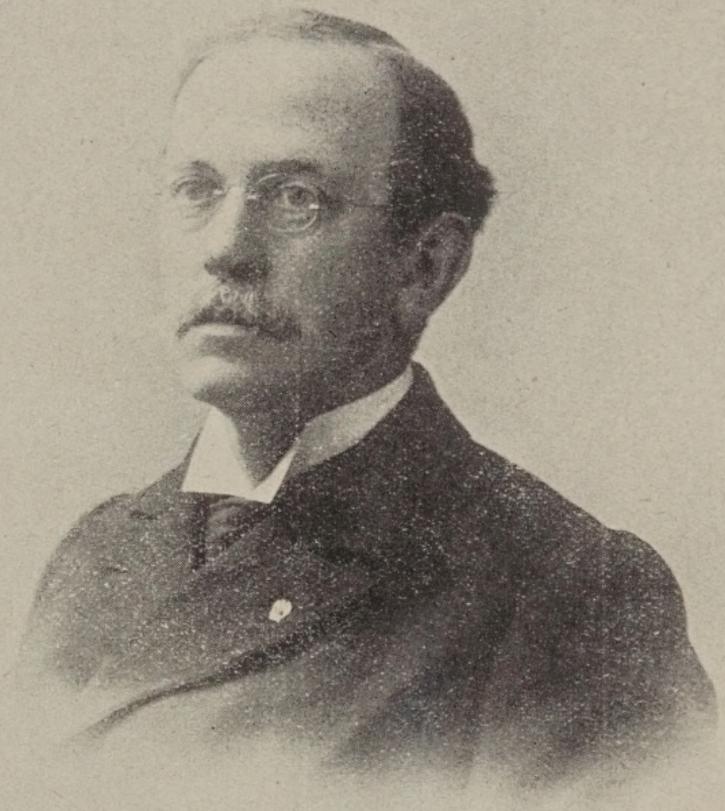


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Very truly yours,
Henry B. Schwachtz

THE LOO CHOO ISLANDS

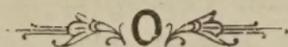
A CHAPTER OF MISSIONARY HISTORY

BY

REV. HENRY B. SCHWARTZ, A.M.

OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL MISSION IN JAPAN.



A GREAT DOOR AND EFFECTUAL IS OPENED UNTO ME.

I Cor. xvi : 9.

THE LOO CHOO ISLANDS

A CHAPTER OF MISSIONARY HISTORY

BY REV. HENRY S. EDWARDS, A.M.

FOR A FULLER ACCOUNT OF LOO CHOO MANNERS AND
CUSTOMS SEE THE CHAPTER, "FORGOTTEN LOO CHOO" IN
THE AUTHOR'S LITTLE BOOK,—“IN TOGO'S COUNTRY.”

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INTRODUCTION.

I desire to commend to all readers this very readable and instructive little book on the Loo Choo Islands, by the Rev. Mr. Schwartz.

There is not a dull sentence in it, and is written *con amore*; for our brother has thru his many visits to the Islands and a study of the people come to know and love them. By his sympathetic and graphic pen, he seeks to introduce the islanders to the Christian world, not for gain, but that we of the west may have a share in Gospelizing this ancient, civilized people.

The story he relates is very much condensed, but it gives an intelligible account of a people who were regarded by Perry as only second to the Japanese and with whose ruler he negotiated a treaty with America. What is of greater interest to us is this, —that our brother and his family have consecrated themselves to the service and salvation of these long forgotten six hundred thousand souls.

They love the people and God has given them a soul-inspiring vision of a Christian Loo Choo which they would now make a fair reality thru the help of the missionary society and friends. Brother Schwartz

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is now building a residence for his family and they will soon become permanent dwellers there.

We are told of the many conversions and baptisms in recent times and the welcome accorded the Gospel everywhere.

Loo Choo thru the grace of Japan is an integral part of that Empire and is provided with a liberal government in sympathy with Christian civilization, a great encouragement to missionary activity.

May many churches, Sunday Schools and Leagues and individuals be led to offer gifts for the training of native pastors and teachers for the work of the Church.

Here is a field that will be left desolate save for the earnest care of our brother, supported by the loyal Methodists who delight to do our Lord's will.

M.C. HARRIS,
Tokyo, Japan.

THE LOO CHOO ISLANDS.

THE Loo Choos are a group of thirty-six islands, extending from the twenty-fifth to the twenty-seventh degree of north latitude. They have an area of about 900 sq. miles and a population of over 642,000. The islands lie almost half way between Japan and Formosa and are reached by three lines of steamers, sailing from Kobe about once a week. These ships call at Kagoshima *en route*, whence it is 390 miles, a voyage of two days and nights to Naha, the principal port and largest city of the islands.

