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Horrible Cruelties of Japanese in Korea is Told by Missionaries

Men Shot Down in Number without any form of Trial and Villages Burned; Christians Wiped Out

TOKIO, Jan. 22.—Charges that the Japanese troops sent into the Chinese district of Chientao, a Manchurian community just over the Korean border, indiscriminately shot hundreds of the villagers without semblance of trial, burned villages, schools, churches and crops, are made public by Canadian missionaries stationed in Manchuria and Korea.

Replying to these charges, Lieutenant-Colonel Hata, of the Japanese Imperial staff, at the Japanese War Office, stated that the Japanese soldiers had burned churches and schools only after evidence had been obtained that they were being used as centers of intrigue by Korean malecontents.

To Investigate

The Japanese government has sent to Chientao a commission to investigate the conduct of the troops. This body is headed by Colonel Mizumachi, formerly military attache at Washington.

One of the missionaries, Dr. S. H. Martin, of Newfoundland, a physician attached to the Canadian Presbyterian Mission at Yongjung, who visited the village of Norahawie on October 31, two days after the Japanese went through that district, states:

"The facts recorded below apply to the whole district of Kando or Chientao in the southern part of the provinces of Kirin, China.

Japan, under the strongest protest from China has sent over 15,000 men into this part of China with the seeming intention of wiping out of existence, if possible, the whole Christian community, especially all young men.

Burning and Shooting

"Village after village is daily being methodically burned and the young men shot, so that at present we have a ring of villages surrounding the city that have suffered from fire or wholesale murder or both. The following facts are absolutely accurate:

"At daybreak a complete cordon of Japanese infantry surrounded the main Christian village of Norahawie and, starting from the top of the valley, set fire to the immense stacks of unthreshed millet, barley and straw and then ordered the occupants of the house outside. In each case as the father or son stepped forth, he was shot at on sight, and as he fell on his face, perhaps only half dead, great piles of burning straw were thrown on top of him.

Some Blood Marks

"I was shown the blood marks on the ground caused by the bayonets thrusts inflicted on the men as they strove to rise from the flames, in spite of the fact that they had been three times shot at close range. The bodies were soon charred beyond all recognition. The mothers, wives and even the children were forced spectators of this treatment of all the grown males of the village.

Houses were fired and soon the whole country was full of smoke, which was plainly visible from this town. The Japanese soldiers then spread out and burned the houses of Christian believers in other villages all down the valley to the main road. Then they returned home to celebrate the Emperor's birthday.

Women Wailing

"As we approached the nearby villages we found only women and children and some white-haired men. The women with young babies on their backs were wailing up and down wailing.

"I photographed ruins of 19 buildings, among which were old men tearing their hair and crying while mothers and daughters were recovering bodies or unburned treasures from the burning ruins. So many women were crying and I was so angry at what I had seen that I could not hold my camera steady enough to take a time exposure.

"We have names and accurate reports of 32 villages where murder and fire have been used. One village has had as many as 145 inhabitants killed. Houses have been burned with women and children in them. At Sonung-tung 14 were stood up in front of a large grave, then shot and their bodies destroyed with burning wood and oil. This is typical."

Shot and Burned

The Rev. W. H. Foote, Canadian Presbyterian missionary at Yongjung, names several villages in which the homes, schools or churches of Christian natives were burned and says that in one of them 25 people were shot and the bodies burned. These cases he declares are "absolutely authentic," the premises having been inspected by four missionaries and a customs official.

Quoting Koreans as his authority, he says that 23 persons were shot and seven burned to death in their own houses at Cheng San; that 80 were shot at Un Tong Ja and that these were all Christian villages.

"The soldiers and commanding officer who go to these places," asserted Mr. Foote, "as a general thing have no conversation whatever with the people, but do their diabolical deeds and pass on. Ku Sei Tong is the only place where any reason was given to the people at all for the action. A Korean accompanied the soldiers and told the people that the officer said he

had evidence that the owner of the house had collected money for Korean patriotic purposes. If only the offenders suffered, even the Koreans would not seriously object; but it is because the perfectly innocent and helpless are done to death without even an opportunity to say a word in their own behalf that the injustice and hardship appears."

Actions of Soldiers

Describing the actions of the Japanese soldiers at Kan Chang, Rev. Mr. Foote said that the young men of the village were "herded in front of a Korean house and without even a form of examination, shot down, 25 in all. They the bodies were heaped together in two piles and covered with wood and burned. While the fuel was being placed on them, some of the wounded still were able to rise, but were bayoneted to the ground and met their fate in the flames.

"I know these people well," Mr. Foote continued. "They live in an out-of-the-way glen. The land was not fertile and firewood is scarce. They were a quiet, hard-working people who struggled hard to make a living. Their church and school, their Bible and hymn books, their Sunday worship, and, above all, their Saviour, were their joy. They were not patriotic soldiers and disapproved of the church taking part in politics."

Five Executed

Miss Emma M. Palethorpe, of Ontario, a member of the Canadian Presbyterian mission at Yongjung, tells in her statement of the execution of five men from the village of Suchilgo who, she says, were led by the Japanese soldiers to the top of a hill about three miles from Yongjung and there put to death.

"In the top of the hill," she declares, "there is quite a large hollow not visible from the road or village. The victims were made to sit at the bottom of this, where they were slashed at with swords. It is reported by an eyewitness that two swords were broken and then the awful work was finished with bayonets. Then the loose earth was pulled down from the sides of the hollow to cover the mutilated bodies."

Villages Burned

In answering inquiries at the Japanese War Office, Lieutenant Colonel Hata told the Associated Press correspondent that the number of Japanese troops employed in the Chientao affair was 5,000 not 15,000. Villages had been burned, he said, but only in cases where the majority of inhabitants were known to be in league with the outlaws.

Referring to the charge that an organized attempt was made "to wipe out the whole Christian community," Colonel Hata said that it was possible that a majority of those who had been executed were Christians, but they were not punished for their religion, but for banditry and rebellion. No charge was made against the missionaries.

Colonel Hata, while admitting that harsh measures had been adopted, said bad conditions had existed in that district for a long time owing to the unchecked activities of Chinese bandits, Korean outlaws and Russian Bolsheviks. He said he was confident that the Japanese soldiers had not been guilty of the barbarities with which they had been charged.

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