

Chapter 24

Triumph and Tragedy

BATANG CHRISTIAN ORPHANAGE TENTH ANNIVERSARY
7-7-29:

“The main purpose besides celebrating the advance of orphanage work was to overcome some of the ignorance in Batang re: the reason for having an orphanage. This is necessary as people are much more interested in civic affairs now. Some libelous statements had been made in Chinese newspapers. So we invited a select few of the official community to hear the Constitution and financial report of the Orphanage and a list of the orphans, their ages and school standings. On 7-6 we planned a meeting for the Chinese merchants, officials and military. Sun. the 7th was the actual anniversary for the Christian community. Mon. a meeting for the Tibetan leaders.”

“Among those who helped in the programs: 3 Chinese: Djang Key Ming, husband of an orphan and head secretary at the civil officials, Fu Kai Di, secretary in the army, and a Christian from Yachow, Li Chi Chang, my secretary. Three Tibetans: Ye She O Zer, assistant at the school, Tsiden Pentsok, Dr. H's Tibetan teacher, Gezong Trimish, my teacher. All gave unstintingly of their time.”

“On Sat. 80 of the 95 invited were present inci. Gen Ma, with Rev. Li presiding. The meeting was opened acc/to Chinese custom with the ringing of a bell. Rev. Li told of the purpose and meaning starting with the opening of the Orphanage in 1919 by Mr. and Mrs. Ogden. Djang Ke Ming read the will of Sun Yat Sen followed by silent prayer. Rev. Li told a short history using one of the orphans, Hao Yao Ni, as example, who was just 6 months old in 1919.”

“Djang read the list of orphans' names, Li Chi Chang read the constitution and Fu gave the financial report. Orphans sang several Chinese songs, Gen'l Ma gave a short speech, Col. Wu also spoke and two Kuomintang Committee men gave fiery Revolutionary speeches (which were too long and resented). Tea and Chinese cakes were served and we took photos of all.”

“Sun., the same program was held in both Tibetan and Chinese. Peterson spoke both times stressing that we were in Ba to make disciples and the Orphanage, School and Hospital were means to that end. Whenever anyone said anything bad about any part of the Mission it hurt each and everyone. Djang Key Ming spoke appreciation

of the Orphanage; his meaning to go on record publicly opposed to the statements of the Committee men on Sat.”

“On Mon. Lamas and their families were represented, 25 being present who were not of the Mission. The same general program was given. It was felt by all a good start in presenting the work of the Orphanage in Ba. Mrs. P- was unable to attend. RAP”.

7-7-29 Dr. Bare to Corey Not true that he wrote information to anyone in China; only registering the birth with the consulate per the law.

7-9-29 Bares to Duncans: Apricots are ready, they had to give away most of the crop, “I hate to do it because it spoils the people to be pauperized.” (!!)

Gegin Atring made arrangements for chair-bearers to be sent to Litang when the request came from the Duncans. Their arrival has been so long in coming enthusiasm has diminished.

7-17-29 Grace Young to Louise D-: She is planning an early return to Ba. Mrs. Ogden has been sick with her asthma and they can't start back till spring. She hopes they can go early and not be in the hot weather on the Yangtze. She hopes for D's support to urge for an early return. She has gone to conventions; on her way to Seattle she plans to stop early to see the MacLeods. She expects to give a 3-minute talk on Music in Tibet and to sing. She wishes she had gone with the Duncans. “Tell your man his book is fine.”

7-24-29 Marion D- to the Foreign Dept.: Their party was escorted to Batang by over 100 soldiers with 30 cannon, besides the Washi tribe driving the yak herd, and the mayor of Batang. Probably the winter will be a quiet one as no one will want to challenge the big guns.

Due to the population, altitude, and accessibility Duncan sees no argument against the expansion of the Mission. Due to its lack of proximity to other missions a family at Tat would be a great help. Otherwise when there are enough native workers an out-station at Litang or Hokeo could be a dream of the future. He had probably been asked to report on these possibilities and shows himself to be very outspoken, sanguine, and unperturbed by the unsettled conditions around Ba. There is already very real worry that Batang may have to be closed. Duncans are arguing against this and tells of the three young men just graduating in Yachow who can take leadership. This will offset the loss of Lee Gway Yuin, who is such a great loss not only in the medical work but in evangelism.

