

Brides of the Gods to Leave their Hindoo Temples

Stripping the veil from the face of the oriental woman and the bandage from the feet of the Chinese, is a plank in the new program of reconstruction.

Slave girls, held in the incense-blurred shadows of Hindu temples as victims of the rituals of ancient creeds, are to find the temple doors thrown open for their escape.

Young brides, wedded by strange rites to grotesque Asiatic gods, are to be delivered from their stone masters.

Women in many lands—millions of women who are beasts of burden, slaves of cruel custom, playthings and property—are to be made free.

The program of their deliverance is an American program. The will of millions of American men and women has created it. The power of \$140,000,000 now being raised by the two branches of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America is being put behind it. And the name of it is the world reconstruction program of the Methodist Episcopal Centenary.

Inspiring this program is a profound conviction that only free women can bear generations capable of fulfilling the promise of universal democracy that is in the political reconstruction of today.

In narrow, winding streets and sun-drenched market places from Algiers to Teheran and from Bombay to Peking, white-draped women may be seen gliding by. And their eyes look out like the eyes of a prisoner, above the "pardah"—the white veil of Islam.

Where They Bandage Feet and Sell Babies

All the light of occidental civilization, streaming in upon China, has not completely flooded out the shadow of the binding of women's feet. Still among the Chinese, despite the efforts of their now more intelligent classes to end a tradition of suffering, are women whose goings and comings and life are limited to mincing steps upon contorted extremities.

In Shanghai, upon the Yangtse-Kiang, not long ago, a country woman shuffled along, unsteady, under the bamboo yoke from which hung two



Dancing Girl of Burma

A Coolie Woman

Married at 15

A Prisoner of the Purdah and the shawl



Wives of the god Khandoba



Witch-doctor of Africa



The Golden Lilies of China



Given her chance, this girl of Korea will help build the democracy of the future

swaying baskets. Over the side of each peeped the immobile face of a Chinese child. They were the woman's children. She had brought them to the city to offer them for sale.

Up the steep incline of a road in Northern India, under a merciless sun, twenty women strained at the traces of a heavy roller. Their bare feet, cut and blistered, scrambled painfully in the gravel of the new roadbed. At their head an overseer—a man—urged them on.

As a trans-Pacific liner slipped into the harbor of Nagasaki, innumerable flat-bottomed boats laden with soft coal made fast alongside. Scores of little Japanese women, heads bound for protection from coal dust, and some with babies bound to their backs, scrambled up the hastily erected scaffolding. Hour after hour they stood, catching the baskets of coal tossed to them by men in the boats. Night had fallen when the coaling was done. The little women took their day's wage, fifteen or twenty cents, and went home.

Are these the mothers of universal democracy? They are types, living illustrations of the subjection of women in oriental countries, whether under the yoke of custom, of ignorance or of poverty.

Strange Wrongs to Be Righted in Every Country

Lifting the yoke is the objective of the centenary program. The small army already being recruited to apply that program will undertake not only to help make them free, but to help make them better mothers, better home makers, greater influences in the lives of their men and of their countries.

There are strange wrongs to be righted in every country. There are millions of women who must be given their heritage.

India's women number 150,000,000. Their yoke, despite all the British government has done to aid them, is still heavy.

Courtesans, Sanctioned by Religion and Custom

They are bowed under the institution of child marriage which disposes of their lives before they are old enough to know what life means. And the custom is 800 years older than the Christian era.

They suffer under the contempt of widowhood. More than 20,000,000 of them, widowed in girlhood, or even childhood, live lives of outcasts, with shaved heads as a badge of their widowhood, and practically prohibited from remarriage.

Young girls are devoted to idols in infancy and early childhood by their parents in some parts of India. About their neck is placed the necklace of the seven cowries. They are wedded to the dagger of Khandoba. Their lives are devoted to singing obscene songs in praise of the god, performing night worship and song services, selling themselves.

These are the mollusks. Akin to them are the devadasis, or slaves of the gods, and the nautch girls of Southern India. They are taken in childhood to sing and dance before the temple gods and in the idol processions. Through centuries they

A Burden-bearer of North Africa

have become courtesans, sanctioned by religion and custom.

