

ANNAM Land of the Tranquil South

GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

This name, like most of the proper names in the Annamese language, is quite suggestive. It is composed of two words or character, "An Nam". The first, means, "Peace" or "Tranquillity," and the second signifies "South." Thus the sub-title is simply the translation of the title.

"This name was formerly used for the name of all Tonkin, Annam and Cochin-China, but at present it is the name of only one of the five States of the French Protectorate, namely—Annam, Tonkin, Cochin-China, Cambodia, and Laos. ~~are the other four States.~~

~~"As our work is established to reach the unevangelized millions of Annam we shall write particularly of the race speaking this one language.~~

"French Indo-China is the eastern half of the great peninsula known as Indo-China, which lies to the southeast of Asia between India and China. Its name alone indicates and explains its geography.

"The French Protectorate is bounded on the north by three southern provinces of China, i.e., Yunnan, Kwangsi, and Kwang Tung, on the west by Burma, Siam, and the Gulf of Siam, on the south and east by the China Sea.

"The mountain range which rises in Tibet extends to the central part of Indo-China, and here the range is known as the Annam Cordillera. In the northern part of Laos is found a large plateau three thousand feet high and in various places there are mountains ranging from 4,500 feet to 6,000 feet high.

~~"The most important rivers are the Mekong in the south and the Red and Black rivers in Tonkin. For vessels of small draught these rivers are navigable for many miles into the interior. Where they empty into the sea are found wide and fertile valleys. The most important of these valleys are found in the Red River district in Tonkin, and in the provinces of Than Hwa and Kwang Nam of Annam. The province of Kwang Nam alone yields \$300,000 of taxes from the fields.~~

~~"The climate of Annam may be called hot. In Saigon it is always warm and the humidity is very great. In Tonkin the humidity is also great in the summer, but during the months from November to March it is cool. At Tourane it is dry and quite warm except for a few winter months. As Tourane is situated right on the Bay and with a view out to open sea, the hot summer days are tempered by the daily sea breeze.~~

ORIGIN AND MIGRATION.

"The Annamese, broadly speaking, belong to the Mongolian race as their language and racial characteristics show. ~~But what was their origin and how they have come to be in Annam are matters about which les savants (the wise) differ. Some affirm that the Annamese have migrated from Tibet, while others contend that they have come from the provinces of Yunnan, Kwang Si and Kwang Tung.~~

~~"It is certain that most Indo-China peoples, such as the Siamese, Annamese, and Laotian races, have come from China. It seems quite probable that they have been driven south by a more progressive and virile race. It is thought~~

and years ago. Their history dates back that far and at various times they are found to be in bondage to the Chinese, and again and again have they shown their national spirit by repeated revolts. Their present relations with the French Government have come through internal strife and Chinese oppression.

"French activities in Annam first began when one of the kings sought aid of France late in the 18th century. This was done to check Chinese influence, but when the Annamese turned and slew several Catholic missionaries, the French Government promptly took steps to punish the offenders and concluded the matter by making the Annamese Emperor's domains a French Protectorate. ~~While all Western governments rule in the East with an iron hand not permitted at home, nevertheless they bring with them a righteousness that far exceeds that of the Oriental. The personal security of both native and foreigner is much greater in Annam under French control than in China under Chinese control.~~

~~"During the past twenty-five years of French occupation, railways have been built in Cochin-China, Annam and Tonkin at enormous expense. Public roads have been made and public buildings erected. Taken as a whole we cannot but say that righteousness and justice prevail much more under the present regime than under the old form of government.~~

POPULATION.

"The matter of population in Annam is about as certain as elsewhere in the Orient. The leading year book issued in the colony sometimes states the population of all French Indo-China to be from 11,000,000 to 20,000,000. The fact is it is well nigh impossible to take any reliable census of an Oriental people. The following, however, seems to be a conservative estimate of the population. Tonkin 15,000,000; Annam 6,000,000; Cochin-China 3,000,000; Cambodia 1,000,000, and Laos 2,000,000. This would make a total of 27,000,000 people under French influence. ~~It is likely that the estimate for Laos is far too low, as there are many strong races dwelling in the mountains whom it would be difficult to number. Think of all these millions as "unreached and uncared for."~~ One is constrained to ask, "Is it possible that there are so many who have never heard, while the churches at home surrounded by luxury, are rapidly losing their pilgrim character and failing to carry out the command of the Lord Jesus Christ?"

