faced early problems in mission work. Dr. Dubose was a person of very imposing appearance. I can still remember his great white beard, which covered his whole chest. He did not have to ask respect in China. They gave it to him gladly.

Daughter Nettie returned to China as a missionary, and there in 1900 she married William F. Junkin. They were assigned to Sutsien, arriving when the work was still in its opening stages. On their first furlough home, in 1903-1904, the Junkins went to Nashville for the required physical examination by Mission Board doctors. The doctors said they could not approve Nettie’s return to China. “You are suffering from chronic malaria. Also, you have incipient tuberculosis.”

“I feel well enough to do my job as a wife,” she said. “Why can’t I go back?”

“If you go to China, you are just going to your death.”

“If I have to die, I would very much rather die while engaged in my work in China, not while sitting around in peace and comfort in America.”

The doctors, and the Board, acceded. “If that is the way you feel, who are we to say ‘No’?”

So the Junkins went back. Nettie Junkin experienced poor health, year after year, but she kept on plugging. She itinerated in the country, riding on wheelbarrows and in motorcycle side cars, and on those miserable little bug infested boats on the canal that were available to us in Sutsien. The Junkins stayed in China as missionaries until after Pearl Harbor, finally being repatriated to the United States in 1943. They settled in Tazewell, Virginia, and continued active in the life of the church. She there died in 1950, at the age of seventy-two.

My mother, a doctor and a fellow missionary with the Junkins in Sutsien, overlapping with them there from 1900 until 1921, kept Nettie on her heart all the time. Nettie DuBose Junkin did what she could. She returned to the field in spite of pain and disease and fever that plagued her all of her life. She returned to the work that God had called her to do. Those of you who knew her and who know her family know that God blessed her and blessed them. Two of her children, William, Jr., and Nettie D., were to become missionaries in China and later Taiwan. Their second daughter, Agnes (Mrs. Albert G. Peery), became a Bible teacher and taught Bible in the schools of Tazewell, Virginia, where she still lives, a witness to the power of God.²

*“As Poor, Yet Making Many Rich”:
Rev. William McC. Miller*

In 1936 I was on furlough in Richmond, Virginia. A retired uncle of mine, Rev. William McC. Miller, compelled by circumstances to be very frugal in food and clothes, came and said, “I want to give you some money to take back to China to use for me. I won’t get there, but you use it for me. I want God to know it is my money, but don’t tell anybody else.”

Knowing his situation, I thought that perhaps at most he would be giving me a gift of \$50. He gave me a check for \$500. I used it for several years as my “faith fund” for emergencies. He had eaten dry crusts, and I

²Nettie Junkin's husband, William F. Junkin, preceded her in death in 1947. The two are buried side by side in Tazewell, Virginia.

mean dry crusts, for many months to give this money to the Lord. He sacrificed in order to do what he could.

*“As Having Nothing, And Yet Possessing All things”:
A Destitute Woman in Sutsien*

In the 1930's, my brother Norman was the station doctor in Sutsien in charge of our medical work. He and his wife, Athalie, lived at the South End, near the hospital. Once one of their daughters, at the time still a small child, was desperately ill. Norman and Athalie were staying up night after night, trying in any way they could to keep the little girl's temperature down.

I went down to the South End one morning, a walk of about a mile from the north side of town where we lived, to see how the child and the family were doing. Somewhat to my surprise, I found an old woman on the front porch, kneeling, her head touching the bricks of the entrance. She was ragged, dirty, unkempt. Her hair had not been combed, her clothes had seen many years of use.

She straightened up when I appeared, and we spoke to one another. She said, “I didn't know what to do. I love your brother and his wife and they are in deep trouble. There is nothing that I can give them. I have nothing. I just came to kneel and pray on their porch, so that they would know that I was asking God to bless them.”

She was destitute, but she had done what she could!

*“As Weak, But Strong in Christ”:
Dr. John W. Bradley*

In earlier years, Dr. John W. Bradley was our station doctor in Sutsien. In the late 1920's, when there was no other doctor available to serve Sutsien, Dr. Bradley insisted on coming back. His blood pressure was running much too high, and when he returned to Sutsien his physical condition had deteriorated to the danger point. As I watched him month after month, I knew that he was a sick man. When the blood pressure was too high, he would draw off a pint or two. When I asked him about it, he said, “This is the only way that I can continue to serve my God.”

Thank God for people that go back and keep on going back. Dr. Bradley kept on, disciplining himself in this matter until the end.

*“As Deceivers And Yet True”:
Helen Bailey*

Helen Bailey went to China in 1923, the same year that Frances and I went out. She came from a little town in North Carolina. Along with Frances, she graduated from the Assembly’s Training School, in Richmond, Virginia, and she was assigned to go to Sutsien, along with us.

Helen was an extremely dedicated and consecrated person. Her work was itinerating in the country, where she helped me. It took some arranging in our area of north China to have a woman visiting in the field, but I was willing to make the arrangements if she was willing to go do the teaching and the visiting.

After 1931, when the finances of our Mission Board had become exceedingly strapped, Helen felt that she should resign and become a missionary “on faith.” We had quite a number of missionaries who were in the field “on faith” while we were there, but Frances and I were not among them. The stipend that the Mission Board gave Frances and me to cover food and incidentals was small, but we were assured of at least that amount. Those “on faith” trusted that if God intended them to stay on the field they would receive sufficient gifts, from whatever source, to make it possible. Sometimes they received a comfortable amount. On the other hand, sometimes they had to tighten their belts, and sometimes they just gave up and quit.

So Helen resigned from our mission. She secured a Chinese woman companion and went out towards the western part of China where there were very few missionaries. She undertook to live on a little boat while groups of people came from the shore and she would teach them. She did an amazingly wonderful job of this kind and the Lord certainly blessed her work.

Her dedication became clear in 1939 when the Japanese invasion of China reached her part of China. It was a dangerous situation for any woman of any age. She was on her little boat, like a sitting duck, waiting for some drunken soldier to come and do what he pleased. She puzzled as to what to do. Even though she expected the Lord to protect her, she knew that the Lord did not expect *her* to be foolish.

She decided that the only way she could stay alive and do her work was to make herself so unattractive that even a half crazed soldier would not think of attacking her. I’m not sure what she put on, but I’ll tell you what I think it was. She mixed up flour and water and daubed it all over her face and neck and arms, and then put on the kind of clothes that would be

suitable for an old, old woman. When she would greet the soldiers as they came rushing in, usually they would back off. With this dried paste, she looked like she was afflicted with leprosy.

The Chinese all knew what she was doing. In fact, some imitated her. She was able to continue her work even though the soldiers were raging all through the area of west China. She was caught between lines during World War II, unable to leave even if she had wanted to. Later, she went to the Philippines to witness for Christ, and I am told that she died there in the late 1980's.

Helen Bailey exemplifies the kind of dedication that you find in certain missionaries who, when they face death, trust the Lord and go right on ahead to see what happens!



Chapter 14 The Human Dimension

Dissensions, Peccadillos, Daydreams

“We have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us”

II Corinthians 4:7

MISSIONARIES are earthen vessels. Or, to speak in less Biblical language, they are only human. This is true of organized missionary groups. It is true of individual missionaries. Maybe, just occasionally, it was even true of yours truly!

Dissension among Missionaries

As a child I listened to my elders giving accounts of discord, dissension, division, and disputation among missionaries, and occasionally even denunciation. It was so easy and natural to find fault. Let me just mention a few of the issues that caused so much of this dissent.

- *Women in the church.* When I was a young, the issue was women speaking in the church. The Chinese Church had decided in 1910 that it would not accept women as ordained ministers. (By 1935 a complete flip-flop had taken place.) In the understanding of that time, the position taken by the indigenous church did not have binding authority over missionaries. But the question was, should it have a moral authority? When missionaries met in their own mission meetings, should women missionaries be allowed to vote on policy? Should they be allowed to preach? To teach? Everyone knew then, just as they do now, that it is really the women who bear the load of church work—who weep with the bereaved, teach children Bible stories, sit by the hour teaching illiterates to read. But that didn't keep some of our missionaries from believing that literal obedience to Paul's injunction meant that women should keep their mouths shut (I Corinthians 14:34).

I still remember what my mother said one day about 1910, when my father came back from mission meeting and told her that the mission had decided to let women vote on mission policy. She turned to us children

and said in a voice that I think was calculated to let Father hear, “Well, at least I can nullify his vote occasionally!”

But when she came back to the Valley of Virginia on furlough in 1911, it was a different story. She had gone to one of the well known area churches to report on her teaching in the name of Christ, her suffering, her medical work in China. But the minister, a rather pompous character, declared that she should not be allowed to speak in the pulpit, for that was reserved for God’s ordained servants. So she stood on the floor, in front of the pulpit, and spoke. To this day I have not forgotten that, because it infuriated me! It was the pride of legalism and self-righteousness that crucified Christ.

- *Literal inerrancy of Scripture.* In those days, when people claimed that the Bible was written by God, many of them thought that God actually held the fingers of the ancient saints and guided the letters as they wrote on parchments. When inerrancy of Scripture seemed to be questioned, it upset some of our missionaries no end.

I used to have a book in China that I wish I had brought back to America. It was written about 1925 by a missionary living in Shanghai. He proved through Scripture that the earth is flat and that the sun goes around the earth and that God said so. The Bible speaks of “the ends of the earth,” he cogently pointed out, and it speaks of the sun “rising” and “setting.”

You can find dozens of places in the Bible that assume the astronomical thinking of ancient times. For a while, my father had problems with this. He loved archeology. He had studied geology in college and could recognize the strata on the sides of the mountains, and he knew what they meant. Yet when he went to Scripture, he saw that Genesis spoke of six days of creation. During all my young years, he fretted and fretted over that conflict. Finally someone pointed out to him that the ancient Hebrew word “day” could mean not only twenty-four hours but also a geological period. Scripture says that “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years” and “a thousand years as one day” (II Peter 3:8). When my father found that out, he breathed a sigh of relief and went on about his mission work.

- *Christ’s virgin birth.* When some missionaries pointed out that the word “virgin” in Isaiah 7:14 means “young woman,”¹ and that Isaiah was

¹[The Hebrew word *almah* in Is. 7:14 is translated “virgin” in the King James Version. Some other versions use different translations.]

really talking about a young woman having a child whom God was going to use in miraculous ways, a conflict immediately burst forth. This seemed to deny the truthfulness of Matthew and Luke when they say that Christ was born of a virgin.

- *Millennialism.* By the time I returned to China in 1923, the center of argument had shifted towards the question of God's plan for the unfolding of human history. Millennialism, premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism were at the center of theological dispute. The basic issue was whether Christians might hope for Christ's Kingdom gradually to exert an influence for good in human society, or whether their hope was only to wait for Christ's future return in power, with no expectation that war or violence or poverty might be ameliorated in the present age. Even some individual mission stations were bitterly divided on the question. That was right after World War I, of course, during the early years of the League of Nations and the heyday of Western optimism about human social progress. Perhaps that was the context that brought this to the forefront of our thinking?

