



The Safety Lamp.

Symbol of the  
International Miners Mission

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a  
light for my path"

*Psalm 119, verse 105*

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## GOD MOVES IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY

*God's grace seen in a Japanese copper mining town*



A true story of  
**The International Miners Mission**

**1906 - 2010**

# GOD MOVES IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY

By David Shillitoe

*God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.*

*William Cowper (1731 - 1800)*

The picture below may look like a typical group snapshot taken during a tourist trip of two young people visiting Japan. In fact it is much more than that. The tall young man in the picture contacted me by email 'out of the blue' in the spring of 2009. His name is Nicholas Kirkland and he said that he was interested in learning more about his great-grandfather, who had been a missionary in Japan in the early years of the last century. Nicholas had seen the International Miners' Mission website on the internet. Did I have any information that might help him? He and his partner were planning a trip to Japan and would very much like to visit those places where his great-grandfather, Rev. H. Raymond Wansey had spent his time some 100 years ago.



*Nicholas Kirkland and his partner outside the Ashio Church in June 2009.  
The young man standing next to Nicholas is Pastor Takashi Okabe with his wife.  
Apart from the new entrance, the church remains exactly as it was built in 1908.*

Cover picture:

Christ Church, Ashio, Japan

The location of the church is indicated by a small building  
with a cross on it to be seen on the background  
map of the town of Ashio.

This is just to the left of the main picture.  
Christ Church is the only Christian witness in Ashio.

It so happened that I had also been contacted some months previously by the Rev. Hirsohi Takagi of Omama, Japan, also by email. He is the pastor of the Omama Church in the Fukuin Dendou Kyoudan group of Japanese Christian churches and also deeply interested in local history, particularly how the group had started some 100 years ago. The name of Rev. H.R. Wansey was known to me, because it was he who had contacted the recently founded Glynn Vivian Miners Mission (now International Miners' Mission) in 1906 with the proposal to establish a Mission Hall at Ashio, Japan. Otherwise I knew practically nothing else about the early years, apart from a few entries in the old GVMM Minute book.



*Rev. Hiroshi Takagi speaking in Omama church*

So it was that I became involved in active correspondence with Hiroshi Takagi over the following months as we shared the information we knew about the Rev. H. Raymond Wansey, his wife Beatrice and their young family. I was able to pass on what I had learned to Nicholas Kirkland. I also was able to put him in touch with Hiroshi Takagi and so it was that they were able to meet up Japan in the summer of 2009. With the help of Hiroshi's daughter Rei, who acted as translator for most of the trip, Nicholas had a 'fantastic time, feeling a little like a celebrity, although I had done nothing of note'.



*Nicholas Kirkland standing outside the entrance to the Ashio copper mine (now closed) with Rei Takagi, who acted as interpreter.*

What follows is the story of how this Christian witness came to be planted and established in a fairly out-of-the-way place in Japan. Truly God moves in a mysterious way.

## CHAPTER 1

*Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never-failing skill  
He treasures up His bright designs  
And works His sovereign will.*

In many ways this story is stranger than fiction, but actually it is a true history illustrating some of the remarkable ways God reveals Himself to humankind. It is a story that centres on a remote copper mining town in Japan. The town is called Ashio, situated some 100 miles north west of Tokyo. Copper had been mined there for several hundreds of years. The town is strung along some nine miles of the narrow Watarase River valley.

To begin with the copper mine was the property of the Tokugawa shogunate (hereditary governors of Japan), producing some 1500 tons of copper annually in the 1600s. As the years passed the level of production gradually dropped and in about 1800 the mine was closed for some years. However in 1871 things changed, when the ownership fell into private hands. Six years later the mine was bought by Ichibei Furukawa, a determined and fairly ruthless business entrepreneur. In 1868, the newly established Meiji government of Japan modernized the country by increasing military strength and expanding industrial production. It established a Department of Industry in 1870 which took the initiative not only in starting new industries but in looking after private enterprise until it was disbanded in 1885. The real achievement of the Department of Industry was to introduce new technologies and machines from the advanced capitalist countries and to invite foreign technicians to Japan to provide new industrial production models and technologies.

### Need for copper

By 1877, mining, financed by private capital, had grown rapidly. Copper was especially important to the new government because its exports brought in much-needed foreign exchange. The demand for copper overseas supported the industry in Japan, the bulk of it being exported as unwrought copper, i.e. copper smelted into rough ingots. By 1880 the copper mine and smelting facilities of Ashio were well known in many parts of the world. In 1890 copper earned 9.5% of Japan's entire export earnings, thus establishing Japan as a world-level producer. This income was used to purchase mining equipment, military weapons and other industrial machinery. Copper played an important role in the development of Japan's capitalism, and the main domestic copper mine was the one at Ashio. In 1881 a new but small lode of copper ore was discovered at Ashio, followed by the much larger Yokomabu lode in 1884. As a result copper production rose very rapidly. In 1884, production stood at 2,286 tons per year. This made Ashio the mine with the highest output in Japan, producing 26% of the country's output and becoming prosperous because of the excellent quality of the ore discovered

in the larger lode. With the help of foreign technicians the mine was reorganized for more efficient production on the basis of new techniques and equipment, and a new mining method was introduced, tunnelling horizontally into the sides of the mountains. However there were dangers from flooding. In September 1885 the Ashio mine was severely affected by floods, although production had reached a record of 4,090 tons for the year.

### The Jardine Matheson connection

The years 1886-1887 saw a depression in world copper markets. The Jardine Matheson Company, the largest of all British trading companies in the Far East at that time, requested exclusive purchasing rights for all copper output from owner Ichibei Furukawa's copper mines, with the aim of creating a monopoly in world markets, something that a French entrepreneur had also been trying to achieve. At first Furukawa was unwilling to enter into a contract with Jardine Matheson because of the large amount of copper to be sold and the terms of payment. But in 1888 a contract was signed by which Furukawa was to sell 19,000 tons of copper to Jardine Matheson for 29 months. With this contract under his belt Furukawa could make capital borrowings, but in order to obtain these, the output of the Ashio mine had to be greatly increased.

When the Ashio mine was updated and modernised it was the first to install a telephone system below ground. The problem of flooding was solved within a year. However, no matter how much effort was given to increasing copper ore production, the refining method was still fairly primitive. In 1887 in order to meet the contract requirements of Jardine Matheson, modern hydrometallurgical separators and pyrometallurgical smelters were installed to replace the old equipment. This was followed in 1890 by a hydroelectric turbine station installed by Siemens of Germany, and 1891 by an electric railway to connect the mine and the refining area.

Up to 1890 the transport of the finished copper ingots depended on the use of horses and cows. Then a 30 HP steam-engine-powered cable conveyor system was installed across the Hosoo Pass. When the Japan National Railway opened the rail line to Nikko, the company began to operate a horse-drawn train from the Hosoo Pass down to the town of Nikko, thus greatly improving the product transportation system.

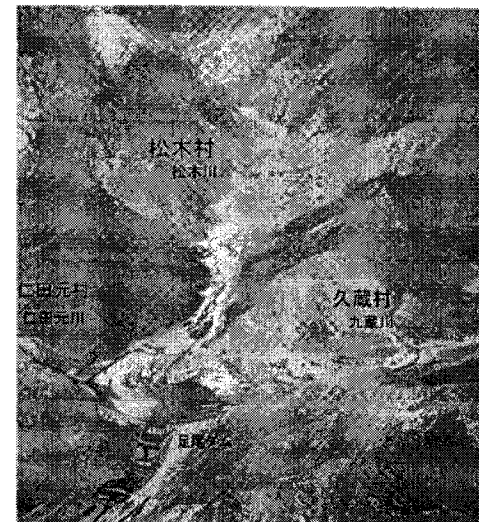
In 1893 Furukawa installed a Bessemer smelter. With the help of this, the time needed for refining of the copper ore was reduced from 32 to 2 days. The Ashio copper mine had by now become the leading copper producer as a result of its greatly increased output.

