





# Education in Korea

A SUPREME OPPORTUNITY FOR THE  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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OLD TIME KOREAN DAY SCHOOL

# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN KOREA

A missionary opening work in a new region started a school. Among the boys who presented themselves was one nine years old, with soiled clothing, wrinkled face, and eyes set so close together he looked like a rat. The missionary was drawn to the lad because he looked so forlorn, and told him of the Saviour who loved him and would help him to become a strong, good man. He gave his heart to Christ with the utter abandon that marks a boy's loyalty, and was instrumental in leading his mother to become a Christian. Then the mother and son together brought the father to the church, and he was shortly afterward converted and became one of the most influential and effective Christians the Korean Church has ever known. Among the many people whom the father led to like saving faith with himself was a merchant, who in his turn became a strong and successful lay worker. In the course of the years this merchant suffered financial reverses, and, selling out his business, went south, purchased farm lands, and settled in a heathen village of thirty-five families. The first Sunday he was there he invited his neighbors to a Christian service in his own house. One man came. The next Sunday two men were present; the third Sunday, three men; and the fourth Sunday, six men. Five months later, when the missionary visited that town for the first time, he found that of the thirty-five families living there only two still professed to be heathen. The rest were all Christians, and they had organized under the leadership of the Christian merchant a church with eighty-six members. There were no schools, so the Christian opened a night school for boys in his house, with his son as teacher, and twenty-six pupils were enrolled. The Chris-

tian's daughter, a girl fourteen years of age, opened a school for girls, and she had fourteen pupils in constant attendance. This is interesting as an incident, but note the chain of events with their results. A missionary opens a boys' school in 1892; a boy attends



KOREAN BOY,  
NON-CHRISTIAN

it, is saved, is instrumental in converting his parents, who in their turn lead a merchant to Christ; and then seventeen years later that merchant, with the same power that first found its lodgment in the little lad's heart, is instrumental in converting a village and establishing two schools, while the boy himself has come to America and is a student in one of our Methodist universities. It is incidents like these that set the seal of divine approval upon the work of Christian education, and show how immeasurable are its results.

#### DEMAND FOR MODERN EDUCATION

A great opportunity confronts the Christian Church in Korea. At least four millions of children and young people are turning eagerly to the new education. To secure and maintain the leadership in the training of these young people will mean the permanent Christianization of the Korean people. There is at the present time a wide-spread movement for the new learning in Korea amounting practically to an educational revolution. This has been going on for some time. Three years ago it became a sort of Korean fad to

start a school, and everybody—governors, magistrates, town officials, noblemen of wealth, and middle-class men—went to heavy sacrifices to bring the blessings of education to their children. Seven school boards would lay hold upon the coat-tails of one teacher and constrain him to abide with them, with the result that the salaries for the native pedagogue soared sky high, and a vast amount of superficial education was inaugurated. This temporary stage has passed, and a more suitable and satisfactory condition prevails to-day.

### THE NATIVE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

The Korean people possess an ancient civilization, with a tradition that extends back three thousand years. In the development of their culture, Buddhism and Confucianism have played important roles. Under these old systems the ideal of education was clearly set forth, and from the earliest times the highest value was placed upon learning. Education under the native systems had a religious base. During the predominance of Buddhism the monasteries were the schools and the monks the teachers. When Confucianism rose to power the temples of the Sage became the bulwarks of education, and the possession of learning was necessary to any who desired to take part in his worship. The idea of a secular education independent of and divorced from religion was foreign to Korean modes of thought.

This religious ideal as determining education has pre-



KOREAN BOYS, CHRISTIAN

vailed to the present time, so that when Christian missionaries first made their appearance in Korea, placing emphasis upon education as a part of their work, it was regarded by the people as quite the natural order, and their first impressions of Christianity were that it was a great educative rather than a religious force.

The native systems of education enjoyed the sanction and fostering care of the government, although there was no system of public schools. Primary education was obtained in the numerous private schools throughout the country, presided over by one teacher and maintained either at the expense of some wealthy gentleman or of a group of families. The schoolhouse itself was usually a room in the house of some wealthy villager, and the compensation of the teacher amounted to little more than his board and lodging.

The course of study consisted of a diligent and perpetual attempt to memorize and master the Chinese classics. The boy began his studies at about the age of six years with a small, easy primer, which familiarized him with a thousand Chinese characters, many of which he would rarely if ever again meet in the course of a lifetime. He then took up another primer, which instilled into his mind the fundamental principles of the Confucian faith. This was followed by a history of China, consisting of numerous volumes and covering the events in that land down to about A. D. 1090. From this historical work he passed into the four primary classics, consisting of "The Great Learning," by Confucius; "The Doctrine of the Mean," "The Works of Mencius," and "The Confucian Analects." He then took up the three great classics, "The Book of History," "The Book of Poetry," and "The Book of Changes," which may be regarded as the post-graduate course of study. These schools never issued diplomas and had no recognized form of graduation.