- *Mode of baptism.* This is a perennial center of dispute. What is the place of baptism in Christian life, who can administer it, what is the age of those who are to receive it, what is its mode?

- *Partaking of communion.* About 1900, one of the independent missionaries (not aligned with a Board) came back from Shanghai when travel was very slow, that is, before the railroads were built. Furthermore, he was on a small boat rather than one of the larger steamers. The Yangtze was not kind to little boats going against the stream, because the current was swift, three miles per hour in summer, seven miles per hour in flood. To go from Shanghai to Chinkiang could take a week.

On one of those leisurely trips, the missionary had stopped his boat for the Sabbath, because it was against Scripture to travel on the Sabbath. He wanted to pass the time profitably, so he went into a cove where there was a Baptist missionary that he knew. He could worship with a Christian congregation on the Sabbath and also renew an old friendship.

The host welcomed him late Saturday night. But he apologized that he would not be able to invite the guest to partake of communion the next day. It was against their regulations to give communion to anyone who had not been baptized according to Scripture. So that was that.

The host went on to say that he found this whole area of Christian practice difficult, because so many of his members fell from grace between communion services. On being asked what he meant by falling from grace, he said, "Things like taking trips on the Sabbath, or selling goods on the Sabbath. I have to check every time to see who is in fellowship with the Lord and who should be granted the privilege of partaking, and if any disciplinary measures are required."

The host continued, "Today there are only two people beside myself who can partake of the communion. I find it rather humiliating, but I had to tell my wife that she could not partake. She lost her temper and said things to me that no minister's wife should say. So I had to tell her that she would be suspended from communion. However, I regret that she and you cannot partake, and I only hope that you will accept my apology, since obviously it is against the will of the Lord."

- *Division into denominations.* There were close to three hundred denominations working in China. The situation confused the Chinese, the very ones we were trying to win to Christ. As a matter of fact, God used the atheistic communist regime after 1949 to crack heads together among the denominations and tell them either to get together or get out. So they accepted the head-cracking and got together. Only one Protestant Christian Church is officially recognized now by the national government in China.

Don't conclude from all I've been saying, though, that missionaries couldn't work together. We did. As I remember my days in China, we always had union services at summer resort areas. The missions carried out many important union projects, such as translating the Bible, printing the Bible, publishing other Christian literature. We had union evangelistic teams that went from church to church. We had Christian literature that was meant for all believers in Christ. We lived in China in the midst of suspicion and sometimes hostile governmental regulation, and we found that we could work and pray and publish and serve the Lord together.

When you are giving out famine relief, no one asks you what you think about women in the church. When you are teaching illiterates to read, no one cares about your particular belief in the virgin birth. When you are in a hospital and saving someone from imminent death, the family doesn't get around to discussing whether baptism should be by immersion or effusion. Actually, Christian people very often carry a little common sense into their religious practices!

Absentmindedness

Dr. George Painter was a missionary of the old guard, highly respected and with long experience of how to get along in China. He had gone out to China soon after the American Civil War, and in the early 1900's he was in his sixties.² He had a quirk that everybody understood, perhaps one that had grown on him over the years, which was that he was quite absent-minded.

He was an old bachelor, and he liked his things arranged and in their proper place. So he bought himself a little houseboat, had it fixed up to suit his way of life, and used it as his hotel when he went traveling about his field of work. The boatman took care of details.

As he was cleaning up a bit one morning before eating breakfast, he saw his pajamas on the cot and made a mental note that he would put them in his suitcase. Then he brushed his teeth. It was summer time and the sliding windows of his cabin were open, so he picked up his pajamas with one hand and his toothbrush with the other and went to the window to spit out his toothpaste. But he ended up throwing his pajamas out the window and spitting on the bed.

He never told this story on himself, but the boatman saw it and shared it with other missionaries. They never let Dr. Painter forget!

Peccadillos

Boom! Boom! I heard shots in the night. It was wintertime in early 1935 and I was itinerating in the country, ready for bed and lying on my cot trying to get warm. Boom! Boom! It was only an occasional blast from a black powder muzzle loader. As long as the rifles and the pistols didn't start their rapid fire, I didn't have to worry too much. It was good to crawl into my bedroll and try to sleep. How nice it would be to have something to read to take my mind off of bandits and brigands. It had not been long since a gang of bandits had cut off the head of one of my fellow missionaries, Mr. John Vinson.³ It had been my friend Ed Currie who had

²[The Rev. George Whitfield Painter (1839-1933). Mr. Painter, a Presbyterian evangelistic missionary, was in China from 1873 to 1906.]

³[Rev. John Walker Vinson (1880-1931). Mr. Vinson began work in Sutsien in 1907. In 1909 he moved to Haichow and continued his work there until his death. On November 3, 1931, he was killed by bandits while itinerating.]

gone out into the country and brought back the body. (The head had been sewed back on by concerned friends.)

The next day I happened to be back in Sutsien writing a letter for our Missionary Correspondence Department. Our Mission Board in Nashville would mimeograph our letters and mail them out to people with whom we wanted to stay in touch. I put in my letter that if anyone had some good, exciting, leftover *True Detective* magazines, I would appreciate getting them. With tongue in cheek I suggested that it might calm my mind and rest my thoughts while I was listening to the boombooming of an evening in the Chinese countryside.

I did get a few magazines. However, I also got a letter from my good friend and cousin, Edgar Guthrie, since deceased. The letter amused me very much. It read: "Dear Houston, I am shocked, surprised, and grieved at your missionary correspondence letter. It has upset my whole idea of the spiritual life of missionaries. How can you possibly hope to secure peace of mind and go to sleep reading a detective story? Surely you would read your Bible and pray. Please go to God's promises from now on and not to a wild story of shooting and killing."

I talked to him two years later, when I came back to America on furlough, and he was still hot under the collar. He felt that somehow I had betrayed his confidence. It wasn't easy to explain. What I wanted to say was that I still trusted the Lord, and that I hoped Edgar would trust me.

He's in glory now, and I trust that he is looking down on me and deciding that this was just one of those peccadillos of life.

Daydreams

Was there ever a time when I was tempted to leave the ministry and the work of the church? One such time occurred after I was back in the United States, in the winter of 1941-1942. I will get to that later ("Tempted To Quit," Chapter 17). But that particular temptation was not one that I faced while I was actually on the field in China.

Daydreaming, however, is something else. Life in Sutsien, even though we were in the midst of millions of people, was lonely and isolated. When we thought of leaving Sutsien and going "out" to Shanghai or Kuling, the trip could take a week or more, even after the railroad was built. So what did we do with our spare time? As a child I read Henty. As an adult, I read *True Detective*. Of course there was always the mission work at hand that needed doing. Beyond that...one daydreamed.

When Frances and I went to China in 1923, I had a deep, personal desire to see parts of the world other than the Pacific Rim countries I was already familiar with. From Peking, one could take the train for Vladivostok, and from there board the Trans-Siberian Railway and travel along the Amur River through Siberia, going on straight across to European Russia. It was a ten day trip or more, and it was over country that few people I knew had ever seen. I really wanted to take that trip. However, between babies and evacuations and shortages of money and revolutions, we were never able to travel home to America by the Trans-Siberian Railway.

During our year in Peking, we saw the camel caravans coming in from Outer Mongolia. Imagine taking a trip across Mongolia along the old Silk Route between Europe and Asia. We saw the caravans and we talked to people that had taken the trip, but we never had the chance to go.

Through the years, I really wanted to take a boat trip up through the gorges of the Yangtze River. The scenery is spectacular as the huge river's swift currents run between high, steep, precipitous rocky bluffs. The gorges are well known and they have been terrifying to many people over the centuries. Traveling by boat, one had to go to Hangkow (in Hupeh Province, now incorporated into the city of Wuhan), change and take passage on a steamer with a very high-powered engine, and negotiate the rapids for the next three hundred miles. But lack of time and lack of money meant that I was never able to do it. Missionary salaries were minimal in those years, and it would have taken just about a year's salary to pay for the trip. So we marked that off.

South China was always dangling before our eyes. Many people in our churches these days have been to Guilin Province in South China and seen the amazing shapes of the mountains which rise from the mists in that area. But that had to be marked off.

I always wanted to go to the Himalaya Mountains. The foothills come right down along the Yangtze River, near Kuling, where my family spent summers when I was a child and where we spent a number of summers again in the nineteen-twenties and thirties. We spent many weeks hiking on those foothills, at an altitude of about three thousand feet. In the winter there were tigers and occasional bears and other animals that would wander down from the ridges into the more populous areas. But no real trip to the Himalayas ever became possible.

I always wanted to be in a town or in a mission station where there were tennis players. But that was never my fortune.

I always wanted to have a boat, particularly after the outboard motor became common. But circumstances never made it possible.

So you see, a missionary, if he happens to have a little private money of a few thousand dollars a year, can really take off and have a good time without hurting anybody. Of course, he may hurt his own conscience for serving his personal whims rather than his God and for permitting himself to be diverted from doing more mission work. If traveling to exotic spots is to be construed as a temptation, it is one that Frances and I were spared, for during our years in China we didn't have the "few thousand dollars." Furthermore, in my own personal experience it was clear that being a father to three children in a land where there was nothing else for them to do except what the home could provide, studying the always difficult Chinese language, administering the work that we were required to do both by the Committee in America and by the problems we could plainly see on the local field, and doing the odd jobs associated with the simple matter of living in a foreign land where there were no hardware stores and not even any grocery stores in our sense of the term—it was clear to me that doing these things was fully sufficient to use up all my energy and ingenuity and patience and time.

At my present age, which as I write is ninety-three, probably the time has come to stop dreaming about all those trips. Still, if any of you who read this happen to be planning an excursion to the Himalayan snow slopes or the Yangtze River gorges or the Gobi Desert outback, and you need a Chinese translator—why not try giving me a call? I could promise to take you, but coming back again might be discussed under the heading, "Only by Divine Providence."



Chapter 15 Our Children

Unforgettable Memories

“The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children’s children.”

Psalm 103:17

H OUSTON and Bob were four and two when we returned to Sutsien in 1929. Houston had been born there and Bob’s earliest memories come from there. Anne would be entering the world in Sutsien in 1932. So, for Frances and me, the Sutsien years provided some of the most unforgettable memories relating to our children.

My brother Norman, who would soon succeed Dr. John Bradley as station doctor in Sutsien, was with us as we travelled across America on our way back to Sutsien in 1929. Along the way, we stopped by the Grand Canyon. The old hotel still stands next to the railroad tracks where we stopped.