### Pollution



*Ashio about 1895*

This new investment in equipment to increase the production capacity of the Ashio mine brought in its wake a serious mining-induced environmental catastrophe. By the end of 1884 all the trees surrounding the mine were reported dead or dying. In August 1885, the use of a rock-crushing machine and a steam-operated pump led to massive fish kills in the Watarase River downstream from the mine. The whole area was becoming hugely contaminated by copper poison. However, in spite of many complaints by the local farmers and the local authorities at the time, little or nothing was done to resolve the problems.



*The headwaters of the Watarase river. Ashio is shown in the bottom left corner. The villages of Nitaogata, Matuki and Kouzou villages were destroyed by pollution.*

The reins of power were held by a few influential people in the Government. Mine owner Furukawa had a strong relationship with Eiichi Shibusawa, the leading Japanese capitalist of the times, and he was greatly supported by Kaoru Inoue, a political magnate who served the Foreign Ministry and the Department of Industry. Indeed Junkichi, the second son of the future Japanese Foreign Minister Munemitsu Mutsu, was adopted as a son-in-law by Ichibei Furukawa, thus cementing the ties with the government of the time. Years passed by with little or anything being done to rectify the pollution. Arbitration was started to try and come up with solution for the victimised farmers, but little came of these efforts.

## Start of Japanese military expansion

In 1894 the Sino-Japanese War broke out and by March 1895 Japan emerged victorious. However, the Laotung Peninsula on mainland China, which juts out into the Yellow Sea between Korea and China and which had been won by Japan, had to be returned to China through the intervention of Russia, Germany and France. Then, in 1898, Russia took over the peninsula including the ice-free port of Port Arthur. Technically, Russia was only leasing the peninsula, but the presence of Russian troops and the extension of the Trans-Siberian Railway through Manchuria made it obvious that Russia intended to hold the area permanently. Russia also began extending its influence into Korea. As a result of this, the Japanese Government decided to turn even more strongly towards military expansion under the military leadership, determined to modernise their forces in order to spread their hegemony to Manchuria and to defeat the Russian army. The Japanese army and navy were ordered to double their capacity. This was the beginning of Japan's policy of imperialistic expansion, which eventually led to Japan controlling Korea.

## The vital role of copper

Copper production was of vital significance in that copper was equated with the nation of Japan itself. It can be claimed that by meeting the increased demand for the mineral, which was needed both for foreign exchange and military purposes, the Ashio mine came to be one of the foundations upon which Japan's imperialism was built. Then the thing which all had feared occurred with devastating force. In September 1896 a massive flood caused by torrential rains caused the Watarase, the Tone and the Edo rivers to overflow their banks. One large city, five prefectures, twelve provinces and 136 towns and villages over a total area of more than 46,000 hectares were damaged by water-borne mine poisons. The loss sustained was about 23 million yen, eight times the annual income of the Ashio copper mine.

Because the flood of 1896 brought great damage to Tokyo and the government had to face possible public outrage, it ordered a survey to be carried out, and for a time there was talk of bringing mining operations to a halt. There were several demonstrations by farmers but the mine continued operating. Military expansion was of the first order of importance.

Environmental protection construction projects were put in hand and completed. In 1902 the government ordered that the burden of the copper poisons in the upper reaches of the Waterase River be lightened by the construction of a catchment basin. However as things turned out, a tower designed to reduce sulphurous acid gas emissions was completely useless. The smoke damage worsened on the upper reaches of the Waterase River. Deaths from pollution doubled in the period 1883 to 1898.



*View from Matuki village towards the dam at Ashio. The wind tends to blow from south to north, so that the sulphur dioxide from the copper smelters killed all the trees when it fell in the form of acid rain.*

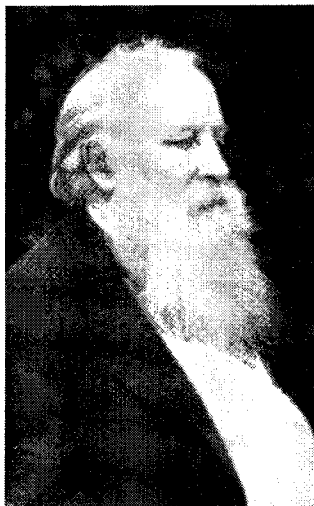
In December 1903, at a cabinet meeting, it was decided that the Japanese government would start plans for a war with Russia, and that Korea should be placed under Japan's control. Moreover, the government gave instructions to the Japanese ambassador to Great Britain to seek economic aid from the British government before the war started. Its policy about copper poisons was in reality a prelude to Japan's period of imperialism.

## CHAPTER 2

### God's Grace knows no bounds

*Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan his work in vain;  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain.*

The reader may be wondering what all this historical and technical information has to do with the intervention of God's grace in the Japanese mining town of Ashio. But God was assembling His servants in His time in a way that only He can do.



*Richard Glynn Vivian in old age*

The first person we must mention was a wealthy industrialist, whose home was on the other side of the world. **Richard Glynn Vivian** was the youngest of four brothers and a partner in the important copper smelting company of John Vivian and Sons of Hafod, Swansea in South Wales. The Hafod works had been established in 1810 by his grandfather, John Vivian, who hailed from Cornwall. Ores of copper, tin and silver came by boat from Cornwall and were brought up the River Tawe to wharves at the back of the copper smelting works. Coal, mined locally from pits on the western side of the valley was carried by tram road and canal. As the demand for copper soared, supplies were imported from mines opening up in such far-away places such as Chile and Australia. It is highly probable that the Vivian Company was importing wrought copper from Japan, because the British end of Jardine Matheson were heavily involved in importing copper. It was directors of Jardine Matheson who also launched the Rio Tinto Zinc Co., a mining company which also had a copper smelter in South Wales.

The influence of the Vivian family in Swansea was considerable. Indeed much of the housing in Hafod was built for their employees at the copper works and for a long time the area was commonly known as Vivianstown or Trevivian. The Vivians were successful and became wealthy, purchasing Singleton Hall, a large property to the west of Swansea. By 1880 the demand for non-ferrous metals rose dramatically as copper was used in the generation and transmission of electricity. This ensured the fast growth of the Vivian & Sons Company. In 1880 all Swansea copper smelters, of which Vivian and Sons was the largest, were producing more than 65% of the copper smelted in Great Britain. The Vivians also entered politics. The Westminster Gazette recorded that 'Among the liberal county members of Parliament who were staunch Gladstonians, none was better known or more respected than Sir R. Hussey Vivian, who represented Glamorganshire between 1857 and 1893. He was then raised to the peerage by his chief as Lord Swansea, but only lived one year to enjoy his title.'

Born in 1835, Richard Glynn Vivian was the youngest brother of Lord Swansea, and although involved in the company, his main interest was in amassing works of art from all points of the compass. Glynn Vivian was also fond of travelling. In the period 1865-1890 he visited North and South America, the West Indies, South Africa, Madagascar and also China. There is a record that during a visit to Peking (Beijing) China he purchased a fine ceramic dish on 19 April 1870. In addition Glynn Vivian visited many European countries. His wealth allowed him to purchase Sketty Hall, a large house on the edge of Swansea, which had once belonged to Charles Baring, a member of the family of London merchant bankers. Sketty Hall was very close to Singleton Hall, where Glynn Vivian grew up.



*Sketty Hall, one of the rooms used to display Richard Glynn Vivian's large collection of porcelain. Much of this can be seen today in the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery in Swansea.*

This house delighted him. He wrote of his new home: 'As Singleton is the dear home of my childhood, so Sketty Hall is the home of my age. With what pleasure, dear old house, have I tried to beautify thee, inside and out! How have I watched the result of my labours, when as at a magic touch, out of the square built, good old house, I saw white marble balconies, brought from Italian palaces, adding beauty to thy old walls who can tell how old some of them are?'