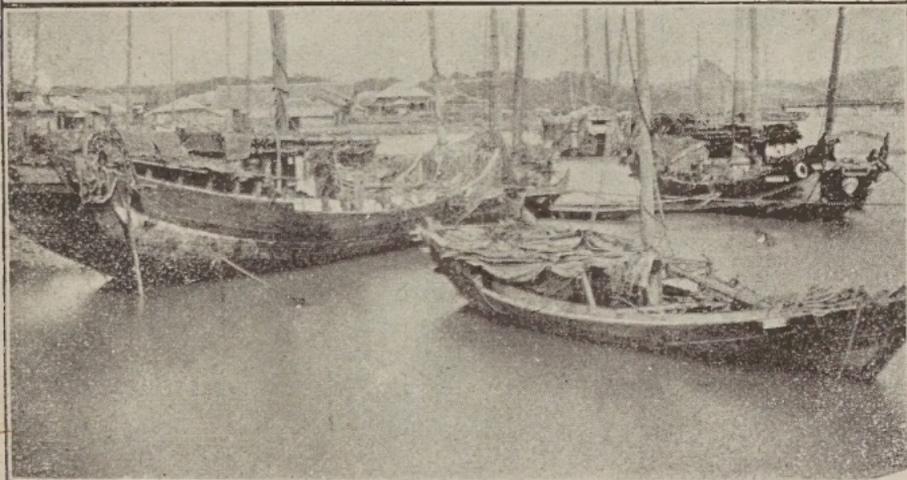
But the two days and nights have been almost due south and the visitor from Japan realizes even before he comes ashore that he has come to a country wholly different from the one he has left behind. It is, however, not as hot as he expects to find it for the climate is tempered by the constantly blowing trade winds and the highest temperature noted since weather observations have been kept is 95° while the lowest is 41° . Strange to say, though so much farther south, the landscape seems much less tropical than that of Japan proper. Pines are the most prominent trees but around Naha almost every hilltop is covered with a low growth of sago palms. The banyan, known here as the "Gajamaru," is another conspicuous tree. Sometimes the banyan grows erect; but the commonest species grows like a great vine; running along on the top of the walls and rooting itself from time to time until it reaches a hundred feet or more from the original root. This species of banyan gives the walls a fresh, green appearance but it affords a hiding place for a kind of adder which is the curse of the islands. The snakes which lurk thus on the

walls are six or seven feet long and two or three inches in diameter. Their bite is generally fatal in a few hours, and many deaths occur from them every year.

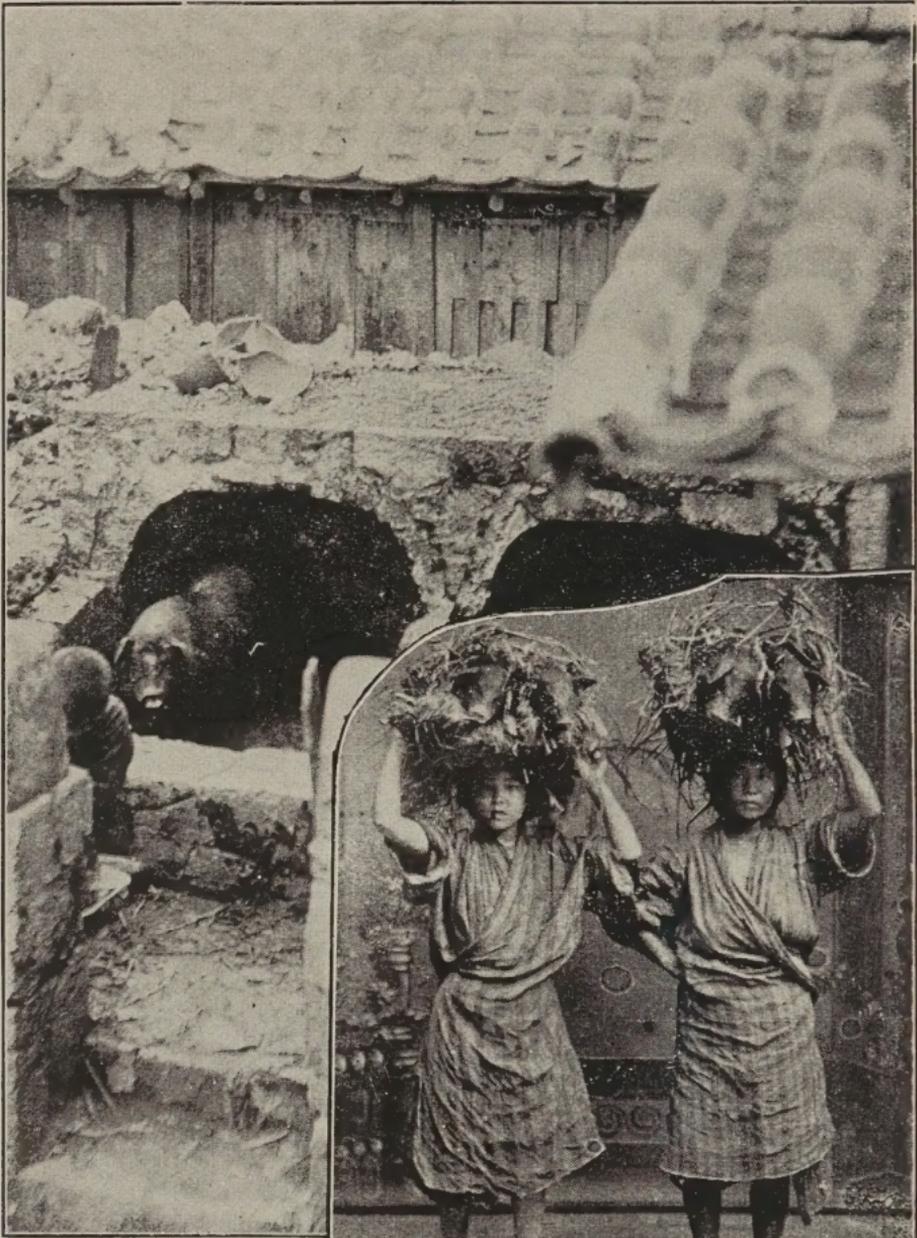
If her snakes are peculiar to Loo Choo, she shares her rice culture with all the countries where the Chinese and Japanese influence has been strong, but compared with the wonderful way it is carried on in Japan, Loo Chooan rice culture seems careless and slipshod. Perhaps, they do not think it very important for with all but a few of the better-off Loo Chooans, rice is a luxury. Their daily diet is for the most part composed of sweet potatoes and a kind of starch made from the sago palm. The one fruit which flourishes in the islands is the banana, which furnishes the people both food and clothing, its fibre being used to weave a kind of coarse cloth which forms their common summer dress.