He promises that ‘economy’ will be his watchword, “I can truthfully say that such has not always been my policy - having been

schooled by Shelton and Hardy that, 'we should worry about expenses as we have plenty of them.'" His pragmatic attitude hopefully can calm the situation and reason may prevail. Yet it is all too possible that the lack of the will to reconcile will be a reason for giving up on that little Mission so far away on the Border of Tibet.

Gossip had been that the Treasury was empty and the Bares had watched to see what Peterson would do. They were glad the boys from Yachow had not arrived yet as Lois would like the problem of Yishi Chudren to be solved before they do.

Dramatized by the Bares, the Duncans arrived 8-4-29. The Christians all turned out. With all the drama that the Bares wished, Duncan held an immediate meeting with them only, going through the legal forms of taking over the Mission work without the knowledge or participation of the Petersons. The next morning he confronted the Petersons, taking all the books of the Mission work and telling them they had two weeks to leave. There was no reconciliation, no question of mercy and none of the gentleness that Jim Ogden begged for them, not even repentance asked. Petersons were traumatized. Bares had been so emotionally drained this gave them some of the relief they had asked.

8-5-29 DiDee to Minnie: Not asking for money, but telling her she had to sell her wedding ring, when Gway Yin was so sick. It was given by Minnie on her marriage.

Arrived 8-14-29 in response to Georgia's letter "Dad" Fillmore wrote "Dear Raymond, We expect to treat you in a Christian way, so far as we understand that way. We would not have other than a Christian attitude of mind and heart and conduct toward you or anyone else. Not only for your sake but for the sake of Georgia and the children, we hope you will make good and we will do anything in our power to help you do so...With best wishes, Dad."

8-25-29 Raymond P- to 'Dad' Fillmore: I have been mulling over a letter to you; whether it will be satisfactory to you or myself. It is useless to write to Corey. I wrote saying we were sorry. He had such an angry tone and we wish he had reserved judgement. If you talk to him get him to see that there are two sides and ours had not had showing.

Three weeks ago Duncans arrived and the first day they acted decent. The next they said we had better leave soon and to speak to the men who brought them in. We had no time to think Tues. he said all our work was to be turned over that week. Wed. a letter from Mrs. Duncan as secretary set forth the action of the TCM (assembled on Mon. and Tues.) which set the days for our work to be turned over by different items. We tried not to cross them and no time has anything

been done in a regular or Christian manner. We had set rules and regulations and all has been set aside. Boys and girls of the Orphanage run the streets, which we had tried to correct. Bares took over the evangelistic work and made radical changes without consulting the natives.

Mrs. Bare in a very angry way and unreasonable language asked Li Gway Gwang to leave and acted very mean with him simply because he has been and still is my friend. The native Christians are very much upset about this and speak of the persecution the Bares and Duncans are heaping on us. Mrs. Bare is a bad egg and Dr. Bare is stubborn. Words are not adequate to express our dislike and distrust of them. They have 10 or 20 satellites. Most everyone here from officials to peasantry are friends to us in a real way."

"One spoke to me two questions: 'Will they be able to stay without friendly people? and Will it profit anything or anybody?' Signs of the times in China: the native Church is expecting to have a say. B-s and D-s have publicly announced that they four, no more, are going to run things. Duncan is in bad with the officials because he left (in 1927) against the wishes of these same officials; another time he disobeyed the official by going on a trip over the Tibetan border without permission. (*Both true.*) Chinese do not forget things like that."

"They have started firing people, some connected with the Mission for 10 or 20 years, simply for being friendly with us. Mrs. B-runs entirely on feeling, you know how reasonable a woman is. (!) They have torn down everything we have tried to build up and not made a single constructive step - this also from the natives."

Are they saying this just to please them, as before? Remember that Raymond Peterson believed that he had been forgiven by God as Georgia had forgiven him - this for over a year. By the omission of anyone confronting him he had come to feel that the original sin was done with. So he cannot understand why his good works have not been acceptable. Actually the Duncans should have listened.

