

RAKUSANEN, "HAPPY MOUNT LEPROSY COLONY,"
FORMOSA

BY G. GUSHUE-TAYLOR, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S.
Director of the Colony

The following is a brief account of the building of the Happy Mount Leprosy Colony, Formosa. For a quarter of a century outpatient treatment had been given in the mission hospitals to the few lepers who attended. In 1927 the Canadian Presbyterian Mission was enabled to establish a special outpatient clinic, where there have been over 40,000 attendances by more than 450 patients. The number of patients presenting themselves convinced the writer of the need of a residential institution for leprosy. Government officials, including the Governor-General, evidenced a sincere desire to give aid and encouragement to this project, and a permit was granted to collect funds in Formosa for the purpose.

In 1930, a gift of ¥5,000 was received from Her Majesty the Empress Dowager of Japan, which gift was repeated in 1935. Her Majesty wrote in Japanese, and presented to several individuals and institutions engaged in leprosy work, a poem which may be translated thus: "As I am unable to go to these my friends in their distress, do you please go on my behalf and give them comfort." Gifts and encouragement from such an exalted source have been of the greatest value in stimulating all those throughout the Japanese Empire who in any way could aid leprosy work.

In the same year (1930) the Government-General gave a subsidy of ¥25,000 which was used in the purchase of a site for the projected Colony. This gift was later increased by ¥3,000, for equipment. The collection from the general public in Formosa amounted to ¥66,801.86. These funds were supplemented by various gifts from abroad, some of which were used to start an endowment fund for maintenance.

The finding of a suitable site was difficult and was not concluded until three years had elapsed and over thirty possibilities had been explored. The site finally purchased, in June 1931, is situated among hills sixteen miles from Taihoku and two miles from the sea, and is approached by a recently completed motor road.

The area totals 46 acres, of which 10 acres is rice land, the remainder being well-wooded forest and land suitable for dry farming, capable of producing ordinary vegetables and most tropical fruits. An abundant water supply from springs up the hill has been led to a reservoir and piped to each cottage.

Shortly after the work started there arose a storm of opposition of the usual fearful type, which was eventually overcome and which benefited us by giving the project much publicity. This opposition had been anticipated and was provided for by letters from Drs. Denney, Muir and Wade which pointed out the lack of danger in such a colony. These letters were translated into Japanese and broadcast, and gave much assurance to a nervous public. In order to placate the opposition it was agreed to reduce the number of inmates planned for from 200 to 80. The laying of the foundation stone and opening of the colony were performed by the Chief of Police acting for the Governor-General.

For the accommodation of the inmates there are twenty cottages, fifteen for men and five, quite separate, for women. All are of brick, with roofs of reinforced concrete that are being covered by a vine (*Bigonia venusta*, Brazil) to protect them from the summer heat. The unit is a cottage for four patients with one bed-sitting-dining room 12 by 25 feet, behind which is a kitchen 8 by 8 feet, and two smaller dressing and store rooms. There is one hospital ward for ten men, for severe cases or those with complicating diseases. A church building 40 by 60 feet, the gift of the Women's Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, has in its basement a dispensary, treatment rooms, store rooms, pathological laboratory, operation room, staff changing-room and lavatory. Other buildings are an incinerator, mortuary, laundry and drying room, social service room for men, bathrooms, lavatories, and a small community shop. Sewage disposal is by a water-borne system with septic tank. Patients have been educated in sanitation and take great pride in cleanliness. The cottage beds, cheap to construct and easy to clean, consist of brick supports at head and foot, on which are laid boards to make a bed 3 by 6 feet; on these boards are rush mats, and in winter rice-straw mattresses which are burned in the spring. The non-leper buildings consist of an administration block and a residence for the staff, the latter being situated in an adjoining valley.

In Formosa under the Japanese Government sanitary affairs are under the Department of Health, a section of the Department of Police. A leper colony is rated as a hospital, and equipment and staff of higher grade are called for than would be demanded for so small an institution in some other lands affected by leprosy. The property is held and the colony administered under Japanese law by a juridical person composed of eight Japanese citizens and four foreign missionaries. The income is from the following sources: gifts from the Imperial Privy Purse and the Empress

Dowager of Japan, subsidies from the Government-General of Formosa and from the Missions to Lepers (London, Canada and America), gifts from friends locally and abroad, a small amount from patients able to pay, and income from endowment. In addition, the Presbyterian Church of Canada pays the salaries of the writer and his wife as their contribution to the work.

It was at first planned to admit only patients in the first and second stages of leprosy, but we were compelled by public opinion and the dictates of humanity to admit many in the third stage. In 1929, after three years of experience in outpatient treatment, the writer (1) stated that:

Modern literature on this subject, or perhaps the inference which the superficial observer draws from this literature, has tended to paint too rosy a picture of the results which will be obtained in treating lepers as they usually present themselves. Too often the disease has been in existence years before they come under treatment. Emphasis should be laid upon the necessity of diagnosing and treating cases in the earliest possible phase of the disease, and of segregating all infective ones. Especially should this aspect of the problem be placed forcibly before the public, so that they may realize the fact that leprosy is still one of the gravest infective diseases the world has to deal with. . . . Any segregation treatment centers should be conducted in such a humane fashion as will commend them to all right-thinking men and women, and as will receive the approval and co-operation of the patients and their friends. To make them exiles on a distant island or very inaccessible settlement where their friends cannot visit them, is to invite opposition and non-cooperation in a scheme for the success of which united effort is essential. Nerve leprosy and early non-infective leprosy should have treatment available at all public hospitals. . . . A view hopeful but extending far into the future should be taken of this problem. It is a matter for decades rather than for years, and workers today in leprosy while seeing good results in their lifetime are in reality workers for posterity. . . . If spectacular results are promised in ten or twenty years, the result will be disappointment at the comparatively poor results attained. The future should be regarded with optimism but sanity.

The past eight years' experience would lead one to use the same words today.

The Happy Mount colony has been open somewhat over three years, and sixty-six patients have been admitted. No death among these regular patients has occurred. One man, aged sixty-seven, a chronic leper suffering with pneumonia admitted from a general hospital in a dying condition, died three days later, but that death cannot be charged against the colony as a mortality. The regular presentation of Christian teaching in church and Sunday school and social service has done much to aid administration, and adds greatly to comfort and contentment among the patients.

Note on leprosy in Formosa.—During recent years the Government of Formosa has shown much interest in antileprosy measures. In 1930 it opened a well-equipped and well-staffed leprosarium, on a site seven miles from Taihoku found by the writer during his search. At present there are about 400 patients, to be increased as time goes on. Active, cordial cooperation exists between the Government leprosy workers and the staff of Happy Mount Leprosy Colony. In addition to subsidizing the Colony the Government also pays an annual grant to the MacKay Memorial Hospital for their outpatient leprosy clinic. Official records give the known number of lepers in the Island as 1,084 in a population of five millions. Experience in other lands on the relation of known to unknown lepers should lead one to estimate a considerable increase on this figure.

REFERENCE

- (1) GUSHUE-TAYLOR, G. Leprosy in Formosa. *China Med. Jour.* **43** (1929) 6.

DESCRIPTION OF PLATE

PLATE (5)

View of the Happy Mount Leprosy Colony, Formosa.

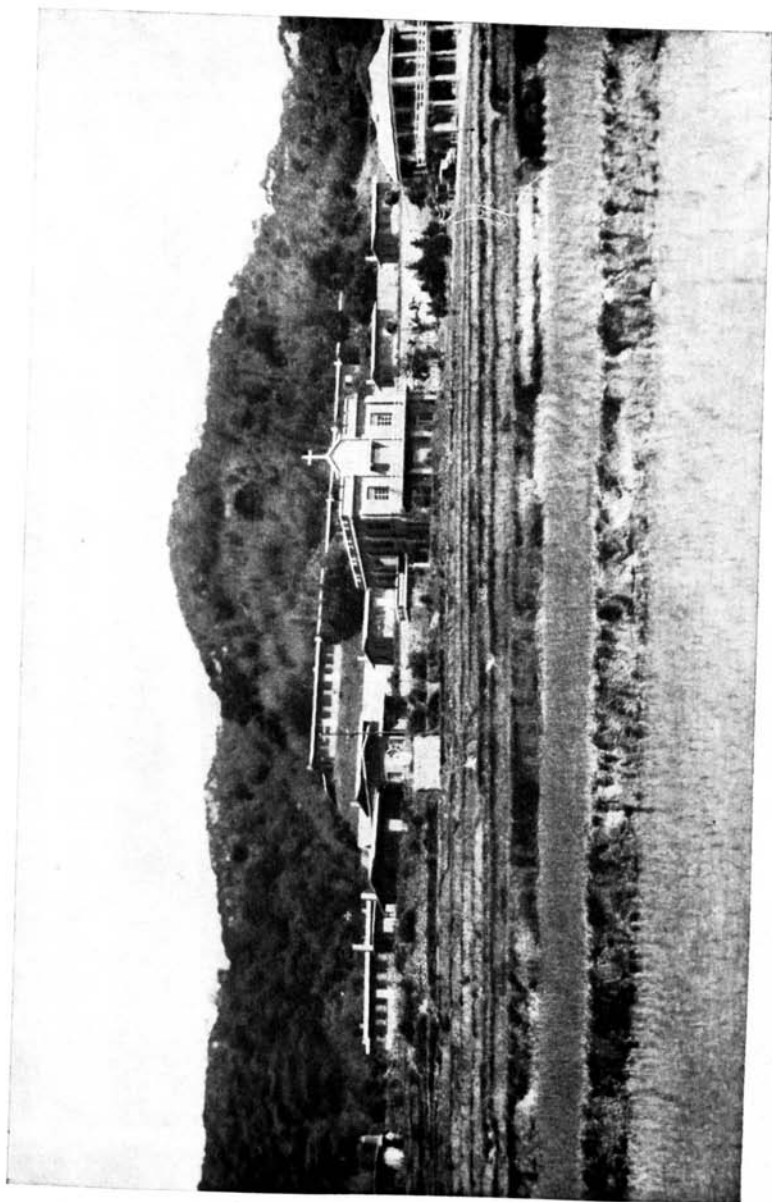


PLATE 5