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MISSIONS

THE TRUTH ABOUT TONQUIN.

By Rev. C. H. REEVES.

Anam is a long narrow strip of land, rising rapidly from the coast to the high mountain chain which forms the boundary between Siam and Anam, lying along the shore of the Tonquin gulf and extending from the Chinese border on the north to the borders of Cambodia on the South.

About 25 miles from the Chinese border it broadens from a strip comparatively uninhabited forest land about 30 miles wide, to a tract of country in the shape of an isoscles triangle with its base along the frontier of the provinces of Kwong Sai and Yunnan in China and its apex at Vinh (see accompanying map); this triangle contains by far the largest portion of the population of the whole of Anam and is called Tonquin by the French, and "The kingdom of the North" by the Anamites and Tonquinese.

It is to this last mentioned portion that I would confine myself, wishing to bring it before your minds as one of the most needy fields and one which in the future we hope to see taken up by the C. M. A. in connection with our South China work, as it is many ways lies right at our doors.

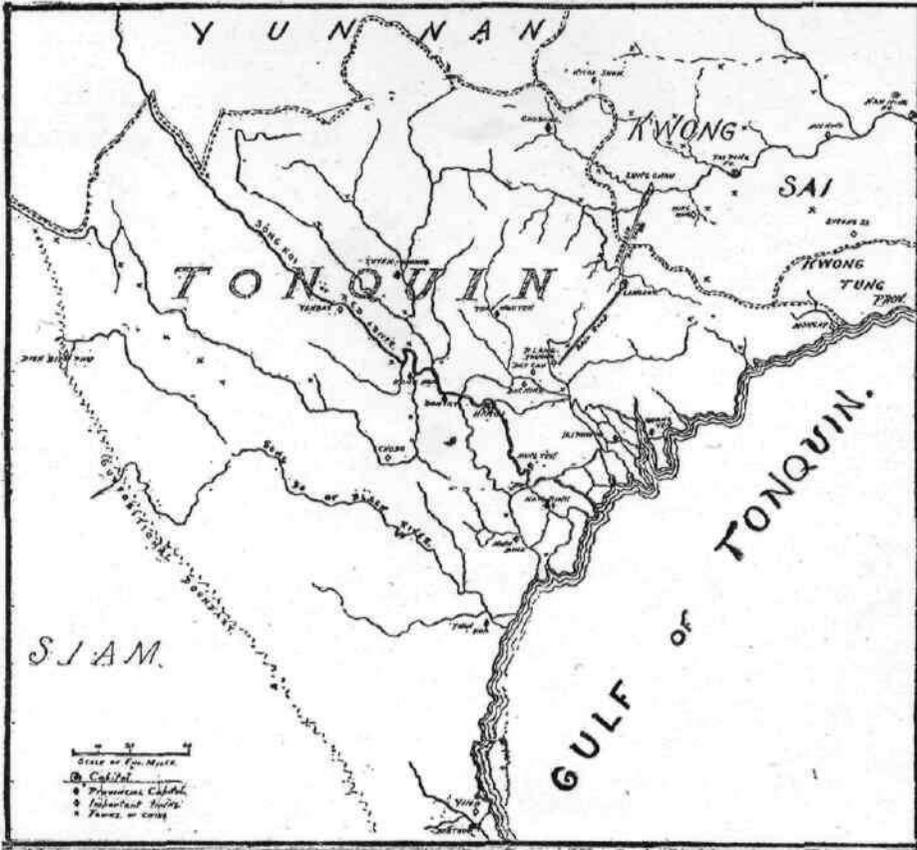
Anam was at one time under hereditary chiefs; then came a time when it came under tribute to Siam, and still later to China and Siam together. Sometime in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries it be-

came a dependency of China, the same as Tibet and Mongolia are today. In 1802 the old Anamite king, Nguyen, "with the aid of our four French officers sent by Louis XVI., at the instance of Bishop Arden," again subjugated the country, and it was under the rule of him and his descendants till about 1862, when the French took active measures to make it a colony of their own, which was finally done about the year 1874, when a treaty was drawn up and signed, and still later strengthened by another treaty in 1881, giving still larger concessions,