*Formal gardens at Sketty Hall, Swansea, created by Richard Glynn Vivian*

Richard Glynn Vivian's rich and fulfilling life was abruptly halted when tragedy struck. Let Glynn Vivian recount what happened in his own words. 'In March 1902, I was walking down Bond Street in London at midday on a fine day, with the sun shining full on everything, when suddenly there settled on my eyes a small white misty cloud, which has gone on steadily increasing. In spite of all that science can do, it has become thicker and blacker and denser, till now I can see nothing beyond a little glare, all else



being black and dark. As far as human knowledge can tell, this will go on until all is sunk in total darkness.' It was clearly a most distressing experience for him. He went to Germany for a course of treatment, but returned home much worse. During the spring of 1903 he realised he was totally blind, and would continue to be blind for the rest of his life. It is hard to imagine what such deprivation meant to this wealthy, gregarious, fun-loving man. He felt totally lost and lonely.

*Richard Glynn Vivian with one of his many pugs*

This is when God stepped in! It was now 1904 and Richard Glynn Vivian had been sent by his doctor to stay in the Hotel Metropole in Brighton to take hot salt-water baths. One day the sad, blind man was walking on the promenade when he was recognised by a family friend, Miss Muriel de Sevin, who was living in Hove, a coastal town next to Brighton. She was most concerned about Glynn Vivian's sorry condition and arranged for a Colonel James Phillips to visit him. James Phillips was leading a Christian Mission in Brighton. As a result Glynn Vivian became a frequent visitor to the Mission Hall. A young member of the youth group called Herbert Voke was very drawn to the helpless blind man and offered his services to act as Glynn Vivian's valet.

Slowly a glorious transformation took place in Glynn Vivian's life. God used not only James Phillips but also Herbert Voke to lead their newly-found friend 'out of darkness into light'. On Herbert Voke's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, 18 November 1905, Glynn Vivian made a great decision. Coming to the young man on that day, he put his arms around his neck and said, 'Today I can say I have given my heart to Christ'. Blessed light! Glorious transformation! The wealthy globe-trotting art lover no longer felt lonely. He realised now that he was not his own, that he belonged to Christ, and that he was only a steward of the possessions which were his to use. Through that mind, now enlightened and made alive by God's Holy Spirit, Glynn Vivian felt an irresistible force taking charge of his life. In his mind's eye he remembered the scenes of squalor and degradation he had witnessed amongst miners, not only in South Wales but also in other countries through which he had travelled.

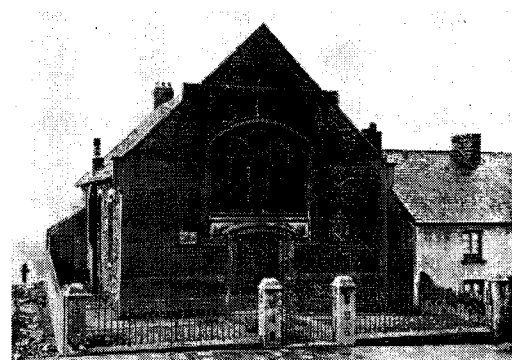
Glynn Vivian remarked that he had been greatly struck, in travelling through mining districts in foreign lands, by the deplorable lot of miners and their families. In so many mining communities these brave men lived and worked miles away from any place of

worship or even a meeting room so that they could avoid going into places of ill-repute. They never heard God's name mentioned from one week to another and the discomfort of their homes he had seen had shocked him, although in those days his outlook was merely philanthropic, he felt sore at heart as he found five or six persons living in one wretched cabin doing nothing in spare time but drinking and gambling, many who had been brought up 'in good and tender homes'. Now with new light and quickened impulse, these memories came back with irresistible force, and so he felt he would like to care not only for their bodies but also their souls.

Glynn Vivian returned from Brighton to Swansea with Herbert Voke as his valet and trusted personal secretary. Now at 70 years of age, he recorded something of the vision that he could see unfolding:

Just as I began to go blind, I saw at Brighton the excellent working of a mission under Col. James Phillips, and the idea seized me to form a similar one at Hafod for our workmen and colliers. This, under God's guidance grew in my mind into the idea of forming missions for miners, colliers and workmen all over the world. I found on enquiry that though of course there are missions for miners in various places, there had never been any combined work to unite them and bring them all to God. Nor to make them respect themselves and to give them some of the comforts of civilisation, such as a reading room attached to each mission, and tea and coffee and good literature could provide. I am no millionaire, not even half a millionaire, simply a partner in a firm. But so impressed was I with the thought of hundreds of our fellow men, who spend their lives in darkness and danger in the bowels of the earth working indirectly for us and our good, that I gave the (then) large sum of £30,000 out of the savings of a lifetime, in order to start the Glynn Vivian Miners' Mission.

The Glynn Vivian Miners' Mission was established with its headquarters at the Union Street Hall in Brighton on the 18 October 1906. This was because Richard Glynn Vivian had most of his Christian friends living there. Around the same time the first Miners' Mission hall had been opened in Hafod, Swansea with young Herbert Voke as its pastor - and by all accounts a fine pastor. By now the great Welsh Revival of 1904/05 had played its part in moulding the spiritual life of this young man. Glynn Vivian relied on him greatly, as well as encouraging him to pursue his activities among the coal miners and copper smelter workers of Swansea.



*Glynn Vivian Miners Mission, Hafod, Swansea opened in 1906.*

## CHAPTER 3

### Seven Steps Heavenward

*Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take!  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.*



*Rev. H. Raymond Wansey*

Events now move to the next step in the amazing event of God's story for the copper mining town of Ashio. **Henry Raymond Wansey** was born near Bristol, England in 1873. He was educated at Clifton College and at University College, Oxford, where he gained his Bachelor of Arts in 1896 and Master of Arts in 1899. In 1897 he was ordained Deacon in the Church of England, serving as a curate of St. Hilda's Church, Millfield in the northeast of England. In 1899 he was ordained priest by the Bishop of Durham and became Vicar of St. Cuthbert, Darlington.

Clearly Raymond Wansey had a desire to go overseas as a missionary, because he applied to the Church Missionary Society as early as 1900, but his offer was turned down on medical grounds. By 1902/03 he was working as a chaplain at the Mission to Seamen centres in South Shields and Hartlepool. He applied to the Church Missionary Society again and on 20 October 1903 he was accepted as a missionary. It had been Raymond Wansey's long cherished desire to serve in Japan, and on the 13 January 1904 he set sail for Nagasaki, Kiu-Shiu, Japan with instructions by CMS to spend the first 18 months studying the language.

On the 8 February 1904 Japan declared war on Russia.

Though based in Nagasaki, from July to October 1904 Raymond Wansey was reporting from the large town of Osaka. As thousands of Japanese soldiers were setting off for the war with Russia, he reported back to CMS headquarters some of his experiences. Here are three excerpts:

1. It is midnight on a night in July, yet Osaka station is bright and gay with lanterns and flags. To the lively strains of the Military Band a regiment of soldiers just arrived from Sendai in the north is marching from the platform under a triumphal arch to a large temporary dining hall put up for them, decorated with bunting and with tables laid for 500. Full justice is done to the meal in 15 minutes and as the men have an hour and a half at the station for rest before proceeding on their way, they enjoy lounging about and stretching the limbs wearied and cramped with the long railway journey in a crowded carriage. Beginning at four o'clock in the morning this is probably the tenth train thus laden that has arrived during the day. The trains then proceed on to Hiroshima, from the port of which city, Ujina, some time ere long they will embark, but when this will be and to what port they are bound, they themselves do not know. Such secrets are well kept in Japan. To meet some of the earlier trains in the day, bands of school children and companies of citizens have come and cheered the soldiers with patriotic songs and their shouts of Banzai! Banzai! as the train has steamed out of the station. At night there are few present, but some Christians who have a little place of their own they have been allowed to put up, where all the soldiers must pass. There are lanterns with crosses, hymns are sung, books given and words spoken to show them not only that the Christians are as patriotic as any in the land and wish them well, but that they have something to give them far more precious than the numerous presents showered upon them on the way. The missionaries also arranged to have some one or more of their number at the station for every train. Each soldier who passed through should have received a copy of 'The Light of the World', a monthly Christian paper of which a large number of extra copies were printed.

