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Fukien Leaflets No. 1

1935

RURAL SERVICE AT FUKIEN

FUKIEN LEAFLETS No. 1. 1935
FUKIEN CHRISTIAN UNIV., FOOCHOW, CHINA

FOCUSING A GREAT NEED

Mankind is "bound in the bundle of life;" no section of it can exist "half slave and half free."

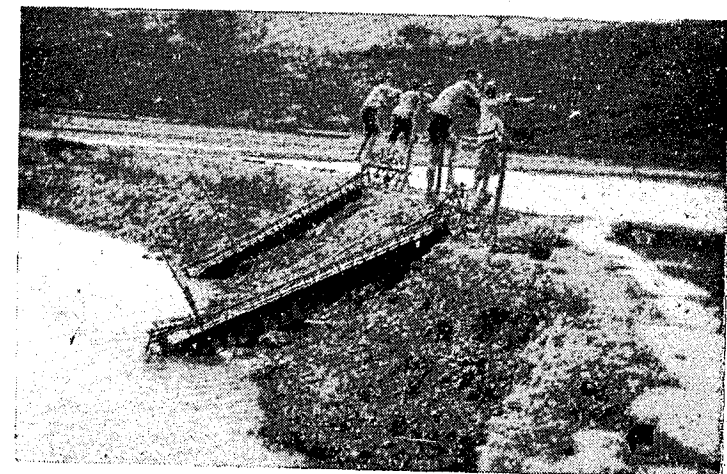
There is a sharp contrast between the inertia, traditionalism and superstition of Chinese village life and the alertness, change and progress of the city life. But no country can really go forward if it leaves its farmers behind.

Once there was a proverb, "What can a girl do with a book, save to keep her skeins of silk in it?" Now China is awake to the danger of educating the boys only. She must awaken to the similar danger of educating the urban youth only, while neglecting the static culture of the village masses. Truly in China to save the farmer will be to save the nation.

IMPLEMENTING A POPULAR MOVEMENT

Rural reconstruction is a new slogan in China. The Government is behind it; the current periodicals speak favorably of it. But the students ask: What shall we actually do?

Irrigating
the
Rice-paddies



Expert knowledge is required; attack on a gigantic problem from many angles. In many areas there must be rapid advance from inertia and vagueness to actual operation. This thing can only be done by doing it. The undiscourageable experimenter is called for.

WHAT CONNECTION HAS LIBERAL EDUCATION WITH RURAL SERVICE?

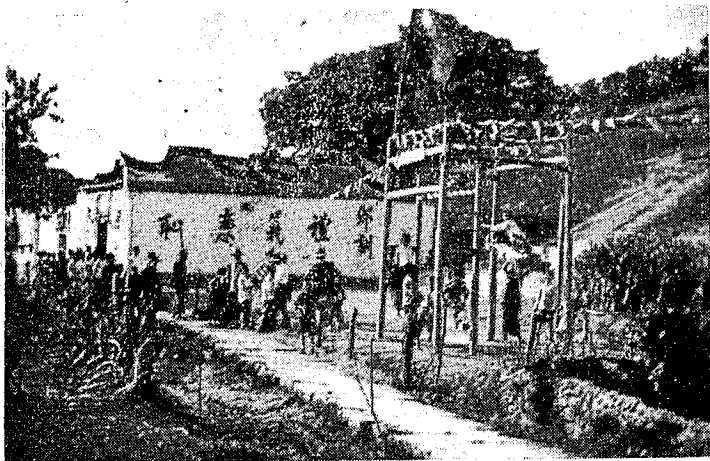
What may a Department of Rural Service give the undergraduate in liberal education?

First, it will show him that his education is not fully complete either in the classroom or even on the campus. Rural service will place him in touch with actual society.

Second, it will furnish him an unparalleled field for social experimentation and for a first hand knowledge of human nature; he will learn how slowly people change their group habits; yet how quickly they respond to goodwill; and how the fundamental need is to get people to believe in themselves.

Third, it will expand his personality to attempt to break down the barriers between sections and classes and to enter sympathetically into the problems of other groups than his own.

Fourth, it will make him rural-minded; he will be able to view with interest the efforts of a large and important section of his fellowcountrymen to break the shackles of conservatism; he will be prepared to give of his money and his time to the cause of their freedom. A few choice spirits will make rural service a lifework. "The students from the country do not go back to the country"? These chosen youth will go back.



Playground
at
Nieu Tien

(2)



Students Cleaning
up a Village

THE NEW PATRIOTISM

The Chinese student has enjoyed a worldwide reputation for patriotism. A decade ago it was asked whether China was a nation or not; and Dr. Sun said the people were like grains of sand. But the students changed all that. Patriotism in those days meant nationalism.

Today patriotism—the "way out"—must mean the moral and spiritual regeneration of the people. Into the battle for moral steadfastness must the modern student plunge—against the cynicism and corruption of the old official class, in behalf of the oppressed people. And the people are in the villages.

TWO CONTRASTS

The village of Nieu Tien, where the Fukien Christian University rural service was started, lies just outside the gates of Kushan monastery. The monks own the best fields; they have no dealings with the people save to collect rents; the people hate them. Buddhism is found wanting. Communism though it proclaims the Christian objective of bringing abundant life to the poor and oppressed, yet vitiates its own appeal by insisting that liberty is to come only by the bloody road of violence Marx is also found wanting.

But Jesus said the privileged were neither to be left in isolation (Buddhism), nor forced to surrender their privileges (Communism); but appealed to to offer them freely to the underprivileged. Our rural service might be a concrete object lesson in this strange new way of Jesus.

(3)

THE FUKIEN RURAL PROGRAM

In 1934 Dr. Francis Chen was appointed Director of Rural Service at Fukien Christian University. The work was begun in three villages within half an hour's walk of the campus, Nieu Dien, a poor village of 75 families, being the starting point. The expanding program includes

(a) By the people: a grade school, a folk school, social center, with clinic, and voluntary medical service by an alumnus of the university; a reading room, school gardens, a young farmers' club, parents'



Village of Nieu Tien

day, children's day, an agricultural fair; and in the summer free tea for the passing ricksha runners.

(b) By the students; volunteer work by means of the rural service club, rural dramatic club, entertainment by the boxing club and the Chinese music club; health and clean-up campaigns; scientific lectures; boys' and girls' clubs; a children's library. Academic credit for the rural service major.

In sum: the service of goodwill, the gift of fellowship, and the offer of the resources in knowledge, character and religion that make it possible for people to overcome difficulties, change customs, and make progress toward a better world,