Company took measures to establish trade with Tonquin, establishing "factories" at Hong yen; but they were not successful and soon moved their factory to Japan. Following these efforts of the Dutch, the Portugese, Japanese and English also made attempts, but owing to the unsettled state of the country evidently were not repaid for their trouble. The fact of Tonquin being under French rule would more than likely impede the entrance of Protestant missionaries, owing to the power of the Church (Catholic) in State affairs. But if the

Lord's time has come to evangelize this country, which to the present day has never had resident missionaries within its borders, nothing can hinder.

Tonquin may be divided very roughly into four divisions; the first, and most thickly settled, being formed by the different mouths of the Song koi river (the Red river of the French), which here forms a delta. This delta is in the form of a triangle with its summit at Sontay, and its base along the coast between Quang-Yen and Ninh-Binh. Nearly the whole of this delta is subject to annual inundations which extend from May to October to a greater or less extent. This being the case, of course, the climate is very telling, and as



MAP OF TONQUIN.

so that today part of the country called Tonquin is in reality a French possession; the French within the last ten years having intersected it with military roads and established at every little point of vantage a military post, drafting into their army the majority of the able-bodied Anamites, leaving only the women, children, and those too old for military service to till the ground.

As early as 1637 the Dutch East India

it is impossible to get pure water, fevers are very prevalent. I was informed by several of the French officers, whom I met, that the term of service in the Tonquinese-French army was but two years, and even with this short term many died. The following quotation from high authority is to the point. The climate of Tonquin varies greatly. In the interior the winter is too cold and the summer too

hot for Europeans. In the delta, the winter is pleasant, but in summer the heat and the rain tell. Dysentery is common, as well as sunstroke. In the hill country dangerous fevers are common. Sanatoria may be founded in the North and



TYPES OF MIAO PEOPLE.

East, near Quang Yen; by means of such health resorts, according to medical evidence, it is possible to keep the French troops only two years in Tonquin." A. B. Colquhoun, F. R. G. S.

Secondly, the plateau country lying in the north, which rises in steppes from the Song Koi and its affluents near Hanoi, and gains a summit north of Quang yen.

Thirdly, a mountain belt cut through by various rivers extending south of the Song koi, between the sea and the main Anam range.

Fourthly, the hill region on the north and east of the Song koi. This region is mostly covered with forests and inhabited by aborigines and fugitive Chinese, and among the latter are to be found the remnants of the once powerful Tai Ping army that overran so much of China in 1840. They are now but little less than bands of robbers going under the names of the "Black" and "Yellow Flags." It is this last mentioned portion that would be reached from western Kwong Sai. The mountains in this division fall rapidly to the Kwong Sai border.

The main and only important river of Tonquin is the Song koi and its affluents. This river, which has its rise near the city of Ti Li Fu in Yunnan (a C. I. M. station) is un navigable from its source to the Tonquin border; from here to the sea it is more or less navigable, having, however, many sandbars and rapids which hinder navigation. On the lower stretches of this river, and on some of its affluents there is now steam navigation, so that in this way much of the country could be easily reached. The two main affluents rise in Yunnan, and like the main stream, are only navigable in part. In the eastern part of Tonquin the West river of Kwong Sai has its rise in two affluents; one having its rise on the borders of Yunnan, and being navigable from Coabang to the Lung Chau, and the southern branch rising in the mountains which divide Kwong Tung and Tonquin, and having sufficient depth of water for small boats from within one day's walk down the river from Langson. These two branches join to form the West

river at Lung Chau, in Kwong Sai, which is fifteen miles from the border.

The principal towns are Hanoi, the capital, with a population of about 100,000, and the center of Tonquinese civilization; Haiphong, with a good sized French population, and Namdingh, with 40,000. The country is divided into sixteen provinces, with a capital bearing the same name as the province. Generally speaking, these capital cities are of small population from 2,000 to 10,000.