Raymond's letter continued: "Duncan owes me money for some things he bought - has he the money? We are ignorant of so much they have taken for granted, I have at last worried. However I still believe in God even if my faith in some so-called Christians has been badly shaken. Duncan got me into trouble by his giving me checks the bank turned down, ought to be \$2000 Mex."

Raymond describes their plans for traveling and expresses their feeling that they are launching out into the unknown. "We do not look upon our work here as a failure. With the help of our friends here, to their peril as it now seems, we found a great deal of satisfaction. This gives me courage nothing can destroy."

At least, Jim would never hear of it - he committed suicide 8-29-29 too weary to continue carrying his self-recrimination.

“In closing let me say I have never doubted that you and your faith in me has helped over many a bad place. Your letter saying you expected to treat me in a Christian way is certainly appreciated for I certainly respect that sort of Christianity you have. I really have not as much hate in my heart as one might gather. We are trying to leave that sort of thing for the other fellow. Georgia thought it might give you the wrong impression. We have tried desperately to keep our heads level and our hearts clean.”

“I will write Corey about our future plans. One more thing it is Lois Bare’s boast that her father baptized S.J. Corey. The fundamental difference between us and Bares is theological as between the Standard and the Century. I look forward to long talks with you, however there would be pain for both of us should we come home immediately. With lots of love, Ray.”

Note written on a letter of Peterson’s by Duncan: “Peterson is dodging the issue here which is that Mr. P- debauched Ruth Ogden so that a child was born & demoralized Harold Ogden so that he had a child by a native girl.” *Harsh words by a strict Victorian raised in a tough school of life also avoids the issues of reconciliation and forgiveness - which the Batang Christians would have preferred. This, also, would have shown the UCMS that the TCM could manage not just as an ongoing mission but with the renewal of the Flame which is redemption.*

There were more accusations, most of them unreasonable, without recourse, meted out as punishment to the Petersons. In his disappointment Raymond makes some wild plans, based partly on the fact that no one listened nor counseled him -there was no help at all from the Duncans.

8-24-29 Minnie’s P.S. to Mr. Duncan: “Jim has been real sick for nearly two weeks running a temperature. If we ever come back to Ba & Dr. Osgood was to come - what do you think? He wrote Ruth he would like to. Jim had had typhus, dysentery and malaria the year before. Now with relapses, his body is rebelling.

Aug. 28 & 29, 1929 Minnie to “Dear Ones”: “I thought he might be a little better, but on Wed morning Ruth went to the garage and found he’d hanged himself. I think in the night he must have gone insane, lost all his thinking power and ended his life. I just know he didn’t mean to do that and I am sure he never knew even one thing when he did it. We cannot worry about it for we know he is happy now and so at rest...I really don’t know how I can face the future without him, but God is my refuge and strength and He will sustain and keep us

in his love. I felt this should go early to his parents...I cannot understand and am dazed..."

8-28-29 James G. Warren of L.A. to Bro. Corey: Telling of his involvement in the tragic proceedings leading to Jim O's death. He learned of Jim's investment of all his savings from their missionary years and from the sale of some property he owned into some real estate which would not return anything for a long time. He had been promised differently. None of these investments would he have advised Jim to make.

Mr. Warren found he could get a refund of some of the money. Jim did seem encouraged for a while then lapsed back into melancholia. "There is no doubt he was thrown off his mental balance by the unwise way he had invested his money without taking any of his friends into his confidence." Mr. Warren hoped since Ruth was planning on entering California Christian College and Harold would be ready to enter in another year as well as Mrs.O- needing continued support that the UCMS could find a way of continuing support of them.

