

Abbie G. Sanderson Papers

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WOMAN IN CHINA.

BY ABEL M. FIELD, NEWTON.

LIFE is a stern and hard thing in China for both men and women; but, as in all places where Christ is not, the hardest heaviest to bear are put upon the weakest. The Chinese woman does not walk in the street with her husband; she does not eat with him, but takes what is left after the men of the family have finished their meal; she has no legal right to anything whatever, apart from her male relatives. Yet her condition is, in some respects, better than that of her sisters in neighbouring countries. She is not the sufferer by any system of caste, as in India; she is not shut up in a harem, as in Turkey; she is not denied the possession of a soul, and the religious privileges of men, as in Dahmah; she is not degraded by polyandry, as in Tibet; she is not in a climate which keeps her bare and lary, like those in Siam; her virtue is as carefully guarded and as highly esteemed as in any country in the world. In character and ability, she is superior to all other Asiatic women, except the Japanese. Female children and elderly women associate with those of the

other sex on terms of apparent equality. Girls and young women, though not kept in such seclusion as in India, do not go out alone, nor appear before male visitors. The customs concerning young ladies are French rather than American. The amount of freedom that may be wise in social intercourse between the sexes must depend on the degree of purity in each. The Chinese have done the best they could under their circumstances, and give women all the social freedom that is discreet for her in a land where the clannish and controlling power of Christian principle is unknown.

In a country where extortion is the chief use of office, and fear of it the main spur to obedience, neither women nor men claim political rights. But there is no law nor prejudice to prevent women following any occupation in which they may be skilled.

The attainments of women in literature are much lauded and respected. Practically, such attainments are uncommon; but historians refer with pride to the scholarship of a few, and novelists are fond of representing their heroines as skilled in writing both poetry and prose. Knowing writers about China tell us eloquently and truly of the system of examination and promotion of scholars, and say, or lead one to infer, that education is nearly universal. In almost every village in this region there is a private school in which a few boys are taught to read; but the proportion of those taught is very small, and girls' schools are wholly un-

known. Of the men here, not more than one in a hundred can read; and, of women, I have seen none outside the Christian mission schools who could read, except those displaced little girls taught to read as actors in theatres.

For acts of heroism or exalted virtue, a woman may, like men, have an honorary portal erected for her with the emperor's sanction. She may even aspire to deification, as many of the richest and most frequented temples are those of the Queen of Heaven, the Protector of Sailors, and other goddesses who were once earthly women.

In one thing, she is exceptionally blessed. She has inherited from former generations a style of dress at once modest, economical, healthful, and becoming. It covers the whole person; and, unlike many western costumes, which make more noticeable what they profess to conceal, it shields the contour of the body from observation. It takes but eight yards of yard-wide cloth for a complete set of winter garments; and there is no waste in fitting, and no false nor unnecessary appendages. Its truest economy, however, is in the saving of mental worry, which comes from always cutting by the same pattern, and the oblation of all need of fitting. It allows unrestricted play to every muscle, is of the same thickness over the whole body, is not in the way when at work, and has little weight, while it has all needful warmth. Many women look handsome in it who are ugly in western attire. This

desirable dress may make us less sorry that half the women in the world are Chinese. Careful consideration of the effects of modes of dress in both countries have made me sure that the custom of binding the feet hampers the body and soul of Chinese women less than the changing and following of fashions does that of American Women. This healthful dress may be a reason why, with floorless and windowless houses, poor food, and unwholesome surroundings, Chinese women live to very old age. The custom of binding the feet is not so universal in China as is generally supposed. In some villages, almost every woman has her feet compressed. In other places, and often through wide regions, especially in the agricultural districts, all the women have naturally formed feet.

