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RAMABAI MUKTI MISSION

PRAYER BELL

January—February, 1949

BAPTIZED UNTO NEW LIFE

On October 30 we gathered once again near the Banana Well for a baptismal service. This time there were fourteen young women who were ready to witness to their faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, and each one had already given such a definite testimony to this fact that we rejoiced over them with great joy.

The first to come forward was Subhadra, who came to Mukti ten years ago as a little Hindu girl deserted by the husband to whom she had been married in infancy. She is now married and in a home of her own, where we pray she may continue to show she is a follower of Jesus Christ.

Of those who followed her, some were of our own family who have spent their lives here, while some were boarders. The mother and aunt of one of the latter had come from a distance to be present at this occasion, and their hearts must have been filled with joy, as ours were, when they saw this young girl step forward with a radiant face to testify to her love for her Lord.

One other was the eldest daughter of one of the families forming the Christian community living at Mukti's doors, and some of her relatives were also present.

The last one was Kamala, whose mother came as a Hindu to our Rescue Home and who, herself, has found Christ to be her Saviour and Friend and now rejoices over her child's experience.

All these had been chosen from a large number who have been attending preparation classes, and it is hoped another group will soon be ready to witness to their belief, but it is only after some hours of prayer and consideration that some of those individually interviewed are selected, for unless there is a real experience to which to testify and of which there has been practical proof in the daily life, there has to be a further period of instruction and preparation.

We now crave your prayers for these young disciples, that they may daily grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. —ISABEL CRADDOCK.

Give me wide walls to build my house of Life—

The North shall be of Love, against the winds of fate;

The South of Tolerance, that I may outreach hate;

The East of Faith, that rises clear and new each day;

The West of Hope, that e'en dies a glorious way.

The threshold 'neath my feet shall be Humility;

The roof—the very sky itself—Infinity.

Give me wide walls to build my house of Life.—E.L.

SOWING FOR A HARVEST

The cool season has come again, and we have just finished a glorious month's work in and around Supa. Our group consisted of Bible-women and medical workers, Okhambai in her usual capable way taking care of the medical work, with Mothibai acting as her valued assistant, for the latter is well known to the people through her gospel work over the years. Vishranti helped with the feltograph, as Dalliebai and Bakulabai told forth the gospel message. Two blind girls completed our team as they sang the gospel message. Bapu and his family were waiting to welcome us, and it was a joy to see their eagerness to have the Word of God explained to them from day to day.

May we picture for you one day's work. Imagine a cool, clear, frosty morning, and as the sun rises, along all roads leading from about fifty villages surrounding the temple of Yesuba come hundreds of people, all eager to reach the temple early on this auspicious day, for then they can make requests which they, poor, darkened souls, believe will be answered. As we mingled with the throng of people, a woman came measuring her length along the dusty road. Her daughter-in-law was childless, and she had come to plead for a grandson. Behind her were twenty-five young women almost worshipping her for her devotion, and chanting the name of the god. At last they reached the temple, and a great shout of joy went up as this exhausted soul threw herself at the feet of the idol, not much caring whether she lived or died, for she had done her part to invoke the blessing of the gods.

This useless sacrifice makes our hearts ache; but how are they to understand unless we, whose souls have been lightened, bring the truth before them? Dalliebai brought the first message, and, with the aid of the feltograph, held the attention of the people for two solid hours, as she told the wondrous story from the virgin birth of Christ to His death and resurrection.

Then the four Bible-women separated, and for another hour each one told the gospel to their own crowd of listeners. We sold all the gospels we had with us. So eager were the children for them, that they rolled on the ground if their parents refused to buy. Surely there will be fruit from this month of sowing. Will you water the seed with your prayers, that we may all reap together?

—EILDA AMSTUTZ.