9-2-29 Marion D- not knowing yet of Jim's death wrote a cheerful letter telling of school starting with the three boys from Yachow returning to help. Duncans have arranged for Yishi Chudren's and the baby's support by giving her sewing to do for the payments from a Christian lady in L.A. for them. They are living with her father who is now a gardener for the D-s. The two children are both fine tots, pretty, attractive and strong. He describes the marriage of Shaum Chuh and Tringguneang led by Li Gway Gwang - very impressive. They are both orphans so the TCM gave them 500 Rs. together as they have no families for support. *The normalcy of his tone would help Minnie feel that the 'mess' was cleared up.*

9-4-29 Mother (Fillmore) to Georgia (which she didn't get until Shanghai 1-8-30): Mr. Corey called us about Mr. Ogden's death. He was found dead in his garage supposedly from a weak heart. Your father had an engagement with him, but was hindered from keeping it. It would have been hard on both so perhaps it was just as well. *Another cause for Jim to have felt very anxious!*

9-6-29 Harold Ogden to Duncans and Bares: "It is with a saddened heart that I write...we have all been saddened and shocked." He tells of Jim's trip East and the gain he got was lost by a heat wave "...he never seemed to rally again..." He also tells of a real estate deal Jim had gotten involved in - trying to make some quick and high return. *Don't forget this is the year of the Stock Market Crash and there were sharks out there selling 'get rich quick' schemes. . Many saw their mistake and regretted - some with their own deaths. Jim also regretted. There had been too many regrets probably, this was just a last straw.*

Mrs. B's letter to Mrs. Shelton just another.

“We tried to get him not to worry and to take everything so seriously, but he seemed beyond that...We did all we could for him and loved him to death. We buried him in a beautiful spot. We could look at the mountains, and it made us think of Tibet. I know he would have preferred to be by Shelton...”

From Ruth: “We are grief-stricken & so sad, we hardly know what to do - God knows the way, He holds the key, He guides with unerring hand, sometimes with tender eyes we'll see; yes, up there we'll understand.” Later 9-7-29, “After serving 24 years in Tibet, honestly, truthfully, sincerely, conscientiously, and by far faithfully, for others. He was not ready to quit his task for Tibet, for he had many plans, and was doing so much for Tibet. I am confident he was faithful to the last minute. Oh, my sweet, my precious Daddy, it is hard for us to carry on.”

9-7-29 Ruth Ogden writes to Ba, giving her version of their shock and sorrow. She is very insistent that they want their Mother to go back to Ba as this is what their dear Daddy would want.

9-8-29 Minnie writes to Ba friends & Co-Workers telling them further details of Jim's condition after his unwise investment. It had been his habit to go for early morning walks so Minnie, who slept separately to give him more rest, thought nothing of it when he left the house for the garage at 5 AM.

9-12-29 Ray to Dad: “It looks as if they were expecting to do us dirty, Duncan did not turn over a letter brought for me. They will not return us, give us any work, prevent us from getting any kind of work in the States, have not sent us any money for expenses to the coast. Duncan said he did not have enough to pay his own way here. I will not accept money from him, will be under no obligation to him. Biggest thing I am worried about is the insurance, they refused to pay the premiums and they are lapsed beyond redemption. I am out several thousand dollars - 10 policies at \$250 per year.

I have written the Tibetans (Washi - caravaneers) we have to go in their caravan. Working as hard as we can to leave when they come for us. The Christians and some of the other friends here gave me a large silver pendant and some nice words urging us to return here. They are writing the UCMS and the Consul stating our side. All that we worked for has been destroyed, but it cannot have been in vain. *It wasn't because when the Mission closed the Christians were ready to take over. The Fillmores kept their promise through all the turmoil and pain and did it so well that their grandchildren knew nothing of Alberay until late in life. Minnie Ogden was a good grandmother to them, also.*

9-14-29 MHD to Yocum: Petersons are planning to leave as soon as they can. "Ma Siling invited 300 Sangchen here to go with him to fight the Dunba. Those Sangchen robbed everybody right and left. They broke into one of the empty houses but got nothing; only broke door knobs they didn't know how to twist to open. The commander told them to stay away from our homes and they did but we kept the gates closed with people on guard. They have all gone now but the people of Ba are very bitter. It is a case of robbers fighting robbers."