The greatest physical danger that ever besets a Chinese woman is likely to occur at her birth. If the mother has not yet borne sons, she often destroys all her female offspring, that she may hope the sooner to have a boy. If she has sons, she will allow two, or perhaps three, girls to live; but beyond that number she smothers them at their birth. If she did not do this, not only her husband and her whole family, but her neighbors and acquaintances, would curse her for bringing useless mouths where there is not food enough for those who can work to earn it. Great numbers of men go abroad as coolies and laborers in other countries, and never return; and, as respectable women never go, the

emigration of so many men tends to cause a surplus of women. But, more than all else, the fact that girls are after marriage entirely lost to their parents, and make no offerings at their own ancestral graves for the support of their parents' spirits after death, causes the advent of more girls than enough to help the mother in household labors to be considered a calamity to the family. In the north, infanticide is said to be uncommon. It is supposed to be practised most in this and the adjoining maritime provinces, where emigration is more constant, and the land more sterile, than in other parts of China. Of ten women now learning to read in my Bible-class here, five have among them destroyed twelve daughters, and five have destroyed none because they have each borne less than three. This was before they became Christians, of course.

The Chinese do not kill female children except at birth. If they are then allowed to live, and it afterwards becomes impossible to keep them, they are sold or given away. Some months ago, in walking near a neighboring village, I met a man carrying two large covered baskets on the ends of a pole over his shoulder. Cries were heard from the baskets, and I made him stop and let me see what was in them. There were three babies, one in one basket and two in the other, all lying on their backs, blue with cold, and hungry and crying with all their small might. The man was a baby-merchant, and had taken out six in the

morning to sell, and, having disposed of half his stock, was returning home at nightfall with the remainder. He said, if I would take them all, he would sell me the lot very cheap. I suppose he would have considered a dollar apiece a sufficient compensation.

Christianity in the hearts of the parents is the only effectual remedy for these terrible ills. These orphans, by the will of man, are sometimes placed, as a work of merit, in Buddhist nunneries, where they wear a peculiar dress, shave their heads, chant prayers to the idols, go in companies begging, and take care of the infant nuns who are to come after them. Sometimes they are bought by those who have no daughters, or to be brought up as wives for sons, or as domestic servants; and often they are bought and reared for the worst of purposes. To save the expenses of betrothal, a mother sometimes buys or accepts from a friend an infant girl, whom she rears as a wife for her son. Several times, I have seen a middle-aged woman dandling a little girl, and been told that the child was to be her son's or grandson's wife.

Having decided to keep a daughter, the mother cares for her as well as she can. She feeds her with such food as she herself has, and, as soon as her age permits, teaches her to spin and weave and sew, and cook rice, and lay on her small shoulders rather heavy burdens in the care of other children.

Children are sometimes betrothed in infancy:

but, as betrothal is as binding as marriage, the Chinese have learned wisdom, and usually defer it until a year or two before marriage, which is when the girl is about fifteen. Lately, just after I had left one of our out-stations, a girl nineteen years old came with her grandfather to our chapel, and said she hoped to find me there, and that I would take her to be my daughter. She was betrothed in infancy to a youth who has since developed incurable dropsy, and is useless and horrible. Her parents are not willing that she should marry him, and his parents will not allow her to marry any one else; and to remain unmarried is, for a woman, a thing unknown in Chinese customs. Her mother urged her to kill herself; but not being willing to do that, and there being no place for her in Chinese ways of life, she came to see if there was any place for her in our way of life. I went for her to come to me here; but her father feared she would become a Christian, and would not let her come.

The proposals of betrothal are made by the parents of the young man, whose business it is to know the history and expectations of the marriageable people of the neighborhood. The selection of the bride is sometimes left wholly to the go-betweens; and sometimes she simply carries messages between the parents, who have their plans previously formed. The betrothal is often made without either of the parties most concerned being aware of what is being done for them; and the bride is brought to her

husband's home without ever having seen him or any member of his family. Having arrived there, she is at once incorporated in her father-in-law's household, and thenceforth has little association with her own kin. Her happiness depends more on the character of her mother-in-law than on that of her husband: for by her husband's mother and grandmother she is wholly ruled. She is domestic servant for the whole household, and especial waiting-maid to her mother-in-law. Sometimes very strong attachments are formed between these women. I have seen a woman weep at being separated for a time from her mother-in-law, and express no pleasure when told that her husband was coming to see her. On the other hand, there is often tyranny on the part of the elder woman, and dislike on that of the younger one.