In addition to their vegetable diet, the better class of Loo Chooans make constant use of fish and especially of pork, for where the Japanese would have a garden, the Loo Chooan has a pig sty;—a pig sty made of coral stone! The total value of the pork produced must be a very considerable item in the annual revenue of the islands. But pigs, however, are a mere by-product, the main commercial product is sugar. This is produced in the most primitive fashion, though the Japanese Government is doing all in its power, apparently with little success, to introduce improved methods.

Sugar is too much of a staple to fill the Japanese idea of a *meibutsu* as they call any local product for which a place is famed. Loo Choo, however, has several of these, the most noted of which are cloth and lacquer. The cotton cloth woven in Loo Choo is strong and durable but not especially handsome. It is dyed with indigo and the commonest pattern is



BANYAN TREE
IN THE HARBOR OF NAHA



A CORAL PIGSTY

LITTLE PIGS GOING TO MARKET

a blue ground flecked with white. Silk goods of a similar pattern is also woven. The design in both, is produced by tying fine strings at regular intervals around the skeins of thread before they are dyed. These strings protect the thread from the dye and when after the dyeing process the strings are untied a white undyed place is left in the thread in place of every string. The closer together the strings are tied the more flecks the woven goods will show to the inch.

The lacquer ware of Loo Choo is of a dull brown when first made but as it grows older it becomes of a handsome vermilion which improves with age so that the best pieces become brighter and clearer the longer they are used. The manufacture of *adani* hats is another industry which has recently sprung up and for which the islands are likely to become noted. They resemble the famous Panama and are said to rival them in durability and comfort.

Turning from the products to those who produce them, we find the origin of the Loo Chooan people is lost in doubt and uncertainty. Even the Japanese themselves have difficulty in distinguishing a Loo Chooan man from a true Japanese except by his language and dress. The identity of the Loo Chooan peasant women is easily recognized by their erect carriage, their square broad shoulders and their deep chests, the results of their universal habit of carrying every thing on their heads. All of this contrasts strangely with the round shoulders and stooping habit of the Japanese women. The Loo Chooan women have fine eyes and wonderfully sweet, soft voices.

Failing to solve the problem of the origin and relationships of the Loo Choo people from their physical characteristics, we would naturally turn to their language and literature but there is practically

no Loo Chooan literature and the speech of today shows too strong a Japanese influence to be a reliable guide to the ancient language. The scholars of Loo Choo for centuries used Chinese as the medium of written intercourse. I met three Loo Chooan men in Naha who in their younger days had taken the Chinese examinations in Peking. Since the Japanese conquest A. D. 1609, that language also has been much studied. Prof. Basil Hall Chamberlain in his little monograph on the language of Loo Choo concludes that the Loo Chooan and Japanese languages resemble each other about as much as do Spanish and Italian, and like those languages their resemblances plainly point to a common original language "a language, which could we find it would probably carry us back to the second or third century before Christ when the common ancestors of both the Japanese and the Loo Chooans crossed from Asia to the island of Kiushiu and there divided: the stronger branch pushing its way north and east while a few of the weaker members of the invading host lagged behind and finally following the lines of least resistance, found their way southward across the chain of islands which like stepping stones led them to what is now Loo Choo."

But while learned men like Prof. Chamberlain try to settle the origin of the people of Loo Choo by migrations from Asia by way of Japan or otherwise, the native annals adopt a simpler method. Somewhere in remote antiquity, they say, a God and Goddess came down from the castle of Heaven and settled in Loo Choo. This celestial pair had three sons and two daughters. The oldest son named Tenson, became the first king. The second son became the first nobleman, the third was the first farmer and the daughters became the first Shinto priestesses. For twenty-five generations Tenson's

descendants are said to have occupied the throne. Their capital was established at Shuri and the country was divided, as it is at present, into villages and *magiri* or districts.