Norman would be a father himself before many years had passed, but in 1929 he was a recently graduated medical student. Frances and I wanted to take the horseback trip down into the canyon, and Norman offered to look after the two boys. We should have known better. As soon as we left, he locked the hotel door, lay down on the bed and went to sleep, leaving the two boys to fend for themselves. By the time Frances and I got back, there was nothing in that room that was not turned over, pulled out, thrown on the floor, taken off the walls. To add to the confusion, suitcases had been opened and emptied. Houston and Bob at least had demonstrated that they had energy! However, we did get them to Shanghai alive. And for some reason they got along with Norman fine in later years, and came to look on him as a favorite uncle.

Houston and Bob did have energy. When we boarded the Pacific liner, I had to wonder whether they would crawl up on the deck rail, look over the ocean, and possibly fall in. As a matter of fact, that was more than a theoretical possibility. I looked up at the pilot house, one day, and saw four year old Houston trying to climb up the rope ladder on the mast. He didn’t get very far, but he certainly had it in the back of his head. Then

there was the day we couldn't find two year old Bob. He had been with us, on deck, just a moment before. There were plenty of holes he could have fallen into, and the deck rail he could have fallen from. We looked and looked, getting more and more desperate. Finally, a member of the crew came by and said, "I don't know who it is you are looking for, but there is a little boy in the main dining room, Deck A, beating on the drums and blowing the horns." Sure enough, there Bob was, in all his glory! We were delighted to find him. But it still was a tense matter, trying to be parents of active preschoolers on a boat that was going six thousand miles across the Pacific, through waves and rolls and occasional storms.

A "T"-Bone That Wasn't Meant To Be

Between other activities, our number one son, Houston, liked to amuse himself on slides and swings. When he was seven years old (about 1932) he fell out of the swing one day and fractured his arm a few inches below the shoulder. My brother Norman, who by then was the doctor in Sutsien, did the best he could. But with no X-ray he could only manipulate the arm to try to evaluate the fracture, and the arm was hurting Houston too much to be able to do even that effectively. As Houston lay on the bed and suffered, and as the weeks went by, we realized that the arm was just not healing.

We knew the bone was out of line when one day we could actually see a bump under the surface that looked like a bone at the wrong place. There was an X-ray machine at Hsuchowfu, so we made arrangements to take him there. When Dr. McFadden took a picture, it showed that the bone was not in line at all. The piece from the elbow hit the other piece about two inches from the end, and where they met it looked like a crossed "T." In the meantime, the pieces had more or less grown together. Dr. McFadden told me to bring my son to the hospital, that he was real sorry but he would have to break the bone. He would do the best he could.

Houston had been suffering with that arm for a month. When I told him what was in store, he looked like he might start to cry, and then he didn't. He just asked me, "When I go into the operating room, will you go with me?"

I said, "Sure!"

Then a second question, "Will you hold my hand?"

I said, "Sure."

Then he said, "All right, let's go."

Talk about unforgettable! This may not have meant very much to *him*, but did it mean the world to *me*! As I said, I've never forgotten it.

"Blitz"

I came back to the United States in the summer of 1941, just before Pearl Harbor. Houston was sixteen years old. The family was reunited for the summer at "Dam Hill," my parents' farm in retirement. It just so happened that a neighbor near the farm in the Tinkling Spring Church community, a Mr. Gilkeson, had an old Willis car that he had parked in our shed. Mr. Gilkeson had in mind selling the car for about \$35. In those days, we did not have as many debts in America as we have now, so the dollar was worth something.

My son Houston almost had a spasm, hoping against hope that I would let him buy the thing. Well, knowing he didn't have \$35, I finally told him, "You don't have that much money."

He went to Mr. Gilkeson and sweet talked him into selling it for what he had, which was about \$23 or \$24. Then he came to me and said he had it all worked out and he could buy it. Either from a soft spot in my head or my heart—I don't know which—I gave in to him. Then I had to convince Frances that it was the wise thing to do, which of course it was not. But I could not see keeping that youngster on a farm for most of the summer, not knowing many people, and left to himself a great deal of the time. He needed something to do. The old Willis was the solution.

Believe it or not, from the first day he produced his money and got the car, it was the idol of his eye and in the center of his heart. He named it "Blitz," petted it, polished it, washed it, took needle and thread to sew up the torn spots in it, and did everything in the world to show all of us that car was a good car. He always was very careful with it and never once made me regret that I had allowed him to own that contraption.

Later on, when he was in the navy as part of the disruption of World War II, he sold the car. I think that even today he regrets that he didn't keep it. It probably would be worth a hundred times as much today as when he bought it!

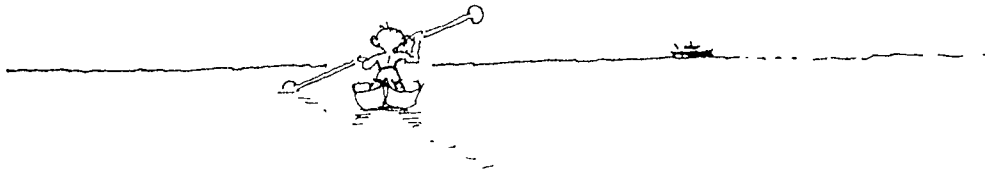
Paddling Across the Pacific

Our second son, Bob, was a good and obedient child. But then, of course, sometimes he would decide that he wanted to do something and

would manage to forget that he had been told otherwise. We were at the seaside missionary resort of Peitaiho in the summer of 1930 or 1931. Bob was three years old, or just possibly four—in either case, he was right small. There was a beautiful beach, and all the missionary families spent hours swimming in the waves.

Houston and Bob pestered me to rent a boat, which we did. It was a little flat-bottomed, two-oared, blunt-ended job that was built to hold no more than two people. The rules were very strict. Bob could not swim. The waves were big enough to tip the boat. The water got deep a little way out. There were no life guards. The only thing between the beach and six thousand miles of ocean was an island off in the dim distance and a battleship anchored a half mile away. So Houston and Bob had been told that under no circumstances were they to get in the boat and try to row unless I was with them.

I let them play for a long time, then pulled the boat up on the sand and went for a short swim myself. That is when it happened. I heard a lot of



commotion. Friends were calling my name. I looked up and with unbelieving eyes saw Bob standing up in the little boat, paddling with all his might, heading straight for America. It looked to me as though he had almost gotten half way. I yelled, but he did not hear. Finally I made it to the boat and brought him back to shore, told him to go to the house while I thought up a punishment, and started him off with a couple of paddles.

The interesting thing was that Bob became so incensed over my interrupting his trip back to America that he hardly spoke to me for two days. There obviously was a confusion in confrontation and communication.

Heads On and Off

“Hurry, Pat. Hurry.” Mrs. Pat was speaking. We were in Sutsien and were taking a short afternoon walk to the West Lake. Houston and Bob

were about six or seven (about 1932). She continued, "Don't look back. I'm frightened that the children will receive too much of a shock."

We kept on walking. The Chinese crowds around were most casual. Frances said, "It is horrible. I looked back and saw two bandit heads, one stuck on each pillar of the big gate through the city wall. If I had known those heads were there, we would not have walked this way."

My reply was an attempt to comfort. "Don't let that bother you. Kids don't get shocked that easily. I remember as a kid seeing this many times. It never kept me awake at night. I imagine the kids saw the heads anyhow. They don't miss much."

She replied, "Oh, I hope not. I can't stand to think of their trauma. Let's go home another way."

Our little half mile afternoon walk was right much ruined for the day. We went on and looked at the old Yellow River bottom and the lake collected there. We enjoyed the gorgeous sunset hues reflected on its changing surface. Why, in this land of China, did beauty and sordid reality, life and death, well fed bodies and starved rib cages, stand out in such bold contrast? How much must be endured in this land to which we had committed our lives and that of our children before it was too much and one could give up and quit? Where did one turn for a reconciliation of opposites, that one might have a peace in unity?

We walked on home. The kids never made mention of the heads that they must have seen. We did not want to bring up the subject. Frances was still obviously upset. Eight o'clock came and the boys went to bed. I went upstairs a little later to tell them good night. They were both amused and snickering to themselves. "What's so funny, boys?"

"Daddy, did you see how funny that man looked. His mouth was all pulled down and he looked like he was trying to laugh. The one head was stuck on crooked too." That was all they ever said. I told Frances she could forget the trauma angle. She never forgot the heads though.

What some consider cruelty, others consider just desserts. What does one do or say when two cultures collide? What was I to do in China land when I looked out the train window and saw a twelve year old boy hanging by his hands from a tree limb, being whipped by some Japanese soldiers...

Almost Blinded by Lime

The quicklime pit came so close to being a major tragedy for us that it is still not comfortable to think about. Some readers of these notes may

just possibly not be familiar with lime and its dangers. We use mortar mix today in masonry construction, and for many years I have not seen limestone burned and mixed to form a mortar. Our word “sarcophagus” means “flesh eating” because in olden days they put corpses in limestone coffins to eat up or dissolve the flesh rapidly. When we built houses in China we had to take this raw, flesh-eating limestone and prepare it for use. The masons would dig a hole which would be just about big enough to bury your automobile. The raw limestone and water were mixed together while it bubbled and the excess heat escaped in steam.

One afternoon, masons who were working on the Women’s Bible School were engaged in this job, and they had their hole more than half full of this dangerous liquid. To help in stirring the brew, they had laid two planks across the pit. The Women’s Bible School was just a short distance from our house, and Houston and Bob were playing around. For some reason that only a boy would understand, these two boys of mine were daring each other to walk across the planks. Having done this successfully several times, and with the Chinese masons protesting, which only added to the thrill, they decided to hop across. Houston made it. But Bob at the time had a cast on his broken arm and so was somewhat handicapped. He fell off directly into the hot, white, thick, lime soup, over his head.

The masons grabbed him out before he gulped any into his lungs or throat. But his eyes went under. They knew the danger and threw water on his face and rushed him home. They peeled his clothes off and washed him all over as quickly as possible. When I got back shortly afterwards, I looked in his eyes, and I still could see little flakes of lime down deep around. These we washed and picked out. The next day, we had the cast removed, and were glad to find that little lime had gotten under it.

So far as we know no permanent damage was done, but it was so close that we have wondered ever since. Just suppose... Just suppose... Just suppose... Paul says, “I can do all things through Christ who at all times gives me the strength” (Philippians 4:13). It was mighty nice not to have to ask for strength this time.

Father or Surgeon?

My brother, Norman, had succeeded Dr. Bradley as our station doctor in 1931. So he was the attending physician when our third child and first daughter was born, October 16, 1932. We named her Anne Rutherford.

Any family that has only one girl does not have to be told that she is very special. The one most interesting thing to me about this daughter of mine was that she never realized what a prize she was in herself. She was always trying to compete with her older brothers. What is the use of trying to compete with brothers when you have the crown jewels on your own head? Her main motto in life was, "I can do it. I will do it." She had spirit, and she had a mind of her own, and she showed both in later life in her commitment to become a medical doctor.