The wife may be divorced for scolding, barrenness, lasciviousness, leprosy, disobedience to her husband's parents, and thieving; but all these crimes are null when her parents are not alive to receive her back again. A man cannot have more than one wife; but he may take concubines, whose children are legally subject to the authority of the wife, as Hileah's were to Rachel; and public opinion does not justify the taking of a concubine, except when the wife has borne no sons. In this region, where nearly all the people are very poor, it is very uncommon for a man to have more than one wife.

As long as a woman is childless, she serves:

as soon as she becomes a mother, she begins to rule; and her dominion increases perpetually with the number of her descendants and the diminution of her elders. Married at fifteen, she is often a great-grandmother at sixty, and the head of a household of some dozens of persons.

So much the welfare of the wife depends on her having sons that it is not strange that they are her greatest desire, her chief pride, and that for which she will sacrifice all else. Her daughters leave her, and become legally and truly an integral part of another family forever. For domestic service, care in sickness, help in old age, and offerings for the sustenance of her spirit after death, she must rely on her son's wife; while her own daughter performs these services for some one else. The prosperity of a Chinese household is in proportion to the number of sons.

There once came to my knowledge a case illustrating well the dreadful effect of the Chinese social and religious systems. A couple had been married many years, and had no children. The wife made many prayers and offerings in a neighboring temple, and promised the idol a splendid feast if she should have a son. At last, her desire was fulfilled; and the delighted couple wished to pay their vow to the idol. But they were very poor, having only a small piece of land on which they lived, and from which they got their whole support. They considered much what they should do.

They had no rich friends from whom to borrow, no handsome clothes that they could pawn, and no way of earning more than their daily bread; yet the idol must be satisfied, or it might do them and the child great harm. There was only the land on which was their whole dependence. After much distressed debate, in which fear of the idol prevailed, they sold the land for thirty dollars, and spread a thanksgiving feast before the god. Then they struggled on, not hopelessly, because they had a son, and need not go hungry nor naked in their old age in this world, nor in the world of spirits. By working at odd jobs here and there, they managed to keep themselves alive, and feed the child. When the boy was eight years old, another son was born to them. Again, the idol must have a thank-offering; but this time they had no land to sell, and were in the last stages of poverty. Their only valuable possession was their eight-year-old boy. He was bright and handsome, and a rich, childless man wanted him for his own. After much discussion, agitated by fear of the idol, and desire for its beneficent influence on the babe, and all other means of getting money failing, they sold the boy for fifteen dollars, and again made a feast before the god. The eldest boy gone, and the feast over, the baby took amplexes and died. The raving, despairing mother carried the corpse, and bound it on the breast of the idol, saying: "You have eaten our land; you have eaten our house; you have eaten our

pots and pans; you have eaten our eight-year old boy; all we ever had has gone into your maw. *Now eat this!*"

The Chinese social, civil, and religious customs and opinions are so linked together that, when one is changed, all must change together. Nothing less than divine help can do them effectual good. Cleansed by the blood of Christ, their faculties readjusted by the Holy Spirit, the truth of God vitalizing their souls, all their oppressive and wicked ways will be altered.

There is no practical bar to their conversion. The country is open, and at peace. The climate is healthful, and cool enough to permit much more vigorous work than in mission-fields further south; to learn the language is feasible; to be the means of saving thousands of souls in one human lifetime is possible. There are now over thirty Protestant single missionary ladies working in China. One of the reasons why female missionary work may be effective here is that native women may be trained to act as Bible-women, and thus one foreign missionary may multiply her influence endlessly. Women over forty may travel and speak the gospel freely to those of their own sex, and often to men. Many of the Christian women have first heard the gospel from men; and many of the men have been led into the Church by women. Here is the most vast and grand of foreign mission-fields for women, as well as men. The population is so dense that multi-

tures come within the reach of one missionary; yet the number of missionaries is so small, in proportion to the extent of the field, that comparatively few of the great mass of Chinese have ever had an opportunity to hear the gospel. It is practicable for the Woman's Missionary Society to cause thousands to be saved, who will not be lost through their effort. Christ has ordained that the water of life shall be dispensed by human hands. Is it not worth while, for his sake, to deny ourselves somewhat, that these our sisters, dying of thirst, may taste some drops from the cup of salvation, which, whether we ourselves drink it or not, is overflowing in our hands? Two hundred millions of Chinese women ask for this draught from YOUR hands; and will *you* give it?