HIS GIFTS UNTO US

The radiant beauty of Bethlehem's star shone down upon the holiness of the angels, the wonder of the shepherds, and the devotion of the wise men as Christians and Hindus sat side by side in the school at the beginning of Christmas week to see and hear and wonder again at the message which has been sung and told around the world for centuries at Christmas time.

The red cellophane Christmas decorations in the compounds were something new, something to be felt, and rubbed, and tasted. The children became so excited that they jumped and ran and shouted and laughed, and, because it was Christmas, no one said 'Hush,' and no one said 'Don't.' At their Christmas parties games were forgotten, food was left on their plates over the thrill of little treasure bags from friends in America which contained ribbons and balloons. That night when the children were all tucked in bed, the missionaries went to each compound to sing carols, and they found the balloons tightly clasped in little hands too thrilled to relax in sleep.

The dawn of Christmas morning was filled with the voices of the carollers as they toured Mukti singing of our Saviour's birth. At ten o'clock the village people joined us in a time of worship at the manger and of looking at the cross to which it led.

As the people filed out of church on their way home, their arms were laden with gifts and candy. The air became red as the Blossoms whirled their bright pin-wheels; the air became dusty as the Fruit Garden children jumped rope, and the whole landscape was filled with colour as Mukti became a little village of complete joy and happiness.

Christmas night when all of Mukti were sleeping, the missionaries bowed their heads in thanksgiving to a Father in heaven who had given us Christ Jesus and with Him had given us the key to a joy that outshines and overcomes the darkness and despair of Hinduism.

As the missionaries opened their gifts around a candle-lit tree, their hearts went up in thanksgiving once again, this time for those people in the world around who had remembered Mukti in prayer and by gifts, and who had helped to make this day one of unspeakable joy in a land of sadness.

—C.T.

OUR GIFTS UNTO HIM

On her hands and knees a crippled, old lady crawled down the long aisle of the Mukti Church to the altar, where she laid down her birthday gift to her Lord. A stalwart man with radiant face walked forward with a big rooster clasped in his hands. One whose face was not so radiant said, 'Don't give that. He's your best rooster,' but the answer came back, 'Nothing but my best can be offered to my Lord.'

'We're going to bring something to the Lord Jesus just like the wise men did. We're going to bring Him our sweets,' said the children as they came forward in their coloured dresses and bright ribbons to place on the altar their sweets, and one saw anew the beauty and fragrance that caused Ramabai to call them 'Blossoms.' The Fruit Garden children and the teen-agers brought the grain which they had subtracted from their food each day for weeks, that they might give a birthday gift to their Lord. The blind were led down the aisle that they might lay at His feet their gifts of sacrifice, for a gift to be worthy of Him must entail sacrifice. In two, long streams the people came to the altar with faces radiant with the joy that is from above.

May we list for you those gifts laid on the altar for Him: 488 pounds of grain, 18 eggs, 11 chickens, 1 goat, fruit, clothes, cloth, vegetables, soap, sweets, sugar, coconuts, ground nuts and money, the total value of all the gifts amounting to Rs. 565-0-6.

May we ask you to picture what it means for people to give up 488 pounds of their staple food, for children to give their sweets away and to keep none for themselves, for a woman, who received six rupees and clothing for her whole year's work, to give five of those rupees as her gift, for a girl who has no money at all to receive a gift of one rupee and then to put that whole rupee on the altar? But above all that, can you picture the fullness of the Lord that must be in their hearts to cause the whole front of Mukti's big church to be filled with such gifts?

As the missionaries joined them in the giving, the heart of Mukti was as one in worship and praise of the Saviour who had given us Himself and all of heaven's goodness. Truly when the Lord blesses, there is not room enough to contain it. Will you praise His name with us?

—C.T.

THROUGH THE OPEN GATE

As the shores of America faded into the distance, there came to my mind the promise in Psalm 121: 8, 'The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.' How my heart rejoiced with thanksgiving for the comfort of these words as at last I was on my way to God's chosen field of service.