I well remember the urgent message that was whispered in my ear one Sunday morning as Pastor Ch'eng of the Sutsien Church was preaching his morning sermon. "Dr. Pu [Chinese for "Patterson"], come quickly. Little Mei Mei [Chinese pet name for Anne] has mashed her finger off."

Anne had been left at home in care of Ch'ang Sao-tze, Anne's amah, a very faithful and reliable person. The year was about 1935 and Anne was not much over three. There was no missionary doctor in our station at the time. Men and women were seated separately in the Chinese church in those days, so Mrs. Pu was settled with the women. I signaled to her, and we started out together to get home as soon as possible.

The distance was just under half a mile. We were both frantic. Frances had on her heavy padded garments and her thick padded shoes. Walking fast was almost impossible. Soon she said, "Pat, you run on ahead. I will come more slowly. See what has happened and what can be done."

Poor little Anne. There she was, with Ch'ang Sao-tze holding her hand, blood visible in spots. She had been playing with a plank, putting it up against the brick wall and seeing how far she could walk up the incline. All would have been well, except that when the plank slipped she had her finger tips on its bottom side. As her weight dropped on the plank, there happened to be an iron pipe which crushed the tip of the little finger.

I looked at the finger. The nail was pushed up over the tip, and the flesh was with it. I could see the little bone sticking up. With no hospital and no doctor, we would have to do whatever was to be done. So...I figured the only thing to do was to put the nail and the flesh back over the tip of the bone—and hold it there until it began to heal. But then how could one disinfect? Mercurochrome I knew was sterile and also would not inhibit healing. So we soaked the little tip in mercurochrome for a few minutes, put the skin and nail back on top of the bone where it had come from, wrapped it firmly, again soaked it with the medicine, and that was it.

In a few days we took the bandage off. You can still see that the job was not perfect, but aside from an impaired finger nail, Anne never knows today it is not a perfect finger. You do what you have to do when you have to do something. I was grateful to God that the bone was not crushed. Don't try to see what the tip of your bone in the little finger looks like. I can tell you if you have to know...It looks like the tiny end of a very small broken stick.

Anne's Career Decision

One thing that my mind turns to when I think of this number three: She went to Agnes Scott College. We cut all the corners that we could, and got her through college, but when she came back from Atlanta, she told us that she had decided to be a doctor. I was somewhat nonplussed and overcome, and my Scotch nature rebelled at the thought that we had put her through four years of college and there was nothing that she could do, but I persuaded her that maybe if she wanted to be a doctor, the simplest thing was for her to be a nurse.

After due consideration and after long argumentation, she agreed. As some of you know, becoming a nurse doesn't take much money. Believe it or not, we sent her to the Columbia University school of nursing, in New York, and she took two years of R.N. training at a cost to us of about \$400 a year. You don't get training like that very often, so she graduated and came back to Bluefield and she was so well trained that she was immediately called upon to go to Charleston and teach nursing. But she still wanted to be a doctor. I might tell you that she tried nursing for a year or two. Then she said, "I *still* want to be a doctor."

I knew this girl well enough to know that she had had her mind made up for ten years, so there was nothing I could do. "Most hospitals don't take women," I said. "I'll find one," she answered.

So she went to the University of West Virginia in Morgantown, took premed, and came through with flying colors. That spring she wrote to three medical schools: the state medical school of West Virginia in Morgantown, a university medical school in Philadelphia, and the medical school of Emory University in Atlanta. The last one she knew very well, since Agnes Scott College was just next door. When she sent in her applications, and they saw where she had been to school and what she had done, they all accepted her. She had the choice of three schools.

To make a long story short, that girl almost put herself through medical school. It cost her very little. She saved at every corner, and the corners where she couldn't save, she just cut off. Being a very independent young lady, she found a chance to work for the government in Arizona. While in Phoenix, she and Alfred D. Hammes were married, and she has been in Arizona ever since. She has always been a marvelous, marvelous daughter.

As the Twig Is Bent

Houston made it through his early broken arm and his later riding of motorcycles. After we came back to the United States permanently in 1941, he entered McCallie School in Chattanooga. (Dr. Park McCallie was very loyal to missionaries and he made it possible for us to send him there.) He was in the wartime naval V-12 program. It sent him to Stevens Technological Institute, Hoboken, New Jersey, where he earned an engineering degree. He pretty soon returned to McCallie, where he has spent his life as a teacher of mathematics and later a Dean of Students.

Bob didn't drown when paddling across the Pacific, and apparently he recovered from the quicklime pit. No one could convince me, after that, that we are not under the care of a God who is in charge and who knows what we can do and how much we can stand! Bob went on to get his Bachelor of Divinity degree from Union Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, and his Doctor of Philosophy degree from Yale University. He is a professor at Rhodes College in Memphis, so I judge his earlier experiences did not upset his constitution.

I will be telling later about our return to Sutsien in 1939 and about Anne under the Japanese. I have already mentioned that she attended Agnes Scott College, as had her mother. In Arizona, she became a public health doctor, using Phoenix as a base to go out and visit the Indian reservations. More recently she became a specialist in the treatment of substance abuse. She lives now in Phoenix with her husband.

I mentioned that Bob was born in Kobe. Sometimes our family has had a hard time convincing immigration officials that we are all natural born Americans, but that is the fact of the case. With my being born in China, Houston in China, Bob in Japan, Anne in China, and Frances in Lexington, Virginia, people have a tendency to cock one eye and look askance, wondering who is kidding whom.

A Test I Didn't Have To Face

One question I never answered in my thinking and never had to answer in fact is what I would have done if I had realized that a blood-thirsty mob of renegade soldiers were planning to torture and kill my family in order to see me suffer and hear my heart break. This was a very real possibility. Thank God I never had to resolve that conflict in the span of my missionary confrontations.

As I look back in my own life and at those three children that God gave us, I know that we could not give them very much. Missionaries don't have a real salary. They simply have a keeping allowance. What is necessary for food, they are given, but they are not given enough to save. So a missionary cannot do very much for his children. But there is one thing that I think my children know, they have no doubt about, that I "did what I could" (Mark 14:8). You know, it makes a tremendous difference in a child when a parent does what he can to make a child happy.



Part V
God's Future



Chapter 16 Darkness Falls

The Valley of the Shadow, 1937-1941

“We believe in looking facts in the face and accepting them as part of the plan of Him who sees the end from the beginning, and to Whom is all the praise and the glory for ever and ever.”

The Mustard Seed Growing in Sutsien

Dr. Patterson (1936)

THE FAMILY and I had spent the 1936-1937 year on furlough in Richmond, Virginia, staying at the Mission Court that is located there. In the summer of 1937 our furlough was up, and in July we left for Vancouver, on the way to Shanghai. We knew that the war between Japan and China had begun, on July 7, 1937. But the fighting was far to the north, near Manchukuo, and the Board in Nashville was still sending missionaries back to China. The boys and I drove across the continent to Vancouver. Frances and Anne followed by train.

Seven weeks after the beginning of the war, on August 13, the war front shifted drastically and unexpectedly to the south. The Battle of Shanghai had broken out. This brought the area of fighting to the coast of mid-China, right where our work was situated. We had been booked on one of the beautiful Canadian-Pacific ocean liners to sail for Shanghai, but that was now out of the question. Two other Presbyterian missionary families, the George Hudsons and the Ed Curries, had been slated to sail on the same ship, and they now waited with us in Vancouver. We all had no choice but to settle down and see what would happen.

Frances and I put the children in Canadian schools. I found a small Vancouver congregation that I could serve. And we waited. But more Chinese and Japanese troops poured into Shanghai, and things only got worse. In November, the Board suggested that we come back to the east coast and consider finding a job. By December 2, Shanghai had fallen. On December 12-13, Nanking, the capital of Nationalist China, fell. In the

weeks that followed, Japanese troops carried out one of the most barbarous acts of the war, the still notorious rape of Nanking.¹

As for us, we came back across an icy country to Hendersonville, North Carolina, where we spent Christmas with my wife's sister, Mrs. Frank Sanford, formerly Mary Glasgow, and her family. The church in Tazewell, Virginia, was seeking a minister, and the Lord having miraculously guided our pilgrimage, we moved there in January of 1938. Tazewell was a beautiful residential town, and Frances and I and our three children were soon happily established.

Then, in 1939, God once again sounded the call to go to China. Dr. William F. Junkin, my co-itinerater in the Sutsien field, himself already back in Sutsien, wrote to put the call of the Lord on my heart. "There is no other person who knows this part of the country. You are the only one that knows these people personally. They have been ravaged by war. You alone can come and help them at this crucial hour!" To return to China would mean taking Frances back with me into a war torn country, and it would mean pulling the children out of school during an uncertain period of their lives and taking them back with us. But Mr. Junkin's message came to me as the call of the Lord, and I went back.

Houston, Bob, and Anne—ages fifteen, twelve, and six—told their Tazewell friends goodbye. Frances, always meticulous, had the manse ready to return to the church. I had the family Ford as ready as possible. In mid-July we headed for the Pacific. By the second week of August, 1939, we were safely aboard a different Canadian-Pacific liner, the *Empress of Russia*, with the Ford strapped to the deck and the one-wheel baggage trailer disassembled and carried aboard as personal luggage.

So we were on the way to China. We thought we knew what lay ahead, but we would soon discover that we didn't.

The Peking Medical Diversion, 1939

A sense of disaster and war filled the local and international news. On September 1, 1939, before we reached Shanghai, Hitler invaded Poland. On September 3, Great Britain and France declared war. We had not heard from my parents, in China, since the first of June.

¹[During seven weeks of deliberate savagery in the conquered city, Japanese soldiers murdered at least 42,000 Chinese in cold blood, burying many of them alive or setting them on fire with kerosene. About 20,000 women were raped.]

When we arrived off the China coast and our ocean ferry took us up the battle scarred Hwang Pu River to Shanghai, we could see the vast rubble areas left from the assault on the city two years earlier. The Japanese had then lost more than one hundred thousand men and the Chinese had lost half a million. But by September of 1939, the heaviest fighting had moved on to the central part of China, and Shanghai was a perfectly safe as a place to disembark. As it happened, some boxes of household effects that we had left in storage when we came home on furlough in 1936 had made it through all the destruction of the city unharmed, and we were able to collect them.