2. At the beginning of the war we saw only the troop trains speeding westward. Now every day ambulance trains bring back sick and wounded from the seat of war. In the largest makeshift hospital in Osaka there are 5,000 patients now. The authorities are preparing for 10,000. With each train come doctors and nurses, who have telegraphed beforehand the number of patients and the kind of conveyances need for them. Those who remain in Osaka are first of all laid out or sit out on straw matting on the platform while refreshments are brought to them. Some have a long wait so the missionaries often give them tea, which they accept gratefully. Sometimes hymn singing starts. This is always welcomed. Some of the faces have such an intensely pained expression, probably partly physical, partly the effect of the terrible scenes they have been through. The singing seems to be a comfort to them. The favourite hymns are 'Tell it to Jesus' and 'Only believe'. This latter hymn begins with the story of the Cross and the need of salvation and goes on to tell of fellowship with Christ. The girls from the school constantly go to the station to help in the singing and are glad to have this little bit of ministry for the soldiers.

3. It is a bright October morning and crowds are finding their way to the harbour to see off some of the soldiers, who are sailing from Osaka. They are standing ready to go on board, a cord keeping back those who have come to speed them on their way. But inside the cord, allowed to go freely up and down the ranks are the missionary and a Japanese worker who are distributing the Gospels, granted by the Bible Society to every soldier going to the front. The courtesy of the officials is most marked, they themselves helping in the distribution so

that all may receive in time, and allowing it to go on even while final orders to embark are given. The men go on board. "Banzai", "a thousand years", is the farewell cry from the crowd as they see them start. From some who watch them goes up from full hearts the prayer that for those thus risking their lives for their country there may not be a thousand years, but eternal life through Christ. So this sad and terrible war is bringing special and exceptional opportunities for spreading the Glad Tidings amongst those very ready to hear. Yet such numbers of them are dying on the battle field, dying in hospitals hungry for Christ and the hunger not satisfied. We do want prayer for them, that this may be the crisis to bring them to the Saviour and also that workers may be raised up in this wonderful time of opportunity to bring to these brave soldiers the news of Christ and His salvation.

## Spiritual and emotional battle



*Beatrice Wansey*

These stirring reports give no clue to the real personal emotional and spiritual battle going on in Raymond Wansey's heart during these months. The fact of the matter was that he found himself in an increasingly difficult situation in his relationship with the Church Missionary Society. Raymond Wansey had fallen in love with Miss Beatrice Nottidge, a young CMS missionary based in Nagasaki. He had proposed marriage to her and she had accepted. Under the regulations of the Society, such a step required the sanction of the CMS Committee in London.

In late summer 1904, Raymond Wansey had written to the General Secretary of CMS in London, Rev. B. Baring-Gould, requesting him to sanction an early marriage with Miss Nottidge, but having received no reply he wrote again on 15 October 1904. Here is an extract of this letter:

Dear Mr. Baring-Gould,

I have not heard from you in answer to my letter sometime ago requesting you to sanction an early marriage with Miss Nottidge, but I now write to you about a matter which has been discussed at the Kumamoto CMS Conference...it is with much regret the Miss Nottidge and I shall feel bound to send in our resignation to the CMS for next Spring. Not without very

much prayer and thought has this conclusion been arrived at, and we are not leaving the CMS in order to get married the sooner, but after my having written a book this summer that I am having printed shortly, I felt convinced that it was necessary for me to sever my connection with the CMS. But Miss Nottidge and I have now taken this step...and we feel that it is, both in our cases, right and irrevocable. I am extremely sorry that I have been led to take this step...the CMS is a Society that I most highly esteem and honour. But I cannot go against my conscience and in leaving the Society, I feel that I am but following God's guidance in order to take up further work in Japan, which I trust will eventually benefit, and by no means retard, the work of the Church and especially the work of the CMS in this island. I remember both writing and talking to you about loyalty to the CMS and I then certainly meant it from my heart. I came out here with no intention of severing my connection with the CMS, but since then, I have been led to take this irrevocable step by many unforeseen circumstances. I was much in fellowship with some China Inland Mission missionaries on the voyage out, but they did not make me determine to leave the CMS. Rather it is the necessary conclusion I have arrived at from writing the book I have already mentioned, and....I feel that I must live more in the Japanese way and apart from the CMS for I cannot write one thing and live another.

I trust that good may come out of it on both sides, that our places may be filled with better people, and that we too in our new sphere of work in Japan may do good service to the Church in this land.

Yours in Christ Jesus  
*H.R. Wansey*

The mention in the letter of a book being published refers to Raymond Wansey's book *Seven Steps Heavenward*. In correspondence with Rev. A.B. Hutchinson, the local Secretary of CMS Japan of the time, he explains that Miss Nottidge and he had spent some time preparing its contents, which he hoped would be printed in Japanese and English. He explained that what they had written had come to them as a Divine message; that God Himself had been leading and directing them in this most important step. He concluded that they felt called upon to spend their lives in Japan in a different way, adopting some of the ways and the modes of living of the Japanese, somewhat perhaps on the lines upon which the Rev. Barclay Buxton worked. The reference to Barclay Buxton is interesting. Barclay Buxton had been an independent missionary in Japan with the Church Missionary Society since 1890. In 1897 he invited Paget Wilkes to join him as a lay helper and they worked together at Matsue in Western Japan. Shortly after their return to England a new missionary movement called the Japan Evangelistic Band was founded in 1903 at the Keswick Convention to assist existing missions and churches in Japan and to organise Christian Conventions for Bible Study and Prayer. The emphasis of the JEB was 'dedication to personal holiness and aggressive evangelism.'

Paget Wilkes led the first missionary party to Japan in October 1903, serving in Yokohama and Tokyo, before moving to Kobe, which became the centre of JEB activity. We have no proof, but it is most likely that Raymond Wansey had contact with members of the JEB. Paget Wilkes imagined 'a band of men...who detaching themselves from the

responsibilities and entanglements of ecclesiastical organisation, would give themselves to prayer and ministry of the Word...' These were exactly the sentiments that Raymond Wansey felt in his own heart at this time, as revealed in his letter of resignation and also in his book *Seven Steps Heavenwards*.

Raymond Wansey's letter of resignation was received in CMS Headquarters in London with regret and some bemusement. It was felt that his resignation had been contemplated too soon after his arrival, being taken on the basis a very sketchy knowledge of Japan limited to only a few months experience. On top of this the CMS would lose the services of Miss Nottidge, who had given six years of service which was highly valued by her missionary colleagues. Even so Raymond and Beatrice went ahead with their marriage, which took place in February 1905. As a result the CMS Committee in London felt that they had to accept the resignation of them both. However because CMS were very short of missionaries at the time, a special agreement was made with Raymond Wansey to allow him to work temporarily 'as a friend outside the Society's ranks' acting as head of the Mission station at Kagoshima. This agreement was dated 17 March 1905 and must have lasted for most, if not all of 1905.

In 1906 we find the Wanseys moving to Karuizawa. According to a document entitled, "The Christian Movement in Japan" dated 1906, Raymond Wansey was now operating as an 'independent missionary of the Church of England'. Located in the mountains 100 miles north of Tokyo, Karuizawa was already a popular summer resort for well-heeled Tokyo holiday makers. Its Christian Centre, established by the Anglican Episcopal Church was very popular with missionaries because it avoided the stifling heat of summer on the Japanese coast. Here Beatrice Wansey gave birth to their first son, Paul, during the summer of 1906. Shortly afterwards the Wanseys moved to Nikko, another town in the mountains of Central Japan, where they set up home. Just over the mountain pass from Nikko was the copper mining town of Ashio. Raymond Wansey was in the right place at the right time!

### **Teisaku Ishizaki pioneer evangelist**

The third servant of God in our story was probably already in Ashio by 1906. His name was Teisaku Ishizaki and he was a member of the Japanese Episcopal Church. His background is shrouded in mystery but he was well educated and clearly a gifted Christian evangelist. By all reports he was a 'hot-blooded' active man and got involved in the lives of the thousands of miners and their families living and working in Ashio.