LANGUAGE.

One of the most remarkable proofs that the Indo-Chinese peoples belong to the great Mongolian race is found in the similarity of their languages. The chief languages of China have from four to nine tones. The Annamese and Thai tribes all have eight tones, and they correspond to the eight tones of Cantonese but do not have the middle entering tone of the Cantonese. Many words in the Annamese have no doubt been drawn from the Mandarin and Cantonese with a slight difference in pronunciation or tone.

"The popular name for the Annamese tongue is "Kwok ngü," or ^{original} natural language. The Catholics, however, have made a Romanized system and applied this name to their written system, ~~so that one might take it to be the original written form of the people.~~ The Annamese have made the literature of China their own, and today they have no other classics than those of the Chinese. Many of the Chinese characters are used in writing the vernacular but there are

the educated class the classical books are read in Annam as well as in China, but the colloquial books of one country are quite unintelligible in the other. Then, too, as there is such a difference between Annamese colloquial and the classical, it is imperative to employ the colloquial to a greater extent than in China.

RELIGION.

"The Annamese are very religious. For centuries they have worshiped some outside and unseen power that perchance they might receive immunity from evil and obtain blessing. The three religions, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, are found in Annam, and each one has a numerous following. Indeed, the same people may worship according to all of these doctrines. An Annamese can leave a Buddhist or Taoist ceremony and proceed to worship his ancestors in a Confucian temple without a sense of shame or hypocrisy. But what have these systems of worship ever done for the Oriental? Always holding out hope and yet leading to the darkest night where one ray of light can never shine. ~~These religions and systems have been proved and found unable to satisfy the human heart or to lead a soul to penitence and to God.~~

CATHOLIC MISSIONS.

"The Catholics have been located in Annam for more than 300 years. Their policy here is not essentially different from what it is in other Mission lands, and their fruits are just as deplorable. They manifest the greatest zeal and have penetrated to the most remote parts of the land. It is true they have established hospitals and schools at various places, but this beneficence is robbed of its virtue when one must continually witness the mercenary actions of one who should give himself to the spiritual regeneration of a heathen people. What a travesty it is upon religion that one who is seeking light and help should be led into such error and awake to find his soul and body and earthly possessions bound to those who offer so little spiritual comfort.

"Although Catholicism has so long been established in Annam, yet the resemblance between Buddhism and Romanism is so striking to even the untutored native that he does not deem it worth while to change his religion from the ethical view point, but at times he may do so from commercial motives. ~~We are firmly convinced that Romanism as seen in Annam has no message worthy of the attention of the Annamese.~~

"As a people they seem to have lost their national spirit and their national independence. They have proved the inefficiency of their native religions and we believe that the present moment is the time to bring them the Gospel of Salvation, that they may learn of the way of Righteousness, Holiness and Eternal Life.

PROTESTANT MISSIONS.

"While Protestant societies have been hindered by various circumstances, finally an entrance has been effected and our Society has opened one station at Tourane, Annam. Messrs. Hughes and Hosler were appointed to the Annamese work in the summer of 1910, and proceeded to study French. Mr. Hughes passed away very suddenly the next year, and Mr. Hosler went alone to Annam, where he was joined by Mr. Soderberg, early in 1912. The Mission force this year (1913) consists of Mr. Soderberg and Mr. and Mrs. Hosler. We are encouraged to learn that the Board will be able to send out some young married couples or some single men and women this year.

"~~While the Tourane station has only been established for less~~

~~Lord has been with us in blessing, and we have been able to give forth the Word to some needy souls.~~

"The work is truly in the pioneer stage. In China the new missionary now finds translations ready to use, but in Annam we have neither Bible, hymn-book nor any other Christian literature. The work is in its initial stages and the best that we can do is to plod along slowly, gaining experience and laying the foundations for our future labors. We have already opened a Sunday service for the Annamese. A copy of Mark's Gospel in Annamese colloquial has been prepared and several Gospel songs translated. With these we opened our first service in April of this year. It was surely a joy after so much preparation and study in Cantonese, French and Annamese, to be able to give some witness for Christ in the Annamese tongue.