WOMAN'S BAPTIST FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY,
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PRICE ONE CENT; TEN CENTS A DOZEN.

KAMOGAWA ODORI
OR
DANCE OF RIVER KAMO
FOR
1929

KAMOGAWA ODORI OR DANCE OF RIVER KAMO

It needs scarcely any comment that the Kamogawa Odori, or the Dance of the River Kamo, is one of the pre-eminent attractions of Kyoto - the classical capital of Japan. This far-famous dance is yearly held in May, drawing tens of thousands of spectators from far and wide. Indeed, it is exceedingly admired by all the visitors without distinction of age or sex.

The beautiful Kamogawa Dance is performed at the Kaburinjō or Geisha School by the most skilled geisha-girls of Fushimi, while its orchestra is unsurpassably excellent. The Fushimi Geisha School is charmingly located on the western bank of the historic River Kamo, close by the three-arched Sanjō Bridge, commanding a sweeping view of Higashiyama or East Mountain.

In brief the Kamogawa Odori will certainly offer the visitor a good opportunity of appreciating things Japanese, especially the dancing. And it would be no exaggeration to say that a visit to this dance will eternally remain a sweet memory of the Land of the Rising Sun.

Act I.

"SANSHI SUMMI OR BEAUTIFUL SCENERY"

The title "Sanshi Summi or Beautiful Scenery" is symbolical of Kyoto and its vicinity, equally crissled with beauty-spots. Small wonder that these places are visited throughout the year by millions of sightseers swarming from all parts of the Empire.

According to a long-established usage, the stage is furnished with a palatial hall decorated with the eight slip-door sliding-screens on which is painted a fine scenery of Higashiyama or East Mountains. The heavy silken tassels hanging down from the gilt catches of these screens impart an atmosphere of stateliness.

The dancers, who are attired in an attractive costume, make their debut in two groups from the so-styled *Hanabishi* or Flowery Passages on the right and the left sides, and dance on to the main stage, holding in their velvety hands the plain-gold folding-fans with scarlet tassels. This is the beginning of the Kanagawa Odori danced by the most lovely girls in the midst of thundering applause.

Act II.

"WISTARIA BLOSSOMS OF OCHIAI"

Ochiai, which literally means "meeting each other," is a very pretty spot where the River Kiyotaki and the River Hara meet each other, hence the name. The present stage is a praiseworthy miniature reproduction of Ochiai, which is profusely freckled with wild wistaria blossoms in late spring when visitors flock thither in large crowds to enjoy the floral sight.

The wistaria is immensely admired in Japan, and it is cultivated as trellis in many gardens, although the wild ones adorn the valleys and mountain-sides as if to heartily welcome mount-
streams. Usually, the wistaria blooms in purple, but often in white. And a species called "Shi-
kinki" bears flowers twice a year. The Noda
Fuji, or the wistaria grown in Noda, near Osaka,
hangs down in clusters five or six feet long.

The River Kiyotaki, or Clear Waterfall River, is famed not only for its rapids that but for its trapid stream running down from Mount Arago, the highest mountain towering in the north-west of Kyoto, and the River Hori is reputably known for its rapids at home and abroad.

Act III.

"TEA PICKING AT UJI"

Uji, a favorite resort in the south of Kyoto, is famous for its producing the best kind of tea. In early summer, Uji suddenly gets very busy with the rosy checked peasant-folk who come from the neighboring villages just for the tea-picking season. While picking tea with their nimble hands, they sing melodiously their birdlike rustic songs as if to lighten the weary hours of labor.

The tea-leaves of the first picking, which are naturally tender, are employed for making the choicest tea. Then follows the second, from which the highest quality is obtained; sometimes the dried picking, of which an inferior grade is made. The Uji tea consists of three kinds, the Hiki Cha

K (powdered tea), the Sen Cha (dried tea) dating to 1738, and the Grohara, a refined development of the dried tea introduced in 1815. According to records, tea was brought to Japan from China by Prince Dengyo Daishi, the eminent founder of the Tendai sect, and it was by the noted

*He are drinking - 1 - a powdered tea
at court that took first prize,*

monk Myō Shōrin that tea was first planted in Uj in 1198.