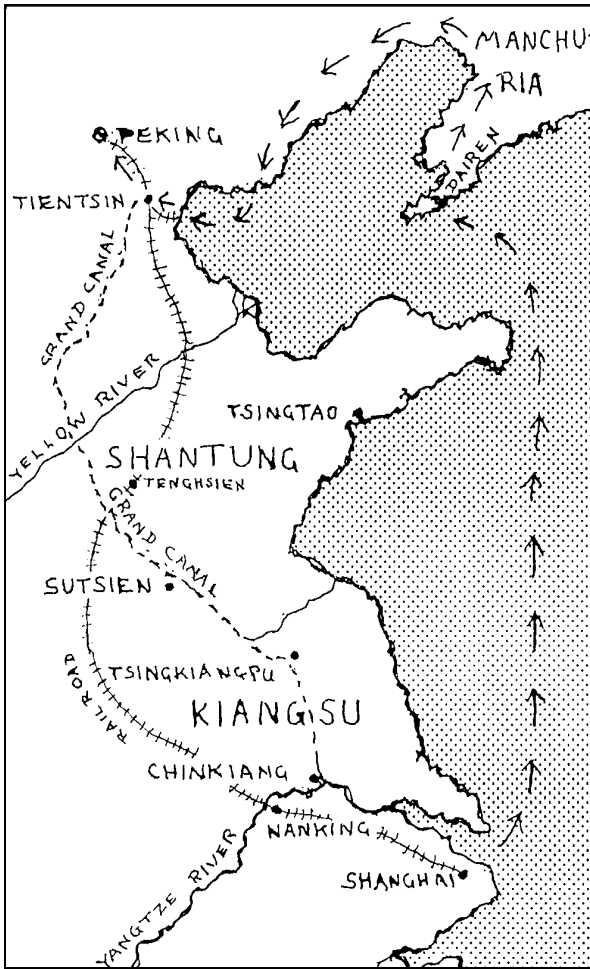
Shanghai in the summer is one of those places where you look for the fan during the night, and find none, and then roll over into a puddle of your own perspiration. Our first night there thrust us bodily into its overwhelming humidity and heat.

The next morning's mail gave us our first shocker. My father wrote from Tenghsien that my mother was in the Peking Union Medical College, that her breast cancer operation was reportedly successful, that his retirement had become mandatory, and that he had tickets to leave Shanghai for the United States at the end of September. But floods from the Yellow River had terminated all transportation to Peking from the south, for a hundred miles. Someone had to go get my mother—somehow, some way. In my father's weakened condition, clearly he could not do it. I was the appointed candidate. I accepted the challenge somewhat in the spirit of old Abraham, who set out to go to the land of Canaan and "unto the land of Canaan he came" (Genesis 12:5).

Ordinarily, the only way to get from Shanghai to Peking was the railroad. But it was now flooded. There was an alternative, but it was complicated—coastal steamer to Dairen in Manchuria, train to a temporary terminal out from Tientsin, a water segment of sixty miles to Tientsin, to be covered in ways not known, and then a spur of the railroad over to Peking. Not having any other options, I started that route.

The boat to Dairen wasn't too bad, though I had to share the cabin with a stranger. But so what? In Dairen, the Japanese had limited foreigners to one hotel. When I left for Peking, I told the fellows at the desk to be sure to save a room for me on my return trip. This of course was just a conversational ploy. They gave me no written promise, I made no deposit.

The trip along the Manchurian coast by fishing scow, and from Tientsin over to Peking by train, was pretty primitive. I wondered how I



The 1939 Shanghai-Peking trip by sea.

could possibly bring a sick mother back. But at that point, some plans for the future had to be labeled procrastination.

When I arrived at the Peking hospital, I found my mother in her usual good spirits, including this time a fatalistic acceptance of what had to be. It took me five days to get all the passes I needed—from the city government, the national government, the Japanese government, and maybe one or two others—in order to leave the city.

My mother was a heavy person, and her hospital experience had not slimmed her overly much. She was still recuperating and could walk only fifty or seventy-five yards, so the question that bore down on me was

how on earth I could get her on a train in Peking, then onto a barge for a fifty or sixty mile trip up the coast from Tientsin, onto a train again for a long trip through Manchuria, and finally onto the coastal steamer for Shanghai. I was overwhelmed and overcome. I really was afraid that she might die on the way. She was prepared for this because her grandmother, Mary Russell Rowland, the wife of Samuel Rutherford Houston, a missionary to Asia Minor in the early 19th century, had died under more or less similar circumstances. Mary Rowland Houston is buried in Alexandria, Egypt.

Getting on a train in China is quite an experience in the best of circumstances. Once or twice Frances got on a train by being pushed through a window and landing in the coach at someone's feet. I knew that the

situation in Peking was worse than usual. So I went to the station and found a nice looking porter and gave him a tip. He promised to get her on without the usual confusion and battle if I would bring her to a certain little back gate. I did, and we got her on the train early one morning, and she was even able to lie down until we got to the terminal near Tientsin.

We managed to get her to the fishing barge, moored half a mile from Tientsin, but then there was no place to sit, much less to lie down. In my desperation, I searched the boat and found the door to the captain's cabin open. I brought her and put her in his cot, and sat outside, waiting for the captain to come back, any time, and explode. Actually, he never came, and she was able to rest there all three hours of the trip.

When we got to the temporary terminal in Manchuria, things went smoothly again. Our tickets were good. She shared her compartment with a twenty-five year old missionary woman with whom she was already acquainted. There was even a dining car on the train.

After twenty-four hours, we arrived in Dairen—after dark, and in a rainstorm. I found a coach drawn by a rather anemic horse. When I told the driver to go to the international hotel, he laughed. “You don't have a chance for a room. There is a war going on, and the place is overflowing.”

I said, “We'll go anyhow.”

The hotel had a tremendous lobby, with fifty or seventy-five people sitting around, and baggage stacked up to the ceiling in the center of the room. It was obviously hopeless to find accommodation—everybody was fuming and fussing. I decided to try to pull a rabbit out of a hat. I walked up to the registration counter and spoke cheerfully, “Well, I'm back. I have my sick mother with me, and I'm ready for that room you promised.”

The fellow behind the counter looked at me cross-eyed, and said something to two or three other people, who did the same. Then they shrugged, and the fellow said, “All right, bring her in.”

They even had an elevator, and they took her upstairs to a two room suite. The young missionary companion stayed with her.

A week later I was able to get a private cabin on a passenger boat bound for Shanghai. When we embarked and went to our cabin, we found it full to the brim with suitcases and furniture, and a Russian woman and her daughter standing arms akimbo in the doorway, daring anybody to come in. I said it was my room, and she said it was hers. I found the captain and brought him back and after a battle of words and fussing and fuming, we agreed to let the Russians have the upper bunk and give my mother the

lower, for which I had a ticket. (I had a ticket for the upper, also.) Actually, they were very pleasant, and as far as I know they didn't even snore. I sat in a chair on the deck, and continued sitting in it until we arrived in Shanghai two days later.

My father was waiting in Shanghai, and took over. Within a few weeks, they were on their way to America, where they lived for another twelve years.

Living Under Four Governments

Sutsien, the mission station that had opened up under my parents in 1894, was going to pieces and there was no way to hold things together. In addition to the Japanese invasion, and no doubt in part because of it, our part of China was overrun by banditry, disruption of every kind, and a chronic lack of economic stability. No one in our situation had any idea which way to turn.

During the years of the Japanese invasion, Sutsien, and all the occupied territory of China, was having to exist under three competing governments. The Japanese occupied the chief cities, such as Shanghai and Nanking, and the smaller ones, too, such as Sutsien and Tenghsien. They also held on to the railroad lines, if they could, and during the day they sent armed patrols to roam through the countryside to try to cow the people. The Central Government or Nationalist Government (known also as the Kuomintang, or K.M.T.) kept armies on the move and technically governed all the towns and villages except the occupied cities. The communists (Chinese Communist Party, or C.C.P.), known as the Eighth Route Army by some and as bandits by others, with officers who had been trained in Russia from captain on up, roamed at will after dark. These three governments all assessed and collected taxes, not only for the current year but also for two or three years in advance. In addition to these three, we missionaries were under a fourth government, that of the United States, and by virtue of that we claimed certain rights as neutrals. This gave us some slight protection, unless some soldier shot first.

We had discovered, on our return to Shanghai, that it was considered acceptably safe in that autumn of 1939 for us to go on upcountry. We settled Houston and Bob in the 9th and 8th grades at the Shanghai American School and took only Anne with us into the interior. I remember that as we travelled northwards towards Sutsien, the September *kaoliang* (a millet grain, somewhat like sorghum) was tall and green in the

fields. On the night we arrived, we got to Sutsien after dark. Our plan was to live in a house at the South End, near the hospital and outside the city walls. It was dark as we moved in.

At day break we happened to look out of the two windows of our bedroom. Out of one window we saw the Sutsien city wall, and we knew the Japanese were garrisoned there. Out of the other we could see the tall *kaoliang*, and we knew the nationalists and the communists were using it for cover. We did not want to get caught in a cross fire. We moved the bed the next night.

The Japanese soldiers loved their bath. The simplest place was just inside the city gate in a big one-hundred gallon drum. It really was amusing to see and hear stories of the shocked consternation of simple peasant women who happened to be entering the city gate while three or four husky braves were standing around in the so-so waiting for their turn to get parboiled.

Anne was just under seven years old when we got back to Sutsien, and she was the only foreign child in the whole town. Since she had been only three when we left for the United States, she had forgotten all of her Chinese language. We realized she would be the loneliest little girl in the orient if she couldn't talk Chinese. Her mother and I tried to teach her a few words, but we had little success. So we employed a Chinese girl a little older than Anne, and asked her to be both a companion and a teacher. The girl talked Chinese to Anne without any embarrassment, and believe it or not, in only a month or two Anne was talking Chinese without any trouble at all. To this day, as a doctor in Phoenix, Arizona, she is willing to give the language a try if a hesitant Chinese person who doesn't speak English comes into her clinic.



Both the Chinese and the Japanese love small children. So Anne, at seven, became a fine diplomat. Whenever I had to go into town and meet the high brass, or just go into town and see what was happening, I would take Anne by the hand and we would walk together. The soldiers liked her and they knew, since I had her along, that I was not expecting to give anyone any trouble.

Our house had a back yard where Anne would play, and beyond the wall was a drill ground where soldiers would practice. I noticed that Anne and her companion would sometimes get up on a big box and look over the wall and be very much intrigued. Finally I got curious. I looked over the wall, and found that the girls were watching the Japanese soldiers shoot Chinese. I suggested it would be more considerate of the poor scoundrels who were being shot if we would not look at them, but let them die in peace. That seemed to make sense to the girls, so they got down from their box. I, at least, felt better about it.

War is hell...it always has been. A woman came into the hospital who had been shot while weeding her garden about half a mile from the city wall. We inquired, and it seemed that a Japanese soldier standing on the wall bet a companion he could hit her with one rifle shot. He did, and won the bet.

Fires, Pyres, Life, Death, Hope

Cremation was the accepted way by which the Japanese disposed of their military dead. The Chinese in our mission territory buried rather than cremating, and the Japanese practice jarred their sensibility. But they were even more jarred by another practice that was reported to me by some friends of ours who lived near the Japanese garrison. They said that among the substantial numbers of cremations that occurred in a period of several days, they had seen at least two or three instances of live soldiers, seriously wounded and obviously incapacitated, placed on the pyre with the bodies of the dead and left to burn.