"This Gospel of Mark is about all that we have to use in preaching and it has been agreed that we should issue a small tentative edition that it may be used and criticised before we need a large edition for general circulation. This year we hope to continue revising translations of Matthew, Luke, John and Acts, which were made by a Catholic from the French Ostervald Bible. Later, we expect to do some original work and, ~~the Lord willing~~, to translate the entire New Testament.

"Nearly two years ago we baptised one of Mr. Bonnet's ^(Mr. Phung) colporteurs. So far as we know, he is the first baptised Annamese ^{in the} Protestant Mission. We also rejoice to say that there are now *three more men awaiting baptism*.

AN APPEAL.

"Surely the facts which we have just ~~passed over~~ ^{reviewed} will reveal to our friends at home the great need of this portion of the mission field. While we have entered, it is still "unoccupied territory." We are settled in the very center of the Annamese speaking race, and are only about four hours journey from the Capitol, ^{Hanoi} Mr. Bonnet the agent of the British and Foreign Society has been in Annam for more than ten years and ~~is now located at Haiphong~~. Mr. Audetat is also located at Song Khone in Laos and has an encouraging work. Outside of these two agencies there are no others directly concerned in giving the Gospel of God's Grace to the many millions in the many provinces of Annam, Tonkin and Cochin-China.

"Who dare say that these souls have had the witness which must be preached to all people. Seeing that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh what should be our duty toward these unreached masses? Has God's call no claim upon our young men and women to-day? The field and the work call for consecrated men and women who will come to give the best of their life and talents to "witnessing for Jesus." In the light of eternity what can be accounted a greater service than to go to the uttermost parts of the earth as witnesses of the Truth according to Christ's last command.

"~~Already some have heard the call of the Spirit and we are praying that they may leave all to follow Jesus.~~" Think of the great opportunity for preaching the Word day after day to more than one audience. Think of the great need of a Bible, hymns and tracts in the vernacular. To what better use can the best talents be given? ~~Also there are Bible schools for training of the native ministry that must be opened. It may be you will have only one or two students at first, but God ever waits to bless and multiply those agencies that seek to make men acquainted with His word. Furthermore there are stations waiting to be opened, and whole districts awaiting evangelization where one young man may have ample scope to prove his qualities of generalship.~~

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Annam.

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"Who will dare to come out to these neglected and unoccupied provinces and help to extend the boundary of God's kingdom around one of the very last nations to be evangelized? My Brother, my Sister, has God given you 'the call?' I do not ask if he has called you as He called me or some one else but is He talking to your heart about Annam? If so, then do not try to close your ears to God's voice and your heart to His will. Such a course would hinder you in your life's work and frustrate God's plan for you. We have in mind to-day a young man called to this very field who instead of obeying God, accepted a 'call' to an 'important church.' Last reports say that this former promising young man was passing through great sorrow and did not have the same joyous service of former years. Oh, dear friends, let us beware how we trifle with that tender Voice that comes to convince us of God's will. Who will answer the call from Annam, 'Come over and help us?' May it not be that God has shut up your way as regards other lines of service in order that you may hear this call as was the case with Paul the missionary in the sixteenth chapter of Acts. Let God lead and when hindrances are encountered press through by faith and prayer and allow nothing to turn you aside."

(John Earl?)
[John Earl?]

REQUESTS FOR PRAYER.

"Pray for workers.

"Pray that God may raise up some young people, married or single, and thrust them forth at once.

"Pray for funds, that we may be able to develop the work without hindrance.

"Pray that there may be some special gifts to meet all the needs of a new work, such as we have in Annam.

"Pray for the work on the field that we may have the Lord's guidance in every plan and undertaking.

"Pray for the Annamese who have begun to hear the Word, and also for the three men who have asked for baptism.

"And above all, pray that the foundation of the Christian church in Annam may be laid according to the Scripture against which nothing can prevail."

PAUL M. HOSLER.