*Ashio copper mine and smelters about 1910: note the total absence of trees*

A contemporary description of living conditions in Ashio in those days leaves no doubt of the appalling conditions of the place:

20,000 miners work in this town, which sprawls down the valley of the River Waterase for about 9 miles. Apart from the barrenness and desolation of this place and surrounding country caused by the poisonous gasses which belch forth from the smelting house like smoke from the pit, withering tree and plant life for miles around, choking even the life out of the rocks, rendering them brittle and liable to collapse at any time, and poisoning the air so as to materially affect the health of the inhabitants apart from these naturally depressing features, the mines in Ashio are a rendezvous for the lowest of the low and a hiding place for many an escaped criminal.

Indeed, so rough and deprived were the men working in the Ashio Copper Mine, that a serious riot broke out in February 1907. The New York Times reported:

TOKYO. Feb. 6 Rioting of miners employed in one of the copper mines in the Ashio district is assuming grave proportions. Dissatisfied with their treatment by the mine owners and officials, the miners started out to damage the property, and are using dynamite freely. The chief engineer of the mine is reported to have been killed, and other officials have fled.

Armed forces had to be sent in to Ashio and a large number of miners were arrested by the Japanese police. Many families suffered as a result as the Mine Company suppressed the uprising. Teisaku Ishizaki decided to help the family of one of the miners arrested. There is a record in Japan to say that he was roughly handled, his clothes were torn and dirtied. Another report reveals that he had been thrown into a ditch at the side of the road.

In those days the Christian faith was fiercely persecuted, but it would appear that Teisaku Ishizaki's ministry was bearing fruit. After one year some 45 people were either already Christians or were seeking the Lord. The names of 31 of them are known to this day. The urgent need was for a hall for the believers to meet in, but where were the funds to come from to purchase the land and build the church?

So it was that all the pieces of God's plan were put in place. The Rev. Raymond Wansey had by now started regularly visiting Ashio, presumably at the request of Teisaku Ishizaki, who had contacts in Nikko. Raymond Wansey's longstanding desire to 'adopt the ways and modes of living of the Japanese' was being fulfilled! Then, believing it to be God's suggestion Raymond Wansey wrote to the newly established Glynn Vivian Miners Mission in England to ask them for help. He indicated that he would be responsible for the oversight of the work of building the mission hall and then superintend the work.

The letter was well received in London. Surely Richard Glynn Vivian would have recognised the name of the Ashio Copper Mine presumably none of the other Committee members would have had the necessary background knowledge about overseas copper mines. As a result, the newly formed GVMM Committee resolved to support Wansey's request for support, subject to further investigation. It was not easy organising the purchase of land and obtaining building permission in Japan in those days and legal negotiations took well over a year. On the 27 March 1908 the GVMM Committee resolved to pay £60 for the site and £70 for the cost of the building. The final cost was eventually £160 a sizeable sum for those days. But what an investment it was to be! Funds for the regular support of the evangelist Teisaku Ishizaki were also put in place. Like nearly all the houses in Ashio, the Mission Hall was built of wood. A local carpenter, Hirino Shintaro, managed to obtain wood from a nearby mountain as there was still no train to Ashio, the branch line only opening in 1912.

## CHAPTER 4

### The first overseas Miners Mission station - the early days

*His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower.*



*Rev. Hiroshi Takagi holding the original Glynn Vivian Miners Mission name board at Christ Church, Ashio*

The Mission Hall in Ashio, opened on 1 October 1908, was named 'Christ Church' from the very start. It was the very first overseas GVMM Mission station. Teisaku Ishizaki was evangelist in charge. Rev. Raymond Wansey made regular visits and sent back encouraging reports to the GVMM Committee in London.

Shortly afterwards in 1910 there was a request to open another hall 100 miles from Ashio, but after consideration by the Committee this request was not met, possibly due to a lack of funds. Sadly, Richard Glynn Vivian died in 1910 and the Mission lost its visionary leader. Fortunately the endowment of £30,000 made by Richard Glynn Vivian to the Mission, combined with a dedicated group of Christians on the GVMM Committee, meant that the work of Christian outreach and ministry to miners would continue and grow, as it does to this day.



*Mountain travelling in Japan Beatrice Wansey (right) riding side-saddle*

During the following years six other missionary centres were opened by the Wanseys and much pioneer work accomplished through preaching, printing and Bible distribution. After Paul, four more children were born to the Wanseys, and Beatrice felt her main responsibility was with the children. However, Beatrice was a great prayer warrior and counsellor and her good influence left its mark on many a Japanese. She was pre-eminently a woman of great faith and persistent prayer. It was said of her that 'triumphant faith carried her through many a trial under which far stronger women would have succumbed'.



*Beatrice Wansey with her two eldest sons, John and Paul taken in about 1909*

In 1911 the GVMM committee received several letters from Raymond Wansey, but unfortunately none of them remain on the mission's file. However, Committee Minutes of the time note that Wansey felt that by the end of the year the national Evangelist in Ashio needed no further pay from England, as the miners should now earn sufficient to support him directly through their giving at the meetings. Raymond Wansey also advised that he was planning to live at the Mission Hall, presumably part-time, and as that entailed keeping up two homes, he hoped that the GVMM Committee could see their way to help him financially now and again. In 1912 the GVMM committee received another letter from Raymond Wansey stating that he now found that he could not get along on self-supporting lines, and that the workers were all feeling the difficulties of poverty. He appealed for support, asking for £7 for upkeep of the hall at Ashio, £13 for travelling expenses and £5 for the salary of the evangelist at Ashio. After some discussion it was agreed by the GVMM Committee to send out the sum of £25 but the Secretary was asked to point out to him that he must not look to the Committee to continue this help. Cutting off the support for Teisaku Ishizaki turned out to be a mistake, as he decided to move away from Ashio and return to Nikko, where he set up a printing shop. Unfortunately he got into debt and moved away from the area. Regrettably we have no more information about this zealous pioneer missionary.

## Home to England

Matters now came to a head, as Raymond and Beatrice Wansey decided to leave Japan with their five children and return to England. This took place in 1913. The main reason for this decision was the education of their eldest son Paul, who was now 7 years old. We have a note that Raymond Wansey gave seven or eight of the leading Christians at the Ashio church 100 yen each (approx. £7); so that they could continue the preaching and leadership of the little church themselves.



*The Wansey family in Japan taken about 1911*

The return of the Wanseys to England in late 1913 was not well received by the GVMM Committee. However the GVMM Secretary, Walter Tucker, had quickly contacted the Japan Evangelistic Band headquarters in England, who undertook to superintend the work for the Miners' Mission. Indeed, they had already sent a Japanese evangelist to Ashio, who had started to preach at the church on the 23 January 1914. His name was Gisabourou Maekawa. He was supported by Assistant Pastor Akira Tanaka, from whose diaries a lot of the information about these early days of the Ashio mission has come to light. The first report of the Japanese evangelist was read out at the meeting. The GVMM Committee agreed to bear all the expenses connected with the restarting of the work at Ashio, estimated at approximately £60 a year.

### Japan Evangelistic Band

The years from 1914 to 1918 reveal no reports from Ashio, but most certainly there was a ministry carrying on under the wing of the Japan Evangelistic Band. In 1918 a fascinating report was received from a Mr. Wilkinson of the JEB, which gives a lot of encouraging news.

#### A VISIT TO THE ASHIO MINERS

My wife and I went to Ashio in August. We anticipated staying in a Japanese hotel, with its lack of things as Westerners deem necessary, such as beds, chairs, tables, etc.! However we were pleasantly surprised to find we could stay in the Mission Hall premises. I had been asked to conduct a series of special meetings, and these began on Sunday, when we had a full day. In the morning Kuramoto San, the Evangelist, spoke to the Sunday school children, and I spoke to the Christians afterwards on "The Way of the Cross". We were quite a small gathering, but I think we were all conscious of God's presence, and we felt encouraged to go forward in faith. In the evening, after a short Bible reading for Christians and enquirers, we went out into the open air, while my wife stayed in the Mission Hall and taught the children some hymns.