Such a soldier would have a deep belief that it was best for all that he go on to join his ancestors. The legless and bleeding Japanese soldier crying out as the flames began to sear was at the same time glorying in the victory of a quick transition to the Land of the Spirits and fellowship with the ancestors. Out on the Pacific a few years later, the kamikaze pilot as he dived his loaded plane at an American destroyer was elated that in a moment he would be ushered into the presence of the greats who had fought and passed on before.

There's a point here for us to consider. We in the West often think of our ancestors in terms of the past, whereas Oriental people think of their ancestors in terms of the living present and the anticipated future. Any missionary who works among the Chinese people becomes increasingly aware of this fundamental difference in spiritual outlook. Christians have

been promised in God's word that our ancestors are alive in Heaven. We as Christians might find a new sense of community if we were more conscious of our ancestors, and of the whole company of God's faithful, as alive in the present and as still to be alive in the future.

Totally Desperate

In the early winter of 1940, we heard a knock on the front gate one night, and I saw a sight that I had never before seen in all my years in China. It was a woman, a beggar, asking for a handout, and she was a foreigner, a Caucasian. She was carrying her baby, leading a little yellow-haired, blond girl, and holding a stick to keep off dogs. We inquired where she had come from, and her reply was, "I have walked all the way from Georgia [U.S.S.R.]" She had fled from the region of the Black and Caspian Seas, across several thousand miles of mountains and plains, and there she was in Sutsien. This was just before Hitler invaded Russia, so I assume it was Stalin's oppression that had driven her to gather her children and flee her home.

She wasn't the only one suffering. We became aware during that winter of 1939-1940 in Sutsien that the situation for the ordinary people in our part of China was really desperate. They were totally unable to make a living, desperate for safety, desperate for anything and everything that had to do with life. Armies, sometimes legitimate and sometimes bandit, marched back and forth throughout our territory. The Japanese roamed over tens of thousands of miles in their big trucks and had orders to subjugate the nation by violence.

During that year, Frances and I had been the only missionaries in Sutsien. When the boys had their Christmas break from Shanghai American School, we didn't try to get them into Sutsien. Instead, we met them in Hsuchowfu, both because it was on the railroad line and because there would be other missionary kids there for them to play with. The Frank Browns were on furlough, and we spent Christmas in their house.

All the Christmas gifts that we had ordered for the children had been held up by some kind of revolution or flood or something. We had nothing. So the time had come for some make-do. We found a metal shop and persuaded the man to make us some things. I will call them "toys," but actually they were practical things—shovels, hoes, a hammer. We got some nails and planks and enough other things for the kids to use their ingenuity. They didn't know any different about the toys we had ordered

from the U.S.A., and my guess is they still remember that Christmas. But they probably didn't know why Santa Claus had such an oriental predilection in toys that he was able to manufacture at the North Pole.

By the end of the year, our mission felt that Frances, Anne, and I could no longer live in Sutsien. There was no doctor. Our daughter Anne was too young to be subjected to this kind of insecurity. So the mission transferred us to Tenghsien, in Shantung Province, one hundred and fifty miles to the north. Tenghsien had a doctor, it had a group of other missionaries in residence, and it was located on a railroad line. I was assigned to teach at the North China Theological Seminary, the same institution that my father had taught at for almost the last twenty years until he retired from the field in 1939.

In late May of 1940, we carried out the move to Tenghsien. Our pleasant old summer custom would have been to go to the mountains of Kuling, but the fighting now made that impossible. So we decided to spend the summer months in the Japanese-occupied port city of Tsingtao, in North China. I accompanied Frances and Anne to Tsingtao, then backtracked to Shanghai to pick up the boys from school.

Amoebic Dysentery

Our train trip back from Shanghai to Tsingtao fell in July. The weather was extremely hot, and the train's dining car served ice cream. Now ice cream is made of milk, and it doesn't take much water from a contaminated source to make milk very dangerous for children. Throughout our time in China we would use milk only after it had been boiled.

But the Japanese, who were in control of the trains at that time, had a reputation for high sanitary standards. Bob was "dying" for some ice cream. (The choice of this word seems unfortunate, in view of what was to happen.) I thought maybe it would be permissible to run the risk.

Eight or ten hours after we arrived at our summer house in Tsingtao, he came down with a dysentery that was rapidly dehydrating him. His fever shot up to 104° or 105°, and he soon became semi-delirious. His mother quickly realized that this was no ordinary malaria. It was something devastating and deadly.

We inquired desperately all over Tsingtao for a doctor who could handle the situation. Tsingtao was a former German colony, and there were a good many Germans still there. The only doctor we found that was remotely suitable was a German doctor who had a private hospital, two

German nurses, and some Chinese nurses that he had trained. In 1940, our national relations with Germany were going from bad to worse, but this didn't come into the discussion. The doctor accepted Bob as a patient on the condition that his mother and I would leave our son with them and get out of the way.

The particular kind of amoebic dysentery that Bob had was obviously deadly and violent. In his delirium, Bob didn't even know we were not there. When we went back to the hospital the next morning, not daring to learn the worst (there were no telephones), the nurses told us that they had stayed up all night with him because he was hovering between life and death. But the treatment took hold. He came through the disease and today is healthy and well. It was a close call. One little ice cream cone, and that was the price and the penalty.

The Chinese for millennia have used human waste as a form of organic fertilizer. It was liquified and sprayed on gardens. When every lettuce leaf and every pepper has been sprayed every few weeks during the growing season, you realize that trying to keep dysentery or cholera or other forms of parasites out of the body is something that requires a major effort.

Abdominal X-rays

Our 1940 summer in Tsingtao was a pleasant one. To be sure, our enjoyment of Tsingtao's beautiful beach was sometimes interrupted on the days the Japanese soldiers happened to choose it for their daily swim. The soldiers always enjoyed going in, but the difficulty for us was that they all had left their bathing suits in Japan. In this condition they were not too beautiful, so we stayed away. But on other days we enjoyed the ocean immensely. Fellowship was close among the missionaries of many denominations. If our family had stayed in China, I think we would have continued going to Tsingtao for many summers.

Tsingtao, on the Shantung Peninsula, is located in the area that the Germans used to know as Kiaochow when they held it as a concession from China, 1897-1922. It was one of the first places invaded by Japan, and in 1940 the Japanese held it in strict control. The little incident I'm going to tell happened at one of the UPUSA missionary stations in Shantung, not far from the old German stronghold. I think the station was Yih sien.

The Japanese were aware that a missionary doctor at the station was particularly popular with the Chinese. They were convinced that he must

be doing something undercover to account for his popularity. So Japanese soldiers entered the hospital with orders to check everything they could find. One thing they found was a photographic negative which they were sure was a photograph of their underwater fortifications in the Tsingtao harbor.

I do not know to this day what the Japanese were doing underwater in that Tsingtao harbor, but I do know they were keeping it under very tight security. Finding now a photograph related to their naval effort, they were not only suspicious but furious. The doctor did his best to explain to them that they were mistaken about the picture, but nothing would convince them. To prove they meant what they said, they put him under house arrest, quarantined the hospital, took over its administration, and informed the other missionaries in the station that they would all have to be imprisoned as subversives.

It took two weeks for the missionaries to find local doctors whom the Japanese would be willing to listen to. These doctors made it clear that the X-rays in question were of the abdomen of someone suffering with gall stones. The missionaries were exonerated and under the regulations of the time were allowed to leave the country.

A Missionary Smuggler

In the fall of 1940, the war in Europe had taken a bad turn. President Roosevelt was sending American destroyers to Great Britain to bolster their food supply. The President also sent out word through the State Department for all missionaries and other civilian personnel from China who could possibly leave to return to the United States. The federal government commandeered the *U.S.S. Washington*, a large luxury liner that normally plied the Atlantic, and sent it across the Pacific especially to pick up army families and civilian personnel from China and the Philippines. Frances and the children were among those who were slated to go.

It was then that I became a smuggler of silver dollars. Technically, I suppose being a smuggler was a sin, but actually the only thing that worried me was getting caught.

Several months earlier, in Sutsien, one of my deacons came around and said, "Dr. Patterson, I have a serious problem. I have \$150 in silver dollars. The Japanese garrison is searching everywhere and confiscating all the silver they can find. If they find these dollars in my possession, they will

probably tear down my house searching for more. They will search me, but they won't search you. Will you give me currency for the silver dollars?"

With my big heart and small brain, I said, "Sure! Just bring it around." So he brought, and I bought. The one hundred and fifty silver dollars were Kai Yuan dollars, minted by the democracy that came to power in 1912. They were good dollars, each one weighing an ounce in pure silver. I put them in my trunk.

In 1940, Japanese soldiers were stationed at almost every crossroad. They searched you when you went into a train station and when you left, when you went through the gate into a city and when you came back out. They searched your baggage, your pockets, your everything. Even after you were on the train, whenever the soldiers took a notion to search and check, they opened up everything while you watched helpless as dirty hands pawed through your belongings.

Having Scotch blood in me, even though separated from those ancestors by several generations, I could not bear the thought of throwing my one hundred and fifty silver dollars away. Now the family was to be leaving for America. Perhaps this was my chance! The problem was how to get a roll of one hundred and fifty dollars in silver through inspection after inspection between Tenghsien and Shanghai.

This is what I did, and it worked. I had a two gallon bucket, about eight inches in diameter. I put the silver dollars into it first. On top of them I put various hinges and broken parts of a motorcycle engine. Then I poured heavy engine oil over it until the bucket was half full. With this very dirty looking mess, it seemed clear there would be no "in depth" examination of its contents. I personally carried the bucket as I went to the Tenghsien station to get on the train for Shanghai. The inspector came to the bucket and asked, "What do you have there?"

I said, "You can see it is some little pieces of motorcycle. I'm taking them to Shanghai."

I didn't actually lie, although I may have fudged a little about disclosure of the whole truth. Still, being a good missionary, I thought maybe God wouldn't hold it against me. As for the inspector, he decided he would investigate no further.

Before we got to Hsuchowfu, that scenario was repeated. Before we got to Nanking, it had been repeated two or three times more. Before we got to Shanghai, another three or four times.

When we got to Missionary Home, our “hotel” in Shanghai, I retrieved the silver dollars and washed the dirty oil off. When the family got on the *U.S.S. Washington*, the dollars were in the trunk.²

Since being back in America, I have enjoyed looking at these coins, telling people the story, and giving the coins to many of my friends and grandchildren. But just in case you want one now, I’m sorry to have to tell you that I have given them all away!

• • •

Actually, I had once had some previous experience at smuggling. The earlier time related to our missionary medical work. In 1940, one of our hospital doctors in Sutsien came to me and presented his problem. “All our patients come to us with Chinese Bank bills. The drug stores in Shanghai accept these bills. But we have no way to send this money, because the Japanese soldiers have orders to confiscate it. We must get medicine or close down. You are going to Shanghai in a few days. Will you take it for us?”