There is but one main courier route from Hue, in Anam proper, to Hanoi, but from here to the Chinese border there are two—one via Langson and one via Coabang. These roads are impassible, however, for nearly one-half of the year, owing to the inundations in the delta. Besides these there are now built or building a good many military roads to different parts of the country, and of course there are footpaths, used by the natives for years, over nearly all of the mountain ranges, but many of them, like one I went over, go up the beds of creeks, dry perhaps in winter, but during the summer full of water, so one has really to go up streams lengthwise to cross some of the ranges, and on reaching the summit to follow another one down the other side. It is a noticeable thing that all of the main roads run to China.

Like most of China, all of the valleys, even up into the mountains, are cultivated, and to a great extent with the same produce rice, sugar cane, sweet potatoes, and silk being the chief products.

The whole population of Tonquin

breed. In all of the cities the business streets remind one very much of a Chinese city.

Of the Tonquinese proper, the largest part of whom are found in the delta, the following quotation gives a better idea than I can personally. "They widely differ from those in the South. Originally sprung from the aborigines of the hills, who are clearly connected ethnologically with the aborigines of China and the Laos of Siam, with the seaboard people, they have been intermixed with the Chinese, and have adopted the Chinese literature, administration; and religion. They have a nose less flattened than the Chinese and cheek bones more projecting, and are bigger and better proportioned than the Anamese of the South. Their characteristic is slimmess. In contrast with the Chinese they have fine black eyes, and fine skin, a good presence and beautiful black hair, which is never cut, but worn chignon fashion, with the aid of a pin. They are addicted to the disfiguring practice of blackening the teeth with a fine paste made of sticklac and polished with burned cocoanut shell, which gives a fine polish, very bright and shining. When I asked one of them why they did so, he replied, "Dogs have white teeth and we are not dogs." Their characteristic may be said to be effeminate, sober, industrious, intelligent. They are said to have a nature that is gay, loving noise and fetes, having no care for the morrow. Docile and submissive when led they can become vindictive on occasion if driven. They are poorly educated.



GROUP OF YUNNANESE.

does not exceed 10,000,000; the larger part of these being in the delta.

All of the business of the country is in the hands of Chinese from Canton, Fokin, and Hainan island. These have mingled freely with the aborigines and Tonquinese, so that a very large part of the population is either Chinese or half-

following blindly Buddhistic practices but indulging mainly in ancestral worship adopted from China. Wanting in grit, indifference and want of character seem to sum up their characteristics."

Of the aborigines less is known, but the researches of linguists and ethnological students such as Mr. E. H. Parker,

315 lead one to the opinion that they are composed of representatives of the Miao people of Southern Kwai Chau and Northern Kwong Sai, of which there are three distinct classes found in Tonquin from the Chinese border well across the country to the Songkoi river. These are the white, red and black Miao people, so called from the costume they wear, all speaking much the same language, but with dialectical differences. Still another family is said to come also from Kwong Sai, but of them very little is known. Besides these, there are also a few scattered tribes of To yan (earth people) who are widely scattered and have very wide dialectical differences of language. Further toward the Siam border are found a large tribe or tribes of Muong people who are closely related to the Laos of Siam.

religions of Tonquin. In my trip I saw hardly a temple of any kind, and as most of my trip was made thro' aboriginal country, I am led to believe that, as in



TYPES OF MIAO PEOPLE.

the case with many wild tribes, they have no one religion but rather a spirit worship.

Catholic efforts. As early as 1596 members of the Dominican order of Catholics entered the country, but were shortly expelled. In 1615 members of the Jesuit order from Macao made a second attempt, and were so successful that before many months they sent in a call for more workers, who were shortly sent to them, but their success was short

from Catholic official sources is that there are in Tonquin today 471,000 converts, or in the whole of the French possessions, including all of Cambodia and Cochin China 700,000, with nine vicar apostolic bishops, 200 missionaries and 300 native evangelists. It is interesting to know that though this much work has been done by the Catholics, still the two large districts lying along the Chinese border, Caobang and Langson, have been unworked, and while unworked by Protestants, they are still free from a false religion, which makes the work, as in all Catholic countries, doubly hard.