Kuramoto San is a young man with great promise, and being blessed with a good sound body and vigorous lungs, he makes a very fine open-air speaker, especially as his subject matter is very good and catches the attention of the crowd. He told me, by the way, that on one Sunday night he preached in six different places for half-an-hour each time, and then returned to the Mission Hall and preached for another hour! Quite a feat, even if only looked at from the physical standpoint. On this evening we made three short stands, and then returned to find the hall overflowing with people, about a hundred having crowded in to see and hear this strange foreigner speak. The Lord graciously gave liberty of utterance, and the people listened well as we told them of the One, True and Living God and the wonderful salvation to be found in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and as a result seven gave their names as enquirers.

The next night was wet and the attendance small, making us feel a little discouraged, but the Lord made it up to us on the last of the three nights by giving us an overflowing blessing. On this night we arranged to have the meeting in the Town Hall, at another part of Ashio called Akakura, about two miles away, as one of the brightest of the Christians lived there, and wanted to have the Gospel preached in that vicinity. It was most refreshing to hear what a great testimony he was bearing to Christ, being so earnest that he was nicknamed 'Yaso Saito' Yaso is the name the country people give to Jesus. Furthermore he not only testified it with his lips but lived it out in his life so that every one had a good word to say for him.

During the day we were conscious of much weakness and opposition as we were both feeling unwell. Soon after breakfast I developed a bad headache, and I knew that if it didn't get better I should not be able to preach that night, which would make it very awkward after advertising the meeting somewhat widely.

Then Kuramoto San also complained of a headache! Also his voice was almost gone owing to lots of preaching during the previous two days. However God wonderfully undertook, and just before the meeting my headache got better, and though Kuramoto San preached four or five times in the open air, he was able to speak again for about two hours altogether indoors. We stayed in the open-air for about forty minutes inviting the people in, and when we returned we were amazed to see the number who had crowded in, filling the large hall and standing five or six deep round the entrance. The room was so packed with people that we had to forbid others coming in lest the floor give way! We estimated the numbers at about 300 a very large crowd in rural Japan. Most of the people listened with rapt attention until the close of the meeting, which lasted nearly three hours! Saito San, the above mentioned Christian, gave his testimony, telling us how he had been brought to Christ through sickness, brought on by a life of sin and profligacy, and how satisfied he was with Christ, even though his health was even then very poor.

I then spoke on 'The woman who touched the Saviour's garment' pointing out the need for every sin-sick soul stretching out the hand of faith and touching Christ, the only One who can heal the soul's diseases, and finally, Kuramoto San gave a message on Power. This is a message particularly suitable to the Japanese, who are all too conscious of their lack of power to overcome sin in their lives; and the story of One who can give them power to overcome has a peculiar attraction and fascination to many who have only experience failure and defeat.

At the close we had an after meeting, at which over thirty stayed, thirteen giving their names as enquirers, most of who had heard the Gospel for the first time. As we went home that night our hearts were full of praise to God who had so bountifully blessed us. Altogether there were twenty three enquirers as a result of the three nights' meetings, and we have heard since that about ten of these seem really hopeful cases - a very fair percentage in Japan. The Christians also seemed blessed and encouraged, and we should do well to pour out our hearts in believing prayer, that the work which the Lord has begun may be carried on to His glory.

In March 1919 the Secretary of the GVMM Committee read out a letter from the Rev. Barclay Buxton of the Japan Evangelistic Band warmly thanking the GVMM for a gift of £10 sent in recognition of 'their valuable help with the oversight in connection with our mission station in Ashio'.

However the scene was now set for the next phase in the wonderful story of the Miners Mission Station at Ashio. At that same March 1919 meeting of the GVMM Committee the Secretary reported that the Japan Evangelistic Band had sent one of their missionaries, Miss Amy Burnet, to Ashio with her Bible Woman in place of one of the national evangelists. The Committee minute noted that 'Miss Burnet would need the sum of £50 per year from the Mission to supplement her private income and the Bible Woman would require £30 per year. It was agreed that GVMM would also pay £30 to the Japan Evangelistic Band representing one half of the allowance JEB had made to Miss Burnet for removal and furnishing expenses in Ashio.'



Amy Burnet

## CHAPTER 5

### Marguerite Amy Burnet: a unique missionary for a unique place

*Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust Him for His grace;  
Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face.*

Ashio was truly a unique place. The location needs to be described in order to understand the nature of this remarkable enterprise in the Lord's work, frankly the word that comes to mind is 'horrific'. Tucked away high up in the great mountains of Central Japan rising sometimes to over 6,000 feet, the River Watarase snaked down the valley, carrying poisonous copper-bearing water to the sea. The town clung precariously to every flat space in the narrow rocky valley. The forlorn looking streets, the squalid living quarters of the miners - many little more than wooden shacks - the degrading spectacle of wretchedly clad women doing extremely heavy work, the monotony and the loneliness all contributed to low moral standards. Into this unique place stepped a unique lady, Marguerite Amy Burnet. Born in 1878, this Christian woman had been challenged by God to offer her life for overseas mission. In her own personal testimony she wrote, 'In 1914 through one of God's missionary servants, God gave me a clear personal call to the foreign mission field and confirmed it with a definite experience of the filling of the Holy Spirit. But it was not until 1917 that I was free to obey the call and actually go forth. In April of that year God made it clear beyond all possibility of doubt that Japan was to be my sphere of service. A few weeks later I was accepted as a Missionary of the Japan Evangelistic Band. In November 1917 I sailed for Japan via America. Before I had been 12 months in Japan, the need for a specific place began to

be laid on my heart. I heard two missionaries talking one day about a town in the mountains, the copper mining town of Ashio in Tochigi Ken province, where the Glynn Vivian Miners' Mission had a station, a most difficult sphere from every point of view where a foreign missionary was urgently needed. Of all the places in Japan it was the last that I should have chosen on account of its trying and unhealthy climate, its utter desolation from any ordinary fellowship and the rough and degraded character of its population'.

So Amy Burnet arrived in Ashio. By then the local Japanese evangelist was Ota San. It is possible to quote extensively from a number of her reports from 1920.

- Mr. Paget Wilkes of the Japan Evangelistic Band came for special meetings which were held in the Mission Hall and in the theatre. It was also possible to use the hall in Akakura, where there was an attentive audience of about 300. The use of the hall at Akakura was obtained in answer to prayer. This is remarkable, as it is a young men's recreation hall, with strong Buddhists on the committee. We have the names of more than 100 people who want to join a Bible Study Class, and I carry on the meetings every week. Last Friday 100 were present and two women accepted Christ. Nearly all these people know nothing of the Gospel, and many are well educated men. The results of the special meetings cannot be estimated. The whole work has moved on one step forward. We know of 20 cases of definite blessing.
- We tried to get a meeting in the compound where the head mining officials live, but failed. Two of the ladies from there, however, have come to the Mission Hall, an unprecedented event. Please pray for this compound. The Buddhist opposition there is extremely strong, and they told me plainly that they definitely did not want Christian meetings. Had we been willing to talk about other things they would gladly have lent their hall.
- A young official in the Electric Works had been attending the classes regularly, and had told me of his desire to become a Christian, and asked me to teach his wife. He has now come to a real decision and has made a bold stand for Christ, and I believe will be much used.
- One afternoon a miner came into the Hall with a letter of introduction from his neighbour, one of our members. Before crossing the threshold he told us he was so burdened with the remembrances of his sins that he could not sleep. Could we help him? Ota San, the Evangelist, was out, so I explained the way of salvation to him from the Word of God. He then poured out to the Lord a long confession of sin, which I am thankful to say I only very partially understood. He then by faith laid his burden where God had laid it nearly 2,000 years ago, on the Christ of Calvary. Then Ota San came in and explained things to him more fully. He went away after three hours with a smiling face, saying that his heart was now light and he had found peace. He was one of the strike leaders imprisoned during the recent disturbances here; and seemed to have openly committed every kind of sin. He had also contemplated the murder of several Labour leaders who had egged him on to deeds of violence and then denied all complicity with him. He was led to tell his troubles to his Christian neighbour by hearing hymn singing through the wall, and Saito San had already taught him a good deal before he came to us. I do not think I ever so clearly realised the wondrous power of the Cross as I did when I saw this poor, half demented heathen sinner instantly able to lose his burden there.
- The doctor here has kindly introduced me to one of the hospitals and gave me permission to visit freely in the other two. I wish we had more time to make use of this privilege as it is a very fruitful kind of work. Kubota San, a miner, was in the hospital for some weeks through an accident to his foot from a piece of rock falling on it in the mine. While there