Having to dodge the Japanese army gave a real savor to the trip. I wrapped several thousand in currency around my thighs, secured the bundles with adhesive tape, pulled on my trousers, and was on my way. Everything worked fine until there was a two hour delay at the Hsuchowfu railroad station. The Japanese soldiers became restless and started peeling off trousers to inspect more carefully.

I was really worried until they did not object when I walked across and joined an “inspected” group. This at least saved me from losing all the money and from a night on a brick couch in a jail. The hospital got their medicine and that is what it was all about. Don’t anybody tell me that I did not help in physical therapy and surgery. Ask Nurse Margaret Wood. She is here now, in Sunnyside, and she was in Sutsien then.

Free Transportation

After Frances and our three children boarded the *Washington* and headed for the U.S.A., I, like many other people in the fall of 1940, was

²Some people have asked why the Japanese didn’t find the dollars when they inspected the trunk. The answer is that once we were in the international concession in Shanghai, the Japanese had no more authority. The pier from which Frances and the children embarked was in the international concession. The old extraterritorial treaties had granted governmental authority to various foreign powers in international concessions, and in 1940-1941 the Japanese still recognized those treaty rights.

left “alone” in China. That winter and spring, I taught in the North China Theological Seminary in Tenghsien.

When June of 1941 came around, I asked for a two month summer vacation so that I might come back to the U.S.A. and talk things over with Frances, face to face. I knew that something permanent would have to be worked out.

One real problem for this proposed excursion was money. It would take six or eight hundred U.S. dollars for the round trip on an American or British boat. The one ray of hope was to buy a ticket in Japanese yen. Tickets were issued in Yokohama based on the official Japanese exchange rate of four yen to one dollar. But in Shanghai, where the Japanese could not regulate exchange rates, the U.S. dollar could be sold for twenty to twenty-three yen.

This meant that if I travelled on a Japanese boat and if I could buy the ticket in Japan, using yen bought in Shanghai, I could get my ticket at a discount of seventy-five percent. The Associated Mission Treasurers, through their office in Shanghai, exchanged \$200 (U.S.) into yen for me at the twenty-to-one exchange rate. Then, through their office in Japan, they bought me a round trip, second class ticket between Yokohama and the U.S.A. on the *Nitta Maru*.

The trip out of China was uneventful. The train to Tsingtao accepted my yen currency. The coastal boat which transported me to Yokohama also accepted yen. While I was waiting in Yokohama, of course I could use yen. The Pacific voyage was a pleasant one, on a boat not too crowded.

The family was waiting for me at “Dam Hill.”³ After we had talked it over, and after I exchanged letters with Dr. Darby Fulton, Secretary of our Board of World Missions in Nashville, we decided it would be folly for me to return to China at that time. That is when I accepted a call to go to the Grundy church in Buchanan County, Virginia.

I wrote to Dr. Fulton and got permission to return the other half of my round trip ticket and let the refund be delivered in Japanese money to our

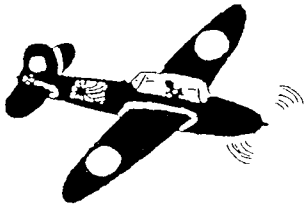
³Father had a farm house near Staunton, Virginia, left to him by his mother. It was near an old mill which had been converted into a barn. The trace for the mill was still there, even though no water flowed. The family dwelling was on a little hill, a hundred yards to the east. We boys called it Dam Hill, and didn't always spell it correctly. This irritated my mother, but she put up with it in good spirits. Later, she promoted the name Maple Terrace, to counter the effect of our nomenclature. When Frances and the children came back to America by presidential order, in late 1940, they landed at Dam Hill (Maple Terrace) to begin their recuperation. That was where I met them when I came back in the summer.

mission treasurer in Japan, with the understanding that the Nashville Board would give me the equivalent in U.S. money. This was O.K. with him. I sent the half ticket to our treasurer in Yokohama, Boude Moore. He got eight hundred yen for it. Nashville gave me \$200. Not a cent lost. Thank you, Hirohito!

Incidentally, the *Nitta Maru* was a beautiful boat, specially constructed to be easily convertible into an armed raider or a troop transport. When Japanese ships later were being sunk all over the Pacific, I constantly searched casualty lists to see if my old friend, the *Nitta Maru*, was there, but I never saw the name again.

The Valley of the Shadow

For forty-four years my life had been bound up inseparably with China, but now I realized that the time had come for me to live and work somewhere else. Within months, Japan threw down the gauntlet to America and to the world, at Pearl Harbor. Hitler inaugurated modern saturation bombing in London. His submarines were sinking thousands



Japanese "Zero" fighter

and thousands of tons of shipping on the Atlantic. His egomaniacal determination to rule the world led him to plunge into what was to be a losing battle in the heart of Russia. As for China, the Japanese classified missionaries as enemy aliens and threw them into detention camps in Shantung and other

provinces. The Chinese Christian church, while not entirely suppressed, came under increasing isolation and suspicion. Many Chinese Christians rose to the challenge, giving leadership to a church under fire.

The story of "my China that was" begins with the disembarkation of my parents in China in 1891, and it ends exactly fifty years later, in 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. So do we close our narrative by talking about the falling of the night? That would not be right. If there were no light ahead, there would be no point in talking about the darkness. Should we in 1941 have asked buglers from the Marine Corps to come and sound taps for the missionary enterprise? Taps emphasize that the lights are going out, the *end* of the day, and that again would not be right. China, and the Christian presence in China, was heading into the darkness of a long night, but the light of hope was not extinguished. Even in the valley of that deep shadow of death, God was there. ❀

Chapter 17 What God Will Yet Do

After Pearl Harbor, 1941-Present

“For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, forever. Amen.”

The Lord’s Prayer

AS OF this writing, in the year 1990, China has been out of my planning and thinking for forty-nine years. My children, Houston, Bob, and Anne, have long been married and have followed rewarding careers in the United States. My eight grandchildren have entered the working force or are in the last stages of their graduate preparation. My great grandchildren, all five of them, are happily at school. The Lord has been more than good to me, I could never thank him for all that he has done. I look back a few years and remember my father and mother who spent their lives in China and are buried now, side by side, in Virginia. I look further back to mother’s father, born of missionary parents in Greece in 1836, and I thank God for him. I thank God for the life of my wife, Frances, who was buried fifteen years ago in the cemetery of the Tinkling Spring Presbyterian Church near Staunton, Virginia. God has given me so much, so very much!

I will pick up the story by turning back to that dark summer of 1941. When I left China that summer, I carried two suitcases with me. Everything else would be confiscated in the ensuing years, either by the Japanese or by the bandits who roamed everywhere in the confusion of those days, looting, killing, burning. At the end of the summer, when it was impossible to return to China, the mission board told me to get a job if I could. I took my family to Grundy, Virginia, and enjoyed the work there all fall and into the spring, along with supplying the churches at Vansant and Oakwood.

Tempted to Quit

During the winter of 1941-1942, a proposal was put to me that for the only time in my life really tempted me to leave the ministry and the work of the church. You will remember that the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor

on December 7, 1941. A few weeks after that, a nice looking officer of the U.S. Marine Corps looked me up in Grundy to pay an official call. He said the Marine Corps had kept up with me in the years since 1919. They had my record and they felt my experience in China and my knowledge of the language could be of great value to the United States. Hoping I would return to active status, but knowing I would be concerned that my family be looked after, they promised me a rating as either a first lieutenant or a captain. They wanted me to go to China as an interpreter.

It was a tremendous temptation. At the time, I had been away from China for only about six months. I would have loved to go back with the United States armed forces and tell the soldiers exactly what they were facing and what the Chinese were thinking.

American strategy in those early years of the war was to try to get at Japan through China. China was going through hell. The Russians still threatened Manchuria, just across the bay from North China. The Japanese were crawling all over the coastal seaboard. President Chiang Kai Shek had gone west, to Chungking, and we were trying to use the Burma Road to bolster his troops in their resistance to the Japanese. Americans thought that the terrible drain of fighting Chinese soldiers all over the vast continent of Asia would eventually wear the Japanese down.

The Japanese stranglehold on the cities of China produced an uneasy peace between the Chinese communists and Kuomintang soldiers. China grasped for anything that gave any hope of deliverance from the roving Japanese soldiers in their trucks and tanks and their constant marauding of the countryside during daylight hours.

At that time both the Russians and the Chinese were our allies. The terrors of Stalinism were well known. As for the Chinese communists, they had been prowling all over my territory around Sutsien for many years. They counted North Kiangsu as one of their "base areas." A group of them spent a night in one of our churches and I had a chance to talk to them, so I knew their tactics. In early 1942 I was still freshly returned from many years in North Kiangsu. I *knew* what the communists were thinking.

The strength and the temptation of that Marine officer's proposal to me was that I was sure I could help to steer our foreign policy away from disaster in China, if I had the chance. If Truman had chosen to leave MacArthur in Peking after the war instead of transferring him to Tokyo, the whole future of the world would have been different.

But I had already been separated from my family for a year. With no church manse, the family would have no home to live in. I did not think it was fair to them to choose this other job because of my personal preferences. So I said "No." I have often wondered what would have happened if I had accepted that offer and said "okay."

In October of 1942, we left Grundy and went to Williamson, West Virginia. In January of 1946, we moved to Bluefield, West Virginia, where I became the pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church. We stayed in Bluefield for the next forty-one years. Bluestone Presbytery had a mandatory retirement policy which applied to me at age seventy-five, so I retired from the Westminster Church in March of 1972. My last sermon at Westminster was preached on February 7 of that year. The church was very kind to allow Frances and me to continue living in the manse. That fall, I became pastor of the Bramwell Presbyterian Church, just a few miles from Bluefield, and continued to serve that church for fifteen years. Frances died in January, 1975, and we buried her in the Tinkling Spring Presbyterian Church cemetery. In November of 1987, just after Thanksgiving, my sister, Margaret, and I moved to Harrisonburg, in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. So it was in Bramwell that I ended my ministerial career.

A Voice from the Past

One day in the mid-1960's, after I had been in Bluefield about twenty years, I found a package from China in the mail. It was the first direct message from China that I had received since 1941.

I couldn't imagine who had sent it. The package had been sent to Bluefield, and it was addressed to me in English. The package contained only a Chinese language magazine, one published by a pentecostal or holiness church in Peking. I went through the pages carefully. The church definitely was preaching Jesus Christ. But why had the magazine been sent to me? Then, on the front page, I saw a little dot by a person's name, and I recognized it...

The story had begun about twenty-five years earlier, in the late 1930's. One day a good friend from the town of Lin Chung, not far from Sutsien, visited me. He told me the story of a beggar lad in that town, aged about seventeen, who had turned evangelist. My friend was rapturous in describing the boy's abilities, speaking of him as a new Elijah, or a new

John the Baptist. He urged me to visit his church and meet this beggar turned preacher.