Protestant efforts. These are limited to a few trips by Bible society agents, who met with but little success partly because of the lack of education of the people, and still more from the treatment received from the French, who in several cases arrested the bookseller and destroyed his books without the least provocation, and in several cases those so arrested were kept a number of days in jail and then released without trial.

Tonquin is today truly without the Gospel. Like all Roman Catholic countries, there are special difficulties placed in the way of the Protestant worker that we, who are in lands where the State and Church are not one, do not have to meet;



THE MEKONG RIVER, ANAM.

It is among this people, numbering from 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 that a good deal of our work from Kwong Sai would be centered.

Religious efforts. Buddhism and ancestral worship seem to be the national

lived, for they were soon under constant persecution, and many of both priests and converts lost their lives. They also were finally driven from the country; but not discouraged. In later years other sects sent out workers, so that the latest reports

but even though there are diticulties our God is more than sufficient to meet them all if we but advance in His strength.

The country is opening in many ways The French have just received a new concession to extend their railroad, whiel

is now built as far as Lang Son and being built to Lung Chau in Kwong Sai, on to the capital of Yunnan province. In this way it will connect our work in South China very easily with the Anam work if a center were but started at Lung Chau, which owing to its being on Chinese and not French territory, would be free from many of the restrictions that would be placed upon the workers if they were located in the country itself.

The French are building roads all over the country, and steam launches are plying on most, if not all, the navigable rivers, so that as far as communication from China to Tonquin is concerned, it is a simple matter. But with all of these physical advantages is the need of the country. 10,000,000 who have never heard the Gospel, the men to carry the Gospel not at hand, if they were, where are the needed finances? Who is there who will meet this need? Men; young men who, not only do not fear roughing it but who, really enjoy it; for this is what much of the work will be at the beginning and perhaps all of the time, for as far as reaching the aborigines are concerned, it will all be mountain work. A fair knowledge of French will be a very great help, if not a necessity, for workers will have to meet the French on every side and from my own experience I can say, work through an interpreter, even if you know Chinese or the language of the country, is very, very unsatisfactory, to say the least.

As far as money is concerned, I think it will take more per year to live in Tonquin than in China for the French are high livers and the business people seem to know it already and have placed their prices accordingly. Besides this, whenever it is possible to get into the country itself and open stations it will be necessary to build your own houses as they do in Africa, and this means more money in hand than is absolutely necessary here in China, where there are houses, such as they are, to rent. Above all, a trust in the living God for ones' health, as well as for needed supplies.

Who will go? Who will give?

"He comes! He comes! The Bridegroom comes!"

The "Morning Star appears";
The "cloudless morning" sweetly dawns,
Saints, quit this vale of tears!
Your absent Lord no longer mourn;
Reproach no longer bear.

"He comes! He comes!" Rise, happy saints,
To meet Him in the air.

"He comes! He comes! The Bridegroom comes!"

The Church is now complete;
Her Lord beholds her clean and fair,
A partner for Him, meet.

"He comes!" His purchased bride to claim;
Her mansion is prepared.

"He comes! He comes!" Rise, waiting saints,
To meet your waiting Lord!

"He comes! He comes! The Bridegroom comes!"

He shouts, for great His joy;
As yet, unseen by mortal flesh,
He carries in the sky.

The marriage o'er, to earth He'll come,
No longer hid from men:

He'll come! He'll come! With all His saints
As "Son of David" then!

Lung Chau not yet occupied.

Reeves describes the country ^{He} and envisions evangelizing north & west in the mountains among the "aborigines," whose centers are in Langson & Cao bang. Rivers, ^{roads} and railroads being constructed into China will facilitate missionary work. He sees it being connected with our work in South China.

He describes the Vietnamese of the north
the religion
the strength of R.C.

Need young men able to rough it
knowledgable in French lang.
money - living costs higher than China
to build houses - can't rent