There are no reliable statistics concerning literacy among the Korean people, but as a rule the men of the gentry class were always more or less educated. Many men of the middle classes who looked forward to employment as government clerks enjoyed a smattering of education. Possibly

ten per cent of the male population of Korea might be said to have been literate under the old system. The women, with certain rare exceptions, were, as a rule, illiterate.

### WHAT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION HAS DONE

In the midst of conditions like these Christian education was in a position to make a very large contribution to the improvement of the Korean people. Among the many lines of service it has been permitted to perform there are six which are particularly deserving of notice.

1. Christian missions introduced to the Korean people their first knowledge of the fundamentals of modern educa-



INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION, CLASS IN CARPENTRY (Y. M. C. A.)

tion. In the old schools there was no study of arithmetic and higher mathematics, geography, grammar, natural science, the history of their own nation and of other nations except China. These subjects were all introduced into the Christian schools, and for the first time the Korean people came to know the things for which these essentials stand.

2. Christian missions gave to the Korean people their first modern text-books. The subjects being new, there were no text-books in the Korean language. This task was particularly difficult because the Korean language was devoid of terms in which the commonest teachings of arithmetic, geography, and the other sciences could be expressed. Probably no more vitally important contribution to the reconstruction of life in the Hermit Nation has been made than that which was accomplished at this point, for Chris-



COLLEGE ATHLETICS, Y. M. C. A. BASE BALL NINE,  
PLAYING IN SEOUL

tianity has constructed the highways along which the feet of native thought must travel for all time.

3. In bringing to the Korean people a new curriculum, with a new apparatus of text-books, it was necessary to train a new staff of teachers. The native pedagogues who had been developed under the old system were of little service. Out of the Christian schools came a new force of teachers, who to-day practically control the educational work in Korea.

4. Christian educators introduced the idea of a graded system, with schools united in a connectional bond. They also established the first large schools requiring a faculty of teachers rather than the solitary and uncontrolled pedagogue who set up in the native village as master of the birch rod. These schools involved the idea of specially trained teachers for each subject. They also brought together large numbers of students, involving the idea of association for educational purposes. Thus the student class discovered its own strength.

5. Christian missions redeemed the native writing from the contempt with which it was held, and made it a real national agency in education. The Koreans possess an admirable alphabet of twenty-five letters, which lends itself readily to the expression of native thought, but because of the high esteem in which the Chinese ideographs were held the people were disposed to look with contempt upon this humble vernacular. Christian missions adopted it and printed the Bible and other Christian books in it, with the result that it has achieved its rightful place as the national literary medium of the Korean people.

6. Christian missions introduced to the Korean people the idea of schools for girls. The great difference between a non-Christian system of education and the Christian system is that while the non-Christian system has schools for boys,



KOREAN GIRLS,  
NON-CHRISTIAN

the Christian system possesses schools for boys and girls. There were no schools for girls in Korea until the Christian Church established them. To-day their number is constantly increasing.

These are a few of the direct results of missionary educational work in Korea. Leadership in this great field is still held by the Christian forces. The Department of State for Education has recognized the Christian schools as part of the national system, registering them, and *has placed the Bible in its list of approved text-books*. In 1909 there were two thousand private schools in Korea registered in the Department of Education, with 42,000 pupils in attendance. Of this number over 1,400 schools, with probably 28,000 pupils, were under the Christian Church; thus out of every three boys getting their education in Korea, two were in Christian schools.

### OUR EDUCATIONAL PLANS

The Methodist Episcopal Church has a school system at the present time consisting of 172 schools, with 6,083 pupils in attendance. There are 183 theological students receiving systematic training, and the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society maintains schools for the training of nurses and Bible women, and there is a school for the education of girls who are blind or who are deaf-mutes.

The schools of our Mission and their needs are as follows:

1. PAI-CHAI HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE, SEOUL

The oldest of our mission schools is located in Seoul—the first Christian school ever



KOREAN GIRL,  
CHRISTIAN

opened in the empire of Korea. Its name, Pai-chai Hak-dang, was given it by the emperor, and constitutes a royal charter. It means School for the Training of Useful Men. It is on an English basis, and is of a high school grade, with 160 students in attendance. The school occupies a small and entirely inadequate building erected twenty-three years ago. Situated in the capital city, and with its long and honorable history, it attracts to it the finest class of students. There is no doubt that if properly equipped with buildings and plant it will



CLASS ROOM, MODERN SCHOOL (Y. M. C. A.)

prove self-supporting. The Mission appeals for \$45,500 for this school, to be expended as follows:

<i>a.</i> Administration building, including class-rooms, chapel, and offices.....	\$15,000
<i>b.</i> Dormitory for 250 pupils.....	5,000
<i>c.</i> Laboratory equipment.....	2,500
<i>d.</i> Gymnasium building and equipment....	7,500
<i>e.</i> Library building and books.....	5,500
<i>f.</i> Twenty perpetual scholarships at \$500 each .....	10,000
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Total.....	\$45,500

## 2. UNION ACADEMY AND COLLEGE, PYENG-YANG

This is the strongest and most successful Christian school in Korea. It is a union institution maintained by the Boards of the Presbyterian and Methodist Episcopal Churches. This coöperative arrangement has proven eminently satisfactory and is regarded by the missionaries of both churches as essential to its continuance as a successful school. It reports 523 students in the Academy and 54 in the College