The greatest event in the history of these twenty-five generations was the coming of the Chinese, which occurred A. D. 607. But China, though she conquered the islands, had no idea of becoming their ruler. She gave them her literature and her arts and in return contented herself with receiving the submission of their kings and a small tribute which was more like the oriental scholar's present to his teacher than it was like our modern taxes.

Loo Choo had been paying such a tribute to China for nearly six hundred years when a famous Japanese warrior named Tametomo, after various adventures came to the Islands. He married a Loo Choo woman and their son Shuten, became the first of a new dynasty of Loo Chooan kings. From this time the Japanese influence constantly increased. In 1260 Japanese priest introduced Buddhism and there after Japanese missionaries of that faith frequently visited the islands, but Japan never enjoyed a monopoly of influence, for Loo Choo preferred to get her civilization at first hand from China. The Loo Chooans expressed their relation to the two countries by saying that China was their father and Japan was their mother, and we must put the oriental value on these relationships to understand the meaning of that saying.

But whether willingly or not the little kingdom of Loo Choo was destined to come into closer and closer relations to Japan, for the same chain of islands which had served as stepping stones for the passage of her first inhabitants and over which Tametomo had crossed so easily now connected her with Satsuma, which at the beginning of the seven-

teenth century was the strongest and most warlike of the provinces of Japan. Many of the Satsuma warriors had just returned from Hideyoshi's expedition against Korea and were hungry for further exploits. Why not invade Loo Choo and add these islands to their territory? With this thought, the Prince of Satsuma applied to the Shogun for permission. It was readily granted and three thousand Satsuma men were sent to invade the islands. They won an easy victory over the unwarlike inhabitants and carried the king back with them to Satsuma. He was treated with the honor due to his rank and after giving in his allegiance to the Satsuma prince was allowed to return to his home. But from this time his power was limited. He was allowed to keep his court and his titles yet so far as independent action was concerned he was a mere puppet in the hands of the Satsuma officials.

In view of the double dependency of Loo Choo, the question naturally arises what did China do about all this? The answer is she knew nothing about it until long after it was over and then, since Loo Choo paid her tribute as usual and sent to China to secure the imperial investment for each new king as she had always done; China simply preserved her dignity and did nothing.

As the years passed, Japan's interests in Loo Choo became more and more important and in 1872 she formally annexed the islands. The Loo Chooan king received the rank of marquis in the newly organized Japanese nobility and he and his nobles were granted annual pensions. Japan assumed the national debt of the little kingdom and in every way asserted her complete authority over it. The Loo Chooan official classes were much dissatisfied with this arrangement and their ill feeling continued until the close of the Japan China war but when they saw



A LOO CHOO FARMER

LOO CHOO SNAKE CATCHER



A LOO CHOO
WOMAN



A BIT OF SCENERY

that Japan with her modern methods could whip China, their opposition ceased; and they are now proud to call themselves Japanese.

But we need to turn back a little to trace the foreign relations of Loo Choo which were quite out of proportion to her size and present importance. In 1816, an English naval expedition visited Loo Choo and one of its officers, Capt. Basil Hall, wrote the "*Voyages*" which gave the western world its first accurate knowledge of the islands. When Com. Perry's expedition was sent to the Far East, a treaty with the king of Loo Choo was thought almost as important as one with Japan itself. The expedition spent several weeks at Naha testing and refitting and while there sent out an exploring party, one of which was the poet and traveler Bayard Taylor, whose sketch of the islands is still interesting and accurate. Perry obtained an interview with the Regent of Loo Choo and later succeeded in negotiating a treaty; but the opening of Japan so completely eclipsed the little kingdom that few people know that such a treaty was ever contemplated. Indeed, Perry's was not the only treaty negotiated, for about the same time the French obtained a similar convention.

But all of these things have lost their importance, for since 1879, Loo Choo has been a mere prefecture of the Japanese Empire under the name of Okinawa and the Kingdom of Loo Choo has disappeared forever. Except that there is as yet no prefectural assembly and that the islands have no representation in the Imperial Diet, the government is carried on by the same system of officials and bureaux in use in other parts of the Empire. The prefectural offices, courts, high schools, normal school, government hospital and all the offices and department by which the machinery of government is carried on are

located at Naha and Shuri ; but in every part of the islands the organizing and directing hand of Japan may be traced. The islands are connected with the mainland by a cable and the principal towns are united by telegraph. Every village has its primary school and its *yakuba* or village office. A net work of good roads has been planned and the influence of the agricultural experiment stations may be noted in a general improvement in the agriculture of the islands. The principals of the higher schools and the more important officials are Japanese but the subordinate positions are all filled by native Loo Chooans. The Governor and most of the Japanese officials live in Naha where there is a Japanese population of about three thousand, but many of the teachers have their homes in Shuri, the old capital. The two places form practically one city with a population of 65,000. In Naha there are good Japanese hotels, and shops but outside of these two cities and two or three of the larger towns the life is exceedingly primitive.

For with all the improvements Japan has introduced, Loo Choo is not yet Japan and the difference in the customs and habits of the two peoples is quite as great as the geological and geographical differences of the two countries. The men of Loo Choo, especially the former nobility and gentry of Naha and Shuri who have been weakened by the pensions granted them by the Japanese government, are lazy and dissolute. But the Loo Chooan women are strong, energetic and shrewd. In the markets only women are to be seen and almost every thing connected with money, with the single slight exception of spending it, is in their hands.