9-14-29 Dr. Hardy writes to "My Dear Mrs. Ogden" telling her how difficult it is to write. When Jim visited them "He was in better health and spirits than I had seen him in years." Hardy had received a letter from Miss Lucy DeMoss King, "I have never known a more devoted man than he. His personal adoration of Christ was very beautiful and inspiring." "We who knew him better... agree with her in the above summary of his life. We were all made better by contact with him, and his memory will always be a blessing."

Letters to Bro. Corey and the Ogdens from Duncan, re: correcting three problems: That of Alberay staying in Batang. Duncans thought Petersons were going to bring him to America (which was disallowed by Lois Bare who would not turn him over to them.) which must not happen. Bares will bring him back in 1931. 2. That of Yishi Chudren and Opal Ione - she will always be considered a bastard here and Yishi Chudren a whore. Her mother will not give her up hoping that O-s will see to Harold's marrying her. She says she will raise her up as a beggar and tell her story far and wide. 3. Jim still holds the land mortgages and these must be disposed of as it is causing a turmoil in Ba and officially. Both letters expressed the love and respect Ogdens are held in both by them and the Tibetans of Ba. Both want them to come back, but these problems must be solved.

9-27-29 Louise as TCM Sec'y now, is quite agitated and tells Bro Corey of her dismay over the letters that the Petersons had written to him about the Bares. It was claimed that there were statements in them that were untrue and inaccurate. She claims they should be counted as personal letters since they did not have the approval of the TCM., *i.e. Bares refused to attend meetings*. There was also a request for not only a medical family, but as the Petersons suggested, a request for an industrial-orphanage manager family.

9-24-29 The audit of Peterson's treasury books by Dr. Bare and Mr. Duncan was sent in showing only minor inconsistencies. One, Pete apparently found it difficult, as all the missionary treasurers did, to manage the continual changing rate of exchange so he did not try to figure it out - just recorded the amounts.

The bigger problem according to Duncans/Bares was his

'overpaying' some of the employees, Fu Gwey Djung and Shado, but particularly the Lee brothers. This was partly due to charging merchandise given as part of their salary and not registering the true value and part to paying them in silver which had a greater value than the copper Rs. So Duncan determined to re-pay the treasury from their wages. Even for Li Gway Yin he was charging his wife, but Pete promised to re-pay for her.

The money was all there, but Duncan objected to the cost of 100 Rs spent on the Orphanage 10th Anniversary. Vouchers were not double-signed (Bares would have no dealing with the Petersons) and there was no sanction by a Mission vote (Bares refused to meet with them) for certain expenditures.

Louise refused to accept any minutes kept by Georgia after the Bares refused to meet with them, since they were not officially sanctioned.

9-30-29 To Whom It May Concern: from RAP. "This is to certify that I, Raymond A. Peterson, an American-born citizen, together with my wife, Georgia F. Peterson and 5 children are leaving Batang by request of the UCMS and not of my own free will and accord. In obeying their instructions I admit no guilt of any charges which they have against me as after repeated questioning they have refused to state definitely and clearly the reasons for such action." Sent from Ba to American Consul, UCMS, Rev. Fillmore, and the TCM.

10-3-29 Duncan writes Mrs. Hardy to let them know they have some money left now that accounts are straight in the Shanghai bank. "The Washi are in and Petersons are all packed ready to leave tomorrow. We have maintained cordial relations but the Bares have not for some months."

The Petersons leaving was accompanied by most of the Christian community. Those who did were encouraged by their love for the Petersons and some by Mr. Duncan's accompanying them for a day's journey. At the last, from the valley below, seeing the terrible winter storms around the pass, Duncan asked, hesitantly, if they should really go. Wearily they went.

Duncans live in the Ogden home. Tudebao went soldiering to Nanking and was later joined by Della leaving their children behind. He has T.B. and they are going to Bakers at Yunnanfu. Many Ba boys are emigrating to Nanking, some Christians, also. "We have asked the Board to send MacLeod or Hardy to Tatienu to act as Mission Business agent."

10-19-29 MH Duncan to Russell Morse and family: He welcomes him back to China presuming he has reached Yunnanfu and remembering the happy days of fellowship together on the trail - 1921.