he was able to help spiritually three other men in the same ward. One of the three is a seeker. His past life had been very bad, and he was for that reason cast off by his parents. Apparently his failure to find peace is connected with his unwillingness to put things right with his fellow man. Another one of the three seems to be saved, though likely to be permanently lame through an accident similar to Kubota San's. The third man came from a village nine miles away in the mountains, called Kaso and further still from any other town or railway station. Needless to say the Name of Christ was entirely unknown there. He became convicted of sin in hospital, and as soon as able came to the Mission Hall where the evangelist led him to Christ. He returned the next day to his village.

- The repairs to the Mission Hall are completed. It is beautifully clean and smart now, and it is a pleasure to go into it. This, in a land where beautiful things are so much appreciated, means much. We have decorated the walls with texts, and the repainting has made it bright and cheerful. The master painter is an earnest Christian man from Tokyo, and he has done the work very well indeed. He spent his evenings helping us to preach the Gospel. As he is a converted drunkard his testimony was very valuable.
- During the year 18 have been added to the visible Church. Of these two are with the Lord and six have left Ashio, four of them with a view to preparation for evangelistic work. There are many other enquirers whom we had hoped would have come forward, but for various reasons they did not. If funds were available all sorts of extensions and improvements would be possible. What should we expect would be the spiritual condition of an English town of 40,000 inhabitants if there was only one little Mission Hall, with one man and two women whole-time Christian workers? Add to this the fact that Ashio straggles over an area eight miles long, and you have to pass no less than 5 small towns with railway stations before you reach the next place with any Christian testimony!

### The 1922 Tent Mission and Convention

In 1922 a good friend of the Glynn Vivian Miners' Mission, Rev. Dr. Charles Inwood indicated that he would be visiting Japan as part of a special delegation. Charles Inwood was a leading speaker at the Keswick Convention along with other well-known ministers of the time, such as Evan Hopkins, Handley Moule, F.B. Meyer and J.S. Holden. On his return from Japan, in a private letter Dr. Inwood said it was worth going to Japan if only to see God's hand in the showers of blessing which fell on the Tent Mission and the Convention held in Ashio!

Amy Burnet reported 'Dr. Inwood preached at the Tent on the last two nights. It was well filled every night, first with children and then with adults, and there was always a crowd listening outside. At least 200 children, and about as many adults, heard the Gospel with deep attention every night for ten days. The sense of the Presence of God was such as we had not known in tent work in Ashio before! Eternity alone will fully reveal the results.'

The Convention in the Mission Hall which followed was an even more remarkable time. Amy Burnet wrote, 'Early morning prayer meetings and informal morning meetings were held by Japanese workers, and Dr. Inwood spoke at the afternoon and evening meetings, so that as many as possible of the Ashio people might be able to attend. It was a never-to-be-forgotten time of refreshment and Blessing from the Presence of the Lord. At the last night but one Dr. Inwood spoke on 'Revival in Japan'. The meeting

completely broke down as all were pleading as one and with tears that God would pour out His Holy Spirit in revival power on themselves and on their land. In the Testimony Meeting on the last night, everyone present was able to testify to personal blessing received.'

God clearly had worked in many hearts. For example, two young men who entered the Tent quite unsaved became soul-winners, leaders in prayer and serving others. One called Saotomi San, a clerk in the Mining Company's office, although baptised as a child, did not have real faith and his heart was full of bitterness towards his father. A testimony given by another believer of his conversion and whose heart had been in much the same condition as Saotomi San's own, was used by the Holy Spirit to convict him of his sin and bring him to repentance. Saotomi San was lodging in a Buddhist temple with a friend called Shimamo San, who worked with him in the same office. When Saotomi San told his friend that he had become a Christian, the announcement was considered as a good theme for a practical joke. Still the friend consented to accompany him to the Tent the following night and was also most deeply convicted of sin. He came to the Mission Hall in what Amy Burnet called 'a deep agony of soul' and was soon able to trust in Christ as his Saviour. In turn, Shimamo San was the means of leading his friend and fellow clerk, Kuribara San, to the Lord - so Kuribara got the nickname of 'Tent grandchild'.

Shimamo San went on to visit Ginzan Daira, a mining village five miles away, where he used to work, for the purpose of evangelising his fellow clerks in that office. His friends came out to meet him with a huge bottle of saké, prepared for a drinking spree as in the old days. They were dumb-founded when he began a four-hour long sermon instead! Much impressed they accepted his gifts of Christian books and left him the bottle of saké still untested in one hand and a Bible in the other!

Amy Burnet tells another story involving Saotami San and Shimamo San. "On my first Sunday in Ashio, when I preached my first Gospel sermon in Japanese, a young man called Sasaki San was converted. However this young man, through living a distance from the Mission Hall, due to sickness in his family, but still more through fear of persecution, had been absent from Church for two-and-a-half years. Through careful and patient follow-up Satami San and Shimamo San were used to restore Sasaki San to full faith and he was prepared for baptism.'

### Furlough in England with a vision

In 1923 Amy Burnet took some well earned furlough back in England. She, along with Dr. Charles Inwood, addressed the Annual General Meeting of the GVMM in Brighton that year. She also spent a week at Glynn Vivian Miners' Mission in Hafod, Swansea. As can be imagined, her addresses and lantern lectures, as they were known in those days, stimulated incredible interest - there is a note that Christian miners and metalworkers of Hafod raised £6.5s.3d. in order to help support the work in Japan. She explained that the best method of outreach to the miners in Japan was through Tent

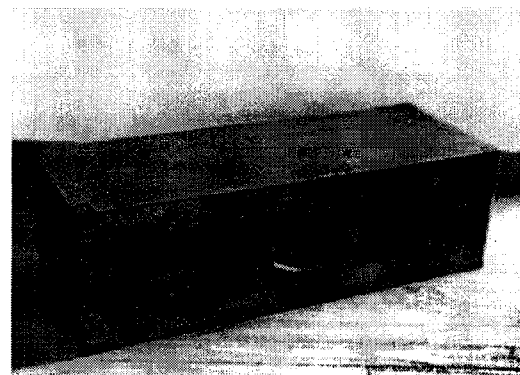
Missions. When the men were converted they gladly came into the Mission Hall for instruction. But it is difficult to get them to come to the Hall beforehand, as their appearance there was taken as meaning that they had become Christians.

Amy Burnet was physically very tough. She had to be. Ashio was no place for the faint-hearted. Several Japanese Evangelists came and went after only a few years. One of them had to leave Ashio on account of his health and went to live in a small town far away from the poisonous fumes of Ashio. He had a comfortable house in that place, but for some reason, perhaps because it was discovered that he was a Christian, the landlord put him out. He had to take any place he could get, however small and unsuitable. The town was completely destroyed by the earthquake of 1 September 1923, which struck Japan with tremendous force. The one house that withstood the earthquake in the entire town was the one to which the evangelist had been forced to move. His former house was destroyed. As Amy Burnet commented, 'the Lord guards His own.'