The Loo Chooan men and women alike dress in indigo blue cotton cloth in the winter and in a kind of coarse linen made from the fibre of the banana in

the summer. The dress of both sexes is much the shape of the Japanese *kimono* except that the men wear their girdles tied in front instead of behind and the Loo Chooan woman wears no girdle at all, holding her flowing outer garments in place with the hand. The shorter under garment is placed by being tucked in the waist band of her drawers. The Loo Chooan woman can hold her outer garment in place in this way the more easily because every thing she carries, she carries on her head! They can carry in this way burdens which they cannot lift and it is no unusual thing to see a Loo Choo woman walk off with a load which two men have placed upon her head! Not only the weight but the nature of her burdens is surprising. Any day a woman may be seen with a great jar or a nest of sugar tubs higher than herself thus poised on her head, leaving both her hands free. But the most comical sight of all is to see women coming in to market with two live pigs which they are carrying in a nest of straw on their heads.

Under the circumstances one would not expect the Loo Chooan woman to wear a very elaborate or very expensive head covering and as an actual fact she wears none at all. The men, who never carry anything on their heads wear several kinds of hats. Both men and women always go in their bare feet. The women twist their hair into a simple coil on one side of the head and hold it in place by a single pin which from the bowl shaped finish given to one end of it looks exactly like a large mustard spoon. The men formerly wore their hair in a cue on the top of the head and had an elaborate etiquette of hair pins but most of the younger men have cut off their cues and wear their hair closely cropped.

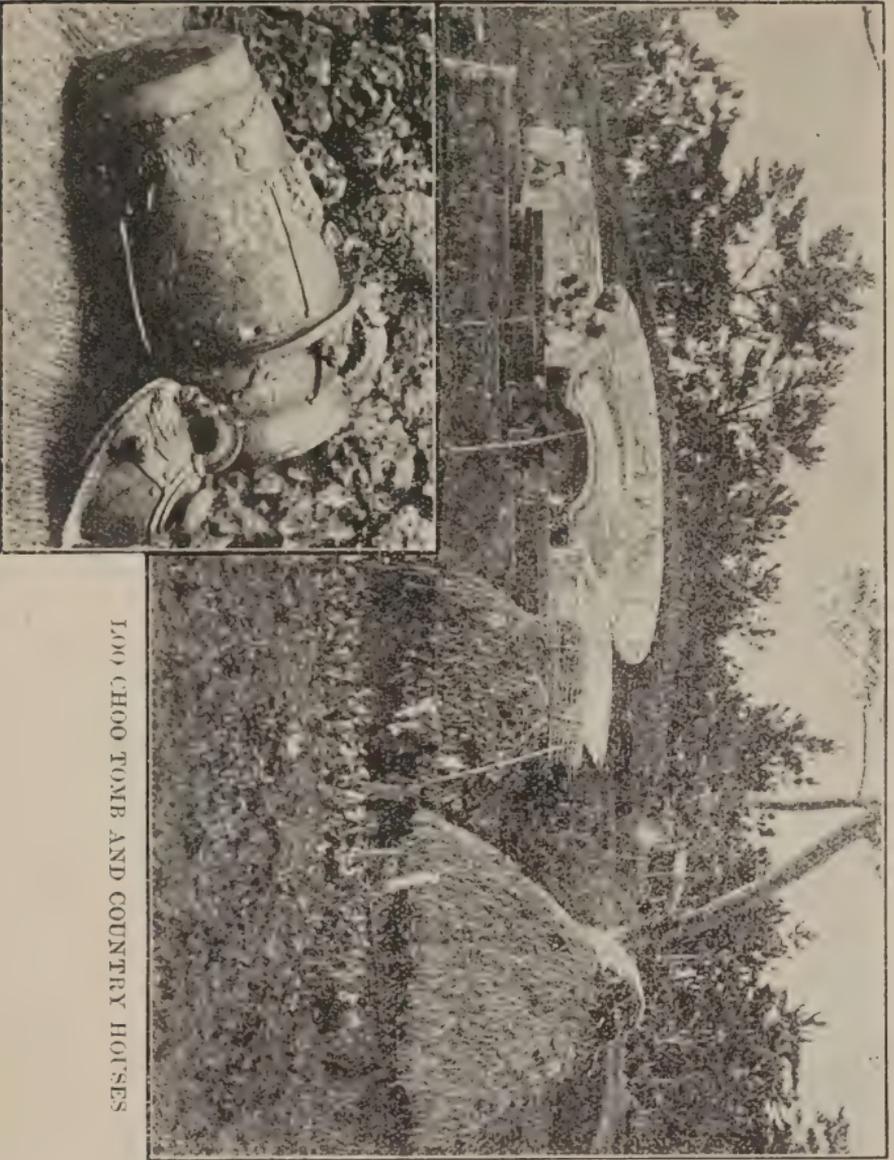
The architecture of the cities does not differ much from that of Japan except for the red tiles which

cover the roofs and for the massive walls which shut the houses in from the gaze of the passers-by. Within too, one misses the light paper partitions of the Japanese house; in their place are sliding doors of heavy wood which make the inner rooms dark and uncomfortable. The country house is a small thatched hut. At the best the Loo Choo home is dirty and squalid.

