



Mrs. Quay, far left, her daughter, Mrs. Wang, far right, and her granddaughter, Kue-Tau Wang, center. Mrs. Quay's daughter was the first pupil in the first school of the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions in China. Kue-Tau Wang studied at Chicago University and became the head of Domestic Science at McTyeire Methodist School in Shanghai. PHOTO: MISSIONARY VOICE SEPT 1920

THE STORY OF MRS. QUAY

by Walter R. Lambuth

The Rev. Dr. Walter Russell Lambuth (1854 to 1921) grew up in China where his father, the Rev. Dr. James William Lambuth, and mother, Mary Isabella McClellan Lambuth, served as Methodist missionaries. He earned both theological and medical degrees at Vanderbilt University in the United States. In addition to his mission work in China, Walter and his parents opened a mission station in Japan for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Walter R. Lambuth returned to the U.S. to become a mission secretary in Nashville and was eventually elected as a bishop. He opened work in the Congo, specifically the Wembo Nyama station, and then in South America. He learned early on to trust the people he was called to serve as they were best able to interpret Christ for their neighbors.

In the early years of our China Mission (1845, MEC, South), a young woman named Mrs. Quay was employed in the home of our missionary doctor, W. G. E. Cunningham. Quay was an ardent Buddhist. When she arrived in the morning, she produced a little wooden idol wrapped in

a cloth, set the image on the window sill, and reverently bowed before it. Later, when she became a resident of the home, this act of worship was repeated morning and night.

Mrs. Cunningham, almost in despair, proposed to dismiss her. The doctor advised patience and urged that

she go on teaching her, little by little. The story of Jesus and his sacrificial love seemed for months to fall upon deaf ears.

One morning, Mrs. Quay came to Mrs. Cunningham and said, "I have been trying to get you to worship my God. Having failed in that after

“In the missionary’s relations with the natives, he should trust them. Suspicion generates dishonesty. Patience is to be cultivated. Firmness, but uniform and unvarying kindness and courtesy, should be the attitude and spirit of the missionary. He should study their customs, never make fun of their religion, nor hold their fetishism up to ridicule. There is a better way. All harshness is to be avoided, and frank concession is to be made if we are in the wrong—and restitution.”

BISHOP WALTER R. LAMBUTH, FROM THE MARCH 1914 *MISSIONARY VOICE*.



Bishop Walter R. Lambuth

so many efforts, I now come to ask about yours.” Evidently the ice had been broken. As the story of Jesus and his love was once more told, the young Chinese woman drank it in. She wrapped up her idol and said, “I will worship it no more.”

She became more devout and zealous as a Christian than she had been as a Buddhist. She learned to read and memorized large portions of Scripture and many hymns. After a couple of years of instruction, she offered herself for Bible woman’s work.

When Mrs. J. W. Lambuth (Walter’s mother, Mary) reached Shanghai, Mrs. Quay came under her instruction with other Bible women. Her greatest desire was to prayerfully ponder the Scriptures. The missionary impulse was upon her. She was not satisfied until she had entered every home within her reach.

When Mrs. (Daisy, Walter’s wife) Lambuth and I returned to China in 1877, Mrs. Quay came to see us at once and looked us over and remarked that we were very young and inexperienced. We quite agreed with her and requested her help.

We were appointed to Nanjing, a few miles in the interior. She insisted upon going with us against our advice.

She was over 70 by this time. Nothing, however, could prevent her from carrying out her purpose, and she appeared on the canal with a small roll of bedding in a mat strapped to her back, a three-legged stool in one hand, and a pewter teapot of good size in the other. Up her right sleeve, carefully wrapped in a large cloth, she had her well-thumbed New Testament, hymn book, and catechism. We weighed anchor and sailed for our new station.

Upon arrival at Nanjing, Quay said: “You young people have much to do in getting ready. As a doctor, you will soon be opening a medical dispensary. You spend your time for the first few days in preparation, and I will spend mine in opening the way by getting in touch with the people.”

She was true in her word. Going down the canal, she found a woman washing her clothes. “You look hot. Won’t you have a drink of tea?” Mrs. Quay planted the three-legged stool, produced a teapot already filled with hot tea, took a drink herself to show that it was all right, and then handed it to her new friend. She asked, “Why do you wash your clothes?” The reply was “to get them clean.” “But your heart needs washing, and nothing will cleanse that but the blood of Jesus

Christ.” This was entirely new and strange, but Mrs. Quay told the story of how Jesus lived and died and rose again in the simplest and most direct way, and it went straight home.

In a few weeks, because she was frail, and the weather was bad, Mrs. Quay contracted pneumonia. I could do nothing for her but sit by her bedside holding her hand and telling her how sorry I was that she was so far away from home. She looked up at me with a smile and said, “How can I be sorry? I always wanted to be a foreign missionary. Jesus gave me the joy of coming up here away from my home and friends to tell them how he left his home above to save us from our sins.” As she lay there, so calm and peaceful, her new-found friends crowded around and stayed on after her death. They said, “We have never seen anything like this. Surely her Jesus must be the true God, and when we die, we would like to go like Mrs. Quay.”

Thus, it was that this first Bible woman not only pioneered the way for the missionary but left a track of light along the way that continued to glow through the years.

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