In China that I knew, any beggar was mired in utter hopelessness. There were hundreds in every town. Young beggars went hungry, old ones died. Was it possible that there could be hope for a beggar, in such a milieu where there was *no* hope? I wanted to see this beggar who had caught a vision of the morning star, who above the storm had heard the voice of our Lord.

It wasn't long before I found an excuse to go to Lin Chung. When I asked about the young man, the minister told me that physically he showed the marks of undernourishment. He was rather shrivelled for his age, looking perhaps twelve years old instead of seventeen. One day on the street, the boy had heard somebody talking about Jesus Christ. "Only believe," the evangelist had said. "You don't have to pay anything, just serve Jesus Christ with your life." This was the first hope, the first light on the path of life, that had ever come into this boy's experience.

Somewhere he had found some old but decent clothes. He asked his mother to wash them, combed his hair, and began coming to church. "When he comes to church," the minister told me, "he does not bring his beggar bowl. We loaned him a Bible, and he is beginning to learn to read. We have indirectly heard lately that he takes about thirty minutes off a day from his work as a beggar and goes up to town to preach on the street."

You may ask, how he could preach with no training? Like John the Baptist and Elijah before him, he preached from his own experience. This young man preached the two S-words—sin and salvation. Sin he knew, upside-down and backwards. In his life on the street he had seen clearly enough the oppression visited on the poor by the rich and the affluent. And salvation? The call of Christ that he had heard, the vision of hope that he had seen, was his clear and personal experience of salvation.

What did he preach? The Christians in Lin Chung told me that his message centered around the sins of the rich and the affluent. He preached about the affluent using their mouths to curse and to oppress. He preached about the rich who in the very contours of their well-fed bodies showed their oppression of the starving. He preached on the idleness of the upper classes, and about their use of illegal means to get money out of other people. And the people to whom he was preaching all knew that he was telling the truth.

I was thrilled that God could stoop down and come into the life of this beggar boy in the hinterland of China. I had a chance to sit down and talk to the boy, after church. He was very intense. He was obsessed with a determination to be able to read the Bible and to be used of God in leading people to Christ. He wanted to go to school. He wanted to *do* something for God. He wanted to know how he could do it.

At the time we were talking, China was in turmoil, bandits and brigands were on the loose, and my own world was in the process of falling to pieces. I frankly didn't know what to tell him. What I said was, "God has led you this far, and you can be sure that God will not throw you overboard now!"

Within a year or two, all connections between my country and the beggar boy's country had been severed, and I had left China. I never saw the young man again.

...This was the man whose name I now recognized, twenty-five years later, on the Peking magazine. He had gone on with his preaching. He had survived the difficulties of the Japanese occupation and of the transition to communism. He had found his way to town after town, and had ended up in this church in Peking. He had learned to read the Bible and had been asked to be a teacher in that Holiness church. He wanted me to know that God did not fail in his promises. And he wanted me to know that he had not forgotten me. Who can ask for anything better than that?

The Blood of Former Friends

Now a new political day has dawned. Many times in the last few years people have asked me whether I would like to go back to China. The answer is "No." I can see no point in going back with no Christian work that I could do. The only possible interest would be to see what changes have been wrought.

Certainly some of the changes made under the communists have been improvements. The government has cleared much of the country territory in North Kiangsu and has turned the area into large farms. Railroads have been put through, big roads built. There is now television. There are health care facilities that we never dreamed to see.

But many of the villages that I used to visit are no more, because they have been leveled. And Sutsien also, at least the town as we knew it, is no more. The inner and outer walls of the city are gone. Industries have been

brought in. A big truck route now cuts the town in two. The communists have converted what were our mission buildings into government buildings of one kind or another. The house where my children played when they were growing up has become an executive office for the local police.

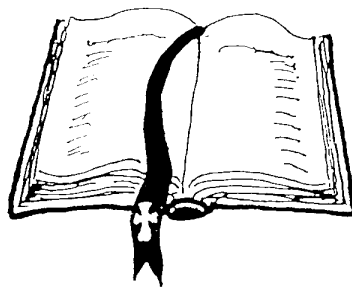
Friends who have gone back say they occasionally run across people who remember “Dr. Pu” (“Dr. Patterson”). But one consideration especially has kept me from wanting to go back. China is a land where many of my former friends have been killed. I simply have had no desire to go back and see the spots where their blood was shed.

What God Will Yet Do

As I draw these memoirs to a close, I recall the motto inscribed over the doors of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, “The past is but prologue.” I am convinced it applies to what God is doing in China. As missionaries, we sowed the seed, even though we were not able to stay to see the day of harvest. But today in China, there is a return to God and to the Scriptures and to the things of the Spirit. Just possibly, China may become a great democracy within the span of this generation. Just possibly the time is now here when China will find in Christ the answer to its spiritual yearnings.

If this is possible, we thank God. If it is not possible in this generation, we still can continue to hope. For the time will yet come when people will know that God’s Word is always fulfilled and when the Kingdom of Heaven will spread throughout the entire earth!

God bless you, each one, and keep you.



Appendix A

Pinyin Spellings for Chinese Place Names

Spellings for Chinese place names that I use in the text had been adopted by the International Postal Union (“I.P.U.”) in the nineteenth century and were recognized as standard when I was in China. Today’s standard spellings are based on a newer system of transliteration called “Pinyin.” I will give you a little comparative list in case you want to look up on recent maps any of the place names I have mentioned. For the most part, the Chinese names or pronunciations have remained constant—only the English spellings have changed. (Manchukuo is the exception. When it became a province of China, it was renamed.) The table below lists the names old style (I. P. U.), followed by new style (Pinyin) in parentheses.

Municipalities

Peking (Beijing)
Shanghai (Shanghai)
Tientsin (Tyanjing)

Kiangsu (Jiangsu) Prov. (*cont’d*)
Haichow (Haizhou)
Hsuchowfu (Xu Zhou)
Nanking (Nanjing)
Sutsien (Suqian)
Taichow (Taizhou)
Tsingkiangpu (Qingjiangpu)

Provinces, Towns

Anhui (Anhui) Province
Wuhu (Wuhu)
Chechiang (Zhejiang) Province
Hangchow (Hangzhou)
Sinchiang (Sinjiang)
Hopei (Hobei) Province
Peitaiho (Beidaihe)
Kianghsi (Jiangxi) Province
Kukiang (Jiujiang)
Kuling (Kuling)

Kiangsu (Jiangsu) Province
Chinkiang (Zhenjiang)

Kwangtung (Guangdong) Prov.
Canton (Guangzhou)
Manchukuo (Liaoning Province)
Dairen (Dalian)
Shantung (Shandong) Province
Chufu (Zhufu)
Tenghsien (Teng Xian)
Tsingtao (Qingdao)
Yhsien (Yixian)

Waterways

Grand Canal (Yunhe)
Yellow River (Huanghe)
Yangtze River (Yangzejiang)

Appendix B

Sources for Further Information

JUST IN CASE some who read this would like more information, we recommend the following sources:

- The Library, Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 3401 Brook Road, Richmond, Virginia 23227 (referred to below as **UTS**)
- Department of History (Montreat), Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), P.O. Box 847, Montreat, North Carolina 28757 (referred to below as **DH(Montreat)**)
- Global Mission Ministry Unit, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 100 Wither-
spoon Street, Louisville, Kentucky 40202 (referred to below as **GMU**)
- The historical archives of the Tinkling Spring Presbyterian Church, Rt. 1, Box 300-A, Fishersville, Virginia 22939 (referred to below as **TSPC**)

Biographical entries in the following publications provide much useful information in a concise way. The publications are available at **DH(Montreat)** and **UTS**, and they may also be found in many other libraries, including church libraries.

- *Ministerial Directory of the Presbyterian Church, U.S., 1861-1967*, editions of 1941, 1951, and 1967. Referred to below as **Ministerial Directory**. Information given only on ordained ministers.
- “Missionary Directory, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.,” published by the Global Mission Ministry Unit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1990. Referred to below as **Missionary Directory**. Brief biographical data given for non-ordained missionary personnel.

Various descendants keep family papers. You might try my son, Robert G. Patterson, Memphis, Tennessee; my niece, Patricia Mack Churchman, Bridgewater, Virginia; or my granddaughter, Mary Moore Patterson, presently in California. The following names might be useful in tracing information:

Samuel Rutherford Houston (1806-1887), my great grandfather, a missionary to Greece. **Ministerial Directory**, entry; **DH(Montreat)**, mss. and papers.

Rutherford Rowland Houston (1836-1917), my grandfather, born in Greece. **Ministerial Directory**, entry; **DH(Montreat)**, vol. of sermons, 1892-1901.

Brown Craig Patterson (1865-1953), my father. **Ministerial Directory**, entry; **UTS**, *Memoirs*, 92 pp., mimeographed; **DH(Montreat)**, *Memoirs*, and other mss. and papers; **TSPC**, *Memoirs*, additional papers, artifacts from China.

Anne Rowland Houston (1867-1954), my mother. **Missionary Directory**, entry; **TSPC**, *Memoirs*, 13 pp., mainly about her life before going to China; **TSPC** and **DH(Montreat)**, copies of a missionary report, 9 pp., 1905, sent to First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, Mississippi, and now in the archives there. In addition, letters from China, mss., now kept by Mrs. Margaret Mack, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

[Craig Houston Patterson (1897-1990). **Ministerial Directory**, entry; **DH(Montreat)**, *Reminiscences of China*, a manuscript that somewhat overlaps *My China That Was*. Copies of *My China That Was*, 1st edition, have been placed at **UTS**, **DH(Montreat)**, **TSPC**, and Washington and Lee University Library. The Westminster Presbyterian Church of Bluefield, West Virginia, has an archive of sermons, and copies of a 1987 pamphlet, "The Stories of Dr. Pat," 28 pp., mimeographed. Various family members hold copies of *The Mustard Seed Growing in Sutsien, Kiangsu, China, 1935-1936*, a pamphlet of 22 pp., with sketch illustrations. Dr. Patterson wrote the text and published the pamphlet to use as a supplement to his personal missionary reports during his 1936-1937 furlough.]

Sources for Text Illustrations

Chinese landscape artist, anonymous:
Page 1 (repeated on pp. 37, 109, 139, 167)

Chinese cut out paper craft:
Pages 4, 35, 108

Robert G. Patterson:
Pages 8, 11, 16, 24, 30, 43, 44, 47, 51, 53, 57, 72, 105,
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Pages 14, 28

Mrs. N. G. (Athalie Hallum) Patterson:
Pages 19, 61, 62, 69, 73, 82, 95, 127, 175

Chinese seals:
Pages 75, 100

Additional copies of MY CHINA THAT WAS are available. To order, write:

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A contribution of \$10.00 per copy for printing and mailing costs would be appreciated.