The average Loo Chooan bestows far more care on his family tomb than on his living abode. These tombs are great vaults built of stone above ground or in the side of a hill. Those of the gentry are covered with a rounded roof in the shape of the Greek letter Omega, while those of the common people have straight pitched roofs. The more expensive tombs have large courts connected with them where the funeral services and the various ancestral rites can be held.

The funeral customs like the tombs themselves were probably borrowed from Foo Chow, China. The body is buried in a squatting position in a small tub and is attended to the tomb by the family and friends and by hired mourners who assist with professional lamentations. After the burial, the door of the vault is walled up and the tomb is freshly cemented and whitened. Three years later the grave is opened and the women of the family take the bones, and after carefully removing with chop sticks whatever flesh may remain upon them, wash them with alcohol and pack them away in earthen jars on the stone shelves within.

To the general laziness and licentiousness of the Loo Choo men must be added almost universal drinking habits. *Awamori* a much stronger liquor than the Japanese *sake* is served on every occasion from birth to death. Another still stronger and cheaper intoxicant made from sweet potatoes is also



100 CHOO TOMB AND COUNTRY HUTSES

PHILIP ERN



A VIEW IN NAHA

in common use. But fortunately for the Loo Chooan race the women never touch a drop of liquor! As a result, while the Ainu in the north of Japan whose women drink as well as the men, are dying out as the result of their intemperate habits: the population of Loo Choo withstanding the dissolute habits of the men is constantly increasing.

The low standard of sexual morality among the men of Loo Choo is due to the wide prevalence of Confucianism with its low estimate of womanhood. To the materialistic influences of the same teachings the general lack of religion in the islands is probably due. And this is the more likely because among the lower classes and especially among the women who did not come under this influence, the religious instinct is strongly developed. The few Buddhist temples in Naha and Shuri are dirty and dilapidated but they are seldom without worshippers. Almost every house has a Buddhist shrine and even in the country districts where the priests never come the traditions of Buddhist worship are kept up. In addition to this the common people find objects of worship everywhere: a huge tree, a fantastically shaped rock, anything strange or peculiar soon becomes an object of worship. But there are a hundred and seventy Japanese primary schools in the islands and education is driving out fetish worship and leaving an unoccupied soil for Christianity's second attempt to carry the gospel to them. For the missionary work now being carried on in Loo Choo is on the ground of the first Protestant missionary work within the bounds of the present Japanese Empire.

I would like to relate the history of this early mission as I have been able to glean it from the printed letters of the missionary and from the traditions which still linger in the islands: for such a

record of earnest faith and heroic endeavor should not be forgotten even though it did end in comparative failure.

Attached to the British expedition of 1816 was a young Irish Lieutenant, Herbert J. Clifford who was detailed by his commanding officer to study the Loo Chooan language and who prepared the vocabulary of Loo Chooan words published in "*Hall's Voyages.*" This occupation threw him much with the Loo Chooan people and their simplicity and unaffected kindness made a deep impression upon him. This impression was strengthened by his conversion which occurred shortly after his return to his native land; and Lieut. Clifford set himself to repay it by sending the Gospel to Loo Choo. For years he kept up a correspondence with the Church Missionary Society and with the London Missionary Society, but missionary societies then, as now, were continually short of funds and Lieut. Clifford finally resolved "to take the field single handed." Accordingly on the ninth of February, 1843, he began the Loo Choo Mission by a letter in the Achill Herald. During the first year of the Mission's existence the sum of £300 was raised. In 1844, at the suggestion of an old mess mate of Lieut. Clifford it became a naval mission; all its officials being officers in the British navy. Lieut. Clifford himself became the honorary secretary for Ireland. In 1845, the funds amounted to £800 and a missionary was engaged and sent out. This was Dr. J. B. Bettelheim, a Hungarian Jew, who had been converted to Christianity about seven years before. He was a graduate of the medical school of the university of Padua and spoke thirteen languages. Dr. Bettelheim utilized the four months voyage to Hong Kong and the

long delay there in the study of Chinese and Loo Chooan, using for the latter the materials which Lieut. Clifford had collected nearly thirty years before. He made such proficiency that when he landed in the islands he could have expressed himself in Mandarin Chinese or, if necessary, in Loo Chooan.