Report is that Atuntze has been sacked by the Gonkalama's men with the aid and connivance of the Yaragong who were supposed to defend the place. The Orphanage stuff in storage there has been reported looted. Petersons left. Tudebao and Della are somewhere near you - we hope she kept her skirts clean in regard to Peterson as "we love her and her husband and hope they will find a way to have their family (together)."

10-27-29 A cablegram came telling the news of your sorrow and bereavement. I am having a difficult time trying to reconcile myself to this loss to our work and to myself personally." Mrs. Duncan goes on to tell a story of Mr. Ogden in a Mission meeting talking of the work and those who had died and the slowness of progress in the work saying, "he felt that in the future there would have to be more martyrs to the cause of Christianity in Tibet before any great headway was made. I am wondering whether God chose him...?"

"I know of no other man, who has done so much in the name of our Brotherhood for the cause of Christ in Tibet, than James C. Ogden, your husband and my friend and counselor. Mrs. Rhinehart (Rijnhart) stirred up the sympathies of our people to carry the blessed news to the Tibetans. Dr. Shelton followed with his healing touch and his great friendliness but the person who carried the burden during the heat of the day and who organized the church, the school, the orphanage and helped in the first days in the dispensary and hospital and who stayed and held the work together while it was in its beginnings, was Mr. Ogden. It is too soon to mention our wishes but they follow what Lha Hse said to me, 'Wouldn't it be fine if Mrs. Ogden would come back with Miss Young?'" KLHD

11-1-29 Minnie O- to Marion D-: she will take up with Mac the question of returning for a few years to Tachienlu to handle the business needs of the Mission from there. She also writes of supporting Yishi Chudren and her baby by a woman of her church in L.A. Perhaps she can buy some land and house with the money. Nothing is decided yet about her own return to Ba.

11-16-29 Marion D- to Minnie O- "We are all grieved...it has made me feel more resentful against Mr. Peterson for we believe that he was largely to blame for this latest addition to your already overburdened soul. You must not lose faith in the providence of God." He again refers to her return to Ba. Yet there is the question of her granddaughter, Opal Ione. Also, Harold and Ruth are at the age when they must be making their own way. "Left to themselves they will develop qualities of resourcefulness and strengthen their character in ways that cannot be seen now...it will benefit you to separate yourself from the daily problems of their training and educating...it will enable you to

forget much of the past which bears down upon you.

You and Mr. Ogden have given more, have sacrificed more for the Tibetan people than any other. Your reward for this magnificent service will be great. On their own initiative the church, school, and orphanage are holding a memorial service for Mr. O-in honor of his friendship and service here among these people. They have been told that Mr. O- was very sick preceding his death. It is unlikely that the manner of his going will ever reach these people.” At least 200 people attended with Mayor Lo and the commander Chung Yen Giang acting in the absence of Ma Siling. (11-20-29)

12-12-29 Duncan tells the UCMS that the manner of Mr. O’s going “would be commended by the Chinese and his children would lose all ‘face’ and never be able to hold up their heads from shame again.” Certainly Ruth and Harold would know of this; absorbed from childhood, though they would try to disregard it in America.

Duncan notes to the UCMS, Foreign Dept. that Mrs. Ogden would be safer traveling than families as the Chinese and Tibetan both have a chivalrous regard for older women. He would send trusted men to pick her up in Tatienu for the last stage.

From a scrap sheet off Corey’s desk (undated) from an interview of Mrs. O- with Leta E. Taylor about Tibet: Mrs. O- should have a single woman’s salary with a sufficient allowance for Ruth and Harold. Only one is needed at Tatienu, possibly Dr. Osgood. MacLeod thinks work cannot be closed now. We should save by sending Minnie O- now, also a new doctor. He is ready to go when D-s come out. Mrs. O-wants to do the right thing about H’s child - put her with other Eurasians - get Alex (Paul?) to find out. Ruth should have the say about the Bares’ baby. Young Ogden is bound to go at his own expense, but hope we will put travel in budget. Miss Young will go anyway. Mrs. O-wants to stay until Petersons come.