The stage shows the foot of Mount Ashiyama in Uj as it is seen from the tea-fields, a scene taken from the subject given this year to the Imperial Poetry Contest, that is, "The Morning of Farm House."

Act IV.

"THEATRICAL DANCE ON DRY RIVER-BED OF SHIJŌ"

This is the first interlude representing the dry river-bed of Shijō where a theatrical dance is performed by three dancers dressed in the tempting costumes of the gorgeous Momoyama Period (1574-1603). They are intended to imitate the so-called O-Kuni Kabuki or the pioneer dramatic performance given on the same spot by O-Kuni, the meritorious founder of Japanese play-the Kabuki. At this play which took place sometime in the Keicho era (1596-1615), she disguised herself as a man and had two partners, namely, Sanjari, a comic lan, and Densaku, a man who played female parts. That is the reason why the three dancers are seen on the present stage. On the conclusion of this dance, there follows the Yari Odori or Spear Dance which is extremely entertaining.

O-Kuni was a pretty daughter of Nakamura Sanyemon, a smith of Inano Province, and was a sacred dancer of the Grand Shrine of Inano. It is said that the cause of her leaving home was to collect a fund for repairing the Shrine. She seems to have gone first to the Gold Island of Sado, and then made her appearance in Kyoto where she gave a series of plays, though, as a matter of course, they were quite primitive. Such was the origin of the Kabuki.

Act V.

"LION DANCE ON MOUNT KURAMA."

The second interlude represents a loveliest "Lion Dance" performed by eight girls under twelve years of age in front of Yuki Jirsha, a Shinto shrine on Mount Kurama of rich historic interest. These little dancers are clad in a cunning costume of purely Oriental taste, revealing a scene too fascinating to describe.

Since olden times, owing to a belief that the lion has a power to expel the evil spirits, the lion-dance has been held on the occasion of congratulation. As a rule, in the Shinto shrines are kept a pair of lion-heads made of wood and a lion-dancer is held on the festival day.

Needless to say, the lion is not a native of this country; therefore, its head must have been copied from that of China in the Tang dynasty. Because the lion is reputed as an animal of good luck not only in China but in Japan, its stone carvings are installed at the entrance of a Shinto shrine or a palace.

The visitors to the Kamogawa Odori would no doubt feel satisfied in having seen the present lion-dance, because the juvenile dancers of fair sex exhibit the art of dancing to the fullest extent.

Act VI.

"SNOW OF SILVER PAVILION"

The present stage displays a stunning scene of the landscape garden of the Buddhist temple Jishiji better known as the Silver Pavilion. This garden was designed by Shoni, an expert in aesthetic art, and is considered to be one of the

manuscripts. Originally, the Jishiji was a villa of Yoshinaka (1415-1473), the eighth Shogun of the Ashikaga dynasty, and it was turned into a temple in obedience to his dying words. Here Yoshinaka lived a very peaceful life totally absorbed in tea ceremony and other artistic pleasures. Thanks to his aid, the fine arts of Japan made a remarkable progress, eventually producing the so-called Higashiyama Art.

In the east of the Main Hall stands an old building named "Tôgudô" containing the private rooms once used by the Shogun, and in its north-eastern corner is found the original ceremonial tea-room of 4½ mats of great size.

The Silver Pavilion is a two-storied and shingle-roofed structure; it was planned at first to be coated with silver foil in imitation of the Gold Pavilion, but had never been carried out owing to the death of Yoshinaka.

Act VII.

"CHERRY BLOSSOMS OF DAIGO"

The clever representation in the last Act of a magnificent sight of the cherry blossoms of Daigo is worthy of high praise. This Act has specially been designed partly to commemorate the one thousand years anniversary of Emperor Daigo (992-1009), whose mausoleum is situated at Daigo, and partly to recollect the most famous cherry blossom party held here in the spring of 1958 by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, alias the Taikô, Japan's unexampled hero. The curtains with paulownia crest decorating the stage are made out in allusion to the "Hyakunô Byôbu" or One Hundred Screens painted for the exclusive use of this historic party of amazing luxury, in which many hundreds of Daigo were