Dr. Bettelheim was kindly received and lodged in a temple by the sea shore. For a while every thing was hopeful. He continued the study of the language and soon was able to preach in it. But the Japanese influence was too strong in Loo Choo to allow a Christian missionary to work there without interruption; and he had not been preaching long before further preaching was forbidden by the authorities. But Dr. Bettelheim explained that he only intended to do good to the people and declined to obey. Instead of ceasing to preach, as he grew more fluent in the language, he extended his preaching until he was speaking three times every Sabbath. His resistance was in vain, however, for the officials, if they could not prevent him from speaking, could and did, prevent the people from hearing. They drove away his congregations and dogged his foot steps when he visited the sick and took away the medicines he left. Finding it impossible to do any public work, Dr. Bettelheim turned his attention to language study and translation, and the whole of the New Testament was translated and published. But it was easier to publish it than to get the people to read it. Finally the officials forbade the people to visit him or even to sell him supplies and when Commodore Perry touched at Naha on his way home, after his visit to Japan in 1854, Dr. Bettelheim was glad to accept a passage to Shanghai. He had been seven years in Loo Choo and while he did yeoman work in translation

probably not a single copy of his New Testament remains either in Loo Choo or Japan.*

For years after Dr. Bettelheim's return no missionary work was done in Loo Choo, but with removal of the prohibition of Christianity, the French fathers planted a mission in Oshima, a large island which belongs, physically to the group; though politically it is separated from it. The mission has been very successful and has a large number of converts. A fine brick church is now building in Naze, the principal town of the island.

In the spring of 1887, the Rev. J. C. Davison, of the Methodist Episcopal mission, at that time living in Nagasaki, visited Loo Choo and spent some time there looking the ground over and holding some meetings. But it was not until 1892, that continuous missionary work was begun. In that year the Church Missionary Society, and the Missions of the American Baptist and Methodist Episcopal churches, each opened work in Naha. All of them depended upon Japanese evangelists to carry on their work with occasional supervision from foreign missionaries. Each of these missions has met with considerable success both among the Japanese residents and among the native Loo Chooans. The

* I have never seen a copy of Dr. Bettelheim's Loo Chooan New Testament and only know of one copy of it in existence, but old books have a curious way of turning up in unexpected places and if any reader of this should have a copy of it, or of the letters issued to the subscribers of the Loo Choo Naval Mission by Lieut. Clifford, it would be a personal favor if he would communicate with me. I have been unable to learn the subsequent history of Dr. Bettelheim. He had a family, for traditions of his lovely daughter whom the doctor's personal teacher wished to adopt, still linger in the islands. Mrs. Dr. Otis Gibson tells me that when she and her husband were in New York arranging to be sent to China, Dr. Bettelheim was in our missionary office trying to be sent out. It would be a great favor if any one could give me any light on his subsequent history or put me in correspondence with any of his descendants.—H. B. S.



GATE IN SHURI
A STREET IN NAHA



REV. T. OHO

Church Missionary Society has lately withdrawn from the islands on account of scarcity of workers.

The first Methodist Evangelist to be sent to Loo Choo was the Rev. C. Nagano, who in 1892 went there as the representative of the Home Missionary Society of the Japanese Methodist Episcopal Church. Mr. Nagano was a man of powerful physique and great energy and he did good work in the islands. As a result of Mr. Nagano's work, Mr. S. Gaja was baptized on the 25th of August, 1892. Mr. Gaja who thus became the "first fruits" of Loo Choo has been a faithful and useful member of our church in Naha ever since. He has served the church well in many ways, as exhorter, local preacher and Bible seller,—and lately was of great assistance in securing property for our mission house.

Mr. Gaja's baptism was followed by others and the work under Mr. Nagano seemed very hopeful. Some trouble, however, arose which hindered the work among the Loo Chooans and during the later years of Mr. Nagano's stay in the islands, the growth of the church was principally among the Japanese residents. Mr. Nagano, after eight years of faithful work, was obliged to return to the main land in broken health in 1900, and died two years later. His successor was Rev. K. Murai, a native of Fukuoka prefecture and a graduate of Chinzei college in Nagasaki. He had had two successful pastorates in the main land, and threw himself heartily into his new work. The first years were years of seed sowing,—in which a great deal of open air preaching was done. About once a week an open air meeting was held under the banyan tree in the market place in Naha. Hundreds of people attended these meetings where under cover of darkness they could learn what Christianity really was. In 1903, the working force in Loo Choo was strengthened by the

addition of Rev. T. Oho. Mr. Oho is a native of Oshima, and speaks both Japanese and Loo Chooan fluently. He was converted in Hawaii in 1892 and after some experience in church work in America he returned to Japan, where for a number of years he was employed in connection with the Loo Choo land survey. This work gave him a large acquaintance and was an excellent preparation for the work he was to take up. For two years he assisted Mr. Murai in the work at Naha. Serving at the same time a wide circuit of country towns. At the session of the South Japan Conference in 1907, Mr. Oho was appointed to open a new circuit, with Shuri, the old capital for his place of residence. He has secured a fine location in this city, and his work begins with great promise. A flourishing Young Men's Society has been organized and I have recently baptized five converts.

One of Mr. Murai's strong points is the way he seeks out suitable young men and encourages them to enter the work of the Ministry. Through his efforts in this direction our band of Loo Choo workers has had two accessions this year.

Mr. C. Nohara a young Loo Chooan was employed in the land survey with Mr. Oho, and when the work of this bureau was completed, he had saved a little money which he resolved to use to fit himself for further usefulness. With this purpose he entered the training class in Chinzei college where he distinguished himself as a good thinker and an able speaker. He was received as a probationer in the South Japan Conference at its last Session and appointed to Nago circuit. Nago is a considerable town in the northern port of the island of Okinawa, about 45 miles from Naha. A well-located preaching place has been rented and there are a number of inquirers, one of whom was recently baptized.