The 1923 Great Kantō earthquake struck the Japanese main island of Honshu, lasting over four minutes. The quake had a magnitude of 8.3 on the Richter scale. It devastated Tokyo and the port city of Yokohama and caused widespread damage throughout the Kantō region. Casualty figures involved 100,000 deaths, many perishing in the fires that followed the earthquake. In addition, 40,000 people vanished, presumed dead. Over 570,000 homes were destroyed, leaving an estimated 1.9 million homeless. (Interesting note: although the Imperial Palace in Tokyo caught fire, the Emperor and Empress were at Nikko, not many miles from Ashio, when the earthquake struck and were never in any danger.)

Amy Burnet was in England at the time of the earthquake, as she was working on a new project. This was the establishment of a new missionary society called the 'Central Japan Pioneer Mission'. This society was established on Amy Burnet's own responsibility, but with the blessing of the Glynn Vivian Miners Mission. It was obvious to all that she was a woman of great vision for Christian missionary outreach in Japan. She pleaded with her friends in London to extend the work in Japan. Other mission stations, for example among coal miners, would give much needed relief for evangelists affected by the copper fumes in Ashio. These could also provide an outlet for service for some promising young men who had been converted at the Ashio Mission. Miss Burnet told the GVMM Committee she would be willing to be personally responsible for the raising of an additional fund if the Committee would approve such positive evangelism.

So, on her return to Japan, the first outreach from Ashio was a Tent Mission in Omama, a large town south east of Ashio. A small six-year-old Japanese boy attending that tent mission watched with amazement as the 'foreign lady' brought out a box and started to play it. It was a portable organ. This was probably the first step that was later to bring the Rev. Kobayashi to faith in Christ and into a position of Christian leadership in Japan.



*Amy Burnet's portable organ*



When setting up her new missionary society, Amy Burnet realised that she needed help. God answered by sending another young woman to join her. In 1926 Dorothy Parr applied to join the Central Japan Pioneer Mission. The author of this booklet can well remember Dorothy Parr telling an International Miners' Mission annual general meeting in London in 1971 some of her remarkable story:



*Dorothy Parr*

The first time I heard about Ashio, the copper mining town in Japan, was when I applied to join Miss Marguerite Amy Burnet way back in 1926. Before I could speak very much Japanese I was sent up to Ashio to see the work among the copper miners there. Miss Burnet lived in Ashio for four years and when men from the mines got saved they wanted to get their families out of the atmosphere of sin and degradation so prevalent in the town. So they took jobs in other towns in the neighbouring prefecture. Miss Burnet and a Japanese worker tried to follow them up and put them in touch with a Christian church, only to discover that there were no churches. This is how Miss Burnet got the vision of reaching into three prefectures in Central Japan with the Gospel of Christ.

So it was that the church in Ashio, started by Rev. Wansey with the funds and support of the International Miners' Mission, is the parent of the Mission that I joined in 1926. Although the Central Japan Pioneer Mission has now closed down, it was used by God for the establishment of the churches in the three prefectures. It in turn became the parent of the group of Japanese Churches known as the Fukuin Dendou Kyoudan (FDK for short). So you see that the Miners' Mission is really the grandfather of a group of churches with which I am privileged to be working.

Ashio is a very difficult place, and yet out of this squalid industrial mining town have come a number of full-time Christian workers in Japan today - men and women who have been saved up there in the copper mining valleys have heard God's call and are preaching His Word in other parts of Japan.

Other missionaries joined the Central Japan Pioneer Mission down the years. Although the Mission was wound up many years ago, now in 2010, there are 40 thriving churches in the Fukuin Dendou Kyoudan group in Japan with a membership of 1,300 believers led by 50 pastors.



*Inside the FDK Omama church, June 2009. Nicholas Kirkland, great-grandson of Rev. H. Raymond Wansey, can be seen on the right enjoying the Japanese hospitality.*

The copper mine in Ashio was closed in 1975. Dorothy Parr, then still active as a missionary in Japan, wrote at the time,

The meetings in the Ashio church continue with God's blessing upon them. Inevitably with the closing down of the copper mine the young people of the town go off to the cities for employment. The authorities are working hard to get the town back on its feet. One big project now in hand is the construction of a tunnel between Ashio and Nikko. *(Note: many of the ex-miners were employed to drill the tunnel through the rock in those days).* When completed, the long and tedious trip over the mountain road with its many hairpin bends will be eliminated. The journey between the two places will take less than half the time. The Communist headquarters in the town is just across the road from the Ashio Church, so near that they cannot help hearing the singing and the testimonies. Incidentally right next door to the Ashio Church is a Buddhist temple and graveyard. So afresh we would covet your prayers for this work, truly a 'light in a dark place'.

The copper ore in the mines around Ashio may have been exhausted, causing the mine to close, but we are thankful to God in His goodness for all that has been accomplished in the Name of Christ down the years. The faith of the believers of Christ Church, Ashio remains strong and bright to this very day.



*Members of the congregation of Christ Church, Ashio at the Centenary meeting attended by Nicholas Kirkland (centre back row) in June 2009. Some of the senior members recounted how their fathers and grandfathers had known Rev. Raymond Wansey's ministry in the early days.*

# 足尾宣教100年

ニコラス・カーランド氏の来日を記念して

## 歓迎会



Beatrice - Mrs. Paul - John - Raymond - Peter  
1912年10月日本にて（ニコラス氏家族写真）

### プログラム

1. 賛美
2. 祈り
3. 挨拶
4. ニコラスさん紹介
5. お食事
6. アンサーについて
7. 質疑応答
8. お祈り
9. 記念撮影

ニコラス・カーランド氏はワンセイ師の長孫（ワンセイ師の孫男・パウロ氏の孫さんの息子）で、現在ニュージーランドに在住しています。  
今回、同氏は初来日にあたりワンセイ師の足跡をたどることを思いつきGVMIMへ問い合わせをしました。その結果、福音伝道教団の存在を知り、教団史編集委員会に連絡してきました。そこで、教団史編集委員会は足尾宣教約100年にあたるため、福音伝道教団の設立に深く関わった足尾の最初の宣教師ワンセイ師の働きを、曾孫のニコラス・カーランド氏と共に振り返り、神様に感謝する会を開催することになりました。是非ご出席ください。

日時：6月2日（火）午後5時～7時まで  
会場：大間々キリスト教会（☎0277-72-3649・73-1190）  
会費：1人 1200円（食事代含）

尚、準備の都合上、参加希望者は5月31日まで大間々キリスト教会高木寛まで電話にてお申し込みください。  
信使の方の参加を歓迎します。

主催・福音伝道教団教団史編集委員会

*Flyer for the Centenary meeting invitation.*

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Nick Kirkland, Raymond Wansey's great-grandson

Ken Osborne, Archivist, Church Mission Society

for their support and interest in this story.

# INTERNATIONAL MINERS' MISSION

*Digging deep for some of the poorest communities in the world*

The International Miners' Mission continues to this day its work of 'Introducing Miners to the Master'. Although support of work in Japan has long since come to a close, the IMM is still committed to taking the Gospel to miners and their families worldwide. Projects to mining communities currently include: **Ethiopia, Romania, Ukraine, Sierra Leone, Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Zimbabwe, Philippines**. In all cases the IMM serves alongside national churches and/or mission agencies, encouraging and financing ministries specifically in mining areas.

There are now five IMM Committees. These are in the **UK, Switzerland, USA, Australia and South Africa**. Each is autonomous, but we collaborate on a regular basis.

Our mandate is the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ to 'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising....and teaching them to obey all I have commanded you'.

Our priority is to take the Gospel to mining communities world-wide, which often are in places where there has been little or no previous contact with the Good News of Jesus Christ. We seek to encourage local churches to send their evangelists out to mining areas. This is often pioneer evangelism and the work involves hardship in the Lord's service.

You can become involved - praying for this ministry.  
This is our greatest need.

For current news we will be happy to send you:

Our magazine 'Safety Lamp'

Our prayer guide 'Prayer Link'

Arrange to visit your local church or fellowship to tell you more about this ministry

If you would like to support the work financially or require further information,  
please see details on the back cover.

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