MODERN SCHOOL, PHYSICAL TRAINING, A DRILL

Department. During the six years, 1902-1908, it graduated 92 students from the Academy and two from the College, while in 1909 the graduating class in the Academy was 65, and there were five graduates from the College. In 1909 the total entering class to the Academy and College numbered 225 students, and every one was a professing Christian. The average age of the student body was twenty years; more than half of the students were married men and six were widowers. Every student pays for his education in

money and labor. The Church in Korea sets aside one day each year for prayer and for contributions to this school. The tuition received from the students pays the salaries of more than twenty Korean teachers and tutors and fully half the running expenses. The amount appropriated by the Boards for running expenses has never exceeded \$500 a year. The graduates and former students are found in every walk of life in North Korea, exercising a potent influence on the new-forming life of more than three millions of Koreans living in its contributory territory. The following sums are appealed for to provide for the Methodist share in the plant and equipment of this institution.

<i>a.</i> Administration building, including classrooms, chapel, and offices.....	\$20,000
<i>b.</i> Laboratory equipment.....	2,000
<i>c.</i> Heating plant.....	1,500
<i>d.</i> Twenty perpetual scholarships at \$500 each.....	10,000
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Total.....	\$33,500

### 3. BIBLICAL INSTITUTE AND SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

By formal agreement with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, a union Theological School is maintained in Korea, under the control and management of a joint Board of Trustees appointed by the coöperating Boards. One hundred and eighty-three students are enrolled, these students spending four months in the classroom work and eight months out in the actual work of the pastorate. It is hoped that the time spent in the classroom work may be increased to six months, thus giving half a year for actual service annually in the work of the pastorate. This arrangement is necessary because the Church is engaged in training the first generation of ministers, and they cannot leave the direct work of the pastorate to give all their time to seminary residence. The plan is proving such a practical and effective method of ministerial training that the sentiment of the

Mission is to make it the permanent order. For this institution the following sums are asked:

<i>a.</i> Site.....	\$5,000
<i>b.</i> Administration building, including classrooms, chapel, and offices.....	10,000
<i>c.</i> Dormitories to accommodate 250 students.....	7,000
<i>d.</i> Bible school building for lay preachers and Sunday school workers.....	4,000
Total.....	<u>\$26,000</u>



#### CONFERENCE ON LIFE WORK

First Christian Student Summer Conference held in Korea

#### 4. BIBLE TRAINING SCHOOLS

At each mission station there is held during the year a series of institutes for the study of the Bible and of methods of personal work. These institutes are attended by local

preachers, exhorters, class leaders, and Sunday school workers at their own expense. Many of the men carry on their backs for a distance of from 25 to 100 miles the rice which they will eat during attendance on the institute. These training schools have an attendance of from 250 to 700, and last from one to three weeks. They are of great value and productiveness in developing an efficient volunteer lay agency throughout the church. It is necessary that there should be proper buildings in which these institutes may be housed, and the following are called for:

a. Bible Training School building, Pyeng-yang.....	\$2,500
b. Bible Training School building, Kong-ju.....	2,500
c. Bible Training School building, Yeng-ben.....	1,000
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Total.....	\$6,000

#### 5. HIGH SCHOOLS

In addition to the higher institutions at Pyeng-yang and Seoul, it will be necessary to provide buildings for high school purposes at the various mission stations, these schools serving as feeders to the central schools. The course of instruction in these high schools will be in the vernacular, and such is the opening to Christian education at these points that they will exercise a most potent influence for the training and development of competent men in the regions where they are located. Four of these are called for:

a. High School building at Su-won.....	\$3,500
b. High School building at Kong-ju.....	5,000
c. High School building at Yeng-ben.....	3,000
d. High School building at Haiju.....	2,500
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Total.....	\$14,000

#### 6. OTHER SCHOOLS

The buildings for all primary schools are provided by the Korean Christians. There are two points where school buildings will be necessary, the control and use of the same to be under the Mission rather than under the native church.

These, therefore, have been incorporated in the Quarter-Centennial budget. They are as follows:

a. Building at Pyeng-yang.....	\$3,000
b. Building at Won-ju.....	1,500
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Total.....	\$4,500

The total budget thus called for amounts to \$128,500. This amount would not be regarded as adequate to build and equip one college in the United States. In Korea it will provide facilities for two generations for a student body that will number annually ten thousand boys and young men. Who can measure the results which will accrue from placing educational facilities within the reach of ten thousand boys annually? From their number will arise the men who in politics, commerce, industry, education, and religion will influence and direct the destinies of multiplied thousands of men and women.

It is said that opportunity is like a horse standing at one's front door, saddled and bridled and impatient to be off; if mounted, it will carry its rider to a great and glorious destiny; but if we wait too long we find that it will pass on without us, and only the echo of its hoof-beats will remain to tell of a great possibility lost. This is true of the educational opportunity in Korea. It must be seized at the present time or we shall lose it forever.