'Haven't you gone yet?' These words greeted me for many months prior to my sailing, as time after time my going was delayed. 'How long, O Lord?' I would cry. Always the answer came back, 'Rest in the Lord and *wait patiently* for Him.' Now as I look back I can understand why there was delay each time and praise Him for His leading.

The voyage over was a wonderful one of rest and relaxation. It was so nice to have Miss Schrag's company and help along the way. We had blessed times of fellowship together with several other missionaries who were aboard, and many opportunities to witness for our Lord. We saw many things of interest and realized anew the great handiwork of our God.

What a welcome we received on our arrival at Mukti! It was something I shall long remember. As we stepped off the train, we were garlanded with garlands of beautiful flowers and were greeted warmly by the missionaries, who made me feel right at home. While riding along in the tonga, I noticed that even the bullocks were decorated for the occasion. How thrilled I was as I passed through the 'open gate,' about which I had heard so much, and gazed into the faces of those for whom so often I had prayed. I was asked to stoop down as two small girls with sparkling eyes and beaming faces decorated me with another garland. As I made my way down the reception line, where outstretched hands greeted me, and saw those happy faces, I couldn't help but compare them with the sad faces of those whom I saw along the way in the villages—those without Christ and without hope.

When left alone in my room, I knelt down and thanked the Lord for safely bringing me to His place of appointment, and asked Him to make me worthy of being a co-worker in a place with such a great heritage as Mukti.

—ELSIE ROHRER.

WHITER THAN EVER BEFORE

'When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice' (John 10: 4).

It is precious to know that when the Lord sends you forth to the regions beyond, He goeth before. Yes, sometimes the way seems rough and rugged and the sea very deep, but with Jesus as our Pilot, Shepherd and Friend, we have nothing to fear.

I do rejoice in the Lord because I was privileged to have a furlough in my home land, and I am especially grateful for the many new and old friends who have become Mukti's intercessors.

As we left the shores of New York on September 25 at six o'clock in the evening, after having said the last good-bye, we keenly realized the Lord's presence as we heard His voice saying, 'Fear not, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'

We are grateful to the Lord for the safe and pleasant voyage. Because our ship was a freighter, there were only thirteen passengers, and we became well acquainted with each other. We enjoyed the fellowship and times of prayer with the missionaries on board ship, and then the Lord gave us the joy of witnessing of His saving grace to others.

It was a glad day when, on October 26, I set my feet once again on India's soil. It seemed like good, old days to see the face of one of our missionaries who came to meet us in Bombay.

When we came to the last part of the journey, the train seemed to move very slowly. It brought great joy to our hearts when we found a host of friends waiting for us at the Kedgaon station. As we were greeted by the many friends from villages far and near, mingled with the joy of meeting them once again came a heavy burden of prayer for the lost among them. 'The field seemed whiter than ever before.'

I was glad to meet once again our dear co-workers, who were awaiting our arrival at the station. Yes, it even seemed a thrill to sit in the old tonga driven by two white bullocks, which were decorated for the occasion. As we jolted along, many questions were asked until we reached the 'open door.' Here we found to our delight all of the missionaries and the great Mukti family, waiting with lamps all trimmed and burning bright.

We are grateful to the Lord and thank everyone who prayed for us, as we know that it is the answer to their many prayers that we are in Mukti today. We are happy and rejoice in the Lord, because we know we are here in the centre of His will, and now we desire the prayers of our friends, for,

Having given ourselves to the Saviour,
He has called our lost souls to win ;
Then let us go fourth as His reapers,
We are labourers together with Him.

So let us bear fruit for our Saviour,
He who forgave all our sin,
Then we'll not be ashamed at His coming,
As co-labourers together with Him.—*N.I.*

—MARIE SCHRAG.

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C O V E R P I C T U R E

PANDITA RAMABAI

The Prayer Bell is the official publication
of the Ramabai Mukti Mission, Kedgaon,
Poona District, India.

Copies will be sent upon request.