The women coolies of India work from sunrise to sunset. They carry upon their heads baskets of concrete for the smooth automobile roads of modern India. They carry earth from excavations, bricks for building, and water. They mix mortar. And often, they steal a moment from their work to look after the little baby they have left under the shadow of a bush near their tasks.

For the bowed millions of India's women, the Centenary program promises the beginning of a new life.

"Woman," wrote Confucius, "is a mindless, soulless creature."

The bound feet, the bound minds, the too early marriages of China's women tell the story of their sufferings under such a philosophy.

Why Chinese Women Are Carried to Work

China has bound its women's feet for 1,000 years. Within the last two or three decades many of the women have unbound their feet. But so old a custom cannot be eradicated in a few years.

There are thousands of Chinese women who have never gone more than 100 yards from their homes unless they were carried. And in the interior one may see women of bound feet, compelled to work, dragging at the ropes of boats, along the towpaths of canals. And, in the cotton fields, they work, sitting, hitching themselves along as they proceed. They are carried to and from the fields in wheelbarrows.

China's coolie women labor like beasts of burden. One may see them by hundreds, bowed under heavy yokes. One may watch them, in the mud of the rice paddies, while men stand by on dry ground, directing their work.

China's women are even more numerous than India's. But the program of the Centenary is for them as well. The American millions to be spent will help them to a higher place in the new scheme of things that is in the making.

The Story of the Geisha Girls

There is work to be done among the women of Japan, advanced though that country is. There are the superannated women hired out at a few yen a day to carry babies on their backs for many consecutive hours—the Komori. There are the girls of the tea houses, some of them work for twenty or even twenty-two hours a day.

And there are the 80,000 geisha, each taken in childhood, to become the property of old women who support them, and train them in singing, dancing, playing the samisen and in repartee. After years of the most rigid instruction, these girls may be hired by men for their entertainment. And the shugi or licensed prostitutes, estimated to number more than 80,000, endure a fate even

worse. They are driven to the Yoshiwaras or vice districts by sheer necessity of making a living. They become virtual slaves under the burden of debt necessarily incurred to equip them for their profession. They are openly bought and sold.

Again, in Japan one finds the coolie woman, not only helping to coal ocean liners, but assisting in driving piles for the building of bridges, and carrying burdens of every kind. And among the factory workers of Japan—in some of the factories shifts are said to be changed once every twelve hours—80 per cent are women. And these women, according to available statistics, are paid between thirteen and fifteen cents a day.

Japan is provided for in the program of the Centenary. Japan's women are to be relieved of their yoke, as well. So are the women of Korea and Malaysia, of Mexico and South America.

Where Neither Childhood Nor Motherhood Is Sacred

So are the women of Africa—those 40,000,000 wild creatures of the jungle who are the prey of the strong, whipped and worked like beasts; bought and sold and inherited like property; neither their childhood nor their motherhood held sacred.

In North Africa, and all through the countries of the orient, millions of Mohammedan women must be liberated, not only from the purdah, but from the senana and the harem—the forbidden place of women.

The senana and the purdah are obligatory upon all women who recognize the Koran. Both are symbols of the subservience and inferiority of woman's position under Mohammedanism, and the senana carries always the implication of polygamy. The veiled women of Islam are innumerable. The secluded number many millions. In India alone there are 40,000,000 of the latter, and in North Africa, it is estimated, there are 20,000,000 more.

The seclusion of the harem deprives women of outdoor liberty and recreation. It affects their health and the health of their children. Many of these imprisoned women die of tuberculosis. Limited in their experience, permitted to see only husband, father, brothers and nephews, their knowledge of life is small, their minds seldom more than child minds.

What the Freedom of Women Will Mean

For the sake of world democracy Methodism in America believes that these wrongs must be righted, these women lifted out of the subjection, the servitude, the contempt which surrounds all women of the oriental countries.

Freedom for the women of the world means to the church the dispelling of ignorance through education, the substitution of Christian ideals for superstition and for creeds that have made possible the wrongs of women.

The program for attaining these ends is definite and detailed. Schools, seminaries, colleges and universities are to be built in many countries. Hospitals are to be founded and equipped, and made the center of systems of dispensaries. Teachers, physicians, nurses are to be sent from this country.

All these will have behind them the major purpose of the Methodist Centenary movement, the establishment of the ideals of Christianity in every country, as a foundation upon which women may stand in the work that is primarily theirs, the building of the world democracy of the future.