The history of another of Mr. Murai's young men deserves to be told in detail.

Four years ago, a young Loo Chooan, Y. Hika by name was principal of the grammar school of his native place in the village of Hanja. He was a graduate of the Normal school in Shuri and had been teaching eight years. He had a wife and two children, the older a son to whom he was greatly attached. This little boy fell sick and died. Just at the time of his great sorrow, the Japanese school authorities selected Mr. Hika with some other teachers to be sent to Osaka to attend the Industrial Exposition.

At the very gate of the exposition grounds he saw a building which bore in great Japanese characters, the words "*Kitarite Miyo*" which is the Japanese version of the Scripture words "come and see." Mr. Hika, however, had no idea that they were words of Scripture nor that the building was the mission hall erected by the co-operation of the Japanese churches: for he had never seen a Bible nor heard a Christian sermon, but the sign attracted him and he went in. There, he heard for the first time of a Savior, who takes away our sins and carries all our griefs and sorrows, and the message was the oil of gladness poured into his wounded heart. He heard and went away and came again, and before he left Osaka he had given his name to those in charge of the mission as a seeker and received a letter to the pastor of a Christian church in Naha. As soon as he reached that place he hunted up Rev. Mr. Murai and gave him his letter. Mr. Murai explained the way more perfectly to him and he hastened back to his home fifteen miles in the country. The fifteen miles which lay between his home and the church in Naha were no obstacle to one who was as eager

to hear as was our school teacher, and Sunday after Sunday he walked in to Naha to hear the sermon and to study the Bible with the pastor and walked home again in time for his school work the next morning.

He opened his home, too, for Christian meetings which workers came out from Naha to hold; and when at last he was ready to be baptized he had come to another decision, that he must give his life to the work of bringing his country men to Christ. He soon realized that he needed more preparation for this and decided to resign his position and go to Nagasaki to take a theological training course in Chinzei College. His decision raised a storm in his family. His father and brother and friends thought he had gone crazy and pointed to his condition as an illustration of the evil effects of the Jesus teaching. Not quite all his family, however, his wife stood by him in his determination. They owned a little house and a bit of ground and she said she could raise sweet potatoes enough for herself and her child. So she urged her husband not to think about her but to go on and carry out his purpose.

He entered the school on a scholarship provided by the Epworth League of Portland, Indiana. He studied faithfully, until summer but when the short summer vacation came, he insisted on going home. His father and mother were yet without Christ and he wanted to help them. So faithfully did he labor that not only his father and mother but eight of the village people were ready to be baptized in the autumn.

In March of this year he finished his course in school and began his life work. Later, he explained to me, he would be glad to go any where but at first he would like to work in his own village that he might show his fellow townsmen that he was



REVS. Y. HIKI, K. MURAI AND G. NOHARA
LOO CHOO YOUNG LADIES OF THE BETTER CLASS



REV. K. MURAI AND FAMILY

not crazy but spoke the words of truth and soberness.

In April, I held a meeting at his house where thirteen people professed Christ and were baptized. There were many happy hearts in that little congregation but no face shone with more joy than that of the faithful wife, who had raised her own potatoes that her husband might attend a theological school. There were many other inquirers in the village but my faith was hardly prepared for the results so soon to follow; for early in May, Mr. Hika's faithful work was rewarded by the baptism of 109 persons at one time, probably the largest number ever baptized at once in the history of our work in Japan. We had no place where such a number of people could come together for our meeting place was two rooms in the pastor's house. The best we could do was to baptize them in detachments of a dozen or so, sending them out doors as fast as they were baptized and letting others fill their places.

Such an event could not occur any where without creating an excitement, but in Hanja village; for 120 persons to break with their old superstitions and turn away from their old beliefs created such an excitement as we can hardly realize. The country villagers have many common interests and the anger of the heathen villagers tried to shut out our young converts from many long established rights, like the use of tools and sugar cane mills which they held in common. It threatened them with personal violence, but beyond angry words and a few stones, the threats died away. And while opposition continues our converts are in no actual danger.

With a few exceptions they have all stood firm, and are the stronger for the persecution they have been called upon to bear. They and their pastor need our earnest prayers. This whole country seems ripe for such a work as this. and only needs to

have the Gospel preached to it by men in whom they have confidence, to have like scenes occur in many of the villages of these beautiful islands. In no part of the Japanese Empire is the prospect for Christianity brighter than among the half million people of lovely Loo Choo.

There have been numerous requests for the appointment of a foreign missionary to reside in the islands, and in 1906, at the unanimous request of the South Japan Conference, Bishop Harris appointed me to this work. I was in America at the time and devoted the rest of that year to raising money for a mission house which must be built before a missionary can live in the islands.

Our reception on our return has been most cordial. Japanese and Loo Chooans of all classes uniting to welcome us. We have succeeded in buying a well-located piece of land and shall begin to build our mission house in the early autumn.

Naha, Loo Choo Is.

July 6, 1907.

“Other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors.”

